



# **Psychosocial Study of Ragging in Selected Educational Institutions in India**

**Prof. Mohan Rao  
Dr. Shobna Sonpar  
Dr. Amit Sen  
Prof. Shekhar P. Seshadri  
Harsh Agarwal  
Divya Padalia**

December, 2015





CENTRE OF SOCIAL MEDICINE & COMMUNITY HEALTH  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY**  
NEW DELHI - 110 067

**Mohan Rao**  
Professor

The Chairperson  
University Grants Commission  
Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg  
New Delhi

Dated: December, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015

Dear Prof. Ved Prakash,

It gives us great pleasure to submit the report entitled "Psychosocial Study of Ragging in Selected Educational Institutions in India".

Our Committee, mandated by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, felt that our deliberations must rest on an empirical basis. This report is based on a study undertaken by our team, which gives us, for the first time, some idea of the prevalence of ragging in educational institutions in the country and some of their causes.

We would like to bring to your attention not only the widespread and continuing prevalence of ragging, but also the social sanctions this has. The causes are complex and thus any solution must also rest on a board range of interventions; in short a law-and-order perspective of the problem is both short-sighted and self-defeating.


We are confident that the recommendations made in the report, based on our study and also on our profound deliberations, will find implementation in letter and spirit.

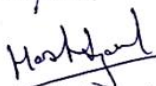
We would like to place on record our appreciation to the UGC for making the study possible.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

  
Prof. Mohan Rao

  
Dr. Amit Sen

  
Mr. Harsh Agarwal

  
Dr. Shobna Sonpar

  
Prof. Shekhar P. Seshadri

  
Ms. Divya Padalia

---

Tel. : (011) 26704420, 26717676, 26717557, Fax : 91 (011) 26717586, 26704420  
Cell : 09818498302, E-mail : mohanrao2008@gmail.com



## ***Acknowledgements***

*Ragging is a multidimensional problem and a widespread phenomenon in our higher education system, impacting students and the academic environment in the institutions of learning. The issue, for decades, has been mired in ambiguities pertaining to its prevalence, causes and consequences. Furthermore, the reluctance of various stakeholders to express their candid opinion on this subject exacerbates the problem and makes it difficult to study the issue and develop a lucid understanding. We are extremely grateful to all the institutions and individuals who helped us in this challenging endeavour to examine the issue of ragging through an empirical study.*

*We are thankful to the University Grants Commission for funding this research study and for their support and cooperation during the course of this project. We express our gratitude to Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, where the project was technically located, for providing administrative support to the project. We are also thankful to the Institutional Ethics Review Board (IERB) of JNU for giving us the necessary ethical clearance to carry out this challenging research.*

*Given the sensitive nature of the subject and the quantum of data we collected, we faced various hurdles during data collection. We are grateful to our young enthusiastic team comprising, Ms. Apoorva Gupta, Ms. Sakshi Lamba, Ms. Mridu Sharma and Mr. Amit Tiwari for data collection, analysis of qualitative data and secondary research. We would also like to sincerely thank Dr. Lakhan Singh for handling the administrative work of the project.*

*We also thank Ms. Bhavana Goel, Ms. Vertika, Mr. Akshay Gupta, Ms. Anjali Nayar, Ms. Swati Kedia, Mr. Harimohan Mishra, Ms. Meera Pillai, Ms. Sheila Ramaswamy and others for their valuable contribution during various stages of this project, including in preparing project proposal, translation of survey schedule, data collection, analysis of qualitative data, statistical analysis of data, institutional study, report writing, etc. We appreciate and thank*

*the Department of Bio-statistics, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) for data entry and statistical analysis.*

*Last but not the least, we are extremely grateful to the participating institutions (thirty seven universities/colleges and six schools) for giving us their consent to collect data, making necessary changes in their academic schedule to facilitate our interaction with staff and students, and providing boarding and lodging facilities and other necessary support to the research team during the field visits. For reasons of confidentiality and undertakings given to these participating institutions, we cannot reveal their names in this report. We also thank the students, faculty members, college management and support staff for their participation in this study and for all the help extended to the research team during the field work.*

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction.....	9
Chapter 2 Methodology.....	30
Chapter 3 Results & Analysis.....	44
Part I – Ragging.....	44
Part II – Bullying in Six Urban Indian Schools: A Supplementary Study.....	166
Chapter 4 Recommendations.....	191
References.....	200
List of Acronyms.....	204
Annexure	
I College Coding.....	205
II Ragging Survey Schedule for Students.....	207
III Indicative List for Individual Interviews with Students (Ragging).....	217
IV Indicative List for Individual Interviews with Faculty/Staff (Ragging).....	222
V Indicative List for FGDs with Students (Ragging).....	224
VI Institutional Study.....	226
VII Domains and Themes from Students’ Interviews (Ragging).....	233
VIII Domains and Themes from Faculty/Staff Interviews (Ragging).....	240
IX Bullying Survey Schedule for Students.....	242
X Bullying Survey Schedule for Teachers.....	248



## Chapter 1 Introduction

---

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. By rough estimates, from reports in English media alone, there are more than 10 deaths, 40-50 cases of serious injuries leading to hospitalization, several cases of rioting in colleges due to ragging every year. It is not unreasonable, given the extent of denial and subterfuge, to think that this figure is just the tip of an iceberg and the number of unreported incidents and serious consequences from ragging are likely to be much higher.

Despite the Government’s ban on ragging since the late 1970s and two subsequent interventions by the Supreme Court (1999 & 2006)<sup>1</sup>issuing guidelines to eradicate ragging, it is still found that a significant section of stakeholders continue to support ragging and justify it by dividing the act into severe and mild, with the latter, in their argument, being benign in nature. Indeed, some believe that ragging is a rite of passage that helps young people to grow up and prepare for the harsh world outside. Disturbingly, people in positions of responsibility to understand and implement anti-ragging policy and guidelines are often ambivalent in their beliefs, and therefore, approach.

Although it has been more than three decades since we recognized ragging to be an entrenched problem causing profound damage in our institutions of higher learning and have been looking for viable solutions through this time, it continues to make news at worryingly regular intervals. It makes one question our understanding of this phenomenon, particularly in the context of the deeper psychological and sociological determinants that eventually manifest as ragging behaviours.

---

<sup>1</sup>Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development (2007), *The Menace of Ragging in Educational Institutions and Measures to Curb It* (Raghavan Committee Report), New Delhi.

Furthermore, there is no credible literature that reveals as to how this practice originated and permeated the educational institutions in India and came to be seen as a 'tradition', especially in professional colleges. There is also not sufficient anecdotal or empirical evidence to suggest whether the incidence and severity of ragging has declined or increased in last few decades. It is nevertheless evident that our definitions have become tighter, and the desire to address it has certainly increased in the last decade and a half, especially after the interventions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

In 1999, on the directions of the Supreme Court, the UGC formed a four member committee under Prof K.P.S. Unny, which defined ragging and outlined its 'positive' and negative impacts. While enumerating some of the 'positive' impacts of ragging, the 1999 Report observed that its negative manifestations had become more prevalent. However, the Raghavan Committee, constituted by the Supreme Court in 2006 took a more serious and in depth view of the problem. The Committee stated: "If education, and particularly Higher Education, is to serve as the lever to the great surge forward of the Indian nation, the scourge of ragging which corrodes the vitals of our campuses needs to be curbed"(Raghavan Committee Report, 2007, p. i).

### **Meaning and Definition of Ragging**

The Supreme Court defined ragging in the Vishwa Jagriti matter (1999) as, "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 other student, indulging in rowdy or undisciplined activities which causes or is likely to cause annoyance, hardship or psychological harm or to raise fear or apprehension thereof in a fresher or a junior student or asking the students to do any act or perform something which such student will not in the ordinary course and which has the effect of causing or generating a sense of shame or embarrassment so as to adversely affect the physique or psyche of a fresher or a junior student." (Raghavan Committee Report, 2007, para. 3.19). However, this definition fails to capture the range and severity of aggressive acts that are carried out in the name of ragging.

Other organisations/bodies working in this field have also attempted to define ragging, the variety of definitions being reflective of differences in perspective and interpretation. In 2007, the Committee of Consultants to Raghavan Committee considered ragging “neither a means of familiarization nor an introduction with freshers, but a form of psychopathic behaviour and a reflection of deviant personalities. Further, ragging reproduces the entrenched power configurations prevalent in civil society” (Raghavan Committee Report, 2007, Annexure V).

According to the NGO, Coalition to Uproot Ragging from Education (CURE), “ragging is an act of aggression committed by an individual or a group of individuals over another individual or a group of individuals where the former, by virtue of their being senior to the latter, somehow gets the authority and audacity to commit the act and the latter, by virtue of their being new to the institution, are automatic victims” (Raghavan Committee Report, 2007, para. 4.19).

Another NGO, Society for People’s Action Change and Enforcement (SPACE), defines ragging as “a systemized form of human rights abuse in educational institutions in South Asia, the worst forms of which are found in engineering, medical and military colleges. It is committed by ‘senior’ students (those in second year or higher) upon ‘freshers’ or first-year students. The forms and traditions of ragging may vary from one place to another, but the greatest common factor in ragging in any educational institution is the creation of an environment of constant fear and intimidation of ‘freshers’” (Raghavan Committee Report, 2007, para. 4.19).

These definitions emphasise different elements of the ragging phenomenon: location in educational institutions, practices inflicted on juniors by seniors, practices that involve coercion and aggression by perpetrators and evoke fear and intimidation and other forms of physical and mental distress in victims, practices that may reflect social power configurations as well as attract deviant personalities.

## Extent and Nature of the Problem

The Coalition to Uproot Ragging from Education (CURE), an NGO working against ragging, has been monitoring the incidents of ragging reported in the media and highlights the current trend of ragging in the country through its annual status report. According to CURE's reports and that compiled by the research team, a total of 717 cases of ragging were reported in the English print media across the country from January 2007 to September 2013. The highest number of incidents was reported from Uttar Pradesh (97), Andhra Pradesh (75), West Bengal (73), Tamil Nadu (54), Kerala (48), Madhya Pradesh (48), Maharashtra (42), and Punjab (35). A total of 71 deaths due to ragging was reported in that period with Andhra Pradesh (11), Tamil Nadu (8), Maharashtra (8), Uttar Pradesh (7), Karnataka (6) and West Bengal (6) registering the maximum deaths due to ragging.

**Table No. 1.1: Ragging cases reported in select English media between 2007 and 2013**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Reported Incidents</i>	<i>Deaths</i>	<i>Attempted suicides</i>
2007	93	10	5
2008	62	8	4
2009	163	17	3
2010	118	12	9
2011	129	9	2
2012	93	7	7
2013 (Till September)	59	8	0

During this period, there were 199 cases of ragging that led to major and minor injuries to students, including 81 incidents leading to hospitalization and causing permanent disability. A total of 128 cases reportedly involved sexual abuse of freshers. Furthermore, 129 cases of ragging led to serious group clashes, protests, strikes and violence between students. Drugs and alcohol abuse, and forced smoking was noted in 35 cases while 25 cases involved caste, region or religion as determining factors.

**Table No. 1.2: Reported incidents of ragging disaggregated by nature**

Cases leading to injury	199
Cases involving sexual abuse	128
Cases leading to group violence and disturbance	129
Cases involving drug abuse, alcohol and smoking	35
Cases involving caste, religion and regionalism	25

Analysis of media reports indicates high percentages of incidents from Engineering and Medical Colleges with a total of 314 cases (44 per cent of total cases). Hostels and paying guest accommodation for students seem to be the breeding ground for ragging as 358 cases (50 per cent of total cases) were reported from residential places located in and around the campus area.

Clearly, ragging is a serious problem that continues despite efforts to curb it. The data above is probably only the tip of the iceberg based as it is on media reports that tend to focus on extreme instances. It does reveal the perversity in practices associated with ragging as well as the involvement of social factors like caste and region. However, it does not reveal the true extent of ragging nor the variety of ragging practices that characterises the phenomenon at large.

### **Approach so far**

It was in the late 70s in the aftermath of the death of two freshers in a Regional Engineering College that the Government of India for the first time issued a notification banning ragging in the country. However, despite the national ban, incidents did not come down, prompting several universities to bring ordinances and state governments to issue executive orders or bring modifications in their state education act or initiate legislation against ragging. The Supreme Court's interventions in 1999 and later in 2006 led to the formation of committees with clear mandates to address the problem of ragging, and has no doubt increased our understanding of the phenomenon and the ways in which it is viewed.

## **Prof K.P.S. Unny Committee Report (1999)**

The anti-ragging campaign got an impetus in 1999 when the Hon'ble Supreme Court, in response to a PIL filed by the Vishwa Jagriti Mission, asked the University Grants Commission (UGC) to issue guidelines to universities to curb ragging. The UGC formed a four member committee under Prof K.P.S. Unny, Registrar of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, to examine and submit a report on ragging.

The report of the Unny Committee noted that 'ragging has negative and positive manifestations' and that 'it could be considered positive if it is done within decent limits'. The report opined that ragging could be positive if it is 'enjoyable by all', 'helps freshers to shake themselves out of inhibition and inferiority complex and to smoothen their angularities' or 'helps ease the pent up tension of modern students without harming anyone'. The report also listed out in detail various acts that could be considered ragging, the reasons for ragging and locations where ragging is commonly carried out. It concluded that the major reasons for ragging lay in senior students' desire to show off their power and superiority, to feel important by helping the juniors, and to avenge their own ragging experience by doing to juniors what they themselves faced.

In their recommendations, the Unny Committee put forward a Prohibition, Prevention and Punishment proposal i.e. prohibition by law, prevention by guidelines and punishment if the prohibition and punishment do not work. They recommended that central and state governments should enact laws against ragging. They suggested punishments ranging from cancellation of admission to a monetary fine of up to Rs. 25,000 and rigorous imprisonment of up to three years. The Committee also recommended various measures to be undertaken for sensitisation against ragging and highlighted the need for incentivizing wardens and students for their good conduct and anti-ragging activities. It was also suggested that institutions failing to curb ragging should be disaffiliated.

## **Raghavan Committee Report (2007)**

In 2006, the issue of ragging was once again brought to the forefront when the Supreme Court expressed its disappointment in the implementation of its previous guidelines and constituted another committee under Dr. R K Raghavan, Director CBI, to suggest means and methods to prevent ragging; to suggest possible action that can be taken against persons indulging in ragging; and to suggest possible action against institutions that fail to curb ragging.

To understand the phenomenon and to make appropriate recommendations, the Committee held extensive meetings with all stakeholders involved in ragging, including the NGOs working on the issue, student victims of ragging, parents, teachers, wardens, heads of institutions, representatives from student bodies, government, etc. in twelve cities across India. The committee made several important observations. It noted that ragging has many aspects, including psychological, social, political, economic and cultural, and that it adversely impacts the standards of higher education. It considered ragging as our failure to inculcate human values from the schooling stage. The Committee made some strong recommendations to curb ragging. It noted that the view taken by the apex court that students indulging in ragging should not be treated as criminals needs to be reviewed. It also suggested that behavioural pattern among students, particularly potential raggars, need to be identified. A sub-group appointed by the Committee made an observation on the sexual forms of ragging and stated that such behaviours are a manifestation of widespread sexual repression in our society.

Carefully examining the Minutes of the meetings of Raghavan Committee (listed as Annexure III in the Raghavan Committee Report) and the details of the ragging incidents reported in the media from across India in the last 15 years, it is clear that ragging is not merely a disciplinary or a law and order problem that can be solved by punishment alone, but has complex social and psychological dimensions. In the meetings held by the Raghavan Committee where people shared their experiences of ragging, the contribution of complex factors related to caste, region, sexuality, substance misuse, personality and so on were evident.

The Raghavan Committee Report makes several important observations and recommendations to tackle ragging. However, in the absence of empirical data to support these observations, the extent and impact of ragging cannot be ascertained accurately. It, therefore, becomes essential to gather detailed and objective information of the issues highlighted to understand the processes and ramifications of ragging at a deeper level.

### **State Laws against Ragging**

An analysis of different state laws on ragging was comprehensively carried out by the Raghavan Committee. It noted that different states have issued executive orders or there are ordinances by the universities; however, very few states have enacted specific laws against ragging and those too are difficult to implement. The Committee found the definition of ragging common to the Acts of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and West Bengal.

The Kerala Prohibition of Ragging Act 1998 defines ragging as doing of any act by disorderly conduct, to a student of an educational institution which causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological harm or raising apprehension or fear or shame or embarrassment to that student. The State law in Andhra Pradesh defines ragging as doing an act, which causes or is likely to cause insult or annoyance or fear or apprehension or threat or intimidation or outrage modesty or injury to a student. The Chhattisgarh Act of 2001, is quite comprehensive and defines ragging as causing, inducing, compelling or forcing a student, whether by way of a practical joke or otherwise, to do any act which detracts from human dignity or violates his person or exposes him to ridicule or forbear from doing any unlawful act by intimidating, wrongfully restraining, wrongfully confining, or injuring him or by using criminal force to him or by holding out to him any threat or such intimidation, wrongful restraint, wrongful confinement, injury or the use of criminal force. However the most important aspect missing from the State laws is the range of sexual acts that are reported in many ragging incidents across India.

Different state laws have laid down varying punishments for ragging. While the Chhattisgarh Anti-ragging Act states that an offender could be imprisoned for up to five years or fined up

to Rs. 5000, the Andhra Pradesh Act lays down a provision of imprisonment ranging from six months to 10 years and fine up to Rs. 10,000. Similarly, other State Acts (of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal and Assam) have punishment ranging from six months to two years and a fine up to Rs. 10,000.

### **Practices akin to ragging and bullying**

Exploring the prevalence of practices like ragging across the world, it is evident that these are not confined to South Asia alone. The nature of ragging acts, the justifications given, the ambivalent attitudes towards it, are markedly similar to what is noted in the Indian context. An internet search revealed that educational institutions in many countries had practices like ragging that functioned primarily to initiate newcomers into the institution's student community. These include hazing in the USA and Canada, *bizutage* in France and Belgium, *doop* in Holland, *nollning* in Sweden, *novatada* in Spain, *praxe* in Portugal, *rabnong* in Thailand, *ospek* in Indonesia, ragging in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, *ijime* in Japan, *trote* in Brazil, *mechoneo* in Chile, *albisotaj* in Morocco and similar practices in the Congo, South Africa, Colombia, Argentina and Lithuania among others. A survey of more than 11,000 students in 53 colleges and universities in the USA found that more than half the sample reported experiencing hazing through practices that included alcohol consumption, humiliation, isolation, sleep-deprivation, and sexual acts (Allan & Madden, 2008). Such acts, as well as others evoking embarrassment, shame or disgust, and physical assault are noted across the world. A common point made in this regard is that it is difficult to draw a definite line between 'initiatory' practices that comprise harmless 'fun', a rite of passage that signifies inclusion and bonding, and those that are offensive and harmful. Although these practices are described in terms of tradition, humour, fun and entertainment, they are often taken too far and degenerate into humiliation and violence. Their purpose is said to help newcomers become a part of the new environment, to build strong bonds and develop a sense of belonging to the institution. Yet the issue of power is very much at the core of these practices as evident in the hierarchy among the seniors and newcomers that sets up a relation of dominance and submission, in the rules and regulations set up to regulate the conduct of newcomers, the penalties for non-compliance and implicit or explicit coerciveness. It is not

surprising that, as among freshers in India, the entry into college is viewed with trepidation and anxiety.

It should also be noted that these kinds of practices take place in contexts other than educational institutions and are often extremely violent. Inmate hazing of new prisoners in prisons, entry into the armed forces in many countries, and entry into sports teams are known to involve severe ragging. Clearly the process of initiation and inclusion is a complex social phenomenon that is shaped by power dynamics and status hierarchies.

The issue of power is central to the phenomenon of bullying and many cases of ragging can well be described as cases of bullying. Bullying is one of the most common forms of violence in our society. Studies have shown that approximately 30 per cent of students in grades 6-10 are involved in bullying, as perpetrator, victim, or both (Srisiva, et al., 2013). Bullying is considered direct if it involves overt attack on the victim through name-calling, abuse, threats and physical violence, and is considered covert when humiliating, shaming or excluding someone. A central and driving feature of bullying is the perceived imbalance of power between the bully and the victim. Bullying is not limited to schools, but is also commonly seen at workplaces, neighbourhoods, families, etc. It serves the powerful to maintain hierarchical structures in any social space and can become an entrenched part of an institution's culture. Bullying is known to cause deep and lasting emotional/psychological damage in victims and bystanders, and can breed an atmosphere of mistrust and fear in a community. Unlike ragging, bullying does not have any ostensible function other than intimidation and aggression; it is less organized, less conspicuous, does not follow a junior-senior hierarchy and does not have social acceptance. However, there are similarities in the power dynamics and types of acts. Further, it is possible that child victims of bullying at home or in school become ragging perpetrators when the power equation favours them in college.

## **This Report**

The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in its order in May 2009 (order dated 08.05.2009 in Civil Appeal 887 of 2009 in the matter of University of Kerala versus Council, Principals', Colleges, Kerala and Others ), constituted a four member committee of mental health and public health professionals with the following terms of reference.

*(i) To ascertain the reasons and circumstances under which senior students resort to ragging;*

*(ii) To ascertain the psychological impact of ragging on students;*

*(iii) To assess and quantify the impact of ragging and indiscipline on the standard of education in an institution and relate it to the existing procedures used by MCI, UGC and other regulatory bodies to assess the suitability of an institution for recognition;*

*(iv) To recommend urgent and mandatory mental health measures to be implemented in, and practiced by school, colleges, and all educational and vocational institutions, so as to curb ragging.*

The reports of the Raghavan Committee and the Unny Committee as well as the explorations by NGOS working in the area such as SPACE and CURE point to issues that have not yet been fully understood and integrated about ragging as a social behavioural phenomenon. They raise intriguing questions the answers to which may help design interventions that are empirically based and accurately aimed.

### **The most pressing of these questions are the following.**

1. What is the actual prevalence of ragging in institutions of higher education and what is the nature of ragging practices? Thus far the information available is that culled from newspaper reports. This paints a grim picture of the horrific extremes to which ragging descends but does not indicate how widespread ragging is nor what sort of practices are encompassed within 'ragging'.

2. Despite two Supreme Court judgements and laws banning ragging, instances of ragging ending in fatalities or severe injuries continue. Is this because there is implicit support for ragging, or denial that it is a serious problem thus resulting in a failure to take measures to curb it? While there is outrage about incidents that have escalated to tragic consequences, there continues to be widespread support for ragging even among those who are in positions of authority in educational institutions and in larger society. Any discussion about the issue of ragging typically unfolds as a debate about its pros and cons rather than an outright condemnation.

3. Are all instances of inter-student coercion and aggression to be understood as ragging? Are there overlaps between school and college bullying and ragging?

4. What motivates those who rag? Are the justifications given for ragging the actual motives for students who indulge in it?

5. Is ragging committed by 'deviant personalities'? Does it mirror prevailing social dynamics such as 'entrenched power configurations'? Is it simply institutional custom?

6. How does ragging perpetuate itself so that those who condemned it initially begin to support it after some time? How does the emotional distress following ragging give way over time to feeling that it was actually a positive experience?

7. Are victims of ragging picked upon because of their physical appearance or personality attributes such as shyness or boldness or social location in terms of class, caste, region, religion and so on?

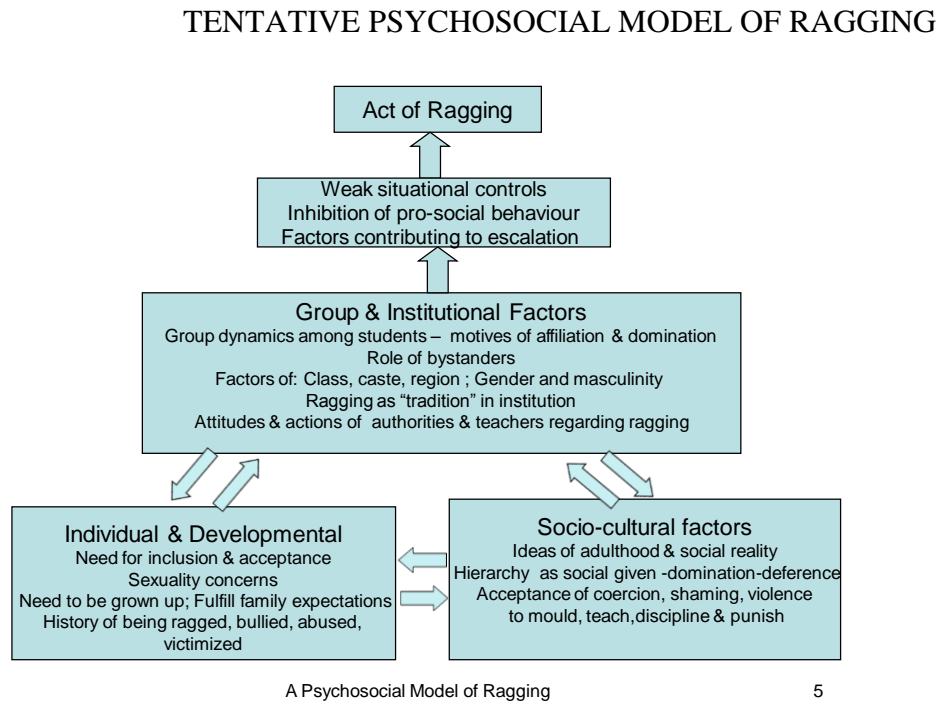
In order to find answers to questions such as these, it was felt that a research study was necessary. The findings of this research constitute the bulk of this report. The nature of the questions raised suggested that a psychosocial perspective might be useful to apply. The basic premise of the psychosocial framework is that any behaviour results from a combination of factors, social and psychological, within individuals, within their relation to groups and within the larger socio-cultural context. With regard to ragging, it means that an

understanding of the phenomenon must encompass the factors in the larger socio-cultural context that support ragging such as the acceptance of hierarchy in society as well as the acceptance of the use of violence and coercive power to maintain authority, and to discipline, teach and punish. Since institutions are microcosms of the society in which they are embedded, social concerns related to issues of gender and diversity will inevitably be mirrored there and intersect with ragging practices. The fact that ragging occurs among youth means that youth-specific developmental issues such as the need to belong and be accepted within the peer world, and the excitement and anxiety about becoming an adult, including that around sexuality, play an important role in ragging. Finally, factors that have to do with individuals, particularly personal history of bullying or being bullied within family, school or neighbourhood could determine who is drawn towards engaging in ragging.

These factors intersect and influence one another. The advantage of a psychosocial framework is that it recognises the multiple factors, psychological and social, that need to be taken into account to understand ragging and puts them in systemic relation to one another. Further, it brings within a single framework not only the factors that contribute to the occurrence of ragging but also the factors that support it, minimise or deny its negative impact, and which allow it to continue. Finally, it provides a map indicating the multiple points at which intervention can be usefully constructed.

Based on a review of literature on ragging as well as other forms of social violence, a tentative psychosocial model was developed to conceptually guide the research undertaken. This is presented on the following page.

## A tentative psychosocial model of ragging



As can be seen in the model depicted, factors operate at two broad levels: distal contextual factors (the socio-cultural factors, individual and developmental factors, and the group and institutional factors) that contribute to a predisposition or potential for ragging, and proximal situational factors that precipitate or facilitate ragging behaviour in a particular instance (factors that weaken normal inhibitions and intensify conformity to group pressure).

The significance of psychosocial contextual factors in the analysis is that interventions that lean towards a law and order approach emphasising surveillance, deterrence and punishment will only be partly successful. From a psychosocial perspective, the metaphor of ‘uprooting’ ragging from educational institutions is inapt because ragging is not analogous to a weed. Rather, there are toxic elements in the soil and water that nourish social institutions, including those of education, which distort the growth of those institutions and sometimes yield poisonous fruit in forms of social violence, of which ragging is one.

While psychosocial contextual factors may be a necessary background for ragging to occur, they are not sufficient. Certain situational conditions must be present that allow actual acts of

ragging to happen. Thus toxic elements in soil or water may be neutralised when ingested by some other mechanism. It is when this mechanism fails that the poisonous effect is triggered. In the case of ragging, these situational factors largely operate by removing the constraints and inhibitions that normally keep offensive and aggressive behaviour in check. The approach towards ragging thus far has tended to operate at this level by trying to strengthen those factors that will constrain ragging behaviour.

## **CONTEXTUAL FACTORS**

### Individual and developmental factors

This refers to those factors particular to youth as an age group, and to factors within an individual student that constitute risk factors for indulging in coercive or aggressive behaviour.

In terms of psychological development, certain concerns predominate in this age group and ragging is one route whereby these concerns get played out.

1. Ragging is ostensibly a way of integrating newcomers into the student community and college life and is often seen as a rite of passage. It ties in with young people's need to 'fit in', to belong and to be accepted within the peer world. This need is a strong motivation to conform to peer pressure. The desire for acceptance and fear of rejection causes victims to yield to ragging. Some students who rag may do so in order to retain their position in their own group. Other students who do not rag and dislike what is happening hesitate to intervene for fear of being ostracised.

2. Youth is also a transitional period between childhood and adulthood. This has several implications for ragging. First, the need to behave in a way that shows that childhood has been left behind is prominent. Especially among boys, the ragging requirement to be strong and able to 'take it' has some relation to being grown up and a man as opposed to being a child, a sissy and 'mama's boy'. Thus ragging practices that force freshers to break taboos such as against smoking and drinking and to endure physical pain from beatings and hard

exercise are common. Secondly, it is difficult for a young person to stand up to the authority of seniors before they have found their own mind and when their socialisation has taught them to obey and respect seniors. It is not surprising that freshers feel scared and helpless in such situations. Thirdly, they are still emotionally dependent on their family for support, approval and guidance. They are therefore vulnerable to stated and implicit expectations that they should try to cope with ragging and not jeopardize academic and career prospects. The student's shame at letting the family down usually ensures silence.

3. Sexuality is a major concern of this age group as well as a marker of being grown up. It is therefore not surprising that it has a significant role in ragging practices. There are few avenues for youth to check out their fascination as well as anxieties about sexual matters and ragging is a practice that gets used to this end.

It has been often noted that those who rag severely have histories of having been similarly ragged. This is not surprising. The study of personal and social violence has repeatedly shown that one outcome of being subjected as a helpless and passive victim to humiliating abuse is of becoming abusive oneself given the chance. The psychology of shame and humiliation explains how victims become perpetrators and also how the initial distress arising from such experiences changes over a period of time to be remembered more positively.

A history of being victimized or bullied at school, at home or in the neighbourhood has similar bearing. The perpetrators could be parents, siblings and other family members, teachers, or peers and older children in the neighbourhood. Some students who indulge in severe ragging could have 'individual pathology' arising from such prior experiences.

At least two implications that arise for intervention from the above are a) the need to have avenues and services that address the normative concerns of youth in constructive ways b) the need to address healing for those who have suffered victimisation in any form.

## Socio-cultural factors

The importance of this domain lies in that it provides some of the ideological ‘justifications’ for ragging. Since these factors lie in the broad socio-cultural realm, they are pervasive in society and impact on all elements - students, parents, teachers and management of educational institutions as well as institutions that make educational policy and oversee the functioning of schools, colleges and universities. From a psychosocial perspective, it is to be noted that external or social reality is internalized by individuals and becomes a part of their psychological structure. This includes the installation of the power relations of the socio-cultural context in which we live along with certain belief systems. Three such factors relevant to ragging are the acceptance of social hierarchy as a norm, the acceptance of violent action as legitimate if used for justifiable purposes, and a view of succeeding in the ‘real world’ as requiring connections and toughness. Viewed in this light, ragging practices affirm such social beliefs in a ritualised way. Since these beliefs enjoy widespread social acceptance, they help understand the reasons for ambivalence toward acting against ragging among those who run and work in educational institutions and thus the persistence of the practice. Parents too may encourage their children to endure ragging for the same reason.

1. The hierarchical distribution of power and the use of coercive power to maintain authority are commonplace in our social institutions. The pervasive acceptance of society as hierarchically structured so that behaviours of domination and deference are intrinsic is clearly reflected in many ragging practices (such as calling the senior ‘sir’, looking down in front of the senior, not speaking unless addressed, performing services for the senior ranging from copying notes to doing laundry to sexual services). The entitlement of seniors to such authority over juniors is seldom interrogated. When ‘benign’ it takes the form of an exchange - that is, if due deference and obedience are shown to the senior, the junior will be given support, academic and social, by the senior. Such support is believed to extend beyond the college years into professional life too. When ‘malign’, this entitlement is deployed abusively and violently (for instance, physically beating up juniors, doing ‘ragda’<sup>2</sup>) sometimes eventuating in injury and death.

---

<sup>2</sup> Forcing juniors to perform physical exercise.

2. There is also wide social acceptance of violent action as justified when used to discipline, punish or teach someone their place. Corporal punishment by parents and teachers, the use of violent means to maintain law and order by police, to chastise wives by spouses, to redress 'honour' in honour crimes, to punish 'offending' groups in cases of caste and religious violence, to reform those who offend the 'moral police' are commonplace. Indeed violent action is valorised if the justifications are 'moral' enough. It is not surprising then for physical violence to be a part of ragging, especially when it is 'to teach a lesson' to the junior or for the junior's 'own good'.

3. An implicit underlying factor is the idea of adulthood and of the real world. In this vision of adulthood, it is important to be tough physically and mentally, and to know how to work the system and its power dynamics. The 'real world' is seen as very different from the protected world of children in families and is usually described in terms of harshness, competitiveness, aggression and clever networking to reach goals. Ragging is justified as a preparation for such a world, and students often ask whether they will be able to succeed in the real world without 'toughening up' through experiences such as ragging. Further the bonds forged through ragging are thought to carry into the real world and be useful resource for future success. Indeed, it is seen that many students who are ragged ascribe beneficial outcomes in terms of gaining confidence and making friends.

The socio-cultural domain described above is central to the idea that ragging reflects a failure to inculcate 'good' values. From the viewpoint presented here, ragging reflects a set of values actually prevalent in society. Educational institutions fail, despite lofty ideals, to provide an alternate reality where students observe and learn the values of non-hierarchical, mutually respectful relationships, critical thinking, non-violent conflict resolution, compassion and caring, respect for difference, fairness and so on. Indeed, the functioning of educational institutions may, in many instances, confirm a young person's worst apprehensions about how the world works.

Interventions in this domain amount to no less than efforts at social transformation and their impact on ragging practice will obviously be very gradual and indirect. Any move to bring educational institutions closer to stated ideals in practice and the evaluation of institutions in terms of criteria that reflect these ideals (in addition to the academic criteria) will be salutary.

## Institutional and Group Factors

Individuals' experience of society and culture is typically mediated by the social groups to which they belong and the social institutions with which they engage. In the case of ragging, the educational institution itself will obviously be a major factor. In addition, masculine gender and social attributes of class, caste, religion, region and language may also be factors to take into account.

1. The educational institution is a mini-community with its own culture, norms, rules, and social hierarchy. Social psychological research has shown that violence and abuse in institutions is partly the creation of the system that gives tacit acceptance to abusive practices by turning a blind eye, minimizing harm done or justifying the behaviour in some way. Institutions differ in that some have a history of serious ragging that is sustained and defended as a hallowed tradition. Because it is seen as a tradition, it enjoys tacit support of the authorities. The faculty and other authorities in an educational institution may also believe that ragging is actually healthy within limits and therefore promote it in the form of so-called 'interaction' or other event. The management's own beliefs about ragging thus determine the steps it takes or does not take to prevent ragging. Secondly, institutions are concerned about maintaining their reputation and this factor can become an obstacle in acknowledging that ragging occurs and in adopting anti-ragging measures. Thirdly, educational institutions differ in how effectively and efficiently they are run and this factor will affect all aspects of the institution including its efforts to curb ragging. Fourthly, there is an intergenerational power dynamic in the relations between students and faculty which invariably come into play when faculty/ management attempt to 'control' aspects of students' life including the practice of ragging. Sometimes the management fails to take steps to curb ragging for fear of antagonising some section of the student body that could cause trouble. Fifthly, the needs for affiliation (to belong, to be accepted, to have relationships) and dominance (to dominate, to have power, to be respected and feared) are as strong in the student community as elsewhere. The need to belong to the community makes juniors submit to ragging and seniors to feel they are maintaining a 'tradition' as well as preserving their own status. The impression that ragging is more prevalent in professional institutions such as medicine and engineering suggests another layer of complexity to issues of hierarchy. Where entry is secured through competitive exams or some other rigorous procedure, ragging may serve to neutralise the

potential challenge to the power accorded to seniority by juniors who have an ‘inflated’ sense of their worth. Also, as a rite of passage into institutions considered ‘elite’, successfully undergoing ragging marks a fresher as belonging to an ‘exclusive’ club and reinforces the ‘exclusivity’ of that institution.

2. Gender-related factors, particularly masculinity concerns, are significant in ragging practices. Many ragging practices have to do with repudiating femininity and asserting male selfhood as not-female (proving one is not a ‘sissy’ by enduring pain, beatings, having physical stamina), and maleness as an adult-man rather than boy-child (‘sexual’ ragging, mouthing ma-behen abuses<sup>3</sup>). Indeed ragging is far more prevalent among boys though girls also engage in ragging.

3. While diversity in the student population can enrich student life and help build a truly democratic and plural society, social background differences of caste, class, religion, region and language also contribute to the tendency for ‘Othering’ (treating a person or group as intrinsically different and alien) just as they do in wider society. Ragging can become a vehicle of ‘Othering’ groups that are in the minority or are traditionally stigmatised. This can happen by excluding members of such groups from ragging rituals on one hand, and on the other hand, by targeting them for ragging in ways that highlight their minority or stigmatised status.

The implications for intervention at this level will inevitably concern the attitude towards ragging among institutional authorities, and their implementation (or not) of measures to curb ragging. The recommendations of previous committees have dwelt at length on the kinds of measures to be adopted by institutions. A number of other interventions are possible such as mobilising ‘bystander’ students to be proactive in curbing ragging or having the student body take responsible ownership of student relations. Measures aimed at promoting appreciation of social difference and challenging discrimination and prejudice, as well as interrogation of gender-related beliefs and behaviour will also be useful.

---

<sup>3</sup> Common abuse involving sexuality of the victim’s mother or sister

## **SITUATIONAL FACTORS**

The situational factors are those operative in the actual situation that increase the likelihood of ragging occurring. In large part these situational factors ‘trigger’ ragging acts by removing the normal constraints against engaging in aggressive or offensive behaviour.

1. One set of factors weakens controls by neutralising the fear of being caught. Thus ragging most often happens at times and in locations where surveillance is likely to be absent or minimal.

2. Another set of factors lowers internal inhibitions. The use of alcohol is well-known as one such disinhibitor.

3. Internal inhibitions arising from an individual’s moral scruples are also weakened by intensified group pressures in the actual situation. The heightened emotional excitement and the de-individuation that accompanies the group immersion of the moment cause the internal moral radar to be overridden. Individual responsibility gives way to diffusion of responsibility in the group, and groupthink justifying ragging prevails. These factors contribute to a state of ‘moral disengagement’ allowing ragging to escalate sometimes to the point of injury and death. Under these conditions, escalation into even more brutal or offensive ragging behaviour may happen to punish a junior who resists or refuses to capitulate. Such escalation may also arise from a sadistic thrill when a junior is reduced to an abject state.

## **Chapter 2 Methodology**

---

As stated in the previous chapter, the issue of ragging has thus far not been subjected to any systematic study. Reports of the previous two committees were largely based on anecdotal evidence and media reports and observations were not supported by detailed empirical data. However, the findings of the two committees highlight critical social and psychological issues that are central to the problem of ragging and demand a deeper level of understanding. In order to answer the questions raised in the earlier chapter and to meet the objectives of the Supreme Court order, it is imperative to examine the issue through a well designed study and gather detailed and objective information in the form of both quantitative and qualitative data and subsequently analyse them in a methodical manner.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the study are drawn from the terms of reference of the committee constituted by the Supreme Court in its order of May 2009. The study aimed to identify:

- a) The reasons and circumstances underlying ragging behaviour.
- b) The psychological, academic and social impact of ragging on students.

The empirical data was to be used to generate:

- a) Recommendations addressing the problem of ragging.
- b) Preliminary thoughts regarding inter-linkages between educational ideals and standards, students' well-being and problems in educational institutions such as ragging, indiscipline and so on.

A supplementary study on bullying in schools was also conducted to explore the similarity and differences between bullying in schools and ragging in institutions of higher education since both involve systematic coercive or aggressive behaviour. This supplementary study, its

conceptual basis and its findings, are described in detail in Chapter 3 Part II entitled ‘Bullying in Six Urban Schools – A Supplementary Study’. The methodology of the bullying study is described separately towards the end of this chapter.

## **Method**

The study was an exploratory one using mixed methods. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. We were acutely aware that there was no study of this nature in India. We were also acutely aware that this was a sensitive area of exploration. Our purpose therefore was to obtain preliminary quantitative information on prevalence as well as to obtain some idea of the context and dimensions of the problem, its variation across the country and in specific educational sectors.

An initial two-day workshop was held during which faculty of colleges, principals of schools and colleges, members of NGOs working directly or indirectly with ragging issues had fruitful discussions. Once it was determined that it would be useful to conduct a study, further workshops were held with the committee and the research team so as to refine the conceptual and methodological bases of the study. Since the administrative home of the study was to be the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, ethical clearance was sought and granted by its Institutional Ethics Review Board.

### **College Sampling**

The first step in college selection was examination of a comprehensive disaggregated database of around eight hundred ragging cases reported in the media in the thirteen years period, between 1998 and 2011 (from CURE’ annual reports as well as through internet search). This helped to identify courses, regions, demographic groups and colleges where ragging seemed to be more prevalent apart from helping in the preparation of the Survey Schedule. The complaints made on the recently established anti-ragging helpline and the logs of the complaints available on the Aman Movement website (<http://www.amanmovement.org>) were also examined.

Based on the above, a list of colleges to be covered for data collection was compiled. The list was determined by purposive sampling based on factors such as region, state, urban/peri-urban location, year of establishment, public funded or privately managed, courses taught, diversity of students, and so on. Three colleges were also selected for their best practices in successfully curbing ragging. We aimed for maximum diversity and balanced representation of different variables viz. gender, region, type of courses and type of management (government or private), so that the data is indicative of the different dimensions of the problem. Since the sampling is purposive, it may not be entirely representative. Hence the findings may be generalised with caution and with attention to contextual factors.

The above list was further modified due to logistical issues and denial of permission for data collection by the head of the institution as they were apprehensive about their institution participating in this study. Ultimately, 37 colleges/universities participated in the study. Their details are presented in the following tables.

**Table No. 2.1: Zone-wise distribution of colleges**

<b>North</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>West</b>
13	10	6	8

The colleges were from all the regions of India. More colleges were selected from the North and the South for two reasons: a higher reported prevalence of ragging in the North and a higher density of professional colleges in the South.

**Table No. 2.2: State-wise distribution of colleges**

<b>Haryana</b>	2	<b>Uttar Pradesh</b>	6	<b>Telangana</b>	3	<b>Rajasthan</b>	2
<b>Punjab</b>	2	<b>Karnataka</b>	2	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>	3	<b>West Bengal</b>	4
<b>Delhi</b>	3	<b>Kerala</b>	2	<b>Maharashtra</b>	6	<b>Orissa</b>	2

Higher numbers of colleges were selected from Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra as these are large states and also have higher number of colleges and higher prevalence of ragging than other states in their respective zones.

**Table No. 2.3: Distribution of colleges on type of course**

<b>Medical Colleges</b>	9	<b>Polytechnic</b>	1
<b>Engineering Colleges</b>	11	<b>Hotel Management</b>	1
<b>Universities/ Degree Colleges</b>	9	<b>Veterinary College</b>	1
<b>Law</b>	2	<b>Nursing College</b>	1
<b>Ayurveda College</b>	1	<b>MCA</b>	1

More colleges were purposefully selected that offered medical and engineering degrees, while also obtaining representation from other colleges.

The research team provided undertakings to the Institutional Ethics Review Board (IERB) of the Jawaharlal Nehru University and the individual colleges/universities and Schools that have participated in the study that the identities of the participating institutions will not be revealed in the report. Therefore college codes were devised that kept the identity of the colleges hidden, while revealing some fundamental aspects (region, state, nature of course and government or private) about them. Further details of the coding are available in Appendix I.

### **Tools Used & Data Sources**

The primary source of quantitative data was a survey. Qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions and individual interviews with students and teachers. Examination of the cases registered by the Anti-Ragging Helpline was a further source of data.

### **Survey**

A Survey Schedule was devised based on the objectives of the study, review of literature and of past incidents of ragging, and possible psychosocial factors. The content areas covered included demographic data, student expectations and experience of college life on entry, institutional arrangements for new entrants and for student wellbeing, student experience and opinion about ragging, student experience of discrimination on campus and so on. Two open ended questions were included in the Schedule asking students their opinion on ragging and their suggestions to curb the practice. The Schedule for first year students consisted of 32

questions whereas there were an additional 11 questions for senior students. Senior students were asked additional questions regarding perpetrating or witnessing ragging and the pressures they faced to participate in ragging. The language used was kept simple and the schedule was available both in Hindi and English. The Survey Schedule is provided in Appendix II.

A total of 10,632 students from the 37 colleges chosen participated in the survey. Although these respondents were self-selected and may be considered a convenience sample, an effort was made by the research team to get a balanced representation of participants on the basis of batch year, gender, residence (hosteller or day-scholar) etc. Following are demographic details of the sample.

**Table No. 2.4: Gender distribution of sample**

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Female</b>	43.1%	4587
<b>Male</b>	53.9%	5731
<b>Did not answer</b>	3%	314
<b>Total</b>	100%	10632

Slightly more males than females responded to the survey although the research team comprised both males and females.

**Table No. 2.5: Caste distribution of sample**

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>OBC</b>	28.2%	3002
<b>SC</b>	11.1%	1180
<b>ST</b>	3.4%	357
<b>General</b>	53.5%	5683
<b>Did not answer</b>	3.9%	410
<b>Total</b>	100%	10632

The caste composition of the sample indicates that we have captured the diversity of castes as are reflected in the education institutions in the country.

**Table No.2.6: Place of residence**

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Hosteller</b>	50.2%	5339
<b>Day-scholar</b>	41.6%	4426
<b>Did not answer</b>	8.2%	867
<b>Total</b>	100%	10632

Possibly because we selected more professional colleges, our sample comprises a larger number of hostellers that could be expected.

**Table No. 2.7: Batch-wise distribution of sample**

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Year</b>	50.1%	5327
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Year</b>	30%	3185
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> &amp; 4<sup>th</sup> Year</b>	17.1%	1821
<b>Did not answer</b>	2.8%	299
<b>Total</b>	100%	10632

As the data in the table indicate, about half the sample comprised freshers, with a fair distribution of seniors also.

**Table No. 2.8: Zone-wise distribution of sample**

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>North</b>	34.9%	3706
<b>South</b>	22%	2344
<b>East</b>	20.1%	2137
<b>West</b>	21.6%	2293
<b>Did not answer</b>	1.4%	152
<b>Total</b>	100%	10632

As reflected in the number of colleges, the sample was slightly larger from the North than the others.

## **Qualitative data**

Individual interviews with students, with teachers/staff, and with complainants registered on the anti-Ragging Helpline, and focus group discussion with students constituted the main sources of qualitative data.

### **(i) Student Interviews**

A total of 187 interviews were conducted with students of which 131 were male and 56 were female. The interviews were conducted with those students who volunteered to be interviewed in confidence after completing the survey. 61 interviewees were from 1<sup>st</sup> year, 78 from 2<sup>nd</sup> year and 34 students were from 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years. The average duration of each interview was 20 minutes. An indicative list for the interviews (Appendix III) was used to guide the interview, covering content themes related to their initial adjustment in college, institutional resources, reasons for ragging, students' social relationships, issues of 'Othering', personal encounters with ragging, impact of ragging and psychosocial contextual factors involved in ragging.

In the initial phase of the field visit, the research team conducted face to face interviews with students. However, on realising that many students were not comfortable with this and that volunteers were few, the option of telephone interviews was offered. This was accepted readily by many students.

### **(ii) Teacher/Staff Interviews**

A total of 81 interviews with teachers, wardens, deans, heads of departments, college directors and student counsellors were conducted. The average duration of the interviews was 20 minutes and all the interviews were conducted face to face. The interviews were based on an indicative list (Appendix IV) that enquired about the student welfare provisions, views on ragging and anti-ragging measures in college, vision of education, discipline and so on. Informed consent was obtained before recording the interview. Though most of the interviews were audio-recorded, in cases where the interviewees were not comfortable with the recording, detailed notes were kept.

### **(iii) Focus group discussions (FGDs) with students**

A total of 17 FGDs were conducted with students. Each FGD comprised of 10-25 participants and the average duration of the FGDs was 35 minutes. Before starting every FGD, informed consent was obtained from the participants. The discussion was facilitated based on an indicative list of content themes to be covered in the discussion (Appendix V). These included causes of ragging, circumstances under which ragging takes place, its psychological impact as well as impact of ragging on education. Summaries of the FGDs were made and relevant findings used in the discussion of the results.

### **(iv) Interviews with complainants on Anti-ragging Helpline**

The Aman Movement<sup>4</sup> website has a portal that gives a brief note of the complaints made on the anti-ragging helpline along with the contact details of the complainants and the follow-up action taken on these complaints. The research team went through these complaints and short-listed cases on basis of severity and complexity of issues involved. Complainants were contacted for telephonic interviews. A total of 16 interviews were conducted and recorded on phone with the informed consent of the complainants. The interviews were later summarised and relevant parts have been used in the discussion of the findings.

### **v) Institutional history for best practices**

Interviews with faculty, students and administrative staff were conducted to develop a history of one institution so as to determine best practices in the context of curbing problems such as ragging. This is presented in Appendix VI.

---

<sup>4</sup>The Aman Movement comprises the initiatives against ragging taken by Prof. Raj Kachroo, whose son, Aman Kachroo was killed in a ragging incident in a medical college in 2009. The Aman Movement currently collaborates with the UGC's anti-ragging cell and monitors the UGC's anti-ragging activities; it also runs a help line.

## **Data Collection**

The research was carried out by a team comprising four Project Associates under the direct supervision of a Consultant. The committee members were also directly involved in overseeing and guiding the research process. The project associates were all post-graduates in the social sciences who had some experience in conducting research.

In the preparatory phase, the study team held an intense series of workshops to discuss the project, the conceptualisation of the problem, understanding the psychosocial determinants of ragging and the ethical issues that might emerge. A workshop was also held to discuss qualitative research methods, and the conduct of interviews, case studies and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The research team was also oriented to institutional history taking.

The survey schedule and indicative lists for interviews and FGDs were finalised at a workshop before being field tested. A pilot study to test the instruments with college students was done in Delhi-NCR and Bangalore in the months of January & February, 2013. This not only gave valuable experience to the research team and prepared them well for field visits but also helped make necessary modifications in research tools. The actual data collection in colleges was done in two phases: (i) February – May 2013 (ii) August – October 2013.

The research subjects were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point if they felt uncomfortable. Informed written consent was obtained from all the study participants.

The research team involved in data collection maintained notes of their varied experiences and observations in the course of data collection. These were additionally useful in understanding the findings.

Collecting data on ragging and bullying from colleges and schools was a big challenge. First, the fact that ragging was a criminal offense made teachers/staff cautious in expressing their honest views on the subject and also for students to admit to participating in ragging. In quite a few interviews, the participants gave socially desirable answers and not their honest

opinions. However, in some interviews when the recorder was switched off and the interview was over, participants gave different answers. These answers were noted in the field notes by the research team.

Secondly, the research team had to make substantial and repeated efforts to obtain necessary permissions from the participating institutions. Although in most of the colleges we visited, the college authorities after initial reluctance co-operated with the research team for data collection, a few institutions, including a deemed university in Maharashtra, refused to give approval despite the assurance by the research team that the study is anonymous and the project is mandated by the Supreme Court. At the same time, there were quite a few colleges and universities that showed keen interest in participating in the study and made adjustments in their regular college activities so as to facilitate maximum participation of students in the research.

Thirdly, the field visit schedules had to be changed several times so as to align with the academic calendars of different educational institutions to avoid the dates for examination, vacation and co-curricular activities. Despite several hurdles, the research team managed to obtain sizable and meaningful data for this research project. Subsequently, data was coded and subjected to statistical analysis.

## **Data Analysis**

### **(i) Analysis of Quantitative Data**

The survey schedules for both ragging and bullying were sent to the National Institute of Mental Health And Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) in Bangalore where the information given in the schedules were appropriately coded and entered into an excel sheet. Later the analysis of the data was done using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software. Simple percentages were calculated to analyse the survey results. We also disaggregated data on basis of gender, place of residence, batch year, type of study (professional or degree) to determine the relationship of ragging with different demographic variables. Percentages calculated for any variable is based on the total value of that variable and not on the total

sample. For eg. 65 per cent female for any result means 65 per cent female students out of the total female students who participated in the study. In our results we have also shown top five or top seven colleges with highest values to highlight the co- relationship between different dimensions of ragging and the college ecosystem. In other words, we are dealing here with complex associations, many of which are inter-related. We do not, therefore, claim here the certitude of causation.

## **(ii) Analysis of Qualitative Data**

(a) Students' Interviews (Ragging): Twenty students' interviews were selected based on region, nature of course, year of study as well as the richness of data. These interviews, which were audio-taped, were transcribed and subject to thematic analysis so as to extract relevant themes. All 187 students' interviews were then examined to note the frequency of theme occurrence. The themes extracted from twenty student interviews are presented in Annexure VII.

(b) Teachers' Interview (Ragging): Twelve audio-taped teacher/staff interviews from different regions and from different categories of colleges were transcribed and analysed to extract themes. The final analysis of all 81 Teachers' interviews was done on the basis of the frequency of these themes. The themes extracted from twelve teachers interviews is presented in Annexure VIII.

## **(iii) Limitation of data analysis and statistical analysis**

We would like to emphasise that we do not claim that the data is representative of the educational landscape in India. The vast amount of data that we have obtained however does give us an indication of the prevalence of ragging in different education institutions and their variations over space, type of educational institution and other social determinants. The rich qualitative data also indicates the complex nature of the phenomenon, and how it is inter-related to a complex set of factors.

## **Bullying in Schools – A Supplementary Study**

Six urban schools were selected for the study on bullying, four in Bengaluru and two in Delhi. Of these, two were government schools and four were private schools. The bullying data was collected between November 2013 and February 2014. Students and teachers completed a survey schedule separately devised for each of these groups.

A total of 1453 students from these six schools were administered a Survey Schedule on bullying (Appendix IX). It was deliberately kept simple and contained questions on students' activities and experience in school, their relationship with their classmates, the kinds of discrimination they face, their involvement in bullying or aggressive behaviour and their experience of being bullied by others.

Following are the demographic details of the student respondents.

**Table No. 2.9: Distribution of sample by zone**

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>North</b>	45.7%	664
<b>South</b>	54.3%	789
<b>Total</b>	100%	1453

Since four schools were selected in Bengaluru and two in Delhi, our sample comprises a larger proportion from the South.

**Table No. 2.10: Type of school**

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Government</b>	37.8%	549
<b>Private</b>	62.2%	904
<b>Total</b>	100%	1453

We purposively selected a larger number of private schools and this too is reflected in the study sample.

**Table No. 2.11: Gender**

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Female</b>	41.8%	608
<b>Male</b>	57.2%	831
<b>Did not answer</b>	1%	14
<b>Total</b>	100%	1453

Our sample had a higher proportion of males than females since more males than females responded to the survey. The respondents were self-selected though research team made efforts to get a balanced participation of respondents on basis of gender.

**Table No. 2.12: Distribution of sample by grade**

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	0.1%	1
<b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	14.4%	209
<b>10<sup>th</sup></b>	33.8%	491
<b>11<sup>th</sup></b>	29.1%	423
<b>12<sup>th</sup></b>	18.4%	268
<b>Did not answer</b>	4.2%	61
<b>Total</b>	100%	1453

The majority of respondents were from the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades.

A bullying survey was conducted with 83 teachers from the six participating schools. The schedule (Appendix X) contained 19 questions which had open-ended and choice based answers. Teachers were primarily asked questions to gauge their understanding of bullying, their sensitivity to the issue, about the problem in their school, their personal encounter with bullying and how it could be curbed in schools. Survey answers were later coded for analysis of results.

### **Ethical Issues**

Given the sensitive nature of the subject, we followed all ethical procedures to allay fear among the participants as well as among the heads of the participating institutions. The research team, before administering the schedule, would explain to the participants the

purpose of the research and also clarified any doubts participants had and also assured them of anonymity. Students were explained in detail that their participation was completely anonymous and voluntary and were assured that neither their personal identity nor the identity of their college would be revealed. They were given a separate consent form with a brief description of the study. Similarly, institution heads were assured of absolute anonymity of their institution's participation and a written approval was taken from them before carrying out data collection in their institutions.

The research project was formally approved by the Institutional Ethics Review Board (IERB) of Jawaharlal Nehru University where all the research tools and informed consent forms were submitted before the committee for scrutiny and a detailed presentation on the research study was made by Prof. Mohan Rao. An undertaking was given to the committee that the raw data will not be released and that complete anonymity of the participating institutions and the participants will be maintained. Throughout the field work and during the analysis of the data, the research team maintained complete confidentiality and followed responsible research practice. In order to ensure anonymity of the institutions that participated in this research we have assigned different codes to colleges/universities with which they will be referred to in subsequent chapters. The UGC archives all the survey forms.

## **Chapter 3: Results and Analysis**

---

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part I presents the results and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data obtained from interviews with students and teachers, focus group discussions and a survey schedule administered on 10,632 students in 37 colleges across India. Part I of the chapter has four subsections:

a) Prevalence and Practices

The next three subsections roughly correspond to the first three ToRs of the Supreme Court order:

b) Psychological impact of ragging on students (ToR 1).

c) Reasons and circumstances under which students resort to ragging in colleges (ToR 2).

d) Institution-wise analysis and educational standards (ToR 3).

Part II of the chapter discusses the findings of the bullying survey of 1453 students from six schools in two cities.

### **PART I**

#### **Prevalence and Practices**

In order to ascertain the reasons and circumstances for ragging, what psychological impact it has on students and how it affects the standard of education, it is essential to understand the extent of the problem and the different acts and behaviours done in the name of ragging. The main findings in this section are:

a) Ragging continues to be widely prevalent with almost 40 per cent of the sample saying they were ragged in some form.

b) Institutions vary greatly in the prevalence of ragging indicating that factors particular to individual institutions - their unique psychosocial ecosystem - play an important role in determining whether ragging happens.

c) Ragging is more prevalent among male students compared to female students, among hostellers compared to day-scholars, and among students in professional courses compared to other colleges.

d) In the perception of students, some mild forms of ragging are not categorized as ragging at all.

e) There is a range of practices subsumed under ragging. While some of these are related to the ostensible purpose of ragging as a mechanism fostering inclusion and belonging for newcomers, other practices seem to reflect the developmental concerns of youth around growing up, sexuality and manhood as well as the power dynamics of groups.

These findings are further discussed below.

In our survey we asked the students a direct question -whether they faced ragging or not and whether it was severe or mild in nature (Table 3.I.1). Students had to judge themselves what they considered to be ragging and whether it was mild or severe.

**Table No. 3.I.1: Prevalence & severity of ragging faced by the students**

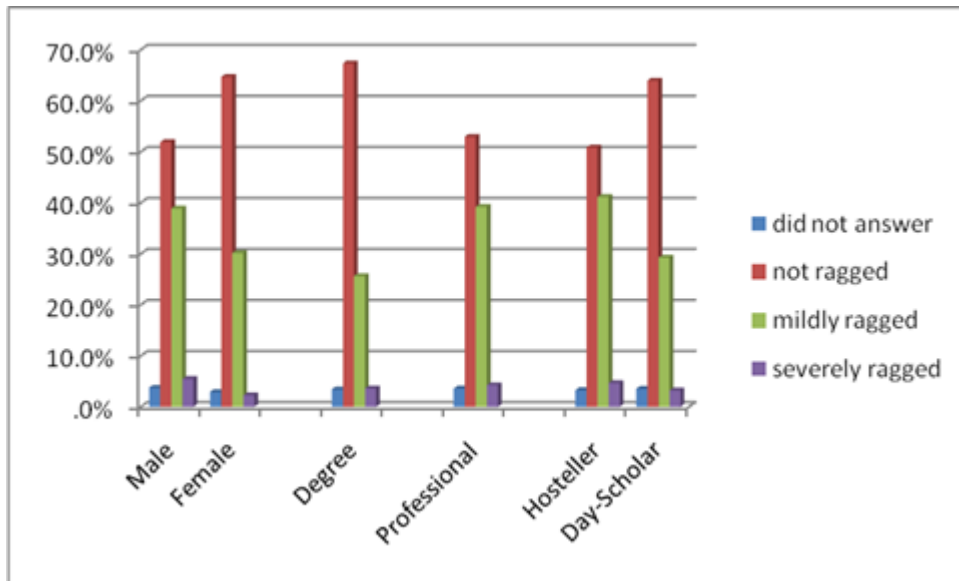
<b>Q. Were you ragged by your seniors in college?</b>			
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest value</b>
a	No	57.3%	NPuGV <sup>5</sup> (93.3%) STnPD (89.6%) WRjGE (85.7%) NUpGD2 (82.8%) STgGD (80.9%)
b	Mildly ragged	35.1%	NUpGM1 (69.8%) NUpGM2 (66.7%) SKIPE (58.4%) STnGM (58.1%) STnGL (53.2%)
c	Severely ragged	4.1%	STnGL (12.1%) SKIPE (9.8%) EWbPE (9%) NUpGD1 (8.3%)
d	Did not answer	3.6%	--

<sup>5</sup> This represents a college code. Alphabets in a code represent region, state, type of management and type of course of a college in the following order: Region → State → Government/Private → Type of Course. For eg. Code NPuGV denote: A college in North India (N), in Punjab state (Pu), managed by the government (G) and teaching veterinary course (V). A detailed description of college coding is given in annexure I.

Analysis of the overall data reveals that almost 40 per cent students admitted to having gone through some kind of ragging- 35.1 per cent students faced mild ragging and 4.1 per cent students were subjected to severe ragging. However, college-wise analysis shows significant variations in these values. More than 70 per cent students from the two government run medical colleges in UP reported that they faced mild or severe ragging in their college thus highlighting a high prevalence of ragging in these two institutions. For severe ragging, the highest percentages were reported from a government run law college in Tamil Nadu and a private engineering college in Kerala. On the other hand, almost 90 per cent of students from a government run veterinary college in Punjab and a private degree college in Tamil Nadu did not face any ragging in their colleges. Interestingly, a government run degree college in Telangana reported relatively higher percentages both for 'no ragging' as well as for 'severe ragging' thus indicating that there may be a small group of seniors bullying juniors under the garb of ragging. On a closer analysis of data of all the institutions, it was noted that several institutions that have reported high percentages for mild ragging have also reported high values for severe ragging thereby suggesting that not only the prevalence of ragging is high in these institutions but some students get singled out and are severely ragged as well.

More importantly, from the above table, the college-wise analysis reveals a marked variation in the prevalence of ragging among colleges thus pointing to the role of institutional factors rather than individual factors in determining the occurrence of ragging. These institutional factors could include, whether faculty tacitly approves of ragging, whether the institution is seen to take a firm stand against ragging, or whether the institution has a tradition of ragging which is upheld by successive batches of students and ignored by the college administration and faculty members.

**Figure 3.I.1: Distribution of severity of ragging faced by students on basis of gender, type of course and place of residence**



### Gender and Prevalence of Ragging

On analysing the data gender-wise we find that male students reported higher percentages than female students for both mild and severe ragging. However it must be noted that ragging among girls is largely verbal and emotional in nature and thus often goes unrecognised and unreported.

Ragging serves as a ritual of coming of age, and signals to both the ragger and the victim a rite in the shaping of masculinities. In that context, physical ragging among boys becomes a test of physical endurance and a way to prove their manhood. It is therefore commonly seen that male students who cannot bear ragging are considered ‘weak’ or ‘effeminate’. For the same reason, male students with physical characteristics not considered masculine enough are ridiculed and targeted more during ragging.

In our FGD with students in a government- run engineering college in Karnataka, the students gave further insight into why ragging is more prevalent among boys than girls. They said that stricter action is taken if ragging occurs among girls as girls cannot endure ragging as much as boys do. They also believed that men are tougher and ragging is good for them. A student said: “As conception ragging is good for guys, for girls the attitude from an external

point of view is completely different”. They also mentioned that there is stiff competition among boys to secure students’ union position which in a way not only forces juniors to interact with their seniors but also comply with their requests thus making them vulnerable to ragging. A similar opinion was echoed in our FGD in a government run engineering college in Delhi.

### **Place of Residence and Prevalence of Ragging**

Higher percentage of hostellers than day-scholars and students from professional courses than degree courses reported facing mild and severe ragging. In a few FGDs, students said that day-scholars are not ragged much and ragging is mainly done in hostels after the dining hours. In an FGD at a private engineering college in Rajasthan, we were told that girl students do not have separate hostels for juniors and seniors as a result of which they face ragging. High prevalence of ragging in hostels is mainly on account of the fact that hostel space provides a sense of secrecy and opportunity to seniors to rag freshers. Moreover, seniors staying in hostel consider themselves as ‘guardians’ of the place and any newcomer seeking accommodation in it has to undergo initiation ritual before being accepted by the hostel community. Factors such as hierarchy, groupism, lack of surveillance and other inhibitory controls, which influence the occurrence of ragging in general, become more profound in the hostel ecosystem thus exacerbating the prevalence and severity of ragging.

### **Type of Course and Prevalence of Ragging**

**Table No.3.I.2: Course-wise prevalence and severity of ragging**

<b>Q. Were you ragged by your seniors in college?</b>				
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Medical</b>	<b>Engineering</b>	<b>Others</b>
a.	No	47.8%	52.8%	67.0%
b.	Mildly	44.5%	39.9%	25.2%
c.	Severely	3.8%	4.6%	3.6%
d.	Did not answer	3.6%	3.0%	3.9%

On further analysing the data course-wise into medical, engineering and other courses, we find that medical (48.3 per cent) and engineering courses (44.5 per cent) have a higher prevalence of ragging than other courses (around 28.8 per cent).

Professional courses, especially engineering and medical are highly competitive for obtaining admission into and are seen as prestigious from a career perspective and students pursuing them have a sense of pride. Professional institutions, especially elite ones, therefore have an investment in maintaining exclusive status and so only those who have gone through initiation ritual or have ‘earned’ their place by undergoing ragging are seen as truly belonging.

### Types of Ragging

**Table No. 3.I.3: Types of ragging faced by students**

<b>Q. What kind of ragging did you face?</b>			
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest values</b>
a	None	33.4%	STnPD (80.6%) NUpGL (66.7%) NPuGV (65.3%) NHrGP (62.5%)
b	Giving introduction to seniors	53.3%	NUpGM2 (90.2%) NUpGM1 (80.2%) EWbPE (77.1%) EOrPE (71.2%) WMhGM3 (70.6%) SKIGE (69.1%)
c	Wishing seniors and addressing them as Sir/Ma’am	32.5%	NUpGM2 (78.2%) NUpGM1 (75.1%) WMhGM3 (61%) NPuGM (59.1%) STnGM (58.9%) WMhGA (56.0%)
d	Following a dress code	23.5%	NUpGM2 (80.5%) EWbPE (56.2%) EOrPE (51.9%) WMhGM1 (48.8%) STnGM (45.8%)
e	Singing and dancing	24.2%	STnGM (59.7%) NUpGM1 (48%) SKIGE (47%)

			WMhGA (44%) SKrGE (43.9%)
f	Approaching opposite sex on some pretext e.g. proposal	8.8%	STnGM (24.1%) WMhGM3 (23%) EOrPE (20.6%) SKIPE (18%)
g	Drinking and smoking	3.0%	EWbPE (10.8%) SKrGE (8.5%) WMhGM2 (8%)
h	Doing assignments for seniors	13.3%	NUpGM2 (58.6%) SKrGE (39.3%) SKIGE (35.6%) EWbPE (33.7%) NUpGM1 (32.7%)
i	Spending/giving money to seniors	3.1%	SKIPE (21.3%) SKIGE (8.7%) STnGL (6.5%)
j	Physical ragging (beating, physical punishments, etc.)	4.2%	NUpGM2 (17.2%) SKrGE (14.3%) WMhGM2 (14%) STnGM (12.3%) NUpGM1 (11.7%) EWbPE (11.3%)
k	Using bad language/words	10.8%	NUpGM1 (32.4%) SKrGE (30.2%) EWbPE (25.8%) NUpGM2 (21.3%)
l	Sexual ragging	1.4%	SKrGE (5.8%) WMhGM2 (4%) STnGM (3.6%)
m	Other	0.9%	--
n	Did not answer	6%	-

On examining the kind of ragging practices prevalent, we find 33.4 per cent responses show that students did not face any ragging (Table No. 3.I.3) whereas, if we look at the findings from Table No. 3.I.1 we note that almost 60 per cent said that they had not faced ragging. Comparative analysis of the two tables suggests that many mild ragging practices like introduction, singing and dancing, etc. are perhaps not categorised as ragging by many students.

Examining the variety of ragging practices, it is noted that they differ in prevalence. It is likely that these different forms of ragging that also vary in severity have different motives or causal factors behind them. Ragging practices such as giving introduction to seniors, addressing seniors as Sir/Ma'am, following a dress code and singing and dancing that are considered milder in form are primarily associated with introducing the newcomer into the system and its norms and finding acceptance and belonging by the local community. Other practices like being made to approach the opposite sex, using abusive words and drinking and smoking suggest other motives such as breaking taboos, being 'grown up', being 'manly' which have developmental relevance to this age group. Physical beating/exercises as a ragging practice may serve to test physical endurance and thus 'manliness', but is also used to punish, intimidate, and humiliate freshers into submission and to reinforce the seniors' power. The important point is that while ragging is ostensibly for the purpose of fostering the inclusion and belonging of newcomers into the student community, in practice other motives relevant to the age group and to the power dynamics within groups also come into play.

### **Introduction & Mild ragging**

Introduction and other milder forms of ragging may seem innocuous to most of us; however, in several cases, ragging involving 'harmless introduction' have led to violent group clashes. It is also noted that students who do not participate in milder forms of ragging not only face exclusion from peers but are considered weak as well and undergo psychological trauma. Complaints are often not taken seriously and the victim is blamed for overreacting in the matter. Feelings of shame and self-blame prevents students from sharing such incidents. As a result, the perception of ragging by the common people is that it only includes physical harm and we seldom hear about the psychological trauma that a victim of ragging endures. Thus these acts of humiliation, embarrassment, exploitation, harassment caused during 'mild ragging' are not considered ragging by many.

Our qualitative data illustrate how traumatic this so-called 'mild ragging' could become sometimes. In one FGD, students talked about the tradition of giving introductions to the seniors in their hostel in which juniors have to cram up a pre-given format and introduce themselves in pure Hindi without any mistake at one go. If they make even a single mistake they are asked to repeat it again and again until they get it right. One student pointed out that anyone who feels that they do not want to accept this culture gets excluded from the peer

group as well as from the extra-curricular activities. In an FGD in a government engineering college in Delhi, we were told that verbal ragging takes place in hostels through meetings called after dinner. Though the authorities ban these meetings, after the routine checking hours these meetings are called almost on a daily basis and go on till 1 or 2 am in the early morning. If any fresher does not attend voluntarily, he is dragged and pulled out of the room and abused in front of the entire hostel.

### **Severe Ragging**

For more severe forms of ragging like forcing a victim to drink and smoke, physical ragging (beating, physical punishments, etc.) and sexual ragging, responses in the survey ranged from one per cent to ten per cent. Further, the two government run medical colleges in UP, a government dental college in Maharashtra, a government medical college in Tamil Nadu and a government engineering college in Karnataka feature repeatedly in the list of colleges with highest values both for mild and severe forms of ragging thus indicating that not only is ragging rampant in these colleges, but also that a few students get singled out and are ragged severely.

In a medical college in Tamil Nadu, the research team came to know of instances in the past in which juniors were beaten up not just in hostel but also in public places like the railway station. Juniors reported that ‘super seniors’, i.e. those who had passed out of college, would beat their juniors if they did not rag the freshers. Here juniors are also made to book train tickets for the seniors, paying for it themselves. Students from a government engineering college in Karnataka talked about their ragging that ranged from trivial tasks such as doing assignments for seniors to severe ragging in which fresher is blindfolded and slapped and juniors who are judged to be fat are made to do sit-ups, etc.

### **Drinking and Smoking**

Analysis of qualitative data and media cases show that in a large number of ragging incidents, juniors are forced to smoke and drink and, in some cases, even consume drugs such as marijuana. Several students are forcibly introduced to smoking and drinking by their seniors as a part of the ragging ritual. One of the complainants on the UGC helpline told us that one night seniors barged into his hostel room locked it from inside and forced him to drink beer.

When he refused, he was severely beaten by the seniors. After the incident, he tried to complain, but the college administration did not take his complaint seriously. Similarly, in the media, several such cases of ragging involving substance abuse have been reported in the past.

From *The Telegraph*, Sep 2011,<sup>6</sup>

*“After a freshers’ welcome party last night, some second-year students came to my dormitory and ordered me to smoke an entire pack of cigarettes. I started feeling sick after puffing two and pleaded that I could not smoke any more. They then ordered me to drink alcohol,” the victim said. “They kicked and punched me and forced me to sniff some powder off a piece of paper while one of the seniors held a lighted matchstick below it. I suspect it was some kind of drug. I managed to break free and ran out of the hostel. Outside, I met two of my batch-mates who too had been ragged.” The victim alleged the seniors had been ragging him since the session started. “They forced me to climb the college stairs on my knees. They made me run in the rain one day and then forced me to sit under a fan for hours.”*

From *India Today*, Sep 2011,<sup>7</sup>

*“I was staying in the room of one of my classmates who lives in a private hostel. They chased me out in the night, took me to a lonely place and forced me to undress and drink liquor till I fell unconscious. When I regained consciousness, they repeated the act. They also hit me with belts. One of them was carrying a revolver,” the victim told the police. “When I said I would register a complaint against them, they again thrashed me and asked me to leave the city immediately”, he added.*

### **Physical Ragging**

In our survey, a higher percentage of physical ragging involving physical punishment, beating, etc. was reported from medical and engineering colleges. However, these incidents often go unnoticed or are suppressed and we get to hear about them only when they reach

---

<sup>6</sup>[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1110911/jsp/bengal/story\\_14493036.jsp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1110911/jsp/bengal/story_14493036.jsp)

<sup>7</sup><http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/uttar-pradesh-students-booked-for-ragging/1/151920.html>

physical extremes or when any student is seriously injured or commits suicide. A large number of ragging cases of serious physical injuries leading to hospitalisation, death or suicide of students have been reported in the media.

From *The Times Of India* -Sep, 2006<sup>8</sup>

*Akhilesh Shukla, a first-year medical student of the B.J. Medical College (BJMC) was admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) of the Sassoon Hospital here on Sunday after he was allegedly ragged by his seniors at the college hostel. He was reportedly forced to do sit-ups for an inordinately long time that left him exhausted. He was taken to the hospital where he was diagnosed as having a renal problem and had to undergo dialysis, sources said.*

**Table No. 3.I.4: Disaggregated data for types of ragging faced based on gender, type of course and place of residence**

Q. What kind of ragging did you face?							
		Gender		Type of study		Place of Residence	
		Male	Female	Degree	Professional	Hosteller	Day-Scholar
a	None	30.5%	37.7%	45.4%	31.5%	26.2%	41.4%
b	Giving introduction to seniors	56.0%	50.0%	47.1%	60.4%	62.7%	43.7%
c	Wishing seniors; addressing them as Sir/Ma'am	33.2%	31.4%	25.5%	38.4%	44.2%	20.7%
d	Following a dress code	26.0%	20.1%	14.2%	29.7%	31.6%	14.9%
e	Singing & dancing	25.7%	22.2%	18.4%	28.8%	31.6%	16.6%
f	Approaching opposite sex on some pretext e.g. proposal	11.3%	5.8%	4.9%	11.2%	11.3%	6.3%
g	Drinking and smoking	4.2%	1.5%	2.4%	3.5%	3.9%	2.0%
h	Doing assignments for seniors	16.6%	9.0%	4.0%	18.4%	18.8%	7.5%
i	Spending/giving money to seniors	3.8%	2.3%	1.3%	4.1%	3.4%	3.1%
j	Physical ragging (beating, physical punishments, etc.)	6.6%	1.3%	2.5%	5.4%	6.2%	2.1%
k	Using bad language/words	16.7%	3.3%	5.7%	14.0%	15.3%	6.1%
l	Sexual ragging	2.1%	.5%	.8%	1.8%	1.7%	1.0%

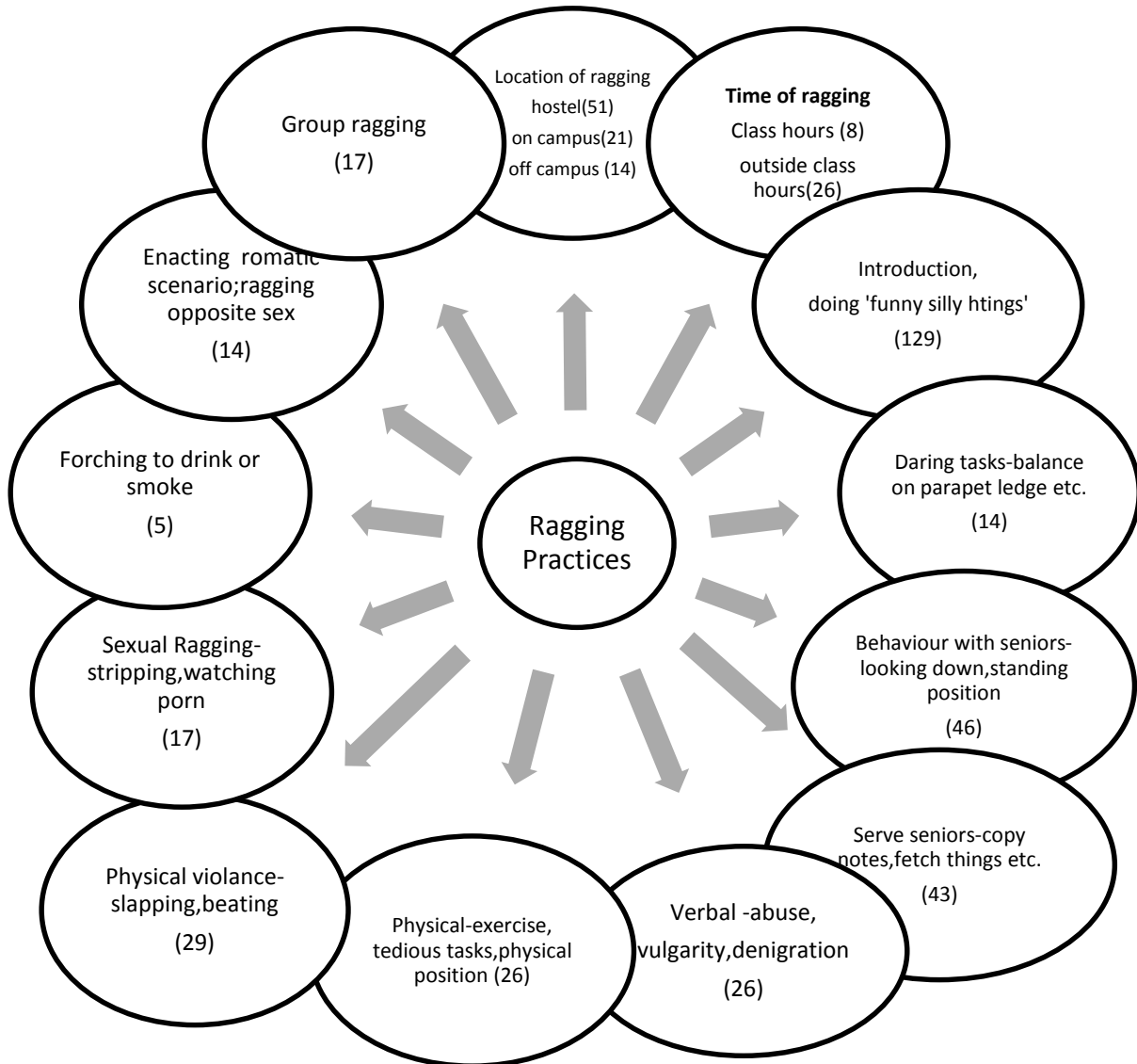
<sup>8</sup>[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2006-09-04/pune/27826585\\_1\\_ils-law-college-akhilesh-shukla-maharashtra-anti-ragging-act](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2006-09-04/pune/27826585_1_ils-law-college-akhilesh-shukla-maharashtra-anti-ragging-act)

In general, more males than females, hostellers than day-scholars and students enrolled in professional than degrees courses, face all kinds of ragging. Almost three times more males (4.5 per cent) as opposed to females (1.5 per cent) have faced ragging where they were asked to smoke and/or drink. Similar patterns can be seen in physical and sexual ragging where percentages for males are higher by four to six times than that of females. This gender gap is slightly small in milder forms of ragging like giving introductions, singing/dancing and following a dress code etc. A similar trend can be seen for type of course and place of residence wherein students in professional courses and hostellers face severe forms of ragging much more than those in degree courses and who are day scholars respectively (Table No. 3.I.4)

The above findings were reflected in our qualitative data as well. In our interaction with students at a private medical college in Karnataka, both juniors and seniors believed that ragging, and mainly physical ragging (with some amount of sexual ragging) existed predominantly among boys. They supported their claims with the argument that women are sensitive and more emotional than men and their ragging is limited to mere introduction and trivial tasks.

Research on hazing has suggested that hazing tends to vary on gender lines and gender gets magnified during hazing. According to studies, it has been shown that especially during adolescence, there is gender difference in forms of aggression, with boys being generally more aggressive than girls and girls are more indirectly aggressive than boys (Athanasziades & Deliyanni, 2010). A study on hazing has suggested that psychological hazing by girls was easier to hide. Further, the study noted that psychological hazing could be as dangerous as physical hazing because of the feelings of loneliness and isolation due to psychological hazing (Ellsworth, 2004). Similarly, it has been argued that higher prevalence of alcohol and smoking among boys during the initiation rituals is because they not only maintain solidarity of the group but also signify masculinity (Ellsworth, 2004).

### Ragging Practices (from interviews)



**Figure 3.I.2: The chart above presents the main themes that emerged from interviews with 187 students on questions pertaining to ragging practices. Figures in brackets denote the number of interviews in which that theme occurred.**

The qualitative data presented in fig. 3.I.2 substantiates the quantitative data and reveals the magnitude and the severity of the problem. The qualitative data, in addition, gives us an idea of the variety of forms ragging can take.

## Sexual Ragging

**Table No. 3.I.5: Sexual ragging in colleges**

<b>Q. Did you face any sexual ragging?</b>			
<b>S.No</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest value</b>
a)	Yes	4%	SKrGE (11.9%) STgGD (11%) SKlGE (8.1%) WMhGM3 (7.5%) WMhGM2 (7%) EWbGH (6.7%)
b)	No	96%	WRjGE (98%) WMhGD (96.8%) STgPN (98.2%) NDIGD2 (96.9%) NPuGM(96%) NPuGV (96%)
c)	Did not answer	3.7%	

Though in our overall data we find that only four per cent of the students admitted to having faced sexual ragging but on analysing the data institution-wise we find significant variations. Students from a government engineering college in Karnataka (11.9 per cent), government degree college in Telangana (11 per cent) and a government engineering college in Kerala (8.1 per cent) reported the highest percentages for sexual ragging.

**Table No. 3.I.6: Kind of sexual ragging**

<b>22b. What kind of sexual ragging did you face?</b>			
<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest value</b>
a)	Stripping	1.8%	STgPN (10.4%) STnGL (4.8%) NHrGD (4.5%) NUpGD1 (4%)
b)	Acting sexual scenes	2.5%	SKrGE (12.2%)

			NUpGM2 (6.3%) WMhGM3(5.9%) WMhGM2 (5%) STnGM (5.2%)
c)	Watching pornography	2.1%	SKIGE (6.6%) STnGL (6.5%) SKrGE (5.8%) WMhGM3(5.3%)
d)	Narrating stories with sexual content	2.4%	SKrGE (11.3%) SKIGE (6%) NUpGM1(5.9%) STnGM (5.5%)
e)	Being forced to masturbate	1.3%	STnGM (3.6%) NUpGM2 (2.9%) NUpGM1 (2.8%) NHrGP (2.2%)
f)	Sodomized	0.9%	NHrGP (5.7%) NUpGL (2.3%) NUpGD1 (1.9%) STgGD (1.7%) EWbGH (1.7%)
g)	Other	1.9%	-

On analysing the overall data for the kind of sexual ragging students faced, we find that mostly government run institutions teaching medical and engineering courses reported higher percentages than the mean value. High percentages of ragging involving different kinds of sexual abuse have been reported from a government medical college in Tamil Nadu, two medical colleges in UP, a government law college in Tamil Nadu and government engineering colleges in Kerala and Karnataka. The highest percentage of ragging, involving stripping, is reported from a private nursing college in Telangana (10.4 per cent). Most common forms of sexual ragging are asking students to enact sexual scenes or narrating stories with sexual content. However, 1.8 per cent students revealed that they were asked to strip, 1.3 per cent forced to masturbate and 0.9 per cent were sodomised.

In our interaction with the students we came across various other kinds of sexual ragging that are prevalent in different institutions. In a government medical college in Uttar Pradesh, the research team was told that the college has a tradition in which male freshers are required to blow condoms and throw them at female freshers or the female seniors they liked. This

practice is termed as 'Medical Introduction' and sometimes this happens even in the presence of faculty members. In a group discussion with the male students from a hotel management institute in West Bengal, students talked about a particular ragging tradition in the institute in which the freshers are instructed to always carry a condom with them. Here a condom is called as '7<sup>th</sup> essential' by the students- other essential items being knife, serving spoon, etc. which the students have to carry with them for their practical classes. This tradition of ragging is so well known both inside as well as outside the college that the students can go to the nearby chemist shops and buy the condom by just asking the shopkeeper to give them the '7<sup>th</sup> essential'.

In an interview with a complainant on UGC helpline, we were told about the sexual abuse the complainant and his classmates went through in the third year. He said a group of ten to fifteen fourth year seniors used to rag a whole batch of around fifty five students every night. This went on for about two months. He was asked to do 'Phantom Activity' in which he had to remove his clothes and wear the inside clothes out, i.e. to take out all of them and then wear the shirt and the pant first and then wear the inner clothes on top of them. The respondent said that when he refused to do so he was slapped.

From *The Times of India*- Aug, 05<sup>9</sup>

*The victims were forced to strip, dance and masturbate on mobile camera and then asked to parade to the girls' hostel. Old-timers and present hostel inmates recall the countless times they have been asked to enact copulation with a fellow student, the only difference with the present controversy being there were no phone cameras to capture their sense of horror and embarrassment. And they were usually fully-clothed, or at worst, shirtless. A French kiss with another guy is something almost all of them have been through. The mildest varieties of ragging are when a student is ordered to confront a female classmate with questions about her figure or the make of her undergarments. Speaking on conditions of anonymity, an ex-student, who had left in his second year said: "On my second or third day, I was made to stand with my face towards a wall, and asked to write my name on it with my*

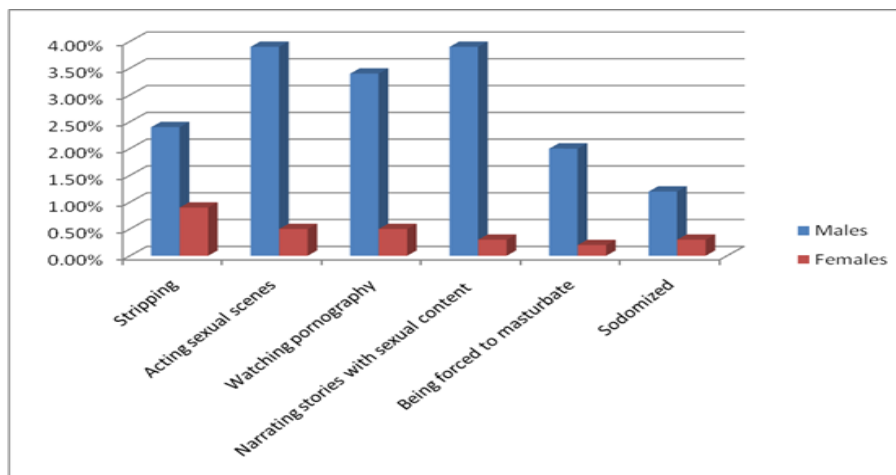
---

<sup>9</sup><http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Tibbia-terror-Just-the-tip-of-ragging-iceberg/articleshow/1193558.cms>

*urine. Unless fairly senior, one always has to watch out for homosexual assaults." The college principal, however, rubbishes the allegations. His explanation: "Now that something like this has happened, students are probably telling these stories to make (such incidents) sound commonplace and to hush the thing up."*

Another aspect that can be seen in ragging is rampant sexual harassment carried out in the name of ragging. In a degree college in Maharashtra, all the students who participated in the FGD had undergone ragging and girls mentioned ‘eve-teasing’ as part of their ragging experience. One girl narrated how she was asked to introduce herself 40 times in a month’s time and was then asked to pretend to be a girlfriend of a college bully for a year during her undergraduate years. The college bully was a six-year failure. The teachers normalized the process and told her that it happens everywhere.

**Figure 3.I.3: Gender-wise distribution of the kind of sexual ragging**



On gender-wise analysing the overall data for nature of sexual ragging, we find that male reported significantly higher percentages than females for all kinds of sexual ragging.

## **Ragging with Second and Third Year students**

It also came to our notice that since colleges have taken the initiative to protect the freshers and keep them away from the seniors, seniors now wait for the juniors to reach second or third year to rag them. One complainant on UGC helpline number told us that in the first year, professors used to protect the freshers and there was not much ragging but when he reached third year he had to undergo physical harassment by his seniors. He said that the seniors started beating them from the first day of their third year. He was picked on for not speaking to a senior properly and beaten up. Junior batch students could not look into the eyes of the seniors. If they did or did not wish the seniors appropriately, they were beaten up.

## **Conclusion**

Our survey and qualitative data clearly debunk the myth that ragging has ceased to exist or occurs rarely. In our survey, a large percentage (almost 40 per cent) of students admitted to having faced ragging. However, on further analysing the data college-wise, we find significant variations in responses. In some colleges, especially engineering and medical colleges, more than 60 per cent of students admitted to having faced ragging whereas in others such as a veterinary college in the North, a private degree college in the South, etc. almost 90 per cent of the students said they did not face any ragging. Thus the major finding that emerged from our survey was that the psychosocial ecosystem of an institution, including the attitude of the college authorities and staff towards ragging, among other factors, determines the prevalence of ragging in that institution.

Variations in responses were also seen on analysing the data on the basis of kind of course, gender, place of residence of students thus suggesting that these are critical factors in influencing not only the prevalence and severity of ragging, but also the kind of ragging practices.

Furthermore, for many students it was difficult to define ragging. They differentiated ragging into 'good ragging' and 'bad ragging'. On analysing the qualitative data, we find several

students consider it ragging only when it is physical or sexual and do not see harm in other forms of ragging. In fact, we noted many students favoured milder forms of ragging like introduction session, singing and dancing, dress code, wishing seniors sir/ma'am, etc. One student said: "Ragging should be stopped completely but there should be introduction session, singing, etc." Similar results were obtained in a National Study on Student Hazing in 2008 in the United States, where it was shown that 90 per cent of students who experienced hazing do not believe that they have been hazed (Allan & Madden, 2008). This suggests that some kind of normalisation has occurred among students towards milder forms of abuse and .they do not see any harm in it. On the other hand, they expect it as a part of their college life experience. This normalisation towards ragging could have occurred by hearing and seeing the elders and adults eulogising their experiences of ragging.

## **Psychological Impact of Ragging on students**

The psychological impact of ragging can be manifold. Research has shown that each of the parties involved in ragging (perpetrator, victim, families and institutions) can experience significant negative effects. Victims of ragging have been known to experience significantly elevated rates of such mental health problems as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and lower levels of self-worth when compared to students who are not ragged (Manani, 2014).

The major findings as discussed in this section are:

- a) The academic functioning of students who are ragged is affected adversely, with a quarter having difficulties in focusing or concentrating on their studies and more than a tenth reporting a fall in academic performance.
  
- b) The emotional and psychological experience of ragging is varied with a third of students saying they enjoyed it. About half said they felt bad initially but were alright later, while more than a tenth had significant negative experience that continues to evoke distress.
  
- c) While about a third of students said that ragging enabled them to form friendships with seniors, a similar proportion said that they did not like the seniors who had ragged them.
  
- d) The psychological impact of the experience of ragging is complex because it involves coping with the associated negative feelings in a way that neutralises them and also restores self-respect. Thus, some students may resort to retrospective justification finding benefits of the experience in the long term and they may also make friends with their tormentors.
  
- e) The negative feelings associated with ragging experience - shame, humiliation, anger and helplessness - are quite toxic and are implicated in mental health problems as well as in continuing cycles of violence.

## Impact of Ragging on Academic Performance

From the table (3.I.7) below, it can be observed that in the present survey, loss of focus/concentration acquired the highest number of responses (25.5 per cent), followed by missed classes, which was answered 'yes' by 17.8 per cent of the students in the sample. Other responses included statements like 'couldn't complete assignment on time' (14.7 per cent) and 'decrease in grades/performance' (12.3 per cent).

**Table No.3.I.7 Effect of ragging on academic performance**

<b>Q. Did ragging affect your studies in any of the following ways?</b>		
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Percentage of students who got impacted*</b>
a)	Loss of focus/concentration	25.5%
b)	Missed classes	17.8%
c)	Couldn't complete assignments on time	14.7%
d)	Decrease in Grades/performance	12.3%
e)	Others	5.5%

\*Calculations based on students who admitted to being mildly or severely ragged

Negative impact of ragging on academic performance was also reported in our qualitative data. A complainant on the anti-ragging helpline said that since he was ragged at various times of the day and not allowed to sleep at proper times, his academic performance suffered. The seniors in the hostels did not spare him at nights and he ended up sleeping during classes. Another caller complained of similar conditions and added that he felt angry for not being able to do anything about it as the juniors did not have the courage to face the seniors. In another case, a student fell extremely ill due to the stress caused by ragging. The severe ragging caused migraine, which could not be cured even by medication.

When disaggregating the data on the effect of ragging on academic performance into gender, place of residence and batch year, certain trends can be observed. It can be seen that generally, male students are affected by ragging more than female students. Similarly, among

hostellers, loss of concentration, missed classes, decreased performance occur far more than for day scholars. This could essentially be because severe ragging is prevalent more among boys than girls, hostellers than day-scholars. Similarly, freshers or first year batch students have reported higher values than senior batches (Table 3.I.8). This suggests that with the passage of time, normalisation towards ragging takes place and students begin to see the practice less negatively.

**Table No. 3.I.8: Disaggregated data on effect of ragging on academic performance\***

	Options	Gender		Place of Residence		Batch Year		
		Male	Female	Hosteller	Day-Scholar	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup>
a.	Loss of focus/concentration	28.2%	21.4%	28.7%	18.9%	28.9%	24.8%	19.3%
b.	Missed classes	20.9%	12.2%	18.7%	15.8%	19.1%	17.9%	14.5%
c.	Couldn't complete assignments on time	15.7%	12.8%	16.6%	11.6%	15.6%	15.3%	11.8%
d.	Decrease in Grades/performance	14.6%	8.3%	14.2%	9%	13.7%	11.7%	9.3%
e.	Others	5.8%	4.9%	6.9%	2.9%	4.5%	7.1%	5.2%

\*All calculations in the table are based on students who admitted to being mildly or severely ragged

Negative impact on academic performance has been reported in the case of hazing too. A study done at Alfred University in the United States found that 21 per cent of the students, who participated in the study, experienced a negative impact on academic performance due to the effects of hazing<sup>10</sup>. Another study on hazing at the military service academies stated that the 'fourth class indoctrination system' consumed so much of the freshman cadets' time that their academic performance suffered (Groah, 2005).

A similar trend can be observed in the case of bullying in schools where there is growing evidence that bullying has a profound and pervasive effect on the learning environment in a school. According to the US Department of Education, fear of being ridiculed, harassed and ostracized at school impairs the learner's learning ability (as cited in Mestry, Merwe & Squelch, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Retrieved from Alfred University website [http://www.alfred.edu/hs\\_hazing/docs/hazing\\_study.pdf](http://www.alfred.edu/hs_hazing/docs/hazing_study.pdf)

## Emotional Experience of Ragging for Students

**Table No. 3.I.9: Experience of ragging for students**

<b>Q. How was the experience of ragging for you?</b>		
<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage*</b>
a)	I enjoyed it	32.6%
b)	I felt bad initially but later felt it was alright	45.1%
c)	It made me feel ashamed and humiliated	8.6%
d)	It made me feel very angry	19.1%
e)	It made me feel helpless	12.1%
f)	It made me feel anxious	7.9%
g)	It still upsets me when I remember it	11.2%

\*Calculations based on students who admitted to being mildly or severely ragged

We also asked students about the emotional experience of being ragged. The noteworthy findings here are: a) that nearly a third of students reportedly enjoyed their ragging experience b) nearly half felt bad initially but later felt alright about the experience c) more than a tenth had significantly negative emotional experience that continued to evoke distress and d) emotions of shame, anger and helplessness characterised the negative experience of a sizable number of students.

The finding that 32.6 per cent enjoyed the experience may be related to having experienced mild forms of ragging that many students find enjoyable. The distinction between varied forms of ragging practices may be relevant here. It is found that practices like ragging across the world are similarly enjoyed by a substantial number of students. For instance, according to a study by Allan and Madden (2008), it was found that students cited positive outcomes of hazing more often than negative ones, and 95 per cent of the students who admitted to have

been hazed, did not consider it worthy to complain. Many of these students saw hazing as a part of campus culture and cited beneficial outcomes to justify their participation or expressed lack of awareness that what they experienced was hazing.

45.1 per cent students admitted to feeling bad initially, but later felt alright about the experience. This shows that there is a process of normalization so that the initial distress is transformed gradually into acceptance and even a positive attitude. In an FGD, students were found to rationalise ragging as inevitable saying: “Later, a person who is even one year older to you, you call ‘Sir’. This should not even be taken as part of ragging.” Thus ragging becomes an integral part of socialization into the campus culture and is rationalized as ‘part of college life’ or an important ‘milestone in the journey to adulthood or professional life’.

The justification of ragging as ultimately ‘beneficial’ is a common mechanism whereby the distress component of the experience is neutralised over time. This was seen in a focus group discussion at an engineering college in the South where seniors believed that expecting juniors to call seniors sir/madam should not impact an individual as it is a tradition of commanding respect. In fact, seniors believed that they have loads to offer as help to juniors during internship/career choices and ragging should in fact enhance a junior’s interactions/bond with the senior and feelings can be shared for the better and may make one more confident in his/her dealings in life. According to them, ragging would also force an introvert to get into a group and make comfortable exchanges with others.

However, a student at a government engineering college in the South drew attention to the differing sensitivities among students and said:

The whole point of not having ragging is that even for one instance not a single guy should be offended. One guy who is very sensitive and he is ragged that can be very serious. If 95 per cent take ragging, it doesn’t mean ragging is right.

Although the overall percentages for negative emotional responses to ragging seem small, the absolute numbers of students so afflicted run into thousands. Moreover, certain colleges have reported significantly higher values; perhaps the degree of coercion to participate even in mild ragging and sanctions for not participating are high in these colleges.

Our qualitative data give further insight into the kind of negative impact ragging has on students. A complainant at the anti-ragging helpline talked about students leaving college due to ragging or moving out of the hostel and described the initial two months as extremely painful. Another student from a government degree college in Maharashtra said: “Seniors start it as an introduction but they don’t realize when they cross the line and start humiliating the person. Though later ragging might seem like an ice-breaker but during that initial week, the victim slips into depression.”

The fact that ragging is associated with extremely negative experience is testified in numerous media reports of cases of injury and mental breakdown. For example, in 2009, a case was reported where the victim had gone into depression.

From *The Times of India*, Aug 2009<sup>11</sup>

*"I was not allowed to sit from 5 pm to 1.30 am as the seniors (one after the other) kept ragging me. It was my first day in the college. When I asked for some water, they forced me to consume beer and smoke a cigarette." He continued: "I was asked to take off my shirt and dance as they clapped and whistled. It was disgusting."*

In another case reported in 2007, senior students tried to force the victim to consume alcohol and non-vegetarian food. When he refused, he was thrashed severely. This led to a feeling of revenge in the victim.

From *The Indian Express*, July, 2007<sup>12</sup>

*"He sustained serious injuries on head, legs and abdomen," the mother of the victim said. The miscreants then took the youth and left him on the railway tracks near the railway station. This fostered extreme feelings of revenge in the victim who keeps repeating: "All I want now is that those people should get back what they did to me."*

---

<sup>11</sup><http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/Ragged-medico-too-shaken-to-go-back-to-college/articleshow/4861276.cms>

<sup>12</sup><http://noragging.blogspot.in/2007/07/ie-kanpur-boy-ragged-beaten-up-left-for.html#links>

Various other cases reported in the media highlight the severity of the negative psychological impact of ragging on students. Quite a few cases have been reported where students enrolled in professional courses ended up committing suicide after facing the ordeal. In a case of ragging in 2012, a student of a Junior College in Vijayanagaram (Andhra Pradesh) was hospitalised after an incident of alleged ragging by girls from her class left her in deep shock. The student was forced by three girls from her class to do various humiliating things. When the girl protested, she was beaten up in the college parking lot and was 'teased' by the accused over her not having a boyfriend<sup>13</sup>.

In many cases, the psychological impact was so deep that victims had to undergo psychiatric treatment for depression and other related symptoms. Such was the case (in 2010) with a student in Gujarat studying at a private engineering college who was hospitalized for depression after he was harassed and not allowed to sleep for two nights by seniors in a hostel<sup>14</sup>. In 2008, another student from a veterinary college in Jaipur had to undergo psychiatric treatment and counseling after his seniors cut off his hair, assaulted him and forced him to move around the campus naked. After giving him a severe thrashing, the accused student forced the victim to leave the college hostel and the boy took shelter in a community inn<sup>15</sup>. In a case of ragging in 2006, an 18-yr-old engineering college girl student from Kerala was ragged by senior students, who also prepared a sleaze CD of the victim. The doctor treating the girl said: "She is unable to speak and falls unconscious frequently. She has been admitted to the mental ward." The victim was staying at the college hostel along with 35 other girl students<sup>16</sup>.

---

<sup>13</sup>[http://zeenews.india.com/news/andhra-pradesh/ragging-horror-andhra-college-girl-loses-voice\\_789145.html](http://zeenews.india.com/news/andhra-pradesh/ragging-horror-andhra-college-girl-loses-voice_789145.html)

<sup>14</sup>[http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/engineering-student-hospitalised-after-ragging-in-hostel\\_100425632.html](http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/engineering-student-hospitalised-after-ragging-in-hostel_100425632.html)

<sup>15</sup><http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/-Aggrieved-father-approaches-SHRC-in-ragging-case/articleshow/3450606.cms?>

<sup>16</sup><http://noragging.blogspot.in/2006/09/new-kerala-girl-ragged-women.html#links>

The data for our question on students' experience of ragging reveals significant difference in terms of gender and place of residence. Male students and hostellers have considerably higher percentages for both positive and negative experiences (Table No. 3.I.10).

**Table No. 3.I.10: Disaggregated data for students' experience of ragging on basis of gender & place of residence\***

<b>Options</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Hosteller</b>	<b>Day-Scholar</b>
I enjoyed it	33.2%	31.0%	33.4%	31.7%
I felt bad initially but later felt it was alright	45.5%	45.3%	49.5%	38.9%
It made me feel ashamed and humiliated	10.3%	5.7%	8.5%	9.5%
It made me feel very angry	20.3%	17.0%	19.5%	18.4%
It made me feel helpless	13.2%	10.2%	13.1%	10.7%
It made me feel anxious	8.1%	7.1%	8.0%	7.7%
It still upsets me when I remember it	11.3%	10.9%	11.5%	10.6%

\*Calculations in the table are based on students who admitted to being mildly or severely ragged

**Table No. 3.I.11: Disaggregated data for students' experience of ragging on basis of type of course\***

<b>Options</b>	<b>Medical</b>	<b>Engineering</b>
I enjoyed it	34.0%	35.0%
I felt bad initially but later felt it was alright	53.5%	42.7%
It made me feel ashamed and humiliated	7.4%	8.7%
It made me feel very angry	17.7%	19.2%
It made me feel helpless	11.6%	13.1%
It made me feel anxious	8.7%	7.1%
It still upsets me when I remember it	10.4%	11.3%

\*Calculations based on students who admitted to being mildly or severely ragged

While the percentage of male students being ragged is higher, there is a great deal of ragging in girls, although of a different kind. More than physical, overt, explicit ragging, girls indulge in more subtle and psychological forms of ragging that are more difficult to observe but can be equally or more damaging to the psyche because of the feelings of isolation and loneliness it brings. Similarly, hostels are prime locations for ragging and because ragging can take

place there without too much check and because peer pressures are magnified, ragging experiences can get extreme in hostels.

It should be noted that the negative emotions arising from being ragged - shame, humiliation, anger and helplessness - are highly toxic to an individual's mental well-being and are the very emotions implicated in continuing cycles of violence. It is pertinent to recall that often it is those students who were subjected to severe ragging who become vicious ragers themselves. It is likely that the psychological mechanism operating is that of reversing the effects of shame, anger and helplessness. Negative experiences of ragging can lead to more pervasive, long term impact on the students. Research on shame explains how "persistent failure overtakes identity and leads a person to think that one is flawed as a human being. The feeling of shame is so discomforting that children develop coping mechanisms to avoid or deflect the ongoing torment, including hiding, running away from school, giving up, or attacking themselves or others".<sup>17</sup>

It will be pertinent to highlight some of the negative impacts of practices similar to ragging, which is documented in various studies. A study on hazing by the Alfred University showed that abusive hazing not only ruins the academic performance of the victims but also destroys their self-esteem. According to the study, various negative consequences of hazing reported by the students were: getting into a fight (24 per cent), getting injured (23 per cent), hurting someone else (20 per cent), committing a crime (16 per cent), being convicted (4 per cent), etc. Furthermore, students also reported interpersonal relationship and emotional difficulties such as fighting with parents (22 per cent), facing problems with friends (11 per cent), and considering suicide (15 per cent) as other negative consequences of hazing. Overall, nearly seventy per cent students who admitted they were hazed reported one or more negative consequences of hazing (From Alfred University website<sup>18</sup>).

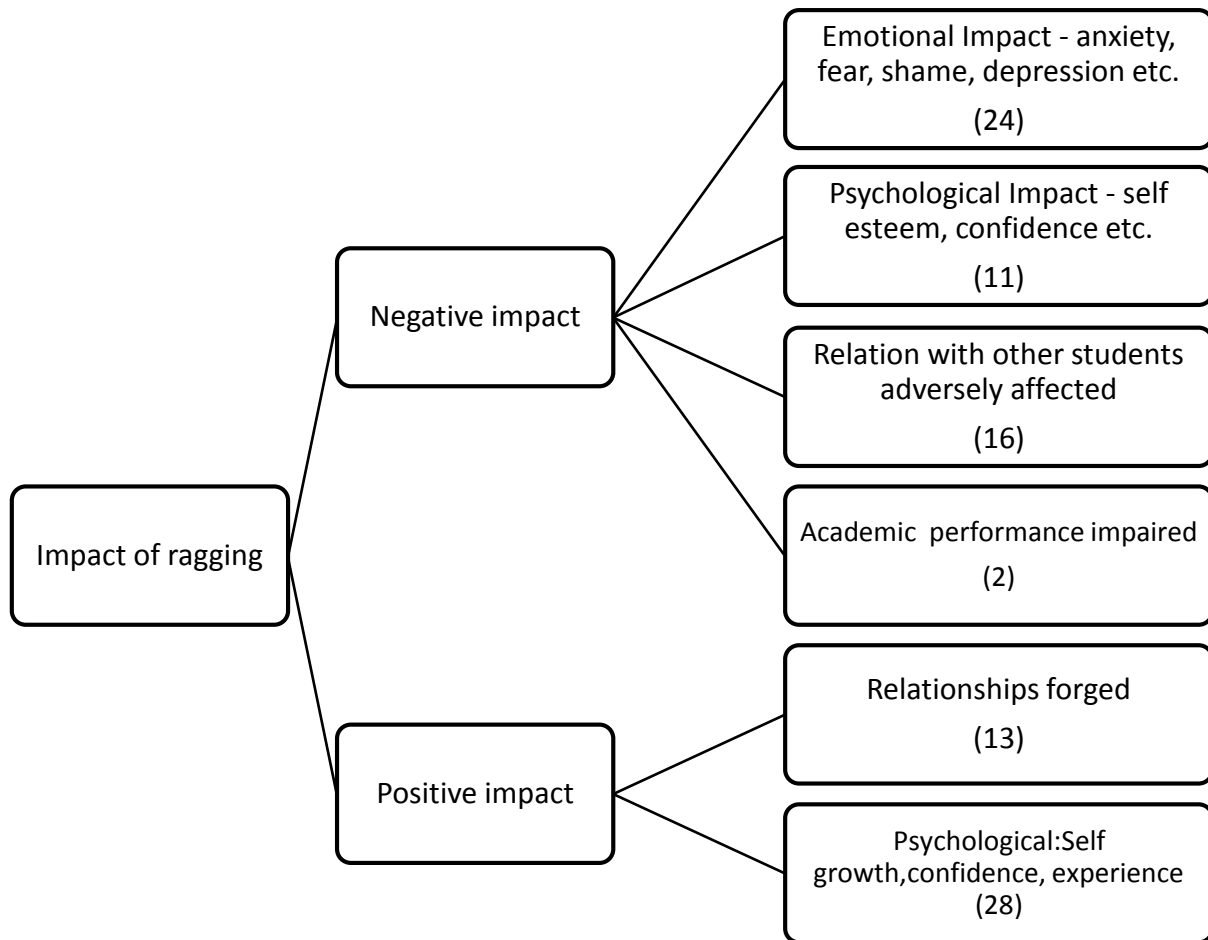
Qualitative analysis of 187 student interviews yielded themes reflecting the fact that ragging was associated with both positive and negative experiences. These are depicted in the chart on the next page.

---

<sup>17</sup> Article by Leslie Shelton, Ph.D – *Transforming the Shame of Early School Difficulties*. Retrieved from <http://www.learningandviolence.net/violence/shame/shelton.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.alfred.edu/hs\\_hazing/docs/hazing\\_study.pdf](http://www.alfred.edu/hs_hazing/docs/hazing_study.pdf)

### Impact of ragging on students (from interviews)



**Figure 3.I.4:** The chart above presents the main themes that emerged from interviews with 187 students on the question on the impact of ragging. Figures in the brackets denote the number of interviews in which that theme occurred.

## Impact of Ragging on Relationship with Seniors

While there is an adverse psychological impact on a significant proportion of students, ragging also affects student relationships particularly between seniors and juniors. The two tables (Table 3.I.12 and Table 3.I.13) below reflect the responses that the current sample gave to two questions: ‘Do you like the seniors who ragged you?’ and ‘Are you friends with seniors who ragged you?’

**Table No. 3.I.12: Relationship with seniors who ragged\***

<b>Q. Do you like the seniors who ragged you?</b>		
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>
a	Yes	33.8%
b	No	34.5%
c	Indifferent	27.9
d	Did not answer	3.6%

\*Calculations based on students who admitted to being mildly or severely ragged

**Table No. 3.I.13: Relationship with seniors who ragged\***

<b>Q. Are you friends with seniors who ragged you?</b>		
		<b>Overall percentage</b>
a	Yes all of them became my friends after ragging	34.2%
b	Only some of them are my friends	35.5%
c	No	25.9%
d	Did not answer	4.1%

\*Calculations based on students who admitted to being mildly or severely ragged

It is seen that ragging enabled some friendships with seniors in about a third of the sample. However, this was not the case with another third of the sample. Hence the impact of ragging on relationships with seniors is mixed. This may be partly due to the nature of ragging practices. Course-wise analysis show that friendship is forged between the seniors and first year students after ragging, mainly in engineering and medical colleges. This is an important point in view of the fact that ragging is often rationalised as creating bonds between juniors and seniors who will then mentor them.

An account of a student in a medical college (who was also severely ragged), posted online, goes:

Many students enter medical college without learning any social skills. Such students live in their own universe and the less time they spend interacting with others, the better are their chances of getting into the medical college. They live for themselves and are practically insulated from the harsh realities of daily existence. For these students, ragging is a primer for the world ahead. I admit that I was such a student but the ragging I received in my first year has indeed helped me bond with my seniors, it removed some inhibitions in social interactions, and it acted as an immunization against whatever challenges the world threw at me later in my life<sup>19</sup>.

The fact that 25.9 per cent students answered ‘no’ to the question about whether they are friends with seniors who ragged them shows that the negative experiences that may be a part of the ragging rituals, can strain relationships between seniors and juniors. Though a significant majority also say that they eventually became friends and that they like the seniors who ragged them, it is important to note that these patterns could be a consequence of the social system that the individuals sees himself in. In most cases, these friendships are forged as both parties have an ulterior motive – a kind of social exchange takes place.

The dynamics of these relationships can be understood by the response of a student from a medical college in Maharashtra. The student said that in the initial days she was afraid of going against the wishes of her seniors but eventually they became friends. She also mentioned that they are helpful if one does not outwardly defy them.

**Table No. 3.I.14: Disaggregated analysis of data on relationship with seniors who ragged\***

Options	Male	Female	Medical	Engineering	Hosteller	Day-Scholar
Yes all of them became my friends after ragging	36.5%	17.7%	34.1%	35%	35.5%	31.9%
Only some of them are my friends	35.1%	21.3%	42.7%	33.1%	37.6%	32.4%
No	24.7%	16.6%	19.7%	27.4%	23.3%	30.1%
Did not answer	3.6%	2.8%	3.3%	4.3%	3.4%	5.5%

\*Calculations in the table based on students who admitted to being mildly or severely ragged

<sup>19</sup> Retrieved from: <http://thepulseheart.com/article/RAGGING-IN-A-MEDICAL-COLLEGE-MY-PERSPECTIVE.html>

On analysing the overall data on the basis of gender, nature of study and place of residence, we find that the tendency to see seniors as friends after ragging is greater in males than in females and in hostellers than in day-scholars. It is to be noted that the prevalence of severe ragging is more among males than females, professional colleges than degree colleges and among hostellers than day-scholars. Similarly, on analysing this data course-wise, we see that higher percentages for such responses are reported mainly from engineering and medical colleges where severe forms of ragging are prevalent.

The above analysis suggests some co-relationship between severity of ragging and fostering of friendship between seniors and juniors and can be further understood from studies on similar practices. In an experimental study conducted on initiation rituals among college students, it was showed that between performing embarrassing or innocuous activities to gain acceptance by the confederates, individuals who were subjected to embarrassing activities viewed the confederates as more powerful and friendlier. In addition, individuals who were subjected to embarrassing activities expressed more enjoyment of the activity, compared to individuals exposed to some innocuous activity. It is stated that “By obeying their ‘confederate’, embarrassing activity subjects may have created a tighter bond, compared to innocuous activity subjects, with the ‘confederate’” (Capretto, 2011, p. 23).

This makes sense according to attachment theory. It has been argued that discomfort prepares the emotional system to seek protection from potential caregivers by establishing emotional bonds with them. Further, according to another study, when the sources of abuse are the only available outlet, feeling of emotional attachment may be directed toward them. Thus, a “possible outcome of severe initiations is the development of interpersonal attraction toward its agents” (Keating et al. 2005, p. 109). This is of course the origins of the Stockholm syndrome.

However, researchers who examined the effects of severe initiation conditions on interpersonal relationships suggested that such situations forged relationships in which both victim and perpetrator were interdependent on each other and held some power over the other which contributed to the continuation of such situations. The perpetrator had a control over the positive and negative outcomes for the victim, whereas the victim had the power to decide whether to comply with the perpetrator and/or rebel against the perpetrator (Ellsworth, 2004).

It is important to note that ragging, irrespective of the severity, involves the dynamics of power where the group that rags fosters feelings of superiority in itself through the shared identity of being 'seniors' and accords a lower status to those who are juniors. Ragging rituals that may seem benign, such as doing favours for seniors, introduce unhealthy dynamics of power and control, and do not serve any purpose that is helpful to juniors. This practice of juniors being ragged on the pretext of them getting help and guidance by seniors are clever ways of creating a dependency and then maintaining it for years to come as rituals. Over time, these behaviours may evolve into hazardous requirements where, as each act of ragging is completed, an environment and attitude of acceptance is created.

Furthermore, the Alfred University study on hazing makes an important observation on the initiation ritual:

*Without the wisdom of experience, young people use humiliation, abuse, and endangerment to produce a story, a secret, a heightened common experience that creates the sense of bonding that they seek. Yet hazing is more destructive to human relationships than constructive, because it relies on substance abuse and other behaviors that are self-destructive, socially offensive, isolating, uncooperative, aggressive, hurtful, or disruptive at the expense of civility, integrity, respect, responsibility, cooperation, and compassion. The social, as well as personal, price of hazing outweighs the results—unnecessarily so. We can learn to bond and challenge each other in socially and personally constructive ways. (From the website of Alfred University<sup>20</sup>)*

---

<sup>20</sup>[http://www.alfred.edu/hs\\_hazing/discussion.cfm](http://www.alfred.edu/hs_hazing/discussion.cfm)

## **Reasons and circumstances associated with ragging**

In the previous section we discussed the academic and psycho- emotional impact of ragging on students and on their relationships with seniors. This section delves into that part of the research that throws light on the motives and circumstances associated with ragging. As described in the conceptual model of ragging in Chapter 1, the phenomenon of ragging is determined by multiple factors at the level of the group, the individual, the institution and also the larger socio-cultural context. Students within an institution are not operating solely on the basis of their individual personality but are subject to influences from the groups to which they belong, the institutional culture as well as broad socio-cultural beliefs and norms.

The main findings in this section are as follows.

a) Students' beliefs about ragging are quite mixed with almost equal numbers believing it to be positive because it helps build friendships, adds fun to college life, maintains a social hierarchy of respect for seniors and benevolent help to juniors, and negative because it affects studies adversely and instils fear in students that makes their adjustment to college hard. This ambivalence about the phenomenon extends to seeing the effects of ragging as positive because it builds confidence and personality, makes students mentally tough thus enabling them to deal with the harshness of the real world, as well as negative because it actually harms self-confidence and has long-lasting negative effects.

b) Opinions about ragging are more positive the more senior the student, and more negative the more junior the student, suggesting that it is gradually normalised through college years as a part of campus life. Positive opinions about ragging are also more among male students, hostellers and students in professional courses, these also being the categories with higher prevalence of ragging.

c) The motives of seniors to rag is seen to lie predominantly in their desire to feel powerful, to follow college tradition, to get over their own ragging experience and to feel grown-up.

d) Two-thirds of students who were ragged said they received help from seniors, this percentage being highest among medical and engineering students. The nature of help is support in academics (notes, assignments, etc.) and protection from other students. Interview data also indicated that students complied with ragging demands in order to forge relationships with seniors and gain the acceptance of the group. They also complied because they felt threatened and because it gave them the 'right to rag' when their turn came.

e) Approximately a third of students said it was important to them to be respected and obeyed by juniors and a similar number believed that juniors who did not obey should be disciplined or punished. In this regard, ragging is a ritual that reflects widely held social beliefs about hierarchy and seniority.

f) The social climate of their institution was seen to be marked by discrimination on the basis of language, region, physical appearance and caste according to about a tenth of the respondents. Physical appearance, region, language, gender, rural-urban background and caste were perceived to be factors that influenced ragging according to about 6-21 per cent of respondents. Importantly, ragging serves both as a rite of inclusion within some of these group categories, and also a discriminatory, stigmatising practice on those outside the in-group.

g) More than half of the senior students felt bad when they saw freshers being ragged and about a third intervened to dissuade the ragers or to complain. Also nearly two-thirds did not support their batch-mates in ragging. This points to a substantial resource in the student community that could be mobilised to change from being bystanders to being responsible agents of change.

### **Students' Beliefs about Ragging – Opinion on Ragging and College Life and Overall Effect of Ragging**

A set of questions in our survey dealt with the students' beliefs about ragging. The question ranged from 'Do you agree with these statements about ragging and college life?' to 'Do you

agree with these statements about the effects of ragging?’ While the first question explores beliefs such as ‘ragging adds fun to college life’ and ‘ragging enables juniors to take the help of seniors when necessary’; the second question looks at beliefs like ‘ragging helps in building confidence and developing personality’.

**Table No. 3.I.15: Students beliefs about ragging and college life**

<b>Q. Do you agree with these statements about ragging and college life?</b>			
<b>S. No</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest value</b>
a)	Ragging adds fun to college life	27.6%	NUpGM1 (41.1%) NUpGM2 (55.2%) SKIPE (43.6%) SKrGE (46.6%) STnGM (50.7%)
b)	Ragging helps making friendships in college	39.7%	NUpGM1 (56.4%) NUpGM2 (53.4%) SKIGE (59.1%) STnGM (66.3%) SKrGE (57.3%)
c)	Ragging helps students develop close attachment to one another and to their college/hostel	35.2%	NUpGM1 (60.2%) NUpGM2 (63.2%) SKrGE (54%) STnGM (55.3%) WMhGM2 (52%)
d)	Those who participate in ragging become popular students	9%	EWbPE (12.5%) NHrGD (13.2%) STnGL (24%) STnGM (15.1%) WMhPE(13.4%) WMhGM3 (12.8%)
e)	Ragging helps keep fresher’s disciplined	24.7%	NUpGM2 (55.7%) NUpGM1 (49.4%) EWbPE (42.7%) EOrPE (43.4%) WMhGM2 (45%) STnGM (40%)
f)	Ragging makes fresher’s respect	28.9%	NUpGM1 (54.7%)

	seniors		NUpGM2 (55.7%) WMhGM1 (42.1%) WMhGM2 (47%) STnGM (44.9%)
g)	Ragging enables juniors to take the help of seniors when necessary	34.5%	NUpGM1 (50.8%) NUpGM2 (56.3%) SKrGE (56%) STnGM (63.6%)
h)	Ragging makes it harder to settle into college life	23.9%	EWbGM (36.3%) EWbPE (36%) NPuGM (32.2%)
i)	Ragging makes it difficult to make friends	10.0%	EWbGM (20.8%) NUpGL(16.1%) STnPD (20.1%) STgPN (22.8%)
j)	Ragging makes fresher's fear seniors	30.3%	EWbGM (42.1%) NHrGP (43.2%) STnGL (40.3%)
k)	Ragging affects studies negatively	30.6%	EWbGM (48.4%) EWbGD (40.2%) NUpGL(44.8%) NHrGP (52.4%)

In order to assess students' opinion on ragging we gave different options under two broad categories (i) Positive opinion (ii) Negative opinion. In our overall data we find that 27.6 per cent students believed that ragging adds fun to college life, 39.7 per cent said that ragging helps making friendship in college, 35.2 per cent said that ragging helps students develop close attachment to one another and to their college/hostel, 34.5 per cent believed that ragging enables juniors to take the help of the seniors when necessary and 28.9 percent felt that ragging makes freshers respect seniors. On the other hand, more than 30 per cent students admitted that ragging affects studies negatively and makes freshers fear seniors. These findings reflect the ambivalence that typically surrounds discussion on beliefs about ragging.

When we look at the college-wise results we find that higher percentages of positive opinion were reported mainly from medical and engineering colleges where the prevalence of ragging is quite high. We also see that the two government run medical colleges in UP have

registered the highest percentages for most of the positive opinion on ragging. Higher percentages for most of the negative opinion on ragging were reported from a government run medical college in West Bengal and a government polytechnic in Haryana.

**Table No. 3.I.16: Students' view on overall effect of ragging**

<b>Q. Do you agree with these statements about the effects of ragging?</b>			
		<b>Overall percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest values</b>
a	Ragging helps in building confidence and developing personality	33.8%	NUpGM2 (59.8%), NUpGM (53.4%), EWbPE (50.2%)
b	Ragging makes students mentally tough	34.8%	SKrGE (47.6%), EWbPE (47.1%), SKIGE (46.3%)
c	Those that cannot bear ragging are weak or cowardly or sissies/effeminate	8.0%	STnGM (13.4), WMhPE (12.7%), NUpGL (12.6%)
d	Ragging prepares students to deal with the harshness of the outside world.	35.7%	NUpGM2 (56.9%), STnGM (53.2%), NUpGM1 (52.2%),
e	Ragging harms self confidence	30.7%	NDIGD1 (45.2%), NUpGD1 (43.3%), NDIGD2 (41.6%)
f	Ragging has long-lasting emotional effect	35.5%	NPuGV (50.7%), NHrGP (48.1), NUpGL (47.1%)
g	Did not answer	10.3%	

As can be seen from Table 3.I.16 almost 30 per cent students believed that ragging harms self-confidence. While an ample number (35.5 per cent) subscribed to the fact that ragging has long lasting emotional effect, an equally large number had views that connote the positive side of ragging. These include views such as 'ragging makes students mentally tough', 'ragging prepares students to deal with the harshness of the outside world' and 'ragging helps in building confidence and developing personality'. We observe that the students from the two government medical colleges in UP, medical college in Tamil Nadu, a private engineering college in West Bengal and government engineering college in Karnataka reported high values for positive effects of ragging. More than half of the students from these

three medical colleges believe that ragging helps in building confidence and developing personality and also prepares students in dealing with the harshness of the ‘real world’.

This points at the huge emphasis that is put on the ‘**real world**’ that students will face after passing out of the institution and how this real world is a tough place to be successful. Students are socialized into thinking that this real world is a tough place, a dog eat dog world, where one needs to be aggressive and street smart to succeed. The ‘real world’ is seen as very different from the protected world of children in families and described in terms of competitiveness, aggression to reach goals, and harshness. People in the real world are not nice, gentle, kind or honest therefore, one has to learn to manoeuvre their way to outsmart others. In this context, it may be important to think of the impact such tutoring has on the attitudes about the outside world on generations of college students; and how such prejudices can perpetuate the vicious cycle of a conflict ridden and cut throat society.

This notion of the real world is evident in the justification of ragging as a preparation, and students ask whether they will be able to succeed in the real world without ‘toughening up’ through experiences such as ragging. The kind of rationalizing that students indulge in can be understood by statements such as ‘ragging helps in building confidence and developing personality’ (33.8 per cent), ‘ragging makes students mentally tough’ (34.8 per cent) and ‘ragging prepares students to deal with the harshness of the outside world’ (35.7 per cent). As one caller on the ragging helpline mentioned “... one should also step out of to be exposed to things that happen in the ‘bazaar’, one needs to be ‘hard’ to face it. To a certain extent ragging helps in toughening a person, it teaches you how to deal with bad people.” According to students at a government degree college in Delhi, ragging reveals talents, which can only be revealed if group discussions and competitions are organized with all the three years participating together. In another FGD at an engineering college in Tamil Nadu, a student shared that ragging increased his confidence and that is how he got to know his seniors.

Another rationale for ragging is that it is as an effective way to **teach discipline** to freshers. In relation to this, one of the responses ‘ragging helps keep freshers disciplined’ can be quoted as evidence which was replied to by 24.7 per cent of the student sample in our survey. A senior year student in our interview said: “I think minor ragging like introduction should be done as it makes a fresher more disciplined as well as strong.”

Many students also participate in ragging because it seems like **fun** and helps them to bond with the group. In our survey around 28 per cent student believe that ‘ragging adds fun to college life’. It is to be noted that this ‘fun’ is a popular construct and a lot of students who do not really enjoy ragging often play along because they are scared to say no to their seniors or opt out of the activity when most of their classmates are participating in it.

It can also be argued that ragging behaviour is motivated by the individual’s **pursuit of high status** and a powerful, dominant position in the peer group. This can be validated by responses such as ‘those who participate in ragging become popular students’ which was answered in ‘yes’ by nine per cent of the sample and ‘ragging makes fresher’s respect seniors’ that is answered by 28.9 per cent. A finding was obtained in bullying research where researchers argued that individuals who get the better of their peers are often leaders of peer groups and are found to be more attractive to the opposite sex<sup>21</sup>.

Furthermore, ragging is also a successful strategy for attaining and **maintaining dominance** and can be understood from statements such as ‘ragging makes fresher’s fear seniors’ as 30.3 per cent of the student sample responded. In this view, the suppression of individual freedom during ragging is critical to ensure that new members are **dependent** upon the group and learn to pay full respect to **tradition**. In an interview, a student is quoted as saying: “I most definitely do not want to be ragged, but because it happens state-wise, I want to meet my seniors from my state, to be able to travel with them and get help and advice from them.” That this thinking is prevalent in colleges can be inferred from the statement ‘ragging enables juniors to take the help of seniors when necessary’ in the table 3.I.15 which was the response of almost 35 per cent of the survey sample. This is a type of an **exchange** where freshers accept the ragging behaviour in order to avail benefits to meet their basic needs.

Another reason often cited in support of ragging is that it **helps foster bonds** between students. In a hypothesis known as the severity-affiliation-attraction, it has been argued that “when individuals face stressful or threatening situations, they will identify with other individuals, especially those who have gone through similar situations. As the situations become more stressful or more threatening, the bond between the individual and others who

---

<sup>21</sup> <http://eagle.northwestu.edu/faculty/ron-jacobson/files/2011/03/Group-Characteristics-of-Bullying-week-5-handout.pdf>

have gone through similar situations will become stronger” (Ellsworth, 2004, p. 5). This is endorsed in our survey as well where students have accepted statements such as ‘ragging helps making friendships in college’ (39.7 per cent) and ‘ragging helps students develop close attachment to one another and to their college/hostel’ (35.2 per cent). It can be said that in the case of ragging, the freshers being ragged and undergoing the same stress may seek emotional attachment and a need to come together and find security in one another. Further, research has shown that fear emanating from anxiety encourages the person to establish emotional bonds with others who are going through the same stressful situation or with those who could help them in that situation<sup>22</sup>.

**Gender-related factors**, particularly masculinity concerns, are also significant in ragging practices. Many ragging practices have to do with repudiating femininity and asserting male selfhood as not-female (not being a ‘sissy’ by e.g. enduring pain, beatings, having physical stamina, mouthing abuses), and maleness as an adult-man rather than boy-child (‘sexual’ ragging). Eight per cent of the student sample in the survey said ‘yes’ to the statement ‘Those that cannot bear ragging are weak or cowardly or sissies/effeminate’ stands as evidence for this fact.

Aggression is seen as something masculine and powerful and hence, must be put to display in order to make a strong impression. Culturally-constructed notions of what it means to be a ‘real man’ place an emphasis on physical and mental toughness, obedience to superiors, and the value of force as a means of accountability. Such beliefs, combined with desires by heterosexual men to demonstrate that they do not possess qualities associated with gay men (e.g., vulnerability, emotionality, nurturance), contribute to the perpetuation of such practices. This process inevitably marginalizes gay men and other men of alternative sexualities, as well as all women. Ragging then becomes an avenue for aggression and rampant misogyny. It is therefore incompatible with a gender-friendly and gender-just campus. Similarly, campuses in India are known to be homophobic. The practise of ragging contributes to the building of prejudices against those with alternative sexualities also. Perceived as weak, gay men are also to be despised and discriminated against.

---

<sup>22</sup> From the article: *Need for Affiliation*. Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Need\\_for\\_affiliation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Need_for_affiliation)

Such is the dominance of the positive beliefs of ragging among students that in one of our FGDs at a government degree college in Delhi, most students were disappointed as they were not ragged. They were, in fact, looking forward to being ragged so that they could experience it as well.

However, the data was not without responses that also pointed at the harm that ragging can cause to emotional well-being and academic performance. Almost one-third of students in our survey believed that ragging affects studies negatively, makes freshers fear seniors, harms self-confidence and has long lasting emotional effect. One student said: “Ragging is useless, it breaks self-confidence.” Another student said: “Ragging must be prohibited in all colleges. It is a mental torture and harms self-confidence. For some seniors, it is a joke, but some time it becomes serious.”

From the tables 3.I.15 and 3.I.16 and our qualitative data, one can infer that there are both positive as well as negative beliefs that students hold for ragging. A study on hazing highlighted various patterns that emerged from students, which made them rationalise hazing or see it less harmful: minimization (“it was no big deal”), voluntary participation (“I had a choice whether or not to participate”), rationalization (“it made me a better man”) and normalization (“it was tradition, so didn’t mind”) being the most prominent (Allan & Madden, 2008, p. 29). Similar patterns are seen emerging from students involved in ragging.

How ragging occurs and persists can also be understood using Owen, Burke, and Vichesky (2008) three stage cycle of hazing as a theoretical model. Adapting this model to understand ragging; first, ragging occurs. Secondly, victims process the ragging to make sense of it. The process, according to researchers, allows individuals to create their own meanings based on their experiences, interactions and perceived norms. Through the process of cognitive dissonance, ragged persons come to accept their experience as normal and their perceptions of ragging become more positive. Third, pro-ragging norms become internalized, leading to groupthink.

**Table No. 3.I.17: Students views about ragging and college life on basis of batch-year**

S. No.	Options	1 <sup>st</sup> year	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> year
a	Ragging adds fun to college life	27.1%	28.3%	28.2%
b	Ragging helps making friendships in college	37.9%	41.4 %	43.6%
c	Ragging helps students develop close attachment to one another and to their college/hostel	31.3%	38.3%	41.9%
d	Those who participate in ragging become popular students	9.3%	8.9%	8.6%
e	Ragging helps keep fresher's disciplined	21.9	27.4	28.5
f	Ragging makes fresher's respect seniors	26.2	31.8	32.6
g	Ragging enables juniors to take the help of seniors when necessary	33.4%	36.0%	35.8%
h	Ragging makes it harder to settle into college life	25.7%	22.7%	21.3%
i	Ragging makes it difficult to make friends	10.5%	10.1%	8.5%
j	Ragging makes fresher's fear seniors	32.8%	29.2%	26.0%
k	Ragging affects studies negatively	32.5%	28.9%	28.4

On disaggregating the data, an interesting finding from our survey (as shown in the table 3.I.17 above) reveals that the positive opinion about ragging becomes more profound as we progress from junior to senior batches (batch year one to batch year three and four). Similarly, negative opinion about ragging declines from first year to final year batches. This shows that with time students gradually recognize ragging as a normal part of the campus culture.

**Table No. 3.I.18: Disaggregated data of Students views about ragging and college life on basis of gender, nature of study and place of residence**

S. No.	Overall %	Males	Females	Degree	Professional	Hosteller	Day-Scholar
a	27.6%	29.3%	25.3%	20.0%	30.6%	32.3%	22.7%
b	39.7%	41.6%	37.2%	29.6%	43.8%	45.8%	33.9%
c	35.2%	37.9%	31.7%	28.1%	38.2%	43.0%	27.6%
d	9%	10.0%	7.7%	9.4%	8.9%	10.0%	8.0%
e	24.7%	26.9%	22.0%	18.8%	27.3%	31.4%	17.8%
f	28.9%	31.0%	26.5%	23.9%	31.2%	35.4%	22.2%
g	34.5%	35.7%	33.0%	25.8%	38.0%	42.5%	27.1%
h	23.9%	22.8%	25.5%	22.8%	24.1%	22.8%	25.6%
i	10%	9.5%	10.6%	11.7%	9.2%	8.3%	11.9%

j	30.3%	29.5%	31.8%	26.8%	31.9%	29.7%	32.5%
k	30.6%	30.8%	30.6%	30.9%	30.3%	28.2%	33.8%

When we analyse the data on basis of gender, place of residence and the kind of course, we find that the positive opinion about ragging is much more prevalent among hostellers, male students and students from professional colleges.

**Table No. 3.I.19: Disaggregated data of the students' view on effects of ragging on basis of gender, nature of study and place of residence**

S. No	Options	Male	Female	Degree	Professional	Hosteller	Day-Scholar
a	Ragging helps in building confidence and developing personality	36.7%	30.1%	25.4%	36.9%	40.0%	27.3%
b	Ragging makes students mentally tough	37.9%	30.8%	30.0%	36.9%	39.2%	30.0%
c	Those that cannot bear ragging are weak or cowardly or sissies/effeminate	9.3%	6.2%	7.2%	8.5%	9.5%	6.7%
d	Ragging prepares students to deal with the harshness of the outside world.	37.1%	34.2%	28.0%	39.1%	41.2%	30.7%
e	Ragging harms self confidence	29.2%	32.8%	33.1%	29.6%	27.5%	34.9%
f	Ragging has long-lasting emotional effect	32.5%	39.8%	38.4%	34.5%	32.3%	40.1%
g	Did not answer	9.8%	10.3%	11.0%	10.0%	9.3%	10.8%

From the table 3.I.19 it can be seen that in general males endorse a more positive view of ragging than females. Especially to the statement 'Those that cannot bear ragging are weak or cowardly or sissies/effeminate', nine per cent males agree as opposed to six per cent female students. An almost similar trend is observed in the case of hostellers who have more

favourable view of ragging in contrast to day scholars; and students enrolled in professional courses as against degree course students.

### Students' Opinion on Why Seniors Enjoy Ragging

Further, a question in the survey dealt with probing the juniors' perspective on why they think their seniors rag them.

**Table No. 3.I.20: Why do you think some seniors enjoy ragging?**

<b>Q. Why do you think some seniors enjoy ragging?</b>			
<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>College with highest values</b>
a	They want to follow the college tradition	46.2%	STnGM (68.8%) NUpGM2 (63.2%) SKrGE (61.9%) EWbGH (60.8%)
b	They like to do what others in their group do	28.0%	SKrGE (40.9%) WMhPE (37.5%) EOrPE (36.5%) SKIGE (35.6%) STnGM (35.6%)
c	They enjoy doing what is forbidden or taboo	19.9%	WMhPE (30.6%) EOrPE (28.8%) NUpGL (28.7%) STgGE (28.2%) NDIGE (27.9%)
d	Ragging allows them to feel powerful, to be in control, to be the boss	46.9%	EOrPE (60.8%) SKIMS (59.9%) WMhPE (59.1%) NUpGL (57.5%) EWbPE (56.3%)
e	Sexual ragging helps them feel more sexually confident themselves	9.7%	NHrGP (17.1%) STgGE (16.4%) NHrGD (15.7%) EOrPE (15.6%) NDIGD1 (14.3%) NUpPE (14.3%)

			WMhPE (14.1%)
f	Physical and sexual ragging makes them appear tough to others	11.7%	STgGE (21.3%) EWbPE (16.9%) NPuGV (17.3%) NDIGD1 (17.5%) SKIGE (16.1%) STnGL (16.1%)
g	Ragging juniors helps them get over their own ragging	33.7%	SKrGE (54%) EOrPE (48.9%) WMhGM3 (45.5%)
h	They enjoy embarrassing and humiliating others	25.9%	NUpGL (48.3%) NHrGP (42.1%) EOrPE (39.7%)
i	They feel more grown-up	32.4%	WRjGE (43.8%) EOrPE (47.1%) STnGL (45.2%) WMhPE (43%) SKIGE (43%)
j	It makes them look tough/strong in their own batch	29.9%	SKrPM (46.5%) EOrPE (44.4%) WMhPE (44%)
k	Did not answer	10.5%	-

To the question on why they think seniors enjoy ragging, more than 46 per cent students said that ragging allows seniors to feel powerful, to be in control, to be the boss and that they want to follow the college tradition. Similarly, almost 30 per cent reported that ragging juniors helps seniors get over their own ragging, makes them look tough, feel grown-up and that seniors want to do what others in their group do. High percentages for these opinions emerge largely from colleges where prevalence of ragging is also high.

Feeling powerful and following the college tradition seems to be the most popular reasons that students give for why seniors may rag their juniors. Our qualitative data give further insight into some of these aspects. A caller on the anti-ragging helpline when asked about the reasons why seniors rag their juniors, said:

Seniors feel that it is important to keep the juniors at a distance so their position as a senior is maintained. Some feel that juniors need to be familiarized with certain rules. Whenever a senior approaches a junior, s/he should know how to behave.

In connection with this, another caller asserted that: “Seniors want to pose as powerful; they want to teach juniors how to treat their seniors. When faculty fears getting involved in matters related to ragging, seniors feel more confident.” In an FGD at an engineering college in South India, a student reported that seniors feel they dominate the college campus and not even a leaf in the college can move without their consent.

Certain parts of the quotations above can be understood as the motive of the senior students to maintain a power distance (the extent to which an unequal distribution of power is accepted) between the juniors and themselves. In an academic setting it can typically be characterized by the ‘Sir/Ma’am’ approach as was evident in table no. 3.I.3 where 32.5 per cent of students acknowledged that they were forced to address their seniors as ‘Sir/Ma’am’ as a part of the ragging process.

Responses like ‘ragging allows them to feel powerful, to be in control, to be the boss’ (46.9%), ‘it makes them look tough in their own batch’ ( 29.9%) and ‘physical and sexual ragging makes them appear tough to others’ (11.7% ) depict the need for a higher self-esteem. And responses such as ‘they want to follow the college tradition’ (46.2 per cent) and ‘they like to do what others in their group do’ (28 per cent) show their need for acceptance. Ragging juniors combines both these needs and as a result, self-esteem is bolstered by a sense of acceptance by others. Perpetrators may enhance their own sense of esteem and heroism by maintaining membership in a group that derives fun out of ragging juniors.

Ragging also has a direct link to notions of power, where ragging others gratifies individuals' desires for a sense of power and control. It signals that the perpetrator is capable of, but withholds, violence. It also signals that violence is always impending. Ragging is about establishing hierarchy within a system. Senior students exert power or social dominance on new students and new students are expected to participate in certain activities to be a part of the group. In reference to this, a student at an engineering college in South India said that it is an addiction: “Mere hisaab se ek nasha hai. Agar aap kisi ko daba sakte ho toh ek nasha hai. Power ek nasha hai.” (If you can bully someone it is an addiction. Power is an addiction.).

### Quoting another student:

Dekha jaye toh ragging ek tarah se seniority dikhana hai. Unko daba ke rakhna and restrictions lagana. Seniors apne juniors ke saath wo hi karna chahte hain jo unke seniors ne unke saath kiya. Ye sirf samay ki barbaadi hai. (If you look at it, ragging is a way to express seniority, a way to oppress juniors and restrict their choices and movements. Seniors want to do with their juniors what they themselves have gone through. This is a mere waste of time.).

Importantly, 33.7 per cent students believed that ragging helps seniors get over their own ragging. This shows that individuals who are ragged may be at a greater risk of ragging others because of a displaced desire for revenge. One student in a medical college responded in an FGD: “It’s actually like the ones who got more ragged, rags more.”

From our qualitative data another explanation emerged on why seniors rag their juniors. According to some students, seniors have insecurities which they try to overcome by ragging their juniors. One student said: “Apne fears ko overcome karne ke liye woh bully karte hain taaki yeh junior unse panga na le sake.” (They do it to overcome their own fears so that the juniors do not mess with them.) In one of the FGDs it became clear that some senior boys were ‘scared’ of the junior boys who refuse to give in to their ragging. They constantly insisted on juniors respecting the seniors and underlined the importance of ragging.

The above points were summarized in an FGD at a medical college where opinions on why seniors rag varied. While two respondents thought that it is due to the pressure of tradition, one respondent felt that ragging gives a sense of power to seniors and said: “They are able to show that they are something.” The other two respondents agreed and said that some seniors feel ‘threatened’ by smarter juniors and hence, they need to use ragging to feel safe.

Another possible reason for seniors’ motive to indulge in ragging can be comprehended from a study on hazing where researchers have argued that because the college administrators fail to provide appropriate rites of passage for new students, the senior students, who lack proper guidance, try to fill that space. In addition, they suggested that on the one hand existing members of a group want the newcomers to show their worthiness to become part of the group, while on the other hand, newcomers have a need to demonstrate their worthiness to be part of the group (Ellsworth, 2004).

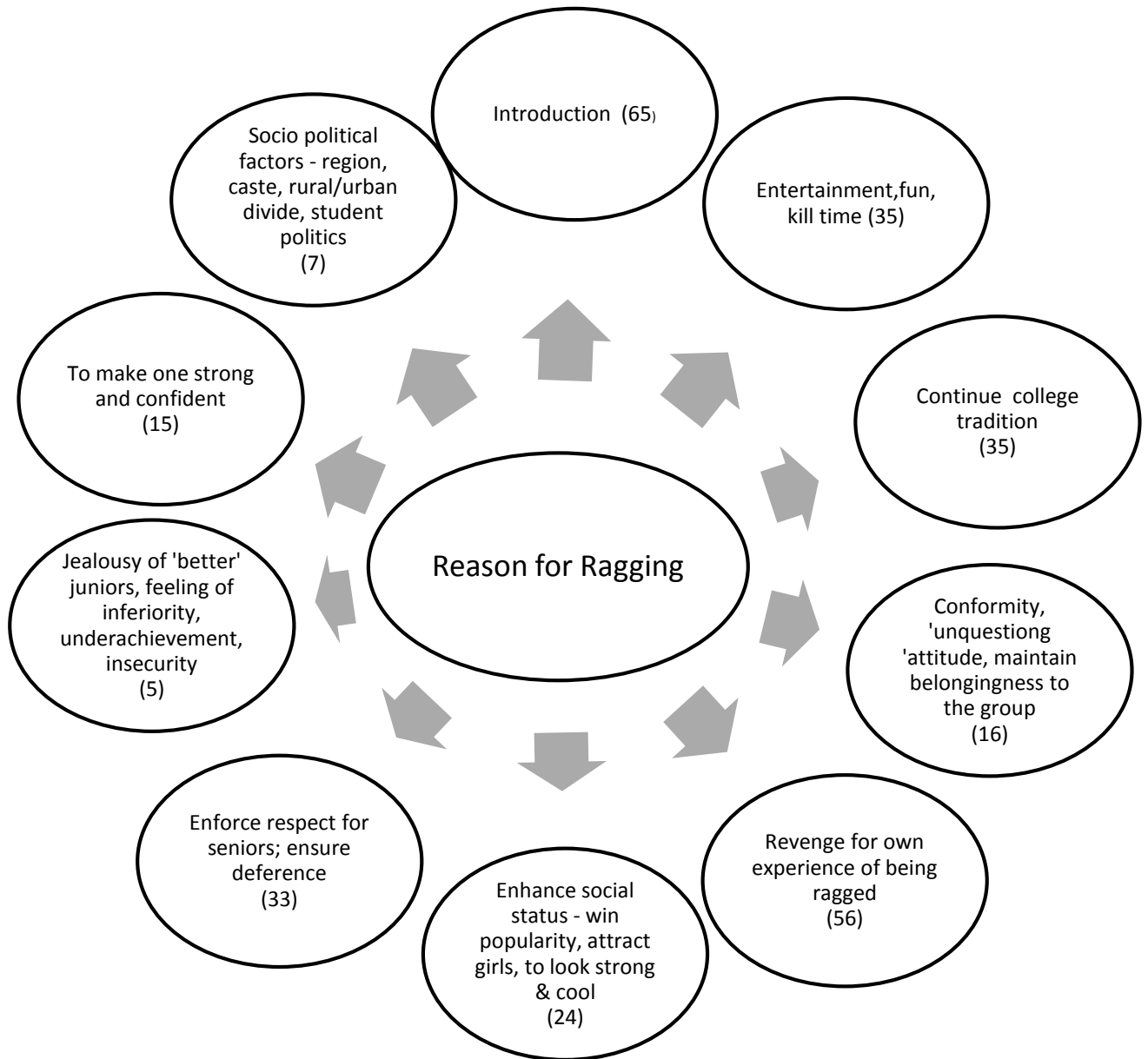
**Table No. 3.I.21: Disaggregated data on basis of type of study**

S. No.	Why do you think some seniors enjoy ragging?	Type of Study	
		Degree	Professional
a	They want to follow the college tradition	35.9%	50.0%
b	They like to do what others in their group do	23.7%	29.6%
c	They enjoy doing what is forbidden or taboo	17.3%	21.1%
d	Ragging allows them to feel powerful, to be in control, to be the boss	41.4%	49.5%
e	Sexual ragging helps them feel more sexually confident themselves	10.2%	9.6%
f	Physical and sexual ragging makes them appear tough to others	10.2%	12.2%
g	Ragging juniors helps them get over their own ragging	24.4%	37.4%
h	They enjoy embarrassing and humiliating others	23.3%	26.9%
i	They feel more grown-up	31.5%	32.6%
j	It makes them look tough/strong in their own batch	18.0%	4.2%

When we dissect the data on basis of type of study (Table 3.I.21), we find that significantly higher percentage of students from professional colleges than degree colleges endorsing most of the above options. This depicts that ragging as a phenomenon is even more greatly internalized by students of professional courses. The reasons to maintain hierarchy and power distance are probably higher in professional colleges where students depend on their seniors more than that in degree colleges. The dependence could be in academic sphere (class notes, help in laboratory etc.) as well as in personal space. Ragging, then, comes in to this equation of social exchange where in return for favours and help from seniors, new students go through a strenuous induction process where humiliation, degradation and embarrassment become a part of the normal discourse.

In response to this, a faculty at one of the universities in the East recommends that question papers be set outside of the university and notes system be banned so as to reduce dependency on seniors.

### Reasons for Ragging (from interviews)



**Figure 3.I.5:** The chart above presents the main themes that emerged from interviews with 187 students on the question of the possible reasons for ragging. Figures in the bracket denote the number of interviews in which that theme occurred.

## Reasons for compliance with ragging

Data on why freshers comply with ragging comes from survey questions as to the help freshers received from seniors and from interview data regarding compliance.

**Table No. 3.I.22: Data on juniors getting help from seniors who rag them.**

<b>Q. Do you get help from the seniors who ragged you?</b>		
<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage*</b>
a	Yes	61.6%
b	No	33.6%
c	Did not answer	4.6%

\*Percentages based on those students who admitted to being ragged

In our survey a significant percentage (61.6 per cent) of students admitted that they get help from seniors who rag them. Analysing the data course-wise we also observe that the highest percentages of students admitting to getting help from seniors are from medical colleges followed by engineering colleges (Table 3.I.23).

In our interaction with the juniors from various colleges, it emerged clearly that there is an implicit rule in colleges that if freshers need support from their seniors, they have to undergo ragging. In our FGDs, students told us that juniors have to comply with seniors' demand and undergo ragging if they want seniors to remain supportive to them. The help from the seniors could be in the form of gaining executive membership to college clubs or societies, help with notes, assignments and guidance during exams, protection from other seniors, etc. One junior said: "Ragging here is faced by all students, they get into it because they want to get entry to tech/cultural bodies, college election, become members of fest committee or to get old question papers."

Some students even expressed their displeasure with the anti-ragging measure taken by the college authorities as it hinders senior-fresher interaction and therefore, junior students feel that seniors do not help them with notes and academics and make excuses whenever approached for help.

**Table No. 3.I.23: Distribution of data on juniors getting help from seniors who rag them on basis of gender, course and place of residence\***

<b>Q. Do you get help from the seniors who ragged you?</b>						
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Medical</b>	<b>Engineering</b>	<b>Hosteller</b>	<b>Day-Scholar</b>
Yes	62%	60.8%	70.3%	59.6%	66%	54.7%
No	33.4%	34.1%	26%	35.1%	29.9%	39.7%
Did not answer	4.4%	4.9%	3.6%	5.2%	4%	5.4%

\*All calculations are based on those students who admitted to being ragged

When we look at the disaggregated data, we find significantly higher percentages of males than females, hostellers than day-scholars and students in medical colleges admitted to getting help from seniors who rag them. In terms of batch year, 57.5 per cent of first year students, 61.2 per cent from second year and 71.8 per cent of students from the third and fourth year batch responded positively to this statement.

As the data suggests, the dependency of freshers on their seniors seems to be relatively higher in medical colleges. This could be largely due to the academic pressure that students are subjected to in the medical course. In an FGD in a medical college, students explained that their syllabus is so vast that it is impossible for the teachers to cover everything in the classroom. In such a situation, it becomes imperative for them to take the help of the seniors who guide them with selective studying.

Similarly, students coming from different cities/towns or states and residing in hostels or paying guest accommodation are more prone to be dependent on their seniors for support pertaining to adjustment in a new environment especially during the initial few days after admission. Thus, these different circumstances leave juniors with no choice, but to comply with seniors' demand and undergo ragging.

**Table No. 3.I.24: Data on the kind of help juniors get from seniors who rag them\***

<b>Q. What kind of help do you get from seniors who ragged you?</b>		
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>
a	They help me with notes, assignments, old question papers	42.1%
b	They guide me during exams	41.5%
c	They protect me from other seniors/students	27.3%
d	Other reasons	5.4%

\*Percentages based on those students who admitted to being ragged

In terms of the kind of help received from seniors, almost equal percentages of respondents say yes to getting help with notes, assignments, old question papers (42.1 per cent) and getting guidance during exams (41.5 per cent). 27.3 per cent students say yes to getting help in the form of protection from other seniors or students.

**Table No. 3.I.25: Disaggregated data on help juniors receive from the seniors who rag them\***

<b>Q. What kind of help do you get from seniors who ragged you?</b>							
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Hosteller</b>	<b>Day-Scholar</b>	<b>Medical</b>	<b>Engineering</b>
a.	They help me with notes, assignments, old question papers	40.6%	44.5%	47.6%	33.2%	53.3%	33.9%
b.	They guide me during exams	41.1%	42.2%	47%	32.9%	61%	33.9%
c.	They protect me from other seniors/students	29.6%	22.9%	30.3%	23.1%	28.1%	33.9%
d.	Other reasons	6.5%	3.6%	4.6%	6.2%	4.1%	5.8%

\*Percentages based on those students who admitted to being ragged

When we analyse the data on the basis of gender, place of residence and kind of study, we get some interesting findings. 29.6 per cent of the male sample answered yes for option “they protect me from other seniors/students” as opposed to 22.9 per cent of female students. If we look at the data in terms of the place of residence, significantly higher percentages of

hostellers than day-scholars acknowledge receiving help from seniors in the area of notes, assignments, old question papers (47.6 per cent), guidance during exams (47 per cent) and protection from other seniors/students (30.3 per cent). Similarly, high percentages of students from medical colleges admitted to getting help with notes, assignments, etc. (53.3 per cent) and guidance during exam (61 per cent) from seniors who rag them. This could perhaps be the reason for the high prevalence of ragging in medical colleges.

The higher education system in the country is structured in such a way that notes from senior students and old question papers are of critical importance for the students to pass examinations and score good marks. This not only adversely impacts the standard of education and encourages students to rote learning, but also makes them dependent on seniors and thus vulnerable to ragging and other means of exploitation.

Another reason why students become dependent on their seniors is the groupism that exists in colleges, especially professional colleges and colleges that attract students from different parts of the country. This gets manifested in its extreme form in hostels and other places of residence for outstation students. These groups on campuses are based primarily on different regions or the states that students come from, but are sometimes also based on caste, religion, economic background, etc. The on-campus inter-group rivalry based on social and cultural differences and prejudices leave the fresher with no choice but to seek protection from the 'veterans' of the group he or she belongs to. The senior students in the group not only assure the fresher protection from the other 'rival' group but also help him in academics, finding accommodation, etc. However, in order to be accepted in the group, freshers have to undergo ragging by the seniors of the group. This becomes evident from the fact that more than 27 per cent students said that seniors who rag them protect them from other seniors. Further, in an FGD in a government engineering college in Karnataka, the students said that giving into the age old tradition of being ragged by the same-state seniors builds a confidence in juniors in receiving guidance and help from the former in academics, extra-curricular or professional life in later stages and seeking protection from seniors of other states.

The survey result shows that dependency on seniors and getting help from them becomes an important reason for freshers complying with ragging. However, apart from forging relationship with seniors to receive support from them, various other reasons for freshers

complying with ragging emerged from the analysis of students' interviews, including fear of ostracisation, acceptance by the group, getting right to rag and enjoying being ragged.

### **Fear**

Students who hesitate to undergo ragging have an immense fear that they will be ostracised or not accepted not only by the seniors but their own batch-mates that they prefer abuse to ostracism. One student recalled his experience of refusing to participate in ragging and how he was termed as 'batch out' owing to his refusal. He said that seniors refused to talk to him or help him with academics and other general things. Following this, even his batch-mates did not talk to him for the initial two months. Now, after two years, he is friends with a few people and speaks to very few seniors. Fear is also created either directly by punishing or beating a few juniors who refused to comply or indirectly by exaggerating the past incidents of ragging to suggest the juniors the kind of trauma they could possibly face.

Use of fear to force juniors to comply with ragging demands can be understood from a study of similar practices. Researchers have suggested that initiation practices are seen as a way to maintain social or cultural orders in particular communities. If a newcomer refuses to participate, this cultural order would be disturbed. In order to maintain this order, threat of personal humiliation and ostracism is applied on the newcomers. This sort of threat has been historically used to maintain group compliance in initiation practices (Johnson, 2011).

### **To be accepted by the group**

Humans, being social animals, have an innate desire to feel part of a larger group. Freshers feel the need to be accepted by the new environment that they want to be a part of and seniors and peers are critical constituents of this environment. Affiliation with a group gives a feeling of security. Hence, in order to gain their acceptance new comers easily comply with ragging practices. The freshers need for acceptance encourages them to agree to even those acts which they may be against otherwise.

In the case of hazing it has been argued that when a freshman is moving away from home for the first time, the feeling of being accepted amongst peers may dominate over any fear that the freshman may have. Though some may find the hazing rituals as harmful but others may

ignore the fear in order to actually raise their self-esteem and confidence amongst their peers<sup>23</sup>.

### **Getting right to rag**

Ragging juniors give a sense of power and control to the perpetrator while the victim feels weak and vulnerable. However, later the victim may like to repeat what was done to him to experience a sense of control over a situation in which he earlier had no control. A study on hazing suggests that a student who undergoes hazing as a victim is more like to support and participate in hazing like activities, thus creating cycle of violence (McCreary, 2012).

### **Enjoys being ragged**

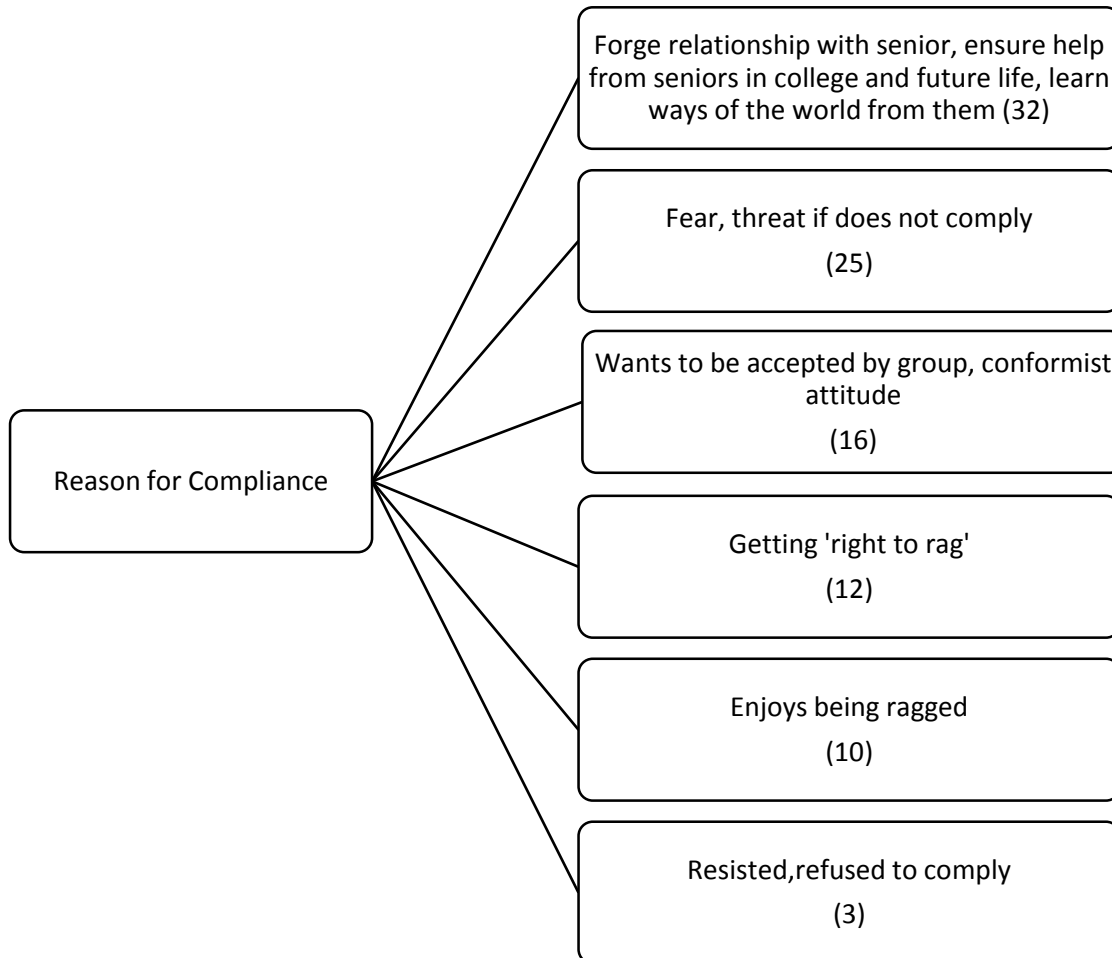
Many students perceive ragging as fun and a process that helps them to bond with the group. It must also be noted that enjoying ragging is a popular construct and many a times even if students do not enjoy ragging they pretend to liking it to appear 'cool' and strong among their peers. Further, a study on hazing found that believing your friends approve of hazing increases the possibility of participating in it (McCreary, 2012).

Turning to the data from interviews with 187 students, only in three interviews had students said they refused to comply with ragging demands. The others offered various reasons for complying as charted on the next page.

---

<sup>23</sup> A study by Anne Mercurio, Samantha Merritt & Amanda Fiumefreddo - *The Effects of Hazing on Student Self-Esteem: Study of Hazing Practices in Greek Organizations in a State College*. Retrieved from <http://www.ramapo.edu/law-journal/files/2014/03/the-effects-of-hazing.pdf>

### Reason for Compliance (from interviews)



**Figure 3.I.6:** The chart above presents the main themes that emerged from interviews with 187 students on the question of the possible reasons for complying with seniors' demand for ragging. Figures in the brackets denote the number of interviews in which that theme occurred.

## Power and dominance

We see that whether it is hazing, bullying or ragging, there exists an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This imbalance of power makes the ‘weaker’ vulnerable to abuse which is manifested in the form of ragging in colleges or bullying in schools. Further, considering the issue of ragging from the perspective of power, we note that ragging perpetuates senior-junior hierarchy in colleges. As one student in an interview rightly commented: “Ragging also shows inequality in university whereby seniors think that they are superior because they started a year or two before juniors.”

## Importance of Respect from Junior Students

**Table No. 3.I.26: Importance of juniors’ respecting and obeying seniors**

<b>Q. How important is it for you that your juniors respect and obey you? *</b>			
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest values</b>
a	Not at all important	13%	STgGD (32.8%), STnPD (24%), STgGE (22.9%), SKrGE (22.9%), WRjPE (20.9%),
b	Not so important	32%	-
c	Important	31%	-
d	Very important	8%	NUpGM2 (23.5%), STnGM (18.4%), STgPN (14.8%), WMhGA (14.5%), EWbGH (13.1%), NUpGD1 (11.5%), NHrGP (11.2%), NUpGM1 (10.1%),
e	Did not answer	16%	

\*All calculation in the table are based on responses from senior students

We asked the senior students how important it is for them that their juniors respect them. In the survey, almost 40 per cent senior students (students from second year and above) said it was ‘important’ or ‘very important’. Some of the institutions, whose students accorded high importance to juniors respecting and obeying them, include a government medical college in UP (23.5 per cent), a medical college in Tamil Nadu (18.4 per cent), private nursing college in Telangana (14.8 per cent), and a government ayurvedic college in Maharashtra.

The importance of juniors respecting their seniors was also observed in our qualitative data. In an interview, a third year student from a private engineering college in U.P. gave the following rationale on why juniors should respect their seniors:

When juniors come to college, a little subordination should be taught to them, I am not saying that they should always feel subordinate to me, but they should respect me. Why? Because I feel that because I am in college, I can teach them how to behave and what to do.

Furthermore, a student said: “Ragging should be done with the freshers so that they know how to respect their seniors but this should be done in limits.” Another student said that there is no ragging in his college because of which juniors do not respect seniors: “Some ragging should be there so that juniors should at least respect their seniors.”

However, the belief about respecting seniors is not just limited to seniors but was echoed by teachers as well. A teacher in an interview said that introduction is essential otherwise juniors do not learn to respect seniors. While another teacher said that it is important to maintain fear and distance between students and teachers. In quite a few colleges, we observed a hierarchical relationship among teachers as well. In one medical college the research team observed charts in classrooms prescribing behaviour for juniors – how they should obey their seniors and respect them.

**Table No. 3.I.27: Seniors liking being addressed as sir/ma’am**

<b>Q. Do you like being addressed as Sir/Ma’am by juniors?*</b>			
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest value</b>
a	Yes	27.4%	WMhGA (54.8%) NUpPE (54.2%) NUpGM2 (69.4%)

			NUpGM1 (73.6%)
b	No	58.1%	EWbGD (85.2%) NDIGD1 (75.6%) SKlGE (78.8%) STnPD (90%) SKrGE (77.7%) STgPN (77.8%)
c	Did not answer	14.5%	-

\*All calculation in the table are based on responses from senior students

Further, we asked the students if they like being addressed as Sir or Ma'am by their juniors. On analysing the overall data we find that 27.4 per cent students said 'yes'. The desire to be addressed as Sir/Ma'am was highest among students from two government medical colleges in UP (73.6 per cent and 69.4 per cent), a government ayurvedic college in Maharashtra (54.8 per cent) and a private engineering college in UP (54.2 per cent).

In a prestigious engineering college, students strongly supported the culture of addressing seniors as Sir/Ma'am. They believed that the system helps to inculcate a professional attitude of respect towards the seniors and the same works for clubs and societies as every organisation demands hierarchy. They further believed that respecting seniors would help them later in their career as many of the graduates would be holding senior positions in various companies.

**Table No. 3.I.28: Disaggregated data on basis of gender, place of residence and type of study**

Q. Do you like being addressed as Sir/Ma'am by juniors?*						
Options	Gender		Place of Residence		Type of Study	
	Male	Female	Hosteller	Day-Scholar	Degree	Professional
Yes	28.9%	25.5%	35.9%	18.5%	22.8%	29.7%
No	56.9%	59.9%	50.5%	65.8%	63.1%	56.6%
Did not answer	14.2%	14.6%	13.6%	15.7%	14.1%	13.8%

\*All calculation in the table are based on responses from senior students

We find that significantly higher percentage of hostellers (35.9 per cent) than day-scholars (18.5 per cent) and students from professional colleges (29.7 per cent) than degree colleges

(22.8 per cent) like being addressed as Sir or Ma'am. Similarly, the same tendency is higher among males than females.

**Table No. 3.I.29: Seniors getting offended if juniors don't address them as sir/ma'am**

<b>Q. Do you feel offended if juniors don't address you as Sir/Ma'am?*</b>			
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest value</b>
a	Yes	12.9%	NUpGM1 (36.5%) NUpGM2 (30.6%) NUpPE (21.7%) STgGD (22.4%) STnGM (28.6%) WMhGA (21%)
b	No	71.6%	SKIGE (80%) STnPD(90%) SKrPM (88.6%) STgGE(81.9%) SKrGE (91.1%)
c	Did not answer	15.5%	-

\*All calculation in the table are based on responses from senior students

Almost 72 per cent students answered the question 'Do you feel offended if juniors don't address you as Sir/Ma'am?' in the negative. However, 13 per cent affirmed that they feel offended if their juniors do not address them as Sir/Ma'am. Institutions where this tendency comes across as highest include the two government medical colleges in UP (36.5 per cent and 30.6 per cent) among others.

The importance of being addressed as 'Sir/Ma'am' for senior students could be understood from a recently reported ragging incident in the media (*Hindustan Times*, October, 2012) where two first year MBA students accused a group of seniors of beating them up for not addressing them as 'Sir'.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup><http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/mbas-cry-ragging-but-amity-in-denial/article1-951984.aspx>

**Table no. 3.I.30: Seniors' view on disciplining juniors who behave disrespectfully**

<b>Q. Do you think juniors who do not obey seniors or behave disrespectfully towards seniors should be disciplined or punished?*</b>			
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest value</b>
a	Yes	33.0%	EOrPE (55.3%) NHrGD (51.2%) NUpGL (50%) EWbPE (49.3%) NPuGM (47.9%) NUpGM1 (47.1%)
b	No	49.7%	SKrGE (72.6%) STnPD (70%) WMhGA (67.7%) NDIGE (65.8%) STgGE(65.7%) NDIGD1 (65.1%)
c	Did not answer	17.3%	-

\*All calculation in the table are based on responses from senior students

When we asked senior students if they think juniors who do not obey seniors should be disciplined or punished, almost 50 per cent of the students said 'no' whereas 33 percent answered in the affirmative. The highest values for 'yes' were from a private engineering college in Orissa (55.3 per cent), a government degree college in Haryana (51.2 per cent), a government law college in UP (50 per cent).

Several cases of seniors beating their juniors for not showing respect to them have been reported in the media. In a ragging case reported in the media, a first year student of a homeopathy college in Himachal Pradesh was beaten badly by his senior for not saluting him<sup>25</sup>. Similarly, in an incident in a private engineering college in Andhra Pradesh, three juniors were beaten badly by their seniors for not showing enough respect to them during the annual day function. The juniors were beaten so badly that they had to be hospitalised (*New Indian Express*, June, 2009)<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>25</sup><http://noragging.blogspot.in/2009/06/himachal-pradesh-medical-college.html>

<sup>26</sup><http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/hyderabad/article40191.ece?service=print>

From *Times of India* August 23, 2011<sup>27</sup>

*An MBBS student at MBS Medical College in Kota was seriously injured when a senior resident doctor attacked him with an iron pipe when he refused to obey his commands. The victim is undergoing treatment at the same hospital with both his hands fractured. Vikram asked Dinesh to put his plates in the sink which he refused. Both had a verbal fight over this. "We have taken the statement of Dinesh. He says that they both had dinner. Vikram asked Dinesh to put his plates in the sink which he refused. Both had a verbal fight over this. It seems Vikram wanted to take revenge over this," said investigating officer Brijprakash.*

The above cases reported in the media show how senior students resort to violence to force juniors to obey and respect them. By doing so, senior students seek to establish their dominant position with respect to juniors and maintain the senior-junior hierarchy that should not be challenged by anyone.

It must be noted that there is pervasive presence and acceptance of domination and deference as a given in a hierarchically structured society such as ours. This hierarchy is established during the ragging period and maintained till the end of college. The entitlement of seniors to such power and authority over juniors is seldom questioned. From a psychological perspective, this reflects the internalisation of the kind of power relations that are prevalent in our socio-cultural context where respect for and obedience to seniors is valorised. It is also not uncommon in our social institutions that power is used coercively to maintain status and authority. This factor is evident at its worst in cases of ragging where coercive power has become brutally violent and resulted in death and injury. In its 'benign' form it is a benevolent power that bestows help and support to the junior provided due deference is shown.

Furthermore, there is wide social acceptance of violent action as a justified way to punish or discipline someone. Cases of domestic violence, communal violence, corporal punishment

---

<sup>27</sup>[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-08-23/jaipur/29918147\\_1\\_mbbs-student-hostel-room-medical-student](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-08-23/jaipur/29918147_1_mbbs-student-hostel-room-medical-student)

and so on illustrate how violent acts are justified and rationalised. It is not surprising, then, for physical violence to be a part of ragging, especially when it is ‘to teach a lesson’ or ‘to discipline’ a junior. And, enforcing subordination through ragging may be particularly important in professional colleges where the inflated egos of juniors who have succeeded in tough competition is perceived to pose a threat to the seniority-based hierarchy.

### **Social discrimination, inclusion and ‘Othering’**

Factors like region, language, caste etc. were noticed frequently in our analysis of media reports and existing literature on ragging and were therefore included for study. The table below displays the results obtained for various factors based on which students feel discriminated against.

**Table No. 3.I.31: Differential treatment because of discrimination**

<b>Q. Do you think that sometimes you are treated differently or discriminated against in college on the basis of?</b>			
<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest values</b>
a	Region	12.2%	WMhGM3 (56.1%) SKrGE (32.9%) STgGE (29.4%) WMhGM1 (27.5%) NUpGM2 (26.4%) NUpGM1 (20.7%)
b	Caste	8%	NUpGM1 (39.1%) NUpGM2 (16.1%) NHrGD (14.5%) NHrGP (13%) NUpGL(12.6%) WMhGM1 (10.5%) NUpGD2 (10.4%)
c	Religion	4.5%	NUpGM1 (17.9%) NPuGM (10.6%) NUpGM2 (10.3%)

			STgPN (8.8%)
d	Language	12.9%	STgPN (33%) SKIGE (27.5%) SKrGE (27.1%) NPuGM (23.8%) EWbPE (21.2%) EWbGH (21%) STgGE (20%)
e	Gender	6.3%	NUpGM1 (25.4%) WMhGM2 (11%) WMhGM3 (10.7%) EWbPE (10.6%)
f	Looks/Physical appearance	13%	STnGL (19.4%) WMhGM2 (19%) NPuGM (18.7%) NUpGM1 (18.4%)
g	Economic background	6.5%	NPuGV (20%) STgPN (12.3%) NUpGM1 (11%)
h	Rural/Urban	6.6%	WMhGM3 (18.2%) STgPN (15.8%) WMhGM1 (13.5%) NUpGM1 (10.9%) NPuGV (10.7%) EWbGD (10.5%)
i	Public school background	3.4%	NUpGM1 (8.9%) NUpGL (6.9%) NUpGM2 (5.2%) NUpGD2 (5.2%)
j	None of these	53%	-

From the table, it can be seen that region (12 per cent), language (12.9 per cent) and looks/physical appearance (13 per cent) emerge as salient factors leading to discrimination among students in colleges. Caste based discrimination was admitted by eight per cent of students; however high percentages were reported from colleges in the North. With regard to college-wise analysis, it was observed that a high percentage of regional discrimination was reported from a government medical college in Maharashtra (56 per cent). Caste and gender based discriminations are most prevalent in a government medical college in UP. A private

nursing college in Telangana (33 per cent) and a government engineering college in Kerala (27 per cent) have the highest percentage in language- based discrimination. Overall, a government medical college in UP reported high values for all kinds of discrimination.

**Table No. 3.I.32: Disaggregated data of discrimination on basis of gender, place of residence and nature of study**

S. No	Options	Overall Percent age	Male	Female	Hosteller	Day-Scholar	Degree	Professional
a	Region	12.2%	14.7%	9.0%	16.7%	7.6%	6.6%	14.6%
b	Caste	8%	9.1%	6.3%	9.1%	6.7%	8.6%	7.7%
c	Religion	4.5%	5.3%	3.3%	5.0%	3.9%	3.8%	4.8%
d	Language	12.9%	14.2%	11.3%	15.5%	10.0%	9.5%	14.4%
e	Gender	6.3%	6.3%	6.4%	7.3%	5.3%	4.7%	7.0%
f	Looks/Physical Appearance	13%	12.3%	14.1%	13.7%	12.7%	11.9%	13.5%
g	Economic Background	6.5%	7.6%	5.1%	6.7%	6.3%	7.3%	6.2%
h	Rural/Urban	6.6%	7.3%	5.7%	7.4%	5.8%	6.7%	6.6%
i	Public School Background	3.4%	3.7%	3.0%	3.5%	3.1%	3.3%	3.5%

In disaggregating the data from Table 3.I.31, it can be seen that regional discrimination was observed more in professional colleges (14.6 per cent) than in degree colleges (6.6 per cent). A similar trend can be seen for gender-wise distribution where males have a higher percentage than females and for place of residence, where hostellers face more regional discrimination than day-scholars. With respect to gender, except for looks/physical appearance, males reported higher percentages for various discriminations than females.

### Social discrimination factors in ragging

Students were asked which factors associated with social discrimination were also involved in ragging.

**Table No. 3.I.33: Factors involved in ragging**

Q. Did ragging involve any of the following factors?		
	Options	Overall Percentage*
a	Caste	6.2%
b	Region	15.6%
c	Religion	5%
d	Language	12.2%
e	Gender	8.5%
f	Looks/physical appearance	20.7%
g	Economic background	4.9%
h	Rural/Urban background	7.1%
i	Public school background	4.2%
j	Any other (please specify)	3.6%
k	None of these	46.7%

\*All calculations are based on students who admitted to being mildly or severely ragged

Like the previous table, the highest percentage (20.7 per cent) can be observed for looks and appearance, language (12.2 per cent) and region (15.6 per cent) as factors in ragging. Rural/urban background (7.1 per cent) and caste (6.2 per cent) fall next in line as factors that may influence ragging. This is evidence for the fact that while ragging may serve as an inclusion rite, it may as well act as an exclusion--discriminatory practice.

Another interesting finding emerged from the **zone-wise** (North, East, South and West) analysis of data. It was found that ragging based on regional discrimination was highest in the West (17.8 per cent), followed by the South at 16.1 per cent. Ragging based on language, however, was most prominent in colleges in the East (19.8 per cent). Caste-based ragging was more prevalent in North with 8.7 per cent students accepting they were ragged based on their caste. The fact that caste features more frequently in the North than in the South (2.9 per cent) is perhaps related to the fact that student populations are more diverse in the South, with its longer history of affirmative action. These differences may also be reflective of the larger

regional or state wise socio-cultural biases/prejudices that influence the dynamics within the microcosms of educational institutions.

### **Looks/Physical Appearance**

In other words, features that mark certain students as ‘outsiders’ or ‘Others’ seem to underlie the practise of ragging. This reinforces differences and hierarchy and marks out those already facing discrimination for further humiliation. One of the most obvious ways of ‘Othering’ is physical appearance because identities of race, gender, etc. are embodied and visible to the world. Research suggests that in ‘Othering’, two distinct groups are formed: one that represents the norm and is valued and other that is characterized by its faults, is vulnerable to discrimination (Staszak, 2008). Looks/physical appearance (20.7 per cent), which can be an easy marker of who falls outside the ‘normal’ then becomes a salient factor in discrimination and ultimately ragging. This may be a possible explanation for the discrimination faced by students from North-eastern states in the capital and other parts of the country. In an FGD at an engineering college when asked about whether looks plays role in ragging, the girls particularly agreed. One of the girls also mentioned that often people with disability are also picked on.

### **Regionalism**

In our survey 15.6 per cent students admitted that they faced ragging on the basis of region. Similarly, in our qualitative data too, there is ample evidence of regionalism becoming a strong foundation on which ragging occurs. In one of the FGDs in a government degree college in Delhi, a participant admitted that she faced regional discrimination and that she was taunted as ‘Bihari’ by virtue of her surname; and her language is often made fun of. The students in the FGD said that clothes are closely scrutinized and commented upon.

The aspect of regional discrimination in ragging came out in another FGD at a medical college in Maharashtra, where a participant said that ragging was done region-wise- i.e., seniors from the same region rag their juniors. They also protect the juniors from their own region from being ragged by others, making clear again how ragging is used as an inclusion rite. Another respondent in Maharashtra said that there is always a clear distinction between the Marathis and the non-Marathis, those who have come through the state-quota and those

who have been admitted through the All India Pre-Medical test. In terms of ragging practices, the respondents listed that they are asked to call name, do assignments for their seniors; often ragging tasks target juniors from other regions as subjects of pranks. A student was quoted as saying: “There are different groups based on region which have conflicts between them.”

Further, a caller on the helpline from a medical college in the South reported to have become a victim of the North-South divide. He alleged that since the director of the institution was from Kerala and so were the senior boys who were ragging juniors, the ragers enjoyed impunity because they knew the director would ‘protect’ them. The caller also reported that in the case of the perpetrators being from the North, strict and immediate action was taken against them. To address the issue of regionalism and inter-state discrimination in colleges, a student in one of the interviews recommended that: “Inter-state interaction be boosted without which students from ‘backward’ states get heavily ragged and those from ‘well-off’ states don’t.”

From *The Times of India*, Dec, 2010<sup>28</sup>

*Talking to Pune Mirror, outside the boys’ hostel of the (CoAP) Pravin Surve (19), one of the complainants, who hails from Washim district said, “We, the first year students have been harassed by the seniors since we came to stay in the hostel on August 26, 2010. From the very first day, we were introduced to the custom of regionalism which dominates the student community. The custom is known as ‘Spirit’ here which indicates that a senior from a particular region or district has total right to harass, rag and even support a student from his own area. This has been happening since a long time and is followed here as a tradition. A junior has to fulfil all the demands and do the work given by their seniors.”*

*Another victim, Pravin Shelke, a native of Jalna said, “Though students from different regions stay in the same hostel room, groupism between students of same region prevails.”*

*Another student who hails from Nanded on condition of anonymity said, “Regionalism is referred to as ‘spirit’ here. Whether it is friendship or*

---

<sup>28</sup><http://epaper.timesofindia.com/Default/Scripting/ArticleWin.asp?From=Archive&Source=Page&Skin=MIRRO RNEW&BaseHref=PMIR%2F2010%2F12%2F02&GZ=T&ViewMode=HTML&EntityId=Ar00100&AppName=1>

*enmity, it has to be with students of the same region. The regionalism factor applies for the ragging issue as well, where seniors of a particular district rag juniors from their own region. However, with time, the relationship develops, and the same seniors help and support the junior students.” Another MSc student said, “Now, this groupism or ragging is no more restricted to regionalism, it has come down to specific districts. The student community from Ahmednagar district are the dominating group as most of the students hail from there.”*

## **Language**

Ragging is also done on basis of language the individual speaks or his/her accent. Though our survey results showed that ragging on language-based issue is highest in the east, however our qualitative data suggest high prevalence of ragging on basis of language in Maharashtra too.

In a case reported from Maharashtra in one of our FGDs, a male student mentioned that he was ragged outside campus (on a metro). He said he was picked upon because of his clearly distinguishable accent. Further, discrimination based on language was reported from various colleges in Maharashtra. A respondent in an FGD said that her college is an English Medium only on paper and most classes are conducted in Marathi. She reported that even Viva examination is held in Marathi sometimes and non-Marathi speaking students are reprimanded for their inability to learn the language. She said that a lot of students struggle with the language and the non-accommodating attitude of the staff towards the non- Marathi speaking students. In another example from the state, a lot of non-Marathi speaking students from a medical college complained that they are discriminated against. They said they are unable to follow lectures as many teachers teach in Marathi. In a government dental college in Maharashtra, most faculty members and students are Marathi- speaking and expect people from other states to become fluent. Seniors also expect juniors to imbibe the Marathi culture.

Moreover, discrimination based on the ability or non-ability to speak in English language is quite common across college campuses and often becomes a basis for class-based discrimination and a factor in ragging as well. A caller on the anti-ragging helpline discussed the importance of being able to converse in English. He shared how a person belonging to a

small town may not be able to converse very well in English and how this becomes the basis for ragging for many people. Languages will always be a barrier and this would never change according to him. Another caller made the same observation and said that people hailing from small-towns are not well versed with English and cannot be expected to speak in English. Language plays a big role in ragging according to him. Another student on the anti-ragging helpline shared that he perceives introduction to be rather important. However it is the 'language' during introduction that is important. He too discussed how people from small towns are not comfortable with English and if a senior asks for another person's introduction in English then the junior 'cannot give his introduction' properly.

The context, however, can also be an important factor in deciphering how the minority-majority dynamics play out. For instance, while English privileges some students in some situations, it is also true that it disprivileges English speaking students in a situation where the majority of students do not speak English. This is said to be one of the factors leading to the death of Mr. Aman Kachru who was ragged because he came from a privileged background and was English speaking.

### **Caste**

In our survey 6.2 per cent students admitted to facing caste based ragging. However, qualitative data gave insight into this aspect of ragging. According to a caller on the anti-ragging helpline: "There is a lot of groupism in the hostel. These groups are often caste-based. For instance, the *bhumihaar* caste students tend to form a group." According to him, an implicit way of ragging based on caste was invented by students of a Bihar medical college where they would ask their juniors: "What is your 'phylum'?" 'Phylum' in loose medical parlance denotes caste. The 'degree of ragging' would then depend on the caste of the junior.

Influence of caste in ragging can be understood from some of the cases of ragging reported in the media.

From *Deccan Herald*, Jan, 2011<sup>29</sup>

*Barely 17, Sunny Kumar Roshan, a first year MBBS student in Patna Medical College (PMC), learnt it the hard way. Only when the ordeal became unbearable, he committed suicide in the state capital when the nation was celebrating Republic Day. Though the college authorities and his seniors deny the ragging theory, his father Kameshwar Rai insists that Sunny was upset because of his seniors. "He had told me about ragging incidents, and also that some senior medicos had asked him to cough up Rs 1,200 as chanda (donation) for Saraswati Puja," said the distraught father.*

*"If you belong to the upper strata of the society, you may be let off. But in case you are an OBC or extremely backward class, then you may have to bear the brunt of ragging," he said, but clarified further, "No one gets physical. That is for sure." Sunny, from a backward community, could possibly have been a victim of this system.*

Another true account of caste based ragging reported in the media is given below:

From *The New Indian Express*, Nov, 2008<sup>30</sup>

*Candid about the fact that everyone was aware of everyone's caste identity, students of a caste Hindu community said the first thing they were asked as soon as they entered Dr. Ambedkar College on the first day was: "What is your caste?" Ragging was based on caste. "The ragging I endured in their hands cannot be put on print and homosexual assault was the least of our worries," said Satish, a final year student. Caste Hindu students said the attack on non-SC students in the hostel last year landed 30 of them in hospital with injuries and forced students to seek transfer to other colleges. Now, the hostel was completely for Dalits.*

*"We had to be violent as the college authorities turned a blind eye to our problems. Nobody wanted to be branded as anti-Dalits. Proof of which is that no action has been taken by the college against erring students in the last many*

---

<sup>29</sup><http://www.deccanherald.com/content/133346/caste-based-ragging-bihar.html>

<sup>30</sup><http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/article5168.ece?service=print>

*years. If the college principal had taken steps three years ago, then the violence would have not escalated to such levels," says Ashwathaman.*

From ANI, June, 2006<sup>31</sup>

*Tapan Jajati Chhuria, a second year engineering student, has been bed-ridden ever since he was mercilessly beaten up two months ago. The 22-year-old is a student of Padma Shree Krutartha Acharya Institute of Engineering and Technology at Bargarh. Tapan, who has lost hearing in one ear, said that he was targeted by seniors as he belonged to a low caste. "That day, when I was returning from my practical classes with another first year student, three students came and started beating me with shoes and belts," said Tapan. Santosh Acharya, the Principal of the college however said that the altercation was initiated by the victim.*

## **Religion**

Although religion as a factor has received the lowest percentage, in certain areas it does emerge as a salient factor, as can be seen from the following report:

From IBN Live, Aug, 2012<sup>32</sup>

*Scores of people of Guru Singh Sabha (GSS) held a protest outside the Superintendent of Police office alleging that senior students indulged in ragging a Sikh student of Prestige College and poked fun at his religious symbols including "pagri and juri" on the eve of Independence Day. SS president Gurudeep Bhatia who led the delegation and submitted a memorandum to the Superintendent of Police (East), alleged that three students, Shivam Yadav, Chanchal Yadav, and Rishi Batra not only indulged in ragging the Sikh fresher Dilraj Singh Hanuja, but also removed his "pagri" and touched religious symbols before beating him up badly. The GSS demanded action against the accused and a criminal case to be filed under ragging rules against the accused.*

---

<sup>31</sup> <http://norragging.blogspot.in/2006/06/one-more-student-becomes-victim-of.html>

<sup>32</sup> <http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/sikhs-allege-ragging-and-insult-of-religious-symbols/1045317.html>

A student's experience on campus is affected by various social and cultural factors. These factors hold the potential to draw groups of people together. Research shows that the social group to which we belong form our social identity. The shared social identity of members in a group influences the way one group behaves towards and perceives other groups. These perceptions and behaviours in turn define the social identity of members in the groups. The

**Box No. 3.I.1:**

*Charles-Arnold Van Gennep noted that virtually all human societies use ceremonial rites to mark significant transitions in the social status of individuals. According to him, the death of one identity and the rebirth of another occur in three phases: separation, transition (liminality), and incorporation.*

***Separation phase** refers to a physical separation and is marked by severing of past ties. In the **liminal/transition** phase, the former identity is shed, and the newcomer enters a "liminal" or "in-between" phase between the now dead "self" and the future, post-initiation identity. Now, the fresher must undergo the tests of strength that characterizes initiation rituals. Once the newcomer has endured the initiation rituals, he/she is welcomed by the community into the social group through an **integration/incorporation** (membership) phase. During this phase, "all of the cultural elements that accompany the newly acquired identity are transferred to the successful initiate" (as cited in Johnson, 2011, p. 205).*

tendency to define oneself by membership of a group leads to having a positive perception and behaviour towards own group, but a negative one towards other groups. This inter-group discrimination leads to prejudice and stereotyping<sup>33</sup>.

Discrimination of any kind in a learning environment curbs the students' scope of growing academically as well as emotionally. It is, however, quite prevalent in campuses across the country because of the complex social system that encompasses factors such as region, caste, class, language, religion, gender and sexuality, which lead to groupism and 'Othering' or the way members of one social group perceive the members of another group as different or 'others'. This often leads to victimisation of students, especially those who are in minority.

A number of international studies associated victimisation with ethnicity, revealing ethnic minority students as more likely to become victims of bullying, but not perpetrators (Protogerou & Flisher, 2012). The same goes for ragging as well.

---

<sup>33</sup> Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_psychology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_psychology)

## Bystander Responses

The victim-perpetrator focus needs to be enlarged to include the role of the bystander who is in fact a large section of the community. Bystanders have the power to perpetuate or prevent ragging (or bullying) by their tacit acceptance or discouragement of the practice. In order to examine this further, we asked senior students about how they felt when witnessing an incident of ragging and their support to their batchmates in ragging juniors.

**Table No. 3.I.34: Senior students' actions/reactions to witnessing ragging of their juniors**

<b>Q. What do you do when you see seniors ragging juniors?*</b>			
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest values</b>
a.	I enjoy watching	6.1%	WMhPE (14.9%), STnGM (14.3%), SKIPE (13%), STgGE (12.4%), NUpGM1 (11.5%), SKIGE (11.3%), SKrGE (10.2%)
b.	I sometimes join them	7.9%	STnGM (19.7%), SKIGE (15%), NPuGM (14.1%), SKIPE (13.9%), STgGE (13.1%), SKrGE (12.1%), WMhPE (11.9%), NhrGD (11.8%), NDIGE (11.7%)
c.	I ignore it since it does not concern me	13.9%	STnGM(29.3%), SKrGE(28.7%), SKrPM(28.2%), NPuGM(22.5%), EOrPE(22.4%), WMhGM3(21.5%), NUpGM1(19.2%)
d.	I feel bad for the junior but cannot help	21.4%	EOrPE(40%), WMhGM2(38.4%), STnGM(36.1%), EWbPE(35.1%), SKrGE(33.1%),

			SKrPM(32.9%), WMhGA(30.6%)
e.	I try to persuade them to stop ragging	23.9%	STgGD(37.9%), NDIGE(34.2%), EWbGH(33.7%), WRjGE(30.6%), NHrGP(30.5%), NPuGV(29.8%), NHrGD(29.4%), EWbPE(29.3%)
f.	I feel upset and want to complain but am afraid of the consequences	8.5%	NHrGP(18.5%), WMhGM2(13.7%), EWbPE(14.6%), EWbGD(13.3%), NDIGE(13.3%)
g.	I complain about the incident	9.5%	NUpGD2(42.6%), STnPD(30%), STgGD(27.6%), WRjGE(23.8%), WRjPE(22.6%)
h.	Did not answer	8.2%	-

\*All calculation in the table are based on responses from senior students

It is heartening to note that more than half of the students felt bad about the incident and nearly a fifth thought about complaining or actually did so. In terms of action, 23.9 per cent said that they intervened and stopped juniors from being ragged and 9.5 per cent students complained about the incident.

Bystanders have significant powers to prevent the event both physically as well as psychologically, but they do not intervene as they are not always able to interpret the event correctly and feel the need to mediate. As we can see in Table No 3.I.34, 6.1 per cent students on witnessing ragging considered it as fun while 7.9 per cent joined their batch-mates in ragging juniors. These students, who witness ragging on the sidelines and perceive the event as fun, may provide implicit applause that can reinforce perpetrator's behaviour.

Approximately 14 per cent students did not intervene as they felt that it did not concern them whereas 21.4 per cent students felt bad for the junior but could not help. Studies done on

bystander effect have shown that individually people might try to stop a situation but they are less likely to do so in a group setting as they would first observe the reaction of the other people. When others are present there is diffusion of responsibility and an individual might feel less responsible to act in that situation. Moreover, researchers have argued that individuals are more likely to intervene if they perceive common social identity with the other bystanders or with the victim (Levine & Crowther, 2008).

Another important reason for individuals not acting in the situation is the fear of retaliation or ridicule by others. In our survey, 8.5 per cent students admitted that they wanted to intervene but were afraid of the consequences. In a ragging case reported in *Times of India* in August, 2013, a second year student was allegedly attacked by his classmate with a knife when he prevented him from ragging first year students. The student was injured so badly that he had to be admitted to a hospital.<sup>34</sup>

However, the fact that over half the students either felt bad when they saw a fresher being ragged or did not support ragging indicates that there is a huge resource that can be mobilised to act against the practice provided creative ways are devised to involve them and affirm that they are acting responsibly. Studies have shown that bystanders in other situations (eg. accidents, other crises, etc.) mobilize in helpful ways when someone else takes the first step or when they note that they are not alone. In an observational study on bullying, it was noted that when bystanders took the side of the victim, they were successful in putting an end to a bullying episode (Salmivalli, 2010).

---

<sup>34</sup><http://noragging.blogspot.in/2013/09/student-attacked-by-classmate-in-nit.html>

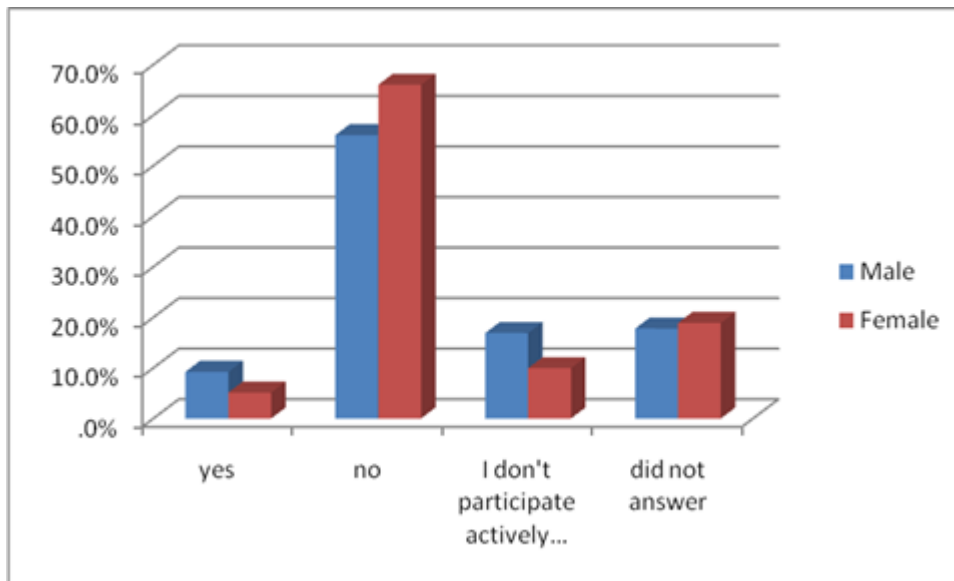
**Table No. 3.I.35: Seniors supporting their batchmates in ragging juniors**

<b>Q. Do you support your classmates when they rag juniors?</b>			
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest values</b>
a	Yes	7.3%	SKIPE(15.2%), SKIGE(15%), WMhPE(14.9%), STnGM(12.9%), STgGE(10.5%), NUpGM1(10.1%), SKrGE(9.6%)
b	No	60.6%	STgGD(77.6%), WMhGM2(76.7%), EWbGD(74.2%), NHrGD(72.3%), STnPD(72%), NUpGD1(70%)
c	I don't participate actively but just accompany them when they rag	13.7%	STnGM(38.1%), SKIGE(31.3%), EOrPE(24.7%), NUpPE(24.7%), SKrGE(24.2%), STgGE(22.9%), NUpGM1(20.7%)
d	Did not answer	18.4%	

\*All calculation in the table are based on responses from senior students

When we asked the senior students if they support their batchmates in ragging juniors, around seven per cent admitted they do, while 13.7 per cent said they do not participate actively but just accompany their batchmates when they rag juniors. The highest percentage of students who admitted to supporting batch-mates in ragging are from a private engineering college in Kerala (15.2 per cent), a government engineering college in Kerala (15 per cent) and a private engineering college in Maharashtra (14.9 per cent).

**Figure 3.I.7: Disaggregated data on seniors supporting their batchmates in ragging juniors**



When we analyse the above question on the basis of gender we find that males have a greater tendency than females to support batch-mates in ragging juniors.

**Table No. 3.I.36: Reasons for supporting classmates in the act of ragging**

<b>Q. Why do you support your classmates in ragging juniors?</b>		
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall percentage*</b>
a.	I think ragging is fun	48.2%
b.	If I don't support them they will make fun of me	5.9%
c.	If I don't support them they will beat me	4.6%
d.	If I don't support them I will lose their friendship	12.2%
e.	If I don't support them everyone will think I am weak	8.1%
f.	Other	9.2%

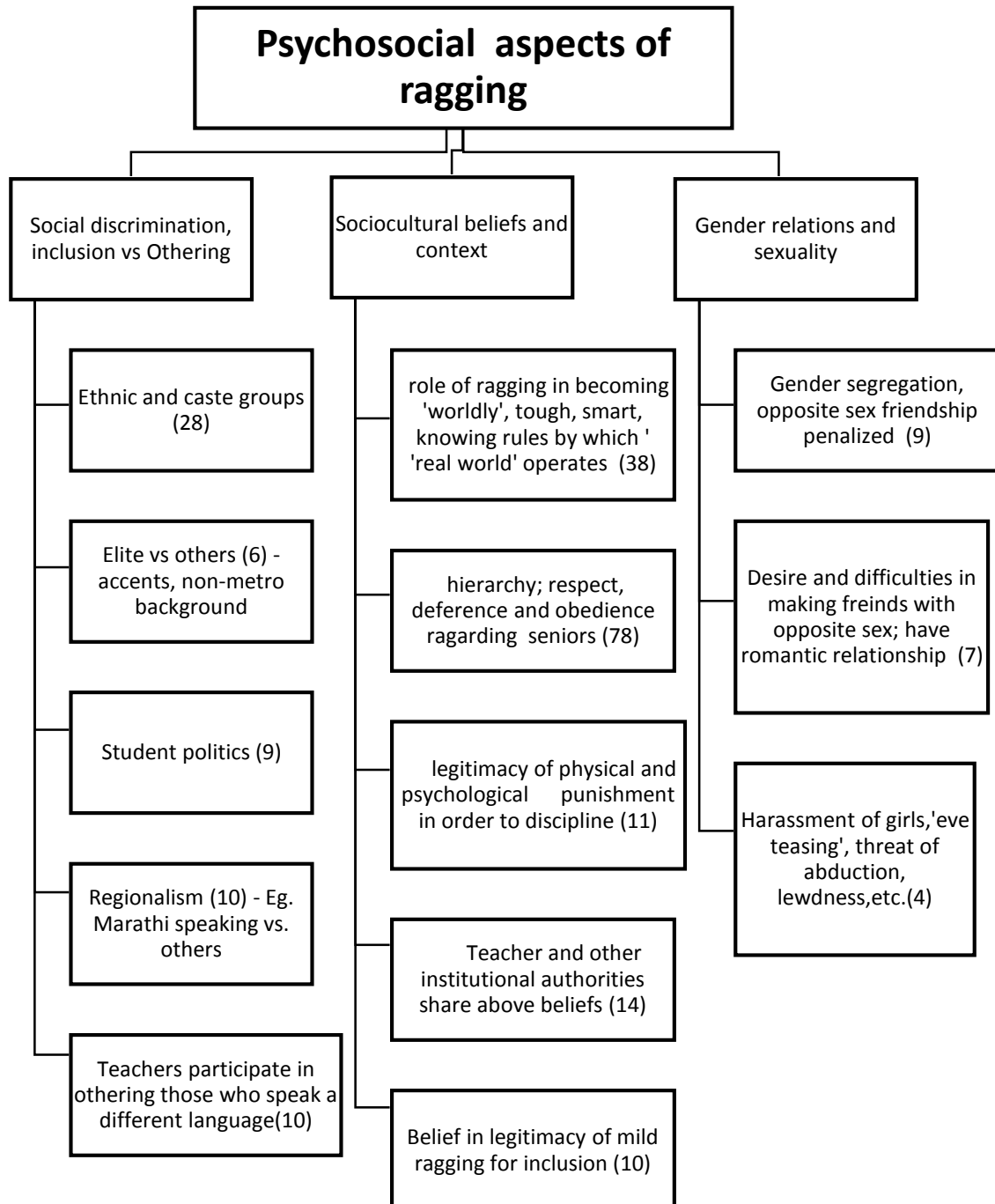
g.	Did not answer	22.6%
----	----------------	-------

\*Percentages based on those who admitted to supporting batch-mates in ragging freshers

Table No. 3.I.36 presents various reasons due to which students actively or passively support their batch-mates in ragging practices. Almost 48 per cent of students said that ragging is fun. Another 12 per cent felt that if they do not support classmates who rag, they will lose their friendship. Another 8.1 per cent accepted the fear of coming off as weak as a reason to comply with their classmates' actions.

Research has shown that individuals in groups are more likely to engage in behaviour that they would have found unacceptable as individuals. A similar phenomenon is observed in ragging too. This could be because of the conformity pressure and students' need for acceptance and belonging. Further, sometimes students could be directly forced to rag their juniors. A complainant on the anti-ragging helpline told us that second year seniors are pressurized by the third and fourth year students to rag freshers and continue the tradition or else second year students will themselves get ragged by their seniors.

**Thematic representation of factors involved in ragging**



**Figure No. 3.I.8:** The chart above presents the main themes that emerged from interviews with 187 students on various psychosocial aspects of ragging. The figures in the brackets denote the number of interviews in which that theme occurred.

The themes emerging in student interviews echo the findings of the survey and have been discussed in detail above. Special attention may be drawn to the subject of gender relations and sexuality which has also been elaborated upon in the ragging prevalence and practices section of this chapter.

## Ragging and Educational Goals

Ragging can have an adverse impact on educational goals and is also reflective of lacunae in the educational system itself. According to Leo Nostrand, the goal of education is commonly thought to include: "the whole development of an individual, apart from his occupational training. It includes the civilizing of his life purposes, the refining of his emotional reactions, and the maturing of his understanding of the nature of things according to the best knowledge of our time."<sup>35</sup> A report by the Task Force on Higher Education and Society convened by the World Bank and UNESCO (2000), highlighted the general educational goals of encouraging ethical behaviour, responsible citizenship, critical thinking, broad-mindedness, communication skill, and so on.<sup>36</sup>

In order to reach these general educational goals, institutions have to do more than impart technical or subject expertise. This is especially important during the early college years when young people are moving into the responsibilities and freedoms of adulthood but may not yet have the life skills to manage the transition. In this regard, we may ask whether educational institutions seem cognizant of and responsive to the social and personal growth needs of youth. If they were, they would make efforts to create an environment supportive of student mental and emotional well-being, and facilitative to learning, the development of critical thinking, the development of ethical and civic sense, the acceptance of diversity and difference, the assuming of healthy adult gender identity and sexuality and the confidence to exercise judgement rather than conform or submit to the writ of the group or other power.

But it is beyond the scope of this research study to dwell on educational goals and the educational system except as reflected tangentially in our study on ragging. As implied in preceding sections, ragging may also be understood as a ritualised way through which young people negotiate the transition into adulthood *in the absence of* alternative mechanisms to grapple with issues of inclusion, exclusion and conformity, dominance and subordination, manliness and sexuality, and so on. As stated earlier in the psychosocial conceptual model,

---

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.tfhe.net/report/Chapter6.htm#11>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.tfhe.net/report/Chapter6.htm>

educational institutions often fail despite lofty ideals to provide students the opportunity to learn the values of critical thinking, non-hierarchical mutually respectful relationships, social and gender equity, non-violent conflict resolution, fairness, compassion, and so on. Indeed, it may be argued that these values are in short supply in society at large and that ragging reflects a version of the values actually prevalent in society, albeit in an exaggerated form. One of the important aspects of ragging we see is that it is more prevalent in institutions teaching technical or professional courses. These institutions give emphasis to speciality skills and professional training and the holistic, humanistic aspect of education is neglected.

The present study has looked at institutional resources and institutional climate in relation to ragging and these are presented below. The main findings are as follows.

a) Students do indeed experience the time of their entry into college as one of greater independence and responsibility and a fifth of them feel stressed by the change.

b) While two-thirds felt that their colleges did take concrete steps to help them adjust to college life the rest did not.

c) Among the steps taken, the ones most helpful were that teachers made them feel comfortable, and that there were concrete measures to control ragging and for freshman orientation.

d) Extra-curricular activities were available in most institutions and contributed to students well-being. However, professional counselling services and gender sensitisation programmes were either not available, or were not utilised due to lack of awareness or other inhibitions.

e) Gender and sexual harassment issues intersect with ragging in several institutions. Social norms around romantic and sexual attraction and gender-appropriate behaviour varied widely among institutions. It seemed that campuses where there was free and comfortable interaction between male and female, students had less ragging.

f) Nearly four-fifths of the students were aware that their institution had an anti-ragging cell.

g) The great majority of students who wanted to complain against ragging did not do so because they doubted that the institution would take action, and also because they feared doing so would lead to adverse interpersonal and professional repercussions.

h) The attitude of staff and faculty towards ragging tends to be ambivalent and many privately support the practice. This has obvious implications for the successful implementation of anti-ragging measures.

i) Separate institutional analysis of the results from the ten institutions that had the highest negative impact of ragging showed a moderately high correlation between high prevalence and impaired academic functioning. In another analysis of ten institutions with highest prevalence of ragging, it is seen that although these institutions had largely implemented the recommended anti-ragging measures and student support services, there continued to be a high ragging prevalence. This may be related to a lack of confidence among students as to whether the institution would actually be responsive to their complaints and to the ambivalent attitude towards ragging displayed by the staff and faculty. The high prevalence of ragging was also related in some of these institutions to a social climate characterised by either gender segregation and unease, perceived social discrimination based on caste, region, etc , or insistence on deference in hierarchical relations between seniors and juniors.

These findings are elaborated upon below.

The transition from school to college marks an important milestone along the path from adolescence to adulthood. Coupled with a sense of change, opportunity, and promise comes a great deal of uncertainty, stress and challenge.

**Table No. 3.I.37: Change in life after joining college**

<b>Q. How has life changed after joining college</b>			
<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest values</b>
a.	No change	4.3%	SKIPE (9.8%) STnPD(9.7%) STgGD(9.2%) STnGL(8.1%)

b.	I feel grown up	36.5%	NPuGV(50.7%) WMhPE(49.1%) NDIGE(46.6%) NDIGD1(45.8%) SKrGE(45.4%)
c.	I feel more independent	39.3%	SKrGE(66.5%) NDIGD2(61.1%) NDIGE(58.5%) NDIGD1(55.3%) EWbGD(48.4%)
d.	I feel more responsible	59%	WRjGE(78.1%) WMhGA(73.6%) NUpGM2(72.4%) WMhGM3(67.4%) WMhGM2(67%)
e.	I feel the pressure of parents' expectations	17%	EOrPE(32.3%) SKIGE(32.2%) EWbPE(23.5%) SKIPE(23.3%) SKrGE(22.9%)
f.	I feel more stressed	21.2%	EWbGM(41.9%) SKrPM(37.2%) NUpGM1(37.2%) WMhPE(35.7%) EOrOE(33.6%)
g.	None of these	1.1%	---

From the table we see that a significant number of respondents answered that they felt more stressed, responsible and pressured by expectations after joining college. It is a transitional time associated with hopefulness and excitement as well as fear and anxiety and inadequacy. Getting used to their new environment and adapting to any changes that come their way can take a toll and practices such as ragging makes the initial adjustment even more difficult.

### **Institutional Resources and Interventions**

One of the questions we asked our respondents in this survey is to do with institutional support to students in their smooth adjustment to college life- 'Did College authorities take specific steps to help students to adjust smoothly to college life?'

**Table No. 3.I.38: College taking steps to help students to adjust smoothly to college life**

<b>Q. Did college authorities take specific steps to help students to adjust smoothly to college life?</b>			
<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest value</b>
a	Yes	67.6%	STnPD(99.3%) , STnGL(88.7%), WMhGM2(87%), STgGD(86.1%), NpuGM(82.8%)
b.	No	29.4%	EWbGM(58.6%), WMhPE(47.8%), SKrGE(44.5%), NUpGL(41.4%), WMhGM1(40.1%)
c.	Did not answer	3%	

Though, overall 67.6 per cent students said that their college authorities took specific steps to help students to adjust smoothly to college life, a high percentage of students from government medical college in West Bengal (58.6per cent), private engineering college in Maharashtra (47.8per cent) and government engineering college in Karnataka (44.5 per cent) reported that their colleges did not take such steps.

The next question tried to explore the specific steps taken.

**Table No. 3.I.39: Specific steps that college took to help students adjust smoothly to college life**

<b>Steps that college took to help students to adjust smoothly to college life</b>				
<b>S. No</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest value</b>	<b>Colleges with lowest value</b>
a)	Teachers made us feel comfortable in college	52.8%	STnPD(85.8%) STnGL (80.6%) WMhGM2 (73%) WRjGE (70.3%) NUpGM2 (62.1%)	NUpGL (28.7%) NDIGE (32.7%) SKrGE (34.5%) NHrGP (39.9%) STnGM (40.5%)

b)	Organized orientation activities	43.1%	STnPD(76.9) WRjGE(69.7) SKrPM(66.5) WMhGM2(64) NDIGE(60.5)	NUpGL(9.2%) NHrGP(12.2%) STnGM(26.6%) STgGD(27.2%) EWbGM(31.0%)
c)	Organized activities to encourage friendship with batch mates	36.2%	NPuGM(67) WMhGM2(62) STgPN(57.9) NUpGM2(47.7%)	NHrGP(15.5%), NupGL(20.7%), STgGD(23.1%), WRjPE(24.7%)
d)	Organized activities to encourage introduction with seniors	33.5%	WMhGM2(57.0%) NPuGM (55.7%) STgPN(50.9%) STnPD(47.8%) WrjGE (46.3%)	NHrGP(13.3%) NupGL(13.8%) SkIIGE(16.1%) SkIPE(18.0%) STgGE (19.6%)
e)	Organized activities to control ragging	43.6%	STnPD(64.2%) NPuGM (63.4%) NDIGE (62.6%) NUpPE (62.4%) NPuGV (61.3%)	STgGD(21.4%) NUpGL(21.8%) EWbGM(23.6%) NHrGP(29.9%) SKrGE(31.4%)
f)	None of these	5.5%		
g)	Did not answer	18.4%		
h)	Any other	1.3%		

On further probing the students about the activities which the college undertook and whether they were helpful or not, we found the highest response was for ‘teachers made them feel comfortable’ (52.8 per cent), followed by activities to control ragging (43.6 per cent), orientation activities (43.1 per cent), activities to encourage friendship with batch mates (36.2 per cent) and activities to encourage introduction with seniors (33.5 per cent).

The research team during the field visit made some important observation about various measures colleges have adopted to prevent ragging and make the newcomers feel comfortable in the college. In a government degree college in Delhi, we found that there exist cordial relationship between students and teachers both inside and outside of the classroom. It seemed that there is no restriction in interaction. Students were friendly with teachers to the extent of discussing personal issues. In another government degree college, we observed that there was an obvious trust in the faculty and the administration on the part of students which was witnessed during interaction with students. Face-to-face resolutions of student problems

are preferred to public humiliation and shaming by the teachers which seems to contribute to this trust.

Similarly, in a government run hotel management institute, we found cordial relations both between seniors and juniors as well as among batch mates. A possible reason for this could be the nature of the course which requires students to work in groups most of the time, which fostered camaraderie among students.

An engineering college in south India makes efforts to disseminate information related to ragging and educate freshers on who they can approach in case of any problems, with the relevant contact numbers mentioned on the anti-ragging posters hung around college during the orientation week. A medical college in the same region also follows a similar regime; however, it has also taken strict action against seniors who were found guilty. Warning, suspension and at times police intervention were few of the actions management have acted out in incidences to curb ragging.

In another engineering college in the south, patrolling duty is carried out; faculty and even the hostel matrons/security/non-teaching staffs are quite particular about the rules of the college. Affidavits are mandatorily made to be signed by all joining students and their parents. Orientation programs generally disseminate all important information regarding ragging. Awareness is created about the norms, attitudes, and implications related to ragging. All students are made to note the contact numbers of all key people of the anti-ragging committee/squad along with the contacts of student body leaders.

## Extra-curricular Activities

**Table No. 3.I.40: Status of extra-curricular activities in college**

<b>Q. What extra-curricular activities does your college actively support?</b>			
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest value</b>
a	Sports	62%	SKrGE (82.3%) SKrPM (85.5%) NPuGV(80%) NHrGD (82.3%) NDIGE (82.3%)
b	Societies for Theatre/Dance/Music/Debate	51.2%	WMhGM3 (81.3%) WMhGM1 (81.6%) NDIGE (81.3%)
c	Excursion/Workshop/Symposium	36.8%	WRjGE (64.9%) WMhPE (66.7%) STnPD (61.9%) NDIGE (57.5%)
d	Student bodies/union	30.4%	WMhPE (54.6%) SKrGE (59.5%) SKIGE (53.7%) EWbGM (68.5%)
e	Others	3.4%	-
f	None of these	8.1%	EWbGH (24.6%) NupGM2 (21.8%) SkIPE (21.3%)

Our assumption is that colleges that devote a good amount of time to extra-curricular activities will have lower prevalence of ragging. We make this assumption because activities away from academics have shown to enhance students' leadership skills, team building, life skills and character building, apart from providing a healthier platform for interaction among students. From our field observation we noted that two degree colleges in Delhi that have reported very low prevalence of ragging provide enormous opportunities to students for extra-curricular activities. A government degree college in Delhi gives students various options to choose from. There is a placement cell to help with recruitments, a very active

dramatics society and many other societies. This seems to be facilitated by regulated number of classroom hours leaving ample time for co-curricular activities. Film screenings and fests organized by departments were also observed. Initiatives are taken by both the students and the teachers to organize these activities. Another college in the same region was seen brimming with energy and festivity. The bulletin boards were colourful, engaging and informative. Dance societies, student fests, book fairs were seen on campus during our visit. A strong presence of the students union was also observed.

On the other hand, we observed that in a university in Uttar Pradesh, the student body seemed to have a huge negative influence on the college environment. It appeared that such student bodies are backed by stronger political bodies and are thus very political in nature. However, in medical colleges it was observed that the academic load of the course does not give much time to the students to participate in extra-curricular activities. This could also be one of the reasons for high prevalence of ragging in medical institutions.

### Professional Counsellor/Psychologist

Another question enquired about the presence of a professional counsellor in their college. Counsellors play an important role in helping students overcome issues that may arise in the course of time they spend in the college.

**Table No. 3.I.41: Presence of a professional counsellor/psychologist in college**

<b>Q. Do you have a professional counsellor/psychologist in college?</b>			
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest value</b>
a.	Yes	36%	EWbGH (83.5%) NDIGE (83.3%) WMhGM3 (66.3%) NPuGM (63.7%)
b.	No	57.9%	EWbGM (83.3%) EOrPE (83.6%) NDIGD1 (84.6%) STgGE (76.2%)

			WMhGM2 (77%) WMhGD (75.1%)
c.	Did not answer	6.1%	--

Only 36 per cent students reported that they have a professional counsellor/psychologist in college. A large number (58 per cent) said that they do not have a professional counsellor/psychologist in their college.

The above findings seem to suggest that colleges are not serious about providing professional counselling service to students and the facility is either not available properly or is not utilised due to lack of awareness or other reasons. Nevertheless, need for a professional counsellor was highlighted by students during a focus group discussion at a medical college in South. A majority (both juniors and seniors) said that there is an extreme need for an expert counsellor who understands the concept and not go by hearsay to intervene in such issues. Though professors can act as mediators in building a healthier bridge between students and in helping them cope with stress, there was a consensus of having trained professionals from outside the college to act as the best agents for change.

In a medical college in South India the awareness of the college counsellor was found considerably low among students. No external or full-time internal counsellor is appointed in the college. Counselling, if needed, is generally done by professors from the Department of Psychiatry. Similarly, in an engineering college in the South, the awareness of the college counsellor was found low among students and the counsellor being the wife of one of the Deans, students feared visiting her with woes. However, most of the faculty advisors along with mentoring, counselled their students on different aspects of college life and stress.

During our field visit we came across a positive example as well. In a government engineering college in Delhi, the counsellor was part of the student orientation and talked to them about student matters openly and they were assured that they could approach her if they faced any kind of problem. In an interview with the counsellor of this college, she mentioned that initially there was a stigma attached to counselling where students who went to the

counsellor were considered ‘mad’. She also pointed to the fact that ragging cases are prevented by pre-empting scenarios to identify vulnerable students.

### Gender Sensitisation/Sexual Harassment Committee

Our next question asked students whether there is a gender sensitization or a sexual harassment committee in their college.

**Table No. 3.I.42: Presence of gender sensitisation or sexual harassment committee in college**

<b>Q. Is there a gender sensitization or a sexual harassment committee in your college?</b>			
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest value</b>
a.	Yes	20.5%	WRjPE (50.7%) NDIGD1 (40%) EWbGD, (50.7%) EWbGH (42.3%)
b.	No	71.5%	EWbGM (90%) EOrPE (85.7%) STgPN (87.7%) WMhGM3 (87.7%) WMhGD (84.4%) WMhGM1 (85.4%) WMhGM2 (86%)
c.	Did not answer	7.7%	-

From the table 3.I.42 we see that large number (71.5 per cent) of respondents said that they do not have a gender sensitisation or a sexual harassment committee in their college. Only 20.5 per cent students reported that they have a gender sensitisation committee in college.

When asked about a gender sensitization cell, a teacher in our interview replied: “When girls don’t feel the need for it, what is the need to impose it on them?” On the other hand, the need for such a cell was highlighted in one of the prominent engineering colleges in Delhi. The counsellor at the college informed us that some students approached her to sensitize the student community about the LGBT community and issues. She asserted that gender and sexual sensitization must start at the level of schooling.

Many gender related issues seem to be coming to the fore in campuses and may go on to become larger issues or problems if not dealt with at the right time. One of the most visible indicators of this could be the type of interaction that takes place between male and female students. For instance, according to some students the perception of female- male attraction in single gender colleges is very unhealthy, and any interaction is inevitably considered romantic. In a university in Haryana we observed that there was little or no interaction between male and female students. If any, there was evidence of 'eve-teasing' by the boys. When asked questions about cross-ragging, teachers often equated it with 'eve-teasing'. 'Eve teasing', like ragging is normalised, with few realising that teasing and harassment often slide into each other and that what is considered 'eve teasing' may actually qualify as sexual harassment. During our stay in the university campus, a lot of boys were seen in the evenings on two wheelers and very few girls. The 'curfew' time at the girl's hostels was 7 pm while the boys had none. The situation seemed so grim that in another government institute in Haryana, a female member of this research team herself faced harassment from male students. They passed lewd comments, constantly stared at her, pushed fellow classmates at her and made her extremely uncomfortable.

There were other important observations, pertaining to gender issue, made by the research team during the field visits. In a government degree college in UP, largely there was no interaction even between male and female faculty members. In interviews with the faculty members of the college, the issue of love triangles came across as a common worry. In another government college in UP, the researchers observed an unhealthy interaction among male and female students. They sat in segregated groups. 'Eve-teasing' was prevalent on campus and so girl students were escorted to and from the college by a male member of the family.

The gender issue becomes graver when the idea of seniority extends to the arena of romantic relationships. At a medical college in UP, it is a big taboo for a male junior to have any feeling for a female senior and if there was a student couple in a junior batch, the seniors behaved in an offensive way with the boy in the relationship. In a degree college in Delhi, on the other hand, where male and female students are free to forge friendships without any social inhibitions, romantic relationships did not seem to be an issue on campus and girls felt safe within the college and campus.

It is an important finding, then, that campuses where male-female interaction is amicable are also campuses where ragging does not take place significantly. Having said that, sexuality education should become a vital part of induction into college life since in most cases students and youth do not have the knowledge of dealing with romantic or sexual relationships. All colleges should also have gender sensitisation committee so that gender sensitisation and the encouragement of responsible relationships could be encouraged.

A warden at a government degree college in Delhi drew the attention of the research team to the fact that sensitization about social backgrounds (gender, caste etc.) is lacking and this also needs systematic sensitization. She added: “Academics is not the only goal of education, it is only a means. Ultimate goal of education is sensitization.”

### Anti-Ragging Cell in College

**Table No. 3.I.43: Presence of anti-ragging cell in college**

<b>Q. Does your college have an anti-ragging cell?</b>			
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with Highest Value</b>
a.	Yes	77.1%	EWbPE (94%) EWbGD (94.7%) EOrPE (93.9%) NPuGM (91.9%) NUpGM1 (94.1%) NUpGM2 (94.3%) NUpPE (94.3%) SKIGE (91.9%) STnPD (95.5%) WMhGM2 (98%) WRjGE (95.5%)
b.	No	19.2%	EWbGM (66.9%) NHrGP (57.9%) STgGD (63.6%) STgPN (70.2%)
c.	Did not answer	3.6%	-

Around 77 per cent of the total students reported that their colleges have an anti-ragging cell. On analysing the data college-wise, we see great variations in responses. Thus, students' response to this question only reflects the degree to which these anti-ragging cells were publicised among the students in different colleges.

Interestingly, we can see that the colleges from where high percentages of students have reported the presence of anti-ragging cells are mostly the ones where the prevalence of ragging is also quite high. This clearly means that either the anti-ragging cells are not very effective in controlling ragging in colleges or owing to the occurrence of ragging these institutions have now started responding to the need for such cells.

Hon'ble Supreme Court in its May 2007 order asked the institutions to set up anti-ragging committee and anti-ragging squads. Subsequently, the UGC and other regulatory bodies (the MCI and the AICTE) issued guidelines in 2009 and made it mandatory for every institution to set up an anti-ragging committee and squad. The college principals/university vice-chancellors/anti-ragging committee heads of most of the colleges we visited told us that they have anti-ragging cell in their institution. However, the functioning of the anti-ragging committee can be gauged from our qualitative data. One student from third year in a college said that there is an anti-ragging squad in the college but they are of no use as the student members of the third and final year are themselves involved in ragging. They tell the freshers that 'this much they have to do'. He said that he complained a lot to the college authorities but no heed was paid to the complaints as it was thought that he is a third year student and therefore cannot be ragged. In another case, a student mentioned in the interview that even though anti-ragging cell has been formed in the college, the committee members themselves are involved in ragging juniors. He asked: "How can juniors survive in the college for five years?" Similarly, a complainant on an anti-ragging helpline said that the anti-ragging committee is dysfunctional in his college. The anti-ragging diary is supposed to be maintained daily, however, it is not done regularly.

Moreover, since 2007, the Supreme Court and various regulatory bodies (the UGC, the MCI and the AICTE) have laid down comprehensive guidelines to be followed by institutions to curb ragging. These guidelines prescribe wide ranging measures such as setting up anti-ragging committee, spreading awareness among students, submission of affidavits by

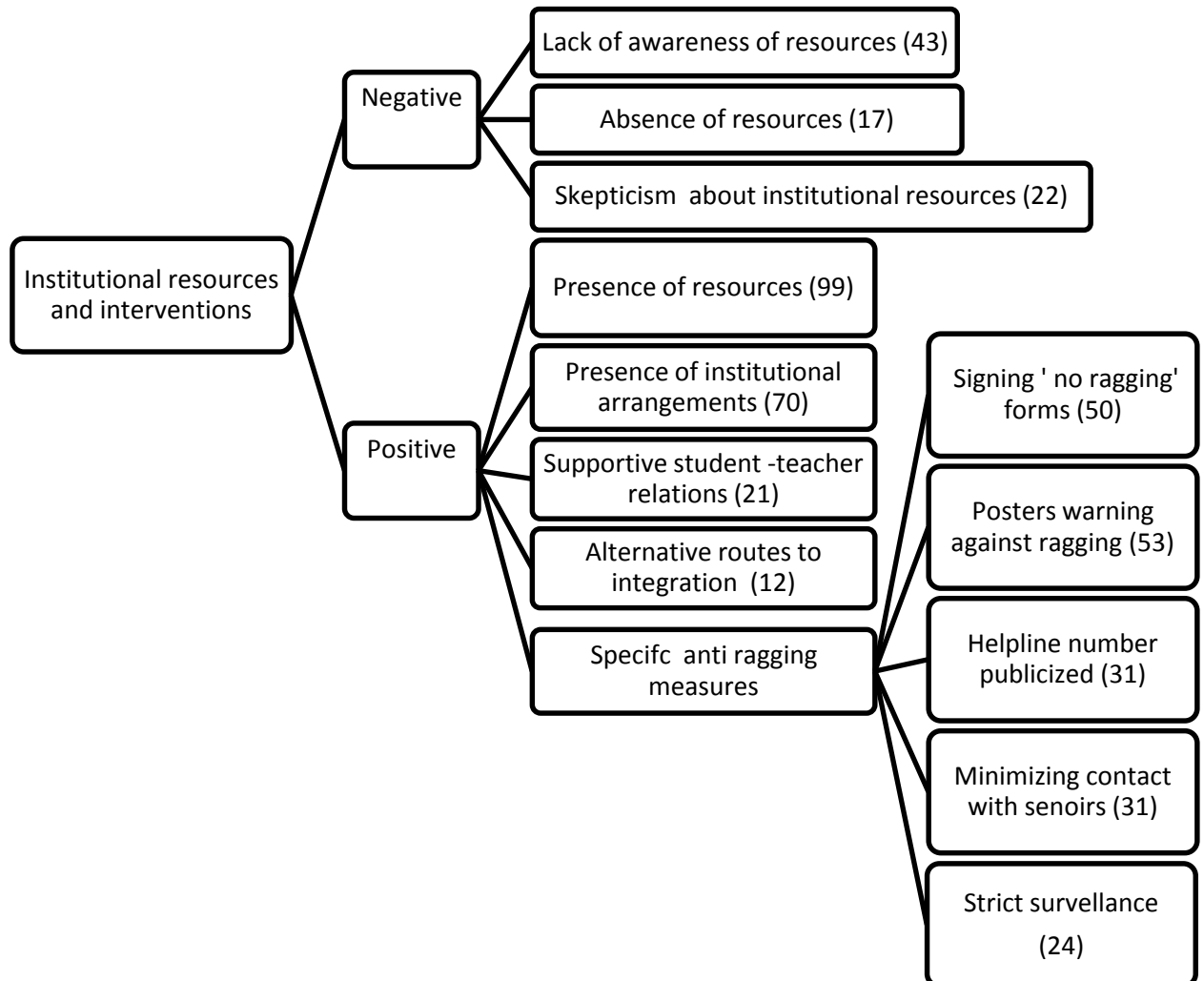
students, conducting anonymous survey on ragging among freshers, surprise raids, setting up of mentoring cells, arranging psychological counselling for students, having a full-time warden in the hostel, etc. During our visit to the universities and colleges, the authorities/anti-ragging committee heads claimed they were broadly aware of anti-ragging guidelines but knowledge of specific guidelines was clearly lacking. Though most of the institutions have set up anti-ragging committees and have put anti-ragging posters on the notice boards, the implementation of several other guidelines could not be authenticated.

Though the Supreme Court guidelines suggest that institutions must ensure that staff members should interact with freshers individually to ascertain their problems and make them feel comfortable to report incidents of ragging, during our visit to colleges we felt that in most of the institutions, students had limited confidence in the management for resolving their issues. We, in fact, found that the institutions where there was largely formal interaction between teachers and students, the prevalence of ragging was much higher.

In our field visit we also came to know of different mechanisms and ways that institutions have adopted to curb ragging. In one of the engineering colleges in Delhi, we were told that the institution sensitizes its students against ragging and discourages them from participating in it even as bystanders. It has also introduced a mentor system involving second and third year students who help the freshers with initial adjustments and other issues. Similarly, in a government engineering college for women, we found a mentor system wherein a teacher mentors a small group of students.

Further, a few colleges have come up with a system of putting first year students in a separate hostel block under the vigilance of a security guard. Senior students are not allowed inside this hostel premise. In some colleges, we were told that security guards have been employed to accompany first year students on campus to prevent them from being caught by seniors for ragging. Also, they have made a rule that no senior is allowed to interact with their junior even in the corridors of the college. However, these steps of keeping first year students away from seniors may seem to work on the surface, but in the end, isolating students from each other may be of little use in the long run.

### Institutional Resources and Interventions (from interviews)



**Figure 3.I.9:** The chart above presents the main themes that emerged from interviews with 187 students on the question on institutional resources and interventions. Figures in the brackets denote the number of interviews in which that theme occurred.

## Ragging Complaints – Factors influencing actions and outcomes

**Table No. 3.I.44: Students’ response on complaining against ragging**

<b>Q. Did you complain when you were ragged?</b>		
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage*</b>
a.	Yes	8.6%
b.	No	84.3%
c.	Did not answer	7.1%

\*Percentages based on number of students who admitted to being mildly or severely ragged.

When we asked the students whether they complained when they were ragged, a large number of students (84.3 per cent) said they did not.

**Table No. 3.I.45: Students’ response on wanting to complain against ragging but did not do so**

<b>Q. Did you want to complain but did not do so?</b>		
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage*</b>
a	Yes	23%
b.	No	66.8%
c.	Did not answer	10.1%

\*Percentages based on number of students who admitted to being mildly or severely ragged.

Probing further on the issue of complaint, we see that 23 per cent of the overall students in our survey admitted that they wanted to complain but did not do so (Table 3.I.45).

**Table No. 3.I.46: Reasons for not complaining against ragging**

<b>Q. Why did you not complain?</b>		
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall Percentage*</b>
a.	I would be made fun of	12.3%
b.	I would be boycotted by other students	23.3%
c.	Seniors would beat me	23.2%

d.	I did not want to harm my career	38.5%
e.	I was not sure whether authorities would take action against the seniors	41.3%
f.	I did not know who to approach and how to make a complaint	21.8%
g.	Other	6.9%

\*Percentages based on number of students who admitted to being ragged and wanted to complain but did not do so.

When we asked the students various reasons for not registering a complaint, we find the highest percentage is for lack of trust in college authorities (41.3 per cent), followed by possibility of harm to career (38.5 per cent), fear of being boycotted (23.3 per cent) and apprehension from seniors (23.2 per cent).

Further, analysis of qualitative data corroborates our findings from the survey (Figure 3.I.10). From the interviews with a complainant on the anti-ragging helpline, it emerged that the students do not complain as they are scared that on complaining their academic result might get affected or seniors might make it hard for them to live in college or worse, they would be ostracised. One of the complainants on the anti-ragging helpline told us that the anti-ragging committee in the college comprised of students from the senior batch who would sometimes become an obstacle for the complaints to reach higher authorities. Moreover, the complainant could be pressurised to withdraw his complaint by seniors. One complainant on the helpline said that he was pressurised to withdraw his complaint not only by the seniors but also by the local members of the community. He further said that as a result of his complaint, he got isolated in the college for about three to four months.

In an FGD in an engineering college, where authorities are known to take strict action on ragging complaints, students said that the issue of not complaining still persists widely. They said that fear of the seniors is quite apparent in hostels where the message is subtly conveyed to freshers within the very first month that they should never question their seniors. Moreover, freshers who face serious ragging are always in a minority and do not get the requisite support from their own batch-mates. The students also mentioned that seniors play a strategy that if two or three seniors are ragging, four or five other seniors would go and console the fresher in order to make sure that the fresher is not contemplating complaining.

Ultimately, in most cases, the fresher decides that silence is the price to pay for being left alone. Moreover, seniors have control over the student bodies and thus freshers have a fear that if they complain of ragging then they will never be able to get any executive post in these bodies. A student in another college said: “Ragging should be stopped completely as juniors have to face a lot of problems. Juniors can’t even complain as seniors would beat us if we complain. There is an atmosphere of fear on campus because of ragging”.

Fear in registering a complaint against ragging can be best seen from a media report on the national helpline number. It was reported in August 2012 that 1.6 lakh calls were made to the helpline but only 1,400 complaints could be registered<sup>37</sup>. This skewed ratio was attributed to the fact that most students changed their mind midway. Even the monitoring committee on ragging, earlier in its meeting in 2008 had noted: “The unwillingness of complainants to disclose their identity and details of ragging incidents and persons involved is posing a big problem in taking action.”<sup>38</sup>

Apart from fear of repercussion on complaining about ragging, the low percentage of ragging complaints especially in colleges where prevalence is high could be also because ragging in these colleges is largely perceived as a normal phenomenon and an ‘accepted college tradition’ which every student must go through. Students may initially find ragging unpleasant, however on seeing other batch-mates undergoing the same practice and bearing it, they may begin to see it as a part of college life and thus decide against complaining. Moreover, students know that if they opt to complain, they will be considered weak and ridiculed for not being able to face ragging bravely.

In a study on hazing by Allen and Madden (2008), it was found that the common reason for students not reporting hazing was that it had been normalised as part of the culture. Some of the common explanations students gave for not reporting hazing activities was “it was tradition, so I didn’t mind”, (p. 29).

---

<sup>37</sup><http://archive.mid-day.com/news/2012/aug/090812-mumbai-Anti-ragging-helpline-1-6-lakh-dialled-but-only-1400-complained.htm>

<sup>38</sup><http://www.iitkgp.ac.in/students/ragscord.pdf>

**Table No. 3.I.47: Students' views on institution's response to complaints of ragging**

<b>Q. How has your college responded to complaints of ragging</b>			
	<b>Options</b>	<b>Overall percentage</b>	<b>Colleges with highest values</b>
a.	No ragging complaint made	18.6%	STgPN(52.6%), STnGM(36.7%), STgGD(36.4%)
b.	College tries to save its name/reputation	7.6%	EWbPE (17.1%), NUpGM2 (16.7%), STnGL (16.1%), NUpGM1 (13.7%)
c.	Tries to explain that ragging is a part of college life	5.5%	NUpGM2 (29.9%), STnGL (16.1%), STgGD (11.6%), WMhGM (10.8%)
d.	Takes disciplinary action against the seniors	34.2%	SKrGE (57%), WMhGM2 (51%), EWbPE (50.8%)
e.	Sends the fresher for counselling	5.2%	NHrGD (14.1%), SKIPE (12.5%), NDIGE (10.2%)
f.	Sends ragger/seniors for counselling	6%	NHrGD (15.9%), NHrGP (11.1%), EWbGD (9.8%)
g.	Doesn't take any action	5.7%	STnGL (19.4%), NHrGP (14.1%), NUpGD1 (12.9%)
h.	Did not answer	31.4%	

Almost 34 percent students responded that disciplinary action is taken against seniors who rag. Institutions with highest percentages on this response include a government engineering college in Karnataka (57 per cent), a government medical college in Maharashtra (51 per cent), and private engineering college in West Bengal (50.8 per cent).

Around eight per cent said that college tries to save its name/reputation and 5.5 per cent revealed that ragging is rationalized by explaining that it is a part of college life. However, a very high percentage of students (30 per cent) from a government medical college in UP said that authorities try to rationalise ragging in their college.

Institutions are a part of and operate within the larger social system that gives approbation to the practice of ragging. Moreover, teachers, wardens, college heads even before becoming part of the institution, had themselves undergone ragging and some even indulged in it during their college days. Later in the institution, having seen the ritual for many years and thus developing an attitude of seeing ragging as a normal practice, indeed, many even start to see merit in it. The indifferent attitude towards ragging was seen in informal interaction with the faculty and other staff members in several colleges during our field visits.

Although in the formal interviews most of the teachers were guarded in their answers, once the recorder was switched off and the interview got over, some teachers spoke in support of ragging or were seen justifying the practice. In a government university in Uttar Pradesh, the head of the anti-ragging committee denied the existence of ragging in his university and also condemned the practice during the interview. When the interview got over and the recorder was switched off, however, he supported the practice and confessed to have actively been a part of it during his student days. Similar incidents happened in both the government medical colleges we visited in Uttar Pradesh. Teachers during the interviews strongly opposed ragging, but off the record they shared their own ragging experiences and their positive opinion about it. Most of the teachers tried to defend mild ragging saying that it fosters deep bonds especially in the medical profession, where one cannot do without help from seniors. They also emphasised that these bonds are lifelong and ragging is instrumental in forging them.

In some colleges, a few teachers in fact believed that too much attention is being given to ragging and that because of the anti-ragging measures students are not able to interact properly and juniors feel overprotected and therefore misbehave. One student accused the teachers in his college of encouraging ragging and making it easier for seniors to rag juniors. The extent to which teachers support ragging could be seen from a ragging incident reported in the media (*Indian Express*, 2012) in which a faculty member, along with senior students of his department, was arrested for ragging a junior student on the campus.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup><http://www.indianexpress.com/news/msu-professor-held-for-ragging-student/1019983/>

In light of the above observations, it is therefore not difficult to comprehend that one of the major reasons why students hesitate to approach college authorities with a ragging complaint is because they are not sure whether the authorities will take any action. This was revealed in our survey too as 41 per cent students who wanted to complain but did not do so answered yes to 'I was not sure whether authorities would take action against the seniors' (Table No. 3.I.46). In our interaction during field visits, several students told us about the lack of seriousness in the college administration in taking action on ragging complaints. One student said that he was ragged in his third year by fourth year students and when he went to the college authorities to complain, they discouraged him and asked him to approach them in case the seniors troubled him again. A complainant on the helpline number told us that even after his complaint nothing has changed in his college in terms of setting up a counselling services, anti-ragging committee, etc. He even saw the students ragging their juniors in front of teachers who did nothing to intervene.

Furthermore, students are afraid of registering complaint thinking the authorities might victimise them instead of taking action against the culprits. This is corroborated in our survey results as over 38 per cent students who wanted to complain did not do so because they were afraid that complaining against ragging might harm their careers (Table No. 3.I.46). In our college visits, we came across two instances where the complainants were punished. One student narrated his ordeal as to how he was victimised and falsely implicated in a criminal case when the college came to know that he has complained about his ragging on the anti-ragging helpline number. Similarly, a warden in an interview narrated how he had to suffer and face suspension when he tried to intervene in a ragging incident and complained about it. The college director instead of taking action against the senior students started troubling the warden by finding fault in his work.

In a ragging incident reported in the media (*Calcutta News*, April, 2008) a student was beaten by seniors with iron rods and subjected to cigarette burns. When he complained to the authorities, the college director, instead of taking action against the seniors, asked the victim to vacate the hostel as he had tarnished the image of the college.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup><http://www.calcuttanews.net/story/345676>

On analysing the media reports, we find quite a few cases reported in the past that highlight the indifferent attitude of the college authorities towards complaints of ragging. In some of the ragging cases listed below, we see that when the college authorities refused to act on the complaints, the victims of ragging attempted suicide.

(i) In June 2009 an engineering student committed suicide by jumping in front of a moving train after severe ragging by his seniors. In his suicide note he alleged that he had brought the ragging issue before the college management but it failed to initiate action.<sup>41</sup>

(ii) In another incident (IANS, August, 2008) a first year student of a private engineering college tried to commit suicide after being ragged by his seniors for about a month. The victim first complained about the ragging to his father who took up the matter with the college. “I stayed here for many days with my son to ensure nothing happens to him. I took the matter to the hostel warden but strangely the warden told me that such ragging was very common and could not be stopped,” the father said.<sup>42</sup>

(iii) In an incident of ragging (IANS, Dec 2005) a student of an engineering college committed suicide after he was forced to bathe in his own urine and went through severe trauma in the name of ragging. Later the victim’s parents told the police that they had complained to the college authorities but that no action was taken.<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, college administrators do not want to acknowledge the prevalence of ragging in their institution and discourage students from complaining because they feel ragging complaints bring disrepute to the institution. With the strict anti-ragging guidelines issued by the Supreme Court, UGC and other regulatory bodies, and with possibility of action against the errant institutions, administrators prefer to suppress and not talk about the issue rather than admit to the problem and act on it. This attitude was seen in a majority of the institutions visited by the research team. Though the colleges were selected on basis of their past history of ragging incidents, most of the college heads denied the existence of any sort of ragging in their institution. In one of the medical colleges in U.P. the research team was having an

---

<sup>41</sup><http://noragging.blogspot.com/2009/06/engineering-student-commits-suicide.html>

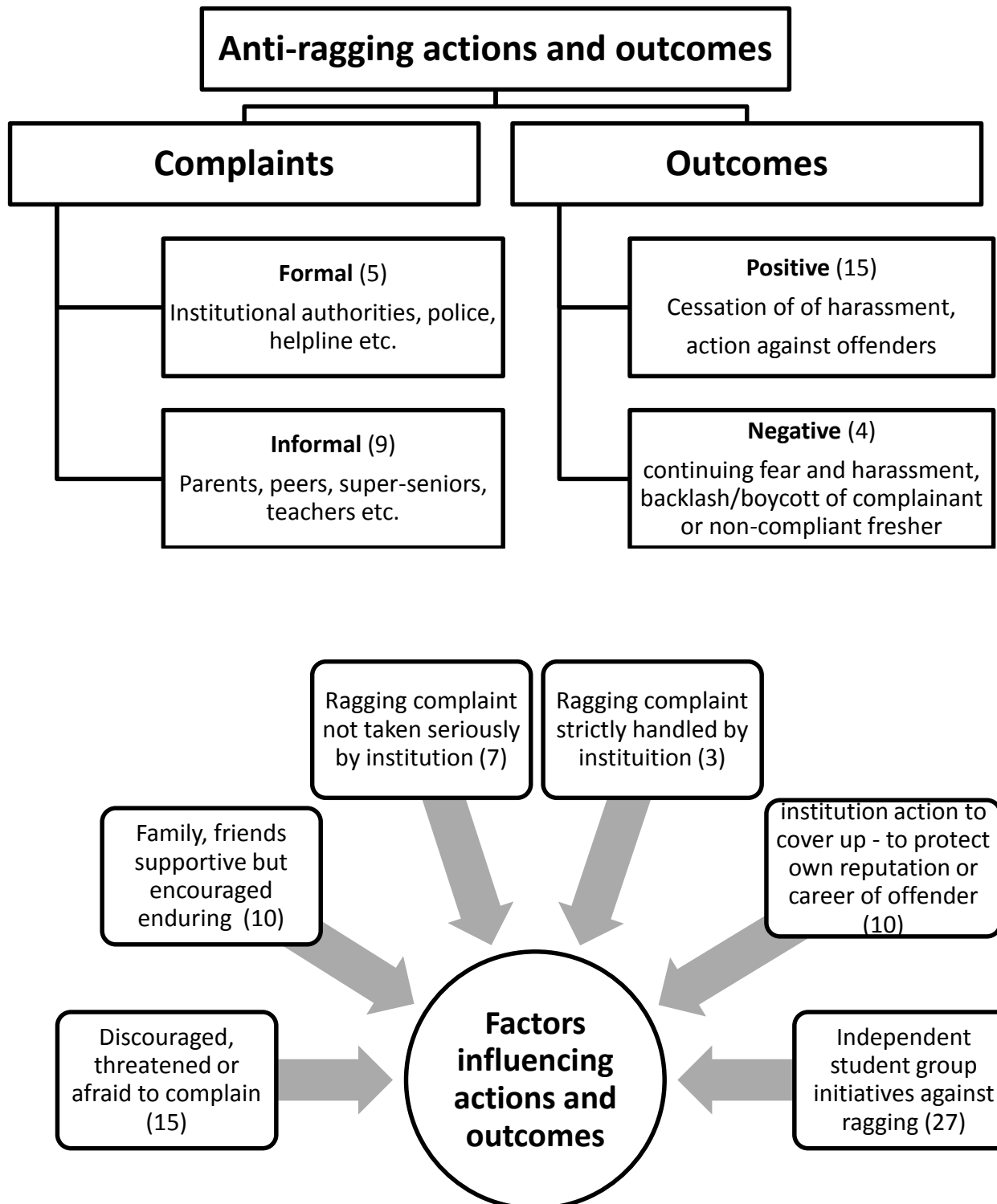
<sup>42</sup><http://noragging.blogspot.in/2009/06/student-attempts-suicide-after-ragging.html>

<sup>43</sup><http://noragging.blogspot.in/2006/06/students-college-staff-held-for.html>

informal conversation with a peon. A senior faculty on seeing this called the peon and instructed him to not to talk to the team. The faculty member was afraid that peon could reveal information pertaining to ragging in the college.

Although according to the Supreme Court order of May 2007, every single incident of ragging where the victim or his parent/guardian is not satisfied with the institutional arrangement for action, an FIR must be filed, students hesitate to complain because of fear of repercussions from college authorities and seniors.

**Anti-ragging actions and outcomes and factors influencing them (from interviews)**



**Figure 3.I.10:** The chart above presents the main themes that emerged from interviews with 187 students on the question on anti-ragging complaints and their outcomes and various factors influencing them.

## **Teachers, Wardens, College Management, etc. as bystanders**

Ragging is a complex problem that gets affected by several factors, most importantly, the culture of the institution. While a focus on students is necessary to prevent ragging, it is equally important to consider the role of administrators, faculty, alumni, parents, elders, etc. Faculty and management become avoidant bystanders when they deny the existence of ragging or deny that ragging is a problem.

In our interviews with the faculty (Figure 3.I.11) we notice that several faculty members (23 interviews) tried to draw distinction between acceptable and non-acceptable or 'good' and 'ugly' ragging and suggested that ragging within limits is fine. In one of the interviews a teacher said: "Mild ragging under some supervision is fine. It should be termed as part-time introduction." On analysing the interviews we also see that 38 teachers felt that introduction is essential for students. One teacher while supporting introduction said: "Introduction is essential otherwise juniors do not learn to respect seniors."

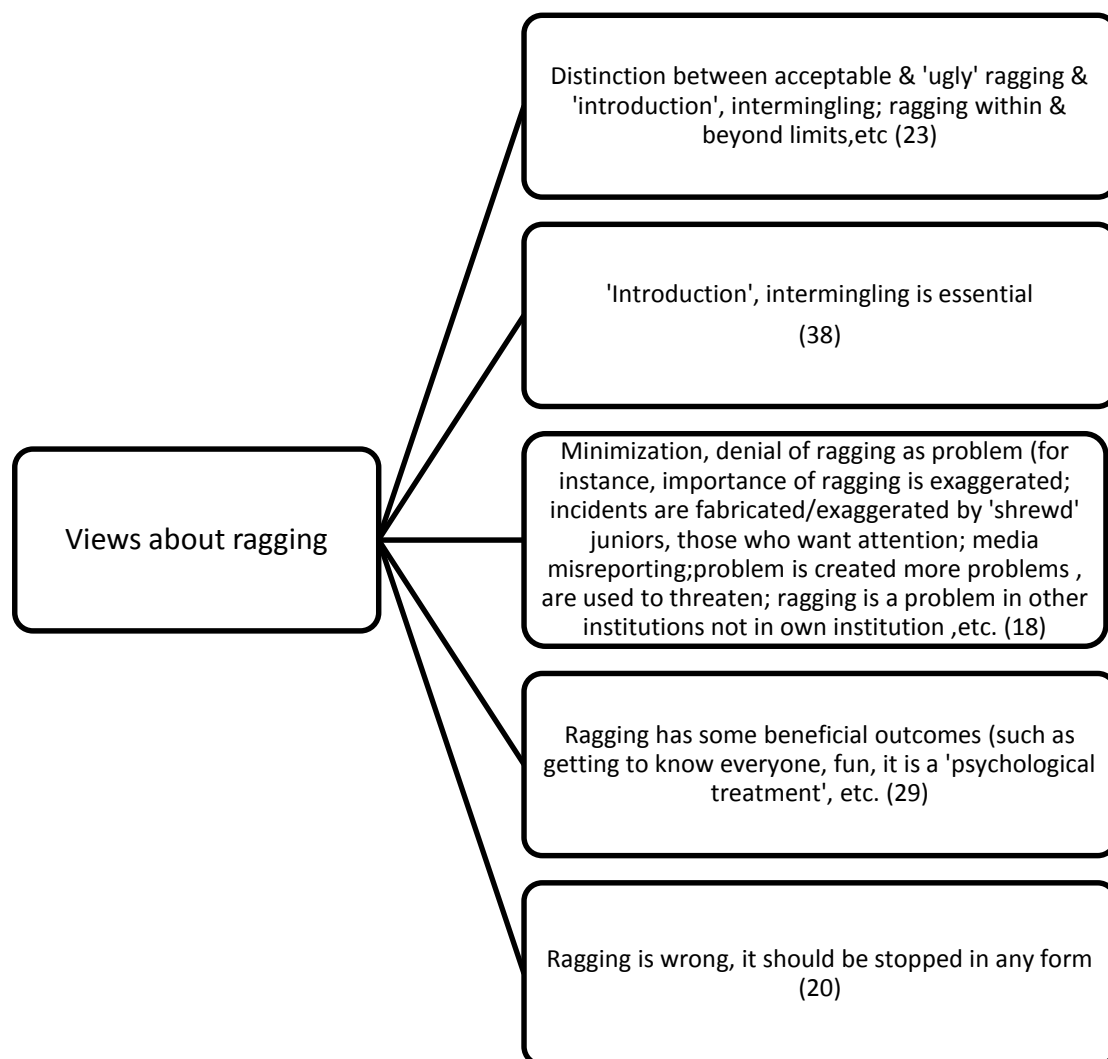
For many faculty members and administrators ragging is not seen as a problem or ragging - to some extent - is condoned. In 18 interviews, teachers did not consider ragging as a problem. A teacher said that too much attention is being given to the issue of ragging. 29 teachers believed ragging has beneficial outcomes. One teacher recalled her ragging days and said: "I enjoyed my ragging. They asked me to speak in English only. It was beneficial for me." Another one said: "Ragging should be decent, co-operative and should have guidance. When we are ragging, we become friends." Another teacher said that because of the anti-ragging measures, juniors are now over-protected.

The cavalier attitude of the faculty members and administrators could be attributed to the fact that many of them have themselves undergone ragging during their college days and normalisation of the practice has occurred and thus they do not see anything wrong in it.

In only 20 interviews did teachers resolutely state that ragging was wrong and should be stopped. "Did not know whether to have fun or feel traumatic when I was ragged during my college days as I was confused", said one teacher.

The college officials need to admit and understand that they are a part of the problem of ragging. The administrators must also accept the responsibility to intervene in ragging whenever they witness it and take action against it. The institutions may be less concerned about addressing ragging in comparison to other issues like sexual harassment or violence on campus, deteriorating academic standard, etc. However, ragging is often linked to these issues. Similarly, alumni, parents and elders give tacit encouragement to ragging when they eulogise their ragging experience.

### Teachers' views about ragging (from interviews)



**Figure 3.I.11:** The chart above presents the main themes that emerged from interviews with 81 teachers on their views about ragging. Figures in the brackets denote the number of interviews in which that theme occurred.

## **Institution-wise Analysis of Results**

In the previous sections we analysed overall data of thirty seven institutions that helped us understand various psychological and sociological dimensions of ragging. An important finding that emerged from our analysis was a marked variation in values of these factors for different institutions suggesting that each institution has its own psychosocial ecosystem that influences the occurrence of ragging. We therefore undertook an institution-wise analysis of the survey results, choosing institutions where students have reported (i) high prevalence of ragging and (ii) high rates of adverse impact on their academic functioning. The institution-wise analysis shows the extent of the impact of ragging on students' academic functioning, the compliance with anti-ragging guidelines issued by academic regulatory bodies and their success in curbing ragging, the beliefs and attitudes of teachers about ragging and students' faith in the college system, and the social climate of the institution.

### **(a) Adverse Impact of Ragging on students' academic functioning**

From the overall data, we see that 31.2 per cent students reported adverse impact of ragging in their academic pursuit, which is a matter of serious concern. Analysing data from the ten institutions with the highest negative impact of ragging on academic functioning, we find them to also have high prevalence of ragging. The co-efficient of correlation between the number of students reporting negative impact of ragging on academic functioning and the number reporting prevalence of ragging in their colleges for 10 colleges having highest negative impact is  $(r) = 0.63$ .

The strength of correlation is moderately high. It is possible that this is an underestimate given that there is likely to be some retrospective 'normalisation' of the experience of ragging. It is to be noted that in four institutions (NUpGM1, STgGD, STgGE and STgPN) in Table No. 3.I.48 below, the percentages of students reporting adverse impact of ragging on academic performance are higher than the corresponding values of prevalence of ragging in those institutions. This could be because ragging has been severe but not as widespread in the institution, or that mild forms of harassment have not been seen as ragging. It is possible also that the atmosphere of fear and intimidation experienced by freshers in some colleges has an adverse impact even though they have not been ragged.

**Table No. 3.I.48: Impact of ragging on academic functioning in 10 institutions with highest adverse effect**

Colleges with highest negative impact of ragging on academic functioning	Prevalence of ragging (mild + severe)  (Avg.*: 39.2%)	% of students who reported negative impact on academic functioning (Avg.*: 31.2%)	Kind of impact				
			(a) Loss of focus/concentration  (Avg.*: 18.9%)	(b) Missed classes  (Avg.*: 12.1%)	(c) Couldn't complete assignment on time  (Avg.*: 9.5%)	(d) Decrease in grades/performances/marks  (Avg.*: 9.0%)	Others  (Avg.*: 3.1%)
NUpGM1	75.4%	89.9%	31.6%	15.9%	12.3%	10.6%	47.4%
NUpGM2	70.1%	51.7%	34.5%	27.0%	21.8%	12.6%	0.1%
EWbPE	58.6%	46.7%	32.9%	16.3%	15.0%	14.8%	1.1%
STnGL	66.1%	43.5%	22.6%	25.8%	8.1%	14.5%	3.2%
STgGD	12.7%	42.7%	16.2%	13.3%	8.1%	9.2%	10.4%
WMhGM1	47.4%	39.7%	25.7%	19.3%	13.5%	13.5%	2.0%
NUpGD1	39.7%	39.4%	20.6%	15.2%	10.2%	9.7%	2.1%
WMhGM2	38.0%	38.0%	27.0%	11.0%	17.0%	9.0%	2.0%
STgGE	31.9%	37.7%	22.8%	17.6%	15.7%	16.7%	2.4%
STgPN	33.3%	36.8%	28.1%	12.3%	12.3%	17.5%	3.5%

\*Overall average of all 37 institutions based on the total sample of 10,632 respondents. Institutions' percentages are based on the total respondents from those institutions.

On analysing the adverse impact on education institution-wise, we see that in five institutions more than 40 per cent students reported negative impact of ragging on academic functioning. The highest negative impact was 'loss of focus/concentration' for which close to 30 per cent students reported 'yes' in four institutions. In two institutions, more than 25 per cent students reported that they missed classes because of ragging. In seven institutions, more than 15 per

cent students missed classes because of ragging. In seven institutions more than 10 per cent students blamed ragging for decrease in their grades/performance/marks. Some students also reported loss of time, sleep and emotional disturbance due to ragging that impacted their studies.

To further understand the adverse impact of ragging in these institutions, we analysed our data on institution's action for adjustment of freshers and students' assessment of first few days in college for 10 institutions with highest adverse effect of ragging.

**Table No. 3.I.49: Institutions action for adjustment of freshers and students' assessment of first few days in college in 10 institutions with highest adverse effect of ragging**

<b>Colleges with highest negative impact of ragging on academic functioning</b>	<b>Prevalence of ragging (mild + severe)  (Avg.*: 39.2%)</b>	<b>% of students who reported negative impact on academic functioning (Avg.*: 31.2%)</b>	<b>Q3a College took specific steps for adjustment of freshers (Avg.*:67.6%)</b>	<b>First few days in college were difficult Q2 (b) (Avg.*: 14.5%)</b>
NUpGM1	75.4%	89.9%	70.4%	26.8%
NUpGM2	70.1%	51.7%	70.1%	17.2%
EWbPE	58.6%	46.7%	69.6%	19.8%
STnGL	66.1%	43.5%	88.7%	16.1%
STgGD	12.7%	42.7%	86.1%	21.4%
WMhGM1	47.4%	39.7%	58.8%	18.7%
NUpGD1	39.7%	39.4%	55.8%	9.4%
WMhGM2	38.0%	38.0%	87.0%	0.0%
STgGE	31.9%	37.7%	59.6%	14.2%

STgPN	33.3%	36.8%	84.2%	28.1%
-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

\*Overall average of all 37 institutions based on the total sample of 10,632 respondents. Institutions' percentages are based on the total respondents from those institutions.

From the table above we find that to our question on college taking steps to facilitate fresher adjustment, a significant majority of students in these institutions said that their colleges had undertaken such measures. In most of these colleges, students told the research team that freshman orientation programmes were conducted and that rules and procedures pertaining to ragging complaints were explained to them. Also, 'No Ragging' boards with names and contact numbers of key persons were prominent in most of these institutions. However, on the survey question on 'how the first few days in college were', we find the response 'difficult' higher than the overall average in seven out of ten institutions. This suggests that though the institution did take steps for smooth adjustment of freshers, this was not so helpful.

#### **(b) Anti-ragging Measures and Student Support System in Institutions with High Prevalence of Ragging**

In 2009, the University Grants Commission and other regulatory bodies, including AICTE, MCI, etc. issued guidelines to curb ragging in institutions under their respective authority. The guidelines issued by these regulatory bodies are similar in many respects: setting up an anti-ragging committee, psychological counselling by professional counsellor, anonymous survey on ragging, creating awareness against ragging, organising sensitization programmes for freshers and seniors, etc. Interestingly, our field observations in several institutions with higher prevalence of ragging indicated that the staff and the heads of these institutions had a relatively better knowledge of the anti-ragging guidelines than the administrators and the staff of the rest of the institutions covered in our study.

We analysed the survey results in the institutions with highest prevalence of ragging in order to check compliance with the regulatory bodies' guidelines and presence of student support services. We analysed survey results on questions pertaining to anti-ragging cell, services of a counsellor and presence of gender sensitisation committee.

**Table No. 3.I.50: Student support system in 10 institutions with highest prevalence of ragging**

<b>Colleges with highest prevalence of ragging</b>	<b>Prevalence of ragging (mild + severe) (Avg.*: 39.2%)</b>	<b>Q7 Anti-ragging cell (Avg.*: 77.1%)</b>	<b>Q5 Counsellor (Avg.*: 36.1%)</b>	<b>Q6 Gender sensitization (Avg.*: 20.5%)</b>
NUpGM1	75.4%	94.1%	34.4%	12.3%
NUpGM2	70.1%	94.3%	22.4%	15.5%
SKIPE	68.2%	74.4%	27.3%	9.5%
STnGL	66.1%	51.6%	35.5%	25.8%
STnGM	64.9%	71.2%	36.2%	16.4%
SKIGE	61.1%	91.9%	20.1%	12.1%
EWbPE	58.6%	94.0%	39.8%	10.4%
SKrGE	57.6%	82.9%	51.8%	7.9%
EOrPE	54.7%	93.9%	11.9%	7.7%
WMhGA	49.5%	46.2%	11.0%	3.3%

\*Overall average of all 37 institutions based on the total sample of 10,632 respondents

The findings show that in eight out of ten institutions, more than 70 per cent students confirmed the presence of an anti-ragging cell in their colleges thus validating the existence of the cells and also showing that students were well-aware of it.

However, students were much less aware of the existence of a gender sensitisation committee and counselling service. This suggests that the efforts of these colleges in securing these provisions for student welfare are not adequate. Even if they exist, they may not be well-publicised. The need to build student confidence in these systems may not be recognised and addressed. In several of these colleges we were told that a faculty member served in the role

of a counsellor too. In one of these institutions we came to know that the counsellor was the wife of the dean and therefore students were reluctant to consult her.

The notable fact that emerges from the above analysis is that despite the presence of anti-ragging cell and other mechanisms to provide support to students, there is a high prevalence of ragging in these institutions. Clearly these provisions are not yielding the intended outcomes. The reasons for this may lie in poor implementation so that the guidelines end up being followed in letter but not in spirit. Importantly, it could also be that these provisions are simply not comprehensive enough to curb ragging.

### **(c) Students' Confidence in Anti-Ragging Measures & Attitude of Faculty and Management towards Ragging**

To understand the reasons for ineffectiveness of anti-ragging measures and their failure to curb ragging, we analysed survey data further to gauge the level of faith students have in the system and the attitude of faculty and management towards ragging in these institutions.

**Table No. 3.I.51: Students' confidence in anti-ragging measures and attitude of faculty and management towards ragging in 10 institutions with highest prevalence of ragging**

<b>Colleges with highest prevalence of ragging</b>	<b>Prevalence of ragging (mild + severe) (Avg.*: 39.2%)</b>	<b>Did you want to complain but did not do so Q28b (Avg.**: 23.0%)</b>	<b>Not sure whether authorities would take action against seniors Q28 (ce) (Avg.***: 41.3%)</b>	<b>College tries to save its name/reputation Q29 (b) (Avg.*: 7.6%)</b>	<b>College tries to explain ragging is a part of college life Q29 (c) (Avg.*: 5.5%)</b>
NUpGM1	75.4%	22.5%	60.6%	13.7%	9.2%
NUpGM2	70.1%	25.4%	48.3%	16.7%	29.9%
SKIPE	68.2%	20.5%	12.5%	8.3%	7.8%
STnGL	66.1%	43.9%	38.8%	16.1%	16.1%
STnGM	64.9%	18.9%	60.0%	5.5%	6.3%

SKIGE	61.1%	15.3%	35.7%	1.3%	4.7%
EWbPE	58.6%	34.0%	48.0%	17.1%	10.0%
SKrGE	57.6%	25.3%	41.6%	11.0%	1.8%
EOrPE	54.7%	28.0%	46.5%	10.1%	7.1%
WMhGA	49.5%	24.4%	45.4%	13.2%	5.5%

\*Overall average of all 37 institutions based on the total sample of 10,632 respondents

\*\* Percentages calculated on basis of those who admitted to being ragged

\*\*\* Percentages based on those who wanted to complain but did not do so

In eight of the ten institutions, more than 20 per cent students said that they wanted to complain but did not do so. In most of these institutions, the responses ‘not sure whether authorities would take action on ragging complaint’, ‘college tries to save its reputation’ and ‘college tries to explain ragging is a part of college life’ have higher values than the overall averages.

In several of these institutions, the research team observed that there was very limited or formal interaction between teachers and students. Although most of these institutions had a reputation for ragging, the principals/directors and faculty denied that ragging took place and were reluctant to talk about it on record. Significantly, while vehemently opposing ragging in the college, off the record they spoke positively about ragging.

The above findings indicate that the steps undertaken to curb ragging in these institutions may not be whole-hearted and committed. Ambivalent attitudes about ragging may dilute the efficacy of these measures. They may only be serving to fulfil formal requirements and avoid punitive action from the regulatory bodies.

#### **(d) Social climate of the institution: Gender, Discrimination and Hierarchy**

The study was not primarily designed to tap the social climate of the institution but a few survey questions throw light on relevant aspects. We examined survey data regarding comfort in interacting with the students of opposite sex, experiencing discrimination in college and

importance of respect for senior students from their juniors. We also examined the field notes of the research team for insights into the social and cultural milieu of institutions with high prevalence of ragging.

**Table No. 3.I.52: Issues of gender, discrimination and hierarchy in 10 institutions with highest prevalence of ragging**

<b>Colleges with highest prevalence of ragging</b>	<b>Prevalence of ragging (mild + severe) (Avg.*: 39.2%)</b>	<b>Not comfortable** in talking to students of opposite sex Q11 (Avg.*: 47.2%)</b>	<b>% of students who reported discrimination in college on basis of region, caste, etc. (Avg.*: 40.6%)</b>	<b>%of seniors for whom it is imp that juniors respect them (Avg.*: 39.0%)</b>	<b>% of seniors who get offended if juniors don't address them as Sir/Ma'am (Avg.*: 12.9%)</b>
NUpGM1	75.40%	63.40%	58.6%	54.8%	36.5%
NUpGM2	70.10%	48.80%	48.2%	43.5%	30.6%
SKIPE	68.20%	40.30%	29.3%	33.7%	8.2%
STnGL	66.10%	48.40%	45.1%	NA	NA
STnGM	64.90%	64.30%	25.7%	57.2%	28.6%
SKIGE	61.10%	49.00%	47.6%	40.0%	12.5%
EWbPE	58.60%	50.80%	51.5%	38.5%	9.3%
SKrGE	57.60%	46.70%	58.2%	21.6%	6.4%
EOrPE	54.70%	50.50%	37.3%	50.6%	16.5%
WMhGA	49.50%	49.50%	29.6%	35.5%	21.0%

\*Overall average of all 37 institutions based on the total sample of 10,632 respondents

\*\*Not so comfortable + Very uncomfortable in talking to students of opposite sex

The findings here are not consistent but show that in some institutions high ragging prevalence goes along with a social climate characterised by gender segregation and unease, felt social discrimination, and insistence on deference in hierarchical relations between senior and junior students. In about half of these institutions with high ragging prevalence, one or more of these social climate parameters are significantly higher than the average for all institutions. This highlights the importance of assessing the psychosocial climate of individual institutions and fitting interventions accordingly. From the observations made by the research team during the field visits, we found that in many of these institutions there was little interaction between male and female students. In several institutions, male and female students occupied separate rows in classrooms. Rigid hierarchical relationship between senior and junior was seen not only among students but among teachers as well.

Our detailed analysis of institutions with high prevalence of ragging shows that following the guidelines of the regulatory bodies is not enough to curb ragging. Attitudinal factors of staff/faculty, lack of student confidence that the system is fair and responsive, and the psychosocial climate within the institution, are also factors that need to be taken into account. In fact a few years ago, EWbPE was penalised by AICTE for failing to curb ragging when a case of ragging was reported from the college. Yet our survey in this institution indicated that almost 60 per cent students from the college admitted to being ragged; around 34 per cent of those who underwent ragging said they wanted to complain but did not do so; almost half of those who wanted to complain but did not do so said that they were not sure whether authorities would take action on ragging complaints and 10 per cent said that college tries to justify ragging. This goes on to show that not only is ragging still widely prevalent in the institution, but more importantly, the action taken by the regulatory body has not made any difference to the ragging culture in the college.

It must also be noted that in recent years either a complaint was registered on the national anti-ragging helpline number or an incident of ragging was reported in the media from many of these institutions covered in this section. Since they still report high prevalence of ragging it seems that ragging practice is deeply embedded in the culture of these institutions.

## **Institutional study of good practices**

It is instructive at this point to examine some key points from the institutional study that was conducted of a professional institution, well-regarded for its healthy and ragging-free psychosocial climate. We conducted in-depth interviews with the institution's registrar, faculty, students, warden and the support staff. The detailed institutional study is presented as annexure VI. The key findings are:

- The institution boasts of a very open culture where 'everyone knows everyone else', which provided an opportunity for healthy interaction within student fraternity as well as between students and staff. The registrar of the university reinforced that he knew each student by name and the students were free to walk in any time as there were no visitation hours.
- The faculty members emphasized that the learning environment facilitated the inculcation of rules. One faculty member said that, "a lot of venting happens in classrooms. All rules are discussed along with the pros and cons and this allows taking out frustrations and promotes understanding."
- Recently, the institution introduced a system in which a week after the start of a new academic session, each fresher is asked to write an essay on, "My First Day at College". This gives a wonderful glimpse into the activities of the college, including the interactions of the freshers with seniors.
- More than a decade ago an incident of ragging was reported to the authorities and the student was immediately rusticated from the college. The then Vice-Chancellor of the institution felt that rustication would serve as the best example for all future generation of students. The VC did not take back his decision despite getting calls from prominent political leaders. During the interviews everyone talked of this incident though it had occurred long ago.

Having a well- established network sends an unwritten but strong message to all students as well as staff that any untoward incident would immediately come to light and swift action would be taken and that perhaps acts as a deterrent. However, we must note that an advantage

for the institution lies in the fact that it has small strength of students (about 450-500 undergraduates) at a time and therefore the teacher : student ratio allows for more personal interaction and a close-knit community structure.

The small student strength and favourable teacher-student ratio allows for a personal interaction that may not be possible in larger institutions. However, it is useful to abstract the important elements that facilitate a healthy psychosocial and learning environment for students. These include personal interaction between faculty/staff and students, a learning environment that is open and promotes expression of opinion and emotions, rules and norms that are internalised through frank discussion rather than imposed by authority, interest in what students think and want, and firm disciplinary action when warranted. It is important to note that the institution gives these aspects as much seriousness as it does to the courses of study and mastery of the technical subject.

### **Institutional Environment**

Every institution has a distinct environment shaped by several factors. Factors such as institution's location/region in the country, facilities it offers, type of courses offered (technical or liberal arts), type of management system (private or public), faculty composition, demographics of the students, institution's ethos, tradition, values, beliefs, rules, history, interpersonal communication, interaction among faculty, administration and other support staff and between them and the students play an important role in determining the culture of an academic institution and its impact on students (Xing, 2013). According to researchers, literature relating college environment to student development talks about two components: formal organizational characteristics (size, faculty and administration) and college culture. The formal organizational characteristics are essential in shaping of the institution's environment. The environment, in turn, produces the basis for student behaviour and, thus, the development of a college's climate or feel (Fleming et al., 2005). However, in order to become aware of the campus climate or feel, it is important to understand how comfortable students feel in approaching university officials and accessing resources provided by them and the sense of security or safety for all cultural groups on the campus

(Fleming et al., 2005). Several empirical studies have highlighted the importance of the perception of non-discriminatory environments to positive learning and developmental outcomes (Reason & Rankin, 2006).

### **Intervention by regulatory bodies**

Over the years, regulatory bodies have issued guidelines to institutions to strengthen student support system and ensure non-discriminatory and positive learning environment for students. But little effort has been made towards monitoring and assessing this. Even when an untoward incident occurs and is reported in the media, and the institution is penalised by the regulatory bodies, the factors responsible for shaping the environment of the institution remain largely unaddressed.

It is important to carry out periodic assessment of campus environment of institutions to analyse gaps and effectiveness of the students' support systems and to understand the experiences, discomfort and problems being faced by the staff and the student community. This will also help institutions to evaluate attitudes, perceptions, behaviours and expectations of students and staff regarding issues of safety, comfort, diversity and thus ensure a positive learning environment on the campus. This would not only help the institution to deal with the issue of ragging but also address other social and psychological issues that have been discussed in the earlier parts of this report.

However, given the number of educational institutions in our country and the complexity involved in the assessment of campus environment, which is a subjective matter, it is not feasible for regulatory bodies to do the assessment of campus environment. A better evaluation of an institution's environment can be undertaken by institutions themselves by an in-depth assessment of factors that define campus environment. Every institution has its own environment and distinct needs and challenges thus required to design its own survey and appropriate intervention. Nevertheless, regulatory bodies can highlight the significance of campus environment assessment and either make it mandatory for institutions to undertake the assessment or incentivise the institutions for doing so.

## Part II: Bullying in Six Urban Indian Schools: A supplementary Study

### Introduction

Within the master set of aggressive behaviours, bullying may be regarded as a subset. Researchers observed that bullying was “an aspect of aggression” (Darmawan, 2010 p. 9), as did Masterson (1997), who termed it “a form of aggression in which a person repeatedly harasses another person physically and/or psychologically” (p. 1). Bullying is a type of aggressive, hurtful, and sometimes violent behaviour, that always involves an imbalance of power or strength and in which an individual or a group of individuals repeatedly attacks, humiliates, and/or excludes a relatively powerless person (Salmivalli, 2010). Victims of bullying often have difficulty defending themselves. Bullying can occur between couples, and in peer groups, families, schools and the workplace. Bullying is also distinguished from peer conflict by marked differences in physical and/or psychological power between the participants, as compared to more equally matched power in the former case (Masterson, 1997).

Typically, within the context of Indian education, the broader term ‘bullying’ tends to be used to refer to aggressive behaviours perpetrated by students on other students in school, or in related locations such as hostels, school buses or during commutes to school. Bullying is a significant problem in many countries. In the United States school bullying statistics show that about one in four students are bullied on a regular basis<sup>44</sup>. In a nationally representative study, American children in the age-group of 8-15 identified teasing and bullying as bigger problems than drugs, alcohol, racism, or sex (Hafner, 2003). Research suggests that direct bullying increases in elementary school, plateaus in middle school and decreases in high-school, however indirect bullying increases with time. In lower grades direct bullying is more common while in higher grades indirect bullying is practised more (Chirilă, 2012). A study shows that as children grow older their social skills improve which protect them against bullying (James, 2010).

---

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/school-bullying-statistics.html>

In order to explore similarities and differences between systematic aggressive behaviour occurring in schools (bullying) and in institutions of higher education (ragging), a smaller study on the former phenomenon was undertaken to complement the study on ragging, the results of which have been already presented. The study was much smaller in scope and size, focusing only on two cities in urban India, Delhi and Bengaluru; and involved a smaller sample: 1453 students from standards 9 to 12, and 83 teachers. While only a longer term longitudinal study may be able to establish clearer or more linear relationships between bullying in school and ragging in institutions of higher learning, the purpose of this smaller survey was to see if any broad, comparable patterns emerged between the two phenomena, to justify undertaking a more detailed effort.

### **Conceptual context:**

According to Andrew Mellor, the manager of the Anti-Bullying Network at the University of Edinburgh, bullying is “an imbalance of power that exists over an extended period of time between two individuals, two groups, or a group and an individual in which the more powerful intimidates or belittles the other” (as cited in Mestry, Merwe & Squelch, 2006, p. 47). Bullying may not always leave broken bones; however, the effects can be both physical and psychological. It may be a dehumanizing experience that manifests itself in various ways (SooHoo, 2009).

**Types of Bullying:** Like ragging, bullying can be of various types. It could include direct aggression involving “those behaviours that a bully commits in the presence of his or her target, resulting in the target becoming immediately aware of being harmed. Indirect aggression, on the other hand, is done without the victim’s immediate knowledge and the bully’s primary intent is to cause harm to the victim by affecting the victim’s social standing or peer relationships” (Durand et al, 2013, p. 2). Such indirect bullying may take the form of rumour spreading, name calling, psychological manipulation, character assassination, and social exclusion. By and large, physical bullying is not as common as the more subtle forms, such as social exclusion, name-calling and gossip. “Physical bullying is a form of direct aggression and occurs when a bully physically harms his or her target through such actions as

hitting, kicking, punching, slapping, or pinching”. “Verbal bullying occurs when a bully uses words to mock the victim’s intelligence, abilities, appearance, or any other quality or characteristic of the victim” (Durand et al, 2013, p. 2). Lately, internet has provided a new platform for bullying as a lot of harassment is done on social media sites.

### **Responses to/Impacts of bullying on those who experience bullying:**

Studies on the social and psychological consequences of bullying in schools suggest that bullying can lead to negative emotional responses (frustration, stress, anger, depression, powerlessness, humiliation, etc.), identity crisis, health problems (depression, anxiety, etc.), negative responses to school (isolation, negative performances, feelings of injustice, etc.) and other responses such as revenge and minimised efforts in the learning process (as cited in Chirila, 2012). Students who underwent bullying also developed fear towards the school environment and school dropout rates increased because of bullying (Chirila, 2012). Olweus (1993) reported that problems due to bullying, which appear in childhood, can persist into later adulthood. Longitudinal studies have suggested that bullying affects a student’s normal development and that there are long-term consequences. Studies revealed that somatic problem such as sleep and eating disorders, headache could also occur due to bullying (Chirila, 2012).

### **Impacts on perpetrators:**

Research has shown that bullying can impact perpetrators as well. Studies on shame suggest that even perpetrators experience shame particularly when they have the knowledge that their action caused hurt to the victim. Perpetrators have a need to protect their own self-worth and they do this by denying that their behaviour is wrong or even rationalising it and seeing the victim as weak.

### **Reasons for bullying:**

Empirical research has shown correlations between bullying and being different. According to a research, what is considered as ‘deviance’ can vary across groups and differences between the culture of the peer group and the behaviour of the individual could lead to social exclusion or bullying (Thornberg, 2010). Although anyone can become a target of bullying, however, research suggests that children who are perceived to be visibly different from social

norms are at higher risk. This includes young people with disabilities or social skills deficits, and young people who are overweight or underweight or who may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) (Stuart-Cassel, Terzian, & Bradshaw, 2013). In a 2007 study in Britain 82 per cent of children with learning disabilities claimed to have been bullied<sup>45</sup>.

Regional, caste and religion-based bullying may also be more relevant to India. Karnataka's Primary and Secondary Education Minister reported in 2015 that of the "1.68 lakh children in the age group of 7 to 14 [who]dropped out of schools in 2014, 67,655 were SC/ST students. Among the possible reasons cited by the minister for this phenomenon were "fear of teachers, [and] unfriendly school environment"<sup>46</sup>. A study conducted by the Dalit Adhikar Abhiyan in 10 districts of Madhya Pradesh in 2014 also revealed that Dalit school children faced a range of discriminatory practices at school, including being forbidden to drink from common water sources, being asked to sit apart from the other students before getting their mid-day meal, and being called by their caste identities by teachers. 36 per cent reported regularly staying away from school, while 46 per cent said they did not have the courage to ask questions in class<sup>47</sup>. A number of reports in the media about such occurrences suggest that these are not necessarily exceptional incidents. Clearly, such environments in which institutional authorities perpetrate or endorse caste-based discrimination suggest that caste-linked bullying by students may also be nurtured in these settings. There is a need for more research establishing this connection as well as to explore regional and religion-based discrimination so that clear guidelines, resources and punitive measures can be put in place to prevent such bullying.

Intolerance and discrimination are believed to be the main reasons behind bullying. However, in communities where social or racial distinctions are less pronounced, children resort to other characteristics such as appearance, academic performance, athletics, popularity, etc. and to create feeling of 'us' versus 'them' and inflict pain on other students whom they see as different from themselves. Children tend to absorb these biases from their parents, teachers, other children and adults around them.

---

<sup>45</sup><http://www.theguardian.com/education/2007/jun/18/schools.children>

<sup>46</sup><http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2014-Saw-a-Huge-Increase-in-Dropouts/2015/02/15/article2669453.ece>. Accessed on April 5, 2014.

<sup>47</sup><http://www.hindustantimes.com/bhopal/kids-bear-brunt-of-macabre-caste-abuses-in-rural-mp/article1-1293731.aspx>

**Perpetrator reasons for engaging in bullying:**

Experts earlier believed that bullies troubled others because of their own low self-esteem. However, new research shows that bullies are quite confident of themselves and being cruel to others makes them feel powerful. Studies suggest that children and adolescents use aggressive strategies to achieve and maintain social status and dominance (Thornberg, 2010). Researchers have found that children who bullied others did so because they wanted to increase their popularity (Boyles & Martin, 2010). Studies have also shown that aggressive children, including bullies, can be perceived as ‘cool’, powerful, and popular even in mainstream peer groups and bullying can help in attaining status (Salmivalli, 2010). This serves as a reward to bullies and only encourages them to continue their behaviour.

**Gender norms and differences in bullying:**

Some amount of bullying revolves around the prevalence of set norms of what constitutes masculine and feminine ideals for the social group, and suggesting real or perceived deviations from these norms as a basis for aggressive behaviour– for example, calling a boy a ‘sissy’ or a ‘girl’, or calling a girl a ‘slut’. Real or perceived deviances made students more vulnerable in school situations. The harassment based on sex-based inequality in power relationships is more prevalent in schools dominated by hegemonic masculinity.

Bullying among girls and young women, unlike bullying among boys and young men, is not easy to identify because it may not often be overtly physical and therefore more difficult to see (SooHoo, 2009). Further, according to a study, girl bullies through the process of ‘Othering’ determine who is valued and who is not and this contributes to a social hierarchy of privilege and oppression. (SooHoo, 2009)

**Role of Bystanders:**

Bystanders are an important element in bullying. Bullying is a combination of a bully, a bullied child who is afraid to complain and bystanders, who either actively participate or watch the act or look away and adults who consider it as ‘teasing’. Further, as the number of bystander increases, the likelihood of intervention of any individual bystander to provide help decreases and more time passes before help does occur. Bystanders tend to inhibit one another from taking action (Mestry, Merwe & Squelch, 2006). Moreover, a study suggests

that by participating in bullying or watching it, other children can contribute to the expected social outcomes and eventually encourage bullying behaviour (Padgett & Notar, 2013).

### **Roles of teachers and the school:**

Intervention by teachers depends on how they perceive different acts of bullying. They may be able to recognise direct physical aggression as bullying, however, according to studies, teachers are less likely than students, to recognise verbal aggression, indirect physical aggression and social exclusion as bullying (James, 2010). A research showed that teachers intervene in bullying incidents if they feel they are similar to the victim and are able to identify with the victim emotionally (SooHoo, 2009). Further, another research suggested that teachers' empathy for the victim and how seriously they perceive the bullying incident determine their likelihood to intervene (Byers, Caltabiano & Caltabiano, 2011). However, a study showed that teachers' identities are also shaped by their own experiences as students within school and many teachers have learned to be bystanders and not do anything (SooHoo, 2009). According to studies, the way teachers respond to bullying behaviours impacts the current and future behaviours of both bullies and victims (Byers, Caltabiano & Caltabiano, 2011).

A study shows that bullying is reduced significantly when all the adults of the school intervene immediately and systematically to stop any form of violence in the school. According to studies, a negative school climate contributes to bullying (Konstantina & Piliotis-Dimitris, 2010). Thus, the prevalence of bullying in a school also depends on how seriously the school addresses this problem. Moreover, it was found in a study that in schools where bullying was low, school personnel were able to articulate purposeful preventive views on bullying to a greater extent than personnel from school where the occurrence of bullying was high (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004).

For developing a positive school climate, a study on bullying recommends that there must be “clear rules and sanctions against bullying behaviours; students must be made to participate in the enforcement of rules and sanctions”; “encouragement of positive and non-violent behaviours of aggressive students by teachers”; and schools must undertake activities that “promote collaboration and positive interaction among students” (Konstantina & Piliotis-

Dimitris, 2010, p. 95). Ensuring safe and comfortable learning environment in school not only prevents bullying among students but also helps them to be successful academically. According to a research, students' perceptions of supportive school climate have been linked to student adjustment, commitment to learning and academic achievement (Richards, 2013).

### **Role of the family:**

Researchers believe that children's beliefs, moral values and attitude towards social life are shaped by family's general life (Kim, 2004). When children see parents teasing/bullying others at home, they begin to see this behaviour as a legitimate way to get what they want. Additionally, parents can encourage bullying when they ignore bullying behaviour in their children and treat it as trivial. Similarly other factors like neglect by parents, overprotection and punitive parenting are also believed to be related to bullying. Children's behaviour is also affected by their parents' attitude towards aggression. A study found a high correlation between parental attitudes toward aggression and children's self-reported aggression (Kim, 2004). Similarly, a study has shown that children are more likely to use aggressive tactics if their parents favour aggressive solutions (Kim, 2004). Parents also need to be careful in correcting the mistakes of their children. According to a study, parental disapproval of offences while respecting the offender's self is associated with less bullying in children (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004). Another research showed that children who are attached to their parents are less likely to bully others (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004). Thus, studies suggest that the family environment plays a role in determining bullying.

The literature review suggests that bullying is a universal phenomenon that is perpetuated by power hierarchies in society that perpetrators and victims recognise. Since a school forms a major part of a student's social world, it can become a fertile ground for bullying. The process of bullying and its associated effects can have long-term consequences on the lives of both victims and bullies. How communities/societies tackle the problem of bullying determines whether it is legitimized and strengthened or not.

## Results:

### Climate of Aggression:

Aggression being the primary characteristic associated with bullying, in our survey of schools to understand the impact of bullying on students, the first question we asked participants was about various aggressive behaviours that were ‘commonly seen’ in school. The results in Table 3.II.1 showed that high levels of aggression were fairly normalised in the school environment, with over 50 per cent reporting verbal aggression, a third reporting physical aggression and a quarter reporting social aggression. In comparison, aggression on social media was lower, about 10 per cent, suggesting that for now, the traditional forms of aggression continue to dominate. A very significant 41 per cent reported that all these forms of aggression were ‘commonly seen’.

**Table No. 3.II.1: Aggressive behaviours commonly seen in school**

a	Physical aggression – students hitting someone, shoving, kicking, spitting, damaging or stealing another student’s property	33.7%
b	Verbal aggression- name-calling, mocking, hurtful teasing, humiliating or threatening someone, making people do things they don’t want to do	50.6%
c	Social aggression- excluding others from the group, spreading gossip or rumours about others, making others look foolish, etc.	25.3%
d	Aggression on social media e.g. Facebook- using e-mail, mobile to threaten or hurt someone, embarrass or make someone look bad	9.6%
e	All of the above	41%

### **Individual Experiences of Bullying, As Targets and Perpetrators:**

**As Targets:** Responses to a question asking students about their own experiences of aggressive behaviour (Table 3.II.2), corroborated the data above and thus confirms the picture of many schools as environments in which many students face bullying. Nearly half the students surveyed reported having been the targets of some kind of aggressive behaviour in school. The most common behaviours experienced were those of being made fun of or ignored (47 per cent), followed by being made a target of gossip in school (reported by a quarter of the sample). Disrespect of others' property was also a problem, and nearly 20 per cent of the students reported having had their personal belongings snatched by other students. While the experiences of male and female students were roughly comparable in the case of these three kinds of behaviours, when it came to experiencing verbal abuse, insults or threats, or physical abuse such as pushing, slapping or hitting, more male students (7 and 12 per cent more for verbal and physical abuse respectively) reported experiencing these behaviours.

**Table No. 3.II.2: Student experiences as targets of bullying in school**

	<b>Bullying behaviours experienced by student targets in school</b>	<b>Overall percentage</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
a	Made fun of/ignored	46.7%	46.0%	48.4%
b	Was the target of gossip in school	25.6%	24.8%	26.6%
c	Snatching of personal belongings	19.3%	19.6%	18.6%
d	Verbally abused/insulted/threatened	19.3%	22.3%	14.8%
e	Physically abused (pushing, slapping, hitting, etc.)	17.5%	22.9%	10.2%

Comparing this data with the results of the ragging study, it is worthy of note that much higher percentage of students in school reported having experienced bullying in some form, compared to about 40 per cent of the students in institutions of higher education who admitted to having faced mild or severe ragging. Even more interesting is that compared to 4.2 per cent of students who had experienced physical abuse as part of ragging, 17.5 per cent of students in school reported such physical abuse as part of bullying. The school study did

not explore parameters such as pressure to drink and smoke as part of ragging, or sexual ragging. Data from media reports on incidents of bullying (see Box 3.II.1) suggest that such physical abuse can be quite severe, very comparable to the stories of ragging that tend to emerge in the media every year soon after professional college admissions.

### **Box 3.II.1: Samples of Media Reports of Severe Bullying**

#### **Case I, June, 2006<sup>48</sup>**

*A X-standard student of a private school left for school on the morning of March 6, returned home, after several days, minus a hand and sense of hearing in one ear.*

*He narrated the story." He snatched my school bag and threw it inside a moving train. I ran to retrieve it. The bully and the other two boys also boarded the train. They made me sit near the window and kept taunting me. I got up from there and stood near the doorway. The bully followed me and hit me on my face and stomach. When I started yelling, unable to bear the pain, they pushed me out of the train. I fell down, near the Sanatorium. I was conscious after I fell down. I got up and started walking slowly. I immediately realised that my one hand was missing." The victim has been at the receiving end of the bullying tactics for the past six months. He was also threatened with dire consequences, if he squealed. The accused has been suspended from school and the police are on a look out for him. The victim who had to miss his X-std. exams, is now sitting at home, crestfallen.*

#### **Case II, Deccan Herald, January 2011<sup>49</sup>**

*23 class six students of a Backward Residential School sustained serious injuries after they were ragged and assaulted by their seniors. The students were blindfolded and assaulted with sticks and belt( sic), and had to undergo treatment. The seniors, class 10 students, had been ragging their juniors since the beginning of the academic year, but the victims, most of whom from weaker sections from neighbouring taluks, remained tight-lipped fearing retribution from their seniors. Parents of the victims staged a protest at the school premises demanding stern action. Following the incident, Zilla Panchayat CEO suspended hostel warden and cook.*

---

<sup>48</sup><http://noragging.blogspot.in/2006/06/ragging-spreads-to-schools-how-can-i.html>

<sup>49</sup><http://www.deccanherald.com/content/126959/23-students-injured-ragging.html>

**Bullying Behaviours Reported by perpetrators:** The perception of schools as environments conducive for students to participate in aggressive behaviours was also borne out by the range of bullying behaviours in which students said they had engaged, from making fun of or ignoring other students to verbal and physical abuse (Table 3.II.3). Direct bullying like verbal and physical abuse and disrespect for others' property were reported by perpetrators as being markedly less than indirect bullying like spreading gossip about a victim or behaviours intended to mock or marginalize her or him. The data shows that girls may engage in more indirect bullying, with about 48 and 46 percent reporting participation in teasing or ignoring fellow students or gossiping about them. In comparison, the range for bullying behaviours like disrespect for others' property to verbal abuse (including on social media) and physical abuse was two to six per cent for girls: a markedly lower figure as compared to the seven to 18 per cent range exhibited by the boys. It must also be noted that in every category of bullying behaviour, except gossiping about fellow students, male students self-reported higher percentages of participation.

**Table No. 3.II.3: Bullying behaviours in which students said that they had participated**

	<b>Kinds of bullying behaviours in which students said they had participated</b>	<b>Overall percentage</b>	<b>% of Males</b>	<b>% of Females</b>
a	Made fun of/ignored someone	54.6%	59.4%	48.2%
b	Gossiped about someone	37.5%	31.6%	45.6%
c	Snatched someone's personal belongings	6.7%	10.0%	2.0%
d	Verbally abused/ insulted/threatened someone	11.7%	15.8%	5.9%
e	Physically abused someone (pushing, shoving, hitting, slapping)	12.0%	17.6%	3.9%
f	Sent lewd SMS/comments on Facebook to hurt someone feelings	5.2%	7.2%	2.0%

The bullying study did not consider sexual bullying in any detail (apart from the parameter about sending lewd SMSs and comments on Facebook).

## Perceptions about Reasons for Bullying:

### Targets' Perceptions about Reasons for Targeting by Perpetrators:

Students were asked why others made fun of them (Table 3.II.4), and looks proved to be the most common instigating factor (28 per cent), followed by the way they spoke (18 per cent). This is in keeping with the primacy accorded to image (self-image and 'fitting in' with images favoured by the peer group) during adolescence. In comparison, in the ragging study, about 13 per cent attributed the ragging they faced to their looks and language, suggesting that looks may become *slightly* less significant for triggering bullying as students grow older. Nevertheless, this was the variable which scored most highly in the ragging study as well, so image continues to be the main criterion used to establish difference and otherness. Academic performance (17 per cent) could also be a reason for perpetrators to target certain students, a parameter that was not considered in the ragging study.

**Table 3.II.4: Targets' perceptions about reasons for targeting by perpetrators**

	<b>Targets' perceptions about reasons for targeting by perpetrators</b>	<b>Overall percentage</b>
a	My looks (height, complexion, weight, etc.)	28.4%
b	The way I speak (tone, accent, language, stammering, etc.)	18.4%
c	Performance in studies	17.4%
d	My family background (income, occupation, place of residence, type of vehicle, etc.)	4.6%
e	Caste	5.3%
f	Religion	4.8%

In spite of the fact that this survey focused only on six schools in urban India, caste and religion continue to be factors that play a role in triggering bullying. Religion-based aggressive behaviour was very comparable in schools and institutions of higher learning, reported by 4.8 per cent and 4.5 per cent of the students respectively, while caste was reported as significant by a marginally higher number (8 per cent) in colleges compared to schools (5.3 per cent). However, it must be noted that the six schools in which the survey on bullying was carried out were urban, in Delhi and Bengaluru; and it is possible that the

figures may be different for semi-urban and rural schools, since media reports and studies by NGOs suggest that not only students, but teachers engage in caste-based aggressive behaviour with students in schools.

Academic performance (17 per cent) was also found to be a reason for perpetrators to target certain students, a parameter that was not considered in the ragging study. In this context, student perceptions of the kinds of student characteristics which find favour with teachers might be relevant, and is given in Table 3.II. 5.

**Table No. 3.II.5: Student perceptions of student characteristics favoured by teachers**

	<b>Student characteristics favoured by teachers</b>	<b>Overall percentage</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
a	Good looking	12.2%	13.1%	10.5%
b	Speak well	34.5%	37.4%	30.6%
c	From privileged background	11.6%	12.9%	9.7%
d	Good in studies	79.9%	78.6%	81.7%

Students resented partiality and favouritism on the part of teachers. During interviews, one student observed that “Teachers are biased, if once you have done something bad they don’t forget it, they categorise you as bad.” Another student noted: “Teachers don’t give opportunities to anyone but some selected students who they have personal attachment with.” Students perceived as gaining unfair advantages may have to face aggressive behaviours from peers. Those to whom teachers are seen to be partial may prompt jealousy in other students who may engage in bullying in response. Teachers may also aid or instigate bullying in school when they discriminate against children or indulge in name calling. Sometimes teachers as well as other support staff in school use sarcasm as a way to discipline students.

### Perpetrators' Reasons for Engaging in Bullying:

The majority of the perpetrators (47 per cent) chose not to answer this question, and the figure for those who did not answer was even higher for girls (58 per cent). Nearly 30 per cent of the perpetrators, including a quarter of the girls, reported that they 'wanted to teach a lesson' to the target as a reason for engaging in bullying. . Clearly this line of thinking continued into higher education settings, as a quarter of the students who engaged in ragging felt that the activity helped to 'keep freshers disciplined'.

**Table No. 3.II.6: Showing perpetrators' reasons for engaging in bullying**

	<b>Perpetrators' reasons for engaging in bullying</b>	<b>Overall percentage</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
a	I think it's alright to do this	7.8%	9.7%	4.6%
b	I think it's fun	19.8%	25.6%	11.7%
c	Others will respect and fear me	5.6%	7.7%	2.6%
d	It will make me popular	5.2%	7.0%	2.3%
e	It will help me make friends	8.0%	9.7%	5.4%
f	I wanted to teach a lesson	28.6%	30.7%	25.7%
g	Did not answer	46.9%	38.6%	57.9%

Nearly a fifth believed that bullying was 'fun', an argument that was echoed by about 28 per cent of the older students who engaged in ragging. About eight per cent of the perpetrators from school felt that engaging in bullying would help them win friends, a figure that was as high as 40 per cent among perpetrators of ragging in college. Thirty five per cent of the perpetrators from college felt that ragging fostered close attachments to one another and to their college and institution. Thus, the perception that engaging in aggressive behaviours will contribute to close relationships and institutional loyalties is much stronger among the older age group. While about five percent of the students who engaged in bullying did so because they felt that this would make other students respect and fear them, this percentage jumped to

30 per cent for students who perpetrated ragging in colleges. A little over five per cent believed that engaging in bullying would make them popular; the matching figure for students engaging in ragging was nine per cent.

### **Student Perceptions about Popularity of Perpetrators:**

Interestingly, a much higher percentage (nearly 30 per cent) of the general student population echoed the response that engaging in bullying made perpetrators more popular and gave them more power, but a heartening 62 per cent did not subscribe to this view.

**Table No. 3.II.7: Students perception about whether students who engage in bullying are popular and have power**

	<b>Student who bully are popular and have power?</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>
a	Yes	29%
b	No	62.1%
c	Did not answer	8.9%

### **Teachers Perceptions about the Reasons for Bullying by Perpetrators:**

Table 3.II.8 shows teacher perceptions on the reasons for bullying. A large majority of teachers (nearly 57 per cent) felt that students engaged in bullying in order to feel powerful. Nearly 50 per cent held that bullying helped students gain popularity. The belief that bullying was an entertainment option for students was held by 40 per cent of the teachers. A quarter of the teachers subscribed to the notion that students might engage in bullying to teach other students a lesson, a number comparable with the views of the students themselves. Revenge was also seen as a strong motive (34 per cent). Contrary to student perceptions, only about two per cent of the teachers believed that bullying was undertaken in order to gain friends.

**Table No. 3.II.8: Teachers perceptions of reasons for bullying**

	<b>Teachers' perceptions of reasons for bullying</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>
a	To gain popularity	48.2%
b	To gain respect	9.6%
c	For entertainment	40.2%
d	To make friends	2.4%
e	To teach someone a lesson	25.3%
f	To take revenge	34.9%
g	To feel powerful	56.6%
h	Others	10.8%

**Responses to Bullying:**

**Targets' Emotional Responses to Bullying:**

Table 3.II.9 shows the emotional reactions experienced by targets of bullying. Of the overall sample, between a quarter and 40 per cent of targets of bullying reported feeling lonely, sad, or angry, or distanced themselves from the experience with an "I don't care" response). About 19 per cent experienced being embarrassed. However, only 6.7 per cent reported being scared. This is an interesting finding, and needs to be explored further, to see whether there are enough systems and stability in the school environment that, although students experience negative feelings overall, fear is not a predominant one, or whether data is skewed because self-reporting on fear negatively affects targets' self-esteem.

**Table No. 3.II.9: Emotional reactions experienced by targets of bullying**

	<b>Emotional Reactions experienced by targets of bullying</b>	<b>Overall percentage</b>	<b>% of Males</b>	<b>% of Females</b>
a	Sad	36.2%	28.9%	46.7%
b	Lonely	23.0%	19.9%	27.6%

c	Angry	40.7%	43.7%	37.0%
d	Embarrassed	18.7%	18.3%	19.2%
e	Scared	6.7%	4.2%	10.0%
f	I don't care	33.6%	36.2%	30.3%

The gender difference in the emotional reactions experienced by boy and girl students is striking. Overall, more girl students said that they had experienced sadness, loneliness and fear to the bullying experience, with 17 percentage points more reporting sadness than boys. More boy students reported feeling anger, and taking a nonchalant attitude, compared to girls. Feelings of embarrassment, though, were roughly comparable.

There were interesting differences between the emotional responses of school students to bullying and college/university students to ragging. Compared to the nearly 41 per cent of school students who said they felt anger, only 12.6 per cent of the older students reported feeling angry. Since the terms used to describe emotional responses in the two questionnaires were different, the data are not exactly comparable. Nevertheless, while 18.7 per cent of the school students who had experienced bullying reported feeling embarrassed, the percentage of college students who said they felt “ashamed and humiliated” was 5.7 per cent. The data was more comparable when 5.2 per cent of college students who had experienced ragging said that they felt anxious, and 6.7 per cent of school students said they felt scared. A marked difference between college and school students was that except for anger, school students reported strong emotional reactions in large proportions, whereas among college students, the maximum number (exactly 50 per cent) reported either enjoying the ragging experience or feeling bad initially but later feeling that “it was alright”. This is a difference that might be worth exploring: whether college students report these reactions because ragging is considered normalised and standard in institutions of higher education, and so older students are better prepared to face a negative experience that they anticipate, or whether these older students are trying to put as good a face as possible on a difficult situation, and whether younger students are being more expressive of negative emotions related to an unjust situation. While about eight per cent of the students in the ragging study reported feeling helpless, a comparable ten per cent of students felt the same way in the study on bullying. Feelings of upset related to the remembered trauma of ragging were not explored in the bullying study.

### **Targets' Actions in Response to Bullying:**

By far the most common action in response to bullying (Table 3.II.10), reported by a little less than a third of the participants of the survey, was inaction; they did not do anything when they were teased or troubled by classmates or friends. A quarter responded to bullying in the same coin, bullying those who harassed them. Close to a fifth of the students either complained to the teachers or fought with the perpetrators, while about ten per cent each complained to parents, friends, displaced the anger they felt and took it out on someone else, or cried and felt helpless. The most important gender difference noted was that markedly fewer girl students (13.7 per cent to the boys' 32.5 per cent) tended to respond to bullying by bullying the perpetrators in turn.

**Table No. 3.II.10: Targets' actions in response to bullying**

	<b>Targets' actions in response to teasing/ troubling by classmates/friends</b>	<b>Overall percentage</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
a	Did the same to them	24.7%	32.5%	13.7%
b	Complained to the teachers	19.4%	18.1%	21.2%
c	Complained to friends	11.4%	10.3%	13.2%
d	Did not do anything	30.2%	31.6%	28.0%
e	Cried/felt helpless	10.0%	6.5%	14.6%
f	Complained to my parents /siblings	11.1%	8.1%	15.1%
g	Fought with them	18.2%	21.3%	14.1%
h	Took the anger on somebody else	9.5%	8.9%	10.5%

### **Bystanders' Actions in Response to Bullying:**

There were interesting differences in the responses of bystanders (Table3.II.11) watching bullying and ragging respectively. About twice as many school students (12.1 per cent) said that they enjoyed watching bullying, compared to only 6.1 per cent of students in institutions of higher learning who said that they enjoyed watching ragging. Likewise, while only eight per cent of the college students said that they sometimes joined in the ragging, 18.3 per cent (24.7 per cent of the male students) said that they joined in in the bullying. The percentages of school and college students ignoring bullying or doing nothing was fairly comparable: 15 and 14 per cent respectively.

**Table No. 3.II.11: Student action/reactions to witnessing bullying behaviour**

	<b>Student actions/reactions to witnessing bullying by their friends/classmates</b>	<b>Overall percentage</b>	<b>% of Males</b>	<b>% of Females</b>
a	Enjoy watching	12.1%	16.5%	5.4%
b	Sometimes join them	18.3%	24.7%	9.4%
c	Do nothing	15.1%	17.1%	11.8%
d	Feel bad for the student, but don't do anything	30.4%	29.4%	31.4%
e	Try to help the student later	39.3%	37.2%	42.1%
f	Try to stop them	55.4%	52.5%	59.7%

However, an equally striking contrast was that while 24 per cent of college students tried to persuade their peers to stop ragging, the percentage of school students trying to dissuade their peers from bullying was as high as 55 per cent. About another 40 per cent of the students said that they tried to help the students later. Roughly comparable proportions reported feeling bad, but not doing anything: 30 per cent in the case of both school students and college students. In the ragging schedule, this data was further teased out into students feeling bad or upset, but feeling that they cannot help, or wanting to complain but being afraid of the consequences. While nearly ten per cent of the college students reported complaining about ragging incidents, the bullying schedule did not specifically examine whether the efforts to stop bullying included attempts to complain to the authorities.

**Teachers views about the impact of bullying on students:**

As Table 3.II.12 shows, only about three per cent of the teachers said that they did not know what the impact of bullying would be on their students. More than three quarters held that targets of bullying would feel sad, lonely and angry, 63 per cent felt that the bullying would harm students' self-esteem, and 54 per cent thought that their self-confidence would be injured. 45 per cent felt that bullying could cause serious mental problems.

**Table 3.II.12: Teachers’ perceptions about the impact of bullying on students**

	<b>Teachers’ perceptions about the impact of bullying on students</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>
a	Causes serious mental problems	44.6%
b	Harms their self-esteem	62.7%
c	Negatively affects their mood- makes them sad lonely and angry	75.9%
d	Injures their self-confidence	54.2%
e	Enhances their self-confidence	7.2%
f	Toughens them and prepares them for the real world	15.7%
g	Others	3.6%
h	Don’t know	3.6%

However, about 16 per cent were of the opinion that bullying would toughen their targets and prepare them for the real world. A smaller number (seven per cent) felt that bullying would enhance the self-confidence of the targets. The data from the interviews of teachers in the study on ragging showed that a significant number endorsed ragging, seeing it as necessary for juniors to respect seniors and as an aid to developing friendship. In comparison, in school, it appears that the majority of the teachers saw bullying as negative.

**Authorities’ actions in response to complaints of bullying:**

When students were asked whether any action was taken by authorities in response to complaints about bullying faced by them, the responses were as shown in Table 3.II.13. The fact that nearly two thirds of the students chose not to answer the question or answered in the negative suggests that the situation with respect to authority response to bullying in schools is less than optimal. The case study reported in Box 3.II.2 suggests that there may be certain times when perpetrators may behave with even more impunity than others, for instance, once they have appeared for Board exams and the school authorities have little leverage with them. In contrast, in the ragging study over two-thirds of the students reported that college authorities had taken specific steps to help students to adjust smoothly to college life and only about three per cent did not answer the question. It appears that the attention that ragging has attracted in the media and the courts has led to institutionalised responses to support new

students, which are comparatively lacking in schools, probably because they are perceived as safer environments.

**Table No. 3.II.13: Students perception of authorities’ response to complaints about bullying**

	<b>When spoken or complained was any action taken?</b>	<b>Overall Percentage</b>
a	Yes	37.8%
b	No	30.2%
c	Did not answer	32%

*Box3.II. 2*

*A ragging “demonstration” made 19 Class IX students flee from the school early today before being caught 7km away and herded back to face suspension. Sources said the students had decided to flee after two boys (of Class IX and Class VIII) — were allegedly beaten up by a group of Class XII students near the student lavatory in the school’s backyard around noon yesterday. “We were called over by a group of Class XII students and made to witness the ragging taking place near the school toilet. They threatened us and said we were witnessing just a ‘demo’ and that they would continue to rag us in the hostel at night”, a boy said.*

*When asked as to why they had not reported the matter to the school authorities, a few students said Class XII tests were on and so they thought the matter would not be taken seriously. The students believed that the school authorities wouldn’t be able to resolve the matter in a fair way. So they took the matter into their own hands and decided to inform the district administration instead. The 11 Class XII students allegedly involved in the ragging were identified and suspended for 10 days — same as the suspension term of the 19 “escapees”.*

**(The Telegraph, August 27, 2013)<sup>50</sup>**

This media report is interesting because it suggests that bullies may actually actively recruit bystanders in order to intimidate them and exert pressure on them by providing them with a foretaste of more bullying to come. It also shows that school authorities do not always exhibit nuanced responses in the actions taken following an incident of bullying. In this case, although the response of the bystanders was fairly extreme (running away from school in order to inform the district authorities) and although they had sound reasons for doing so (the

<sup>50</sup>[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1130827/jsp/frontpage/story\\_17276701.jsp#.Ui8v\\_Mb7CK8](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1130827/jsp/frontpage/story_17276701.jsp#.Ui8v_Mb7CK8)

threats that they were going to be bullied in the night, the fear that this threat generated, and the feeling that school authorities no longer had any leverage with the senior students since they had already given their final public exams, and so would not be able to protect them), the authorities chose to punish the ‘bystanders’ in exactly the same way and to the same extent as the bullies. The authorities do not seem to have considered that the punishment would have mattered little to the perpetrators in any case, since their school lives were already effectively over at that point, whereas it would have had more of an effect on the bystanders. No quarter seemed to have been given to the fact that rather than ignoring the bullying behaviour or joining in, the bystanders felt sufficiently terrorised and unsure of the support of the school authorities to consider running away. As it happens, the reaction of the school authorities bore out their fears; they were penalised instead of being supported. The response begs the question about whether the authorities were more concerned about the unwelcome attention attracted by the school and the consequent negative impact on the image of the school, rather than any sensitive attempt to support the threatened students and initiate active steps to prevent any further incidents of aggressive behaviour in the school. Data from the ragging study also suggests that often, authorities’ action or inaction on the ragging issue was often related to the perception of how such incidents and responses to them would affect the image of the institution.

The bullying study also did not mention the existence of any institutional structures or mechanisms to prevent bullying in schools of the kind that existed in colleges; the ragging study indicated that 77 per cent had an anti-ragging cell, 36 per cent had professional counsellors and psychologists, and 20 per cent had gender sensitisation or anti-sexual harassment committees. It appears likely that bullying is dismissed as low-grade violence which does not require systematic and significant responses from the authorities.

### **Limitations of the Study and Summary of the Conclusions:**

The study was designed to serve as a supplement to the primary study on ragging, in order to understand what patterns emerge with respect to aggressive behaviour by students directed towards their peers in school and how these patterns relate to aggressive behaviour by students towards their peers in college. Limitations of time and resources meant that the study was limited to six urban schools in Delhi and Bengaluru . These schools were selected purposively and our findings are not therefore generalisable. In order to simplify the schedule

for younger students, the terminology used in the schedule for the bullying study did not exactly match that in the ragging study (for example, in referring to emotional responses to aggressive behaviour). Also, certain aspects of aggressive behaviour (for example, behaviour with a sexual content) were not significantly explored in the bullying study. In spite of these limitations, the study on bullying provides certain useful insights, which are summarised below:

- A significant proportion of students (41 per cent) report that a full range of aggressive behaviours (physical, verbal, and social aggression and aggression on social media) is “commonly seen” in school.
- More students in school reported having experienced bullying in some form compared to the 40 per cent of students in institutions of higher learning who had reported to have experienced some form of ragging.
- The most common behaviours in school involved social aggression like being made fun of and ignored (reported by 47 per cent of the sample).
- Nevertheless, compared to the 4.2 per cent students who reported experiencing physical abuse as part of ragging, 17.5 per cent students in school reported experiencing physical abuse as part of bullying.
- In the worst cases, physical bullying in schools could match in severity physical ragging that takes place in schools, with children losing limbs, being hospitalised or committing suicide because of their inability to bear the harassment.
- Seven to 12 percentage points more male students than female students reported experiencing verbal abuse and physical abuse.
- With respect to perpetrator behaviour, in every category of bullying behaviour except gossiping about fellow students, male students self-reported higher percentages of participation.
- The most common reason for bullying identified by targets of bullying was that they did not fit in with the dominant peer group in terms of their looks and the way they spoke. These variables were the most dominant ones for the ragging study as well. However, a much greater proportion of students in schools (28 per cent) reported these as being significant triggers for bullying compared to students in institutions of higher learning (13 per cent).

- Even with the sample from this limited number of urban schools, religion and caste-based bullying tend to be comparable with religion and caste based ragging. It is important to explore the dimensions of such ragging in rural schools as well.
- By far the most important reason given by perpetrators (29 per cent) for bullying other students was “I wanted to teach a lesson”, followed by “it’s fun”. This bears further detailed exploration.
- Teacher favouritism and perceived partiality can serve as triggers for bullying of students who perform well academically – 17 per cent of perpetrators identified such academic performance as a reason for bullying. Helping teachers become more conscious of the need for fairness in dealing with all students is therefore important.
- A significant 30 per cent of the general student population felt that bullying made perpetrators more popular. The 62 per cent who did not subscribe to this view constitutes a significant resource and must be worked with intelligently to counter bullying. Over 55 per cent of bystanders tried to stop bullying and about 40 per cent tried to help targets later. These are strengths which can be used to work against bullying in schools.
- Targets of bullying clearly experience strong emotional responses to the experience. This finding needs to feed into practice, for instance, by designing and disseminating modules on handling strong emotions positively.
- Over a fifth of the teachers condone bullying, saying it helps children become stronger and face the outside world. About 30 per cent of bystanders reported enjoying watching bullying when it happened or joining in sometimes. These attitudes and actions need to be consciously worked with and challenged.
- The study suggests that authorities’ response to bullying may not always be adequate and appropriate and does not necessarily create confidence in the students. This needs to be consciously addressed.

### **Further Directions for Future Research and Practice:**

Enough evidence about the prevalence, range and severity of bullying practices has emerged from this limited exploratory study to suggest that there is need for a national study or series of studies on the phenomenon. Further studies should taking into consideration urban, peri-urban, semi-urban and rural schools; government schools (which vary from the better

resourced Kendriya, Navodaya and Sainik Schools, to poorly resourced rural or municipal schools) and private schools (where again, there is a very wide range); residential and non-residential schools; and religious schools (e.g., Vedic Pathashalas, seminaries and madrassas). Religious and caste-based bullying should receive adequate attention in these studies, as should sexual bullying, and exertion of peer pressure to engage in smoking, drinking or the use of other psychotropic substances.

While awaiting the conduct and results from such studies, training teachers in providing students with life skills education, including conflict resolution, and assertiveness skills and the skills to say 'no' may be important. In addition, designing meaningful, non-academic, practical modules on democratic and rights education will be important for teachers as well as students to begin to work against deep seated patterns of social prejudice which are continuing to play themselves out in our schools. These should be designed to actively work against notions of using bullying to 'teach a lesson' or 'for fun'. Likewise, active strategies to teach the general student community not to assign value to bullying behaviours, so that bullies are not perceived as 'popular' will be necessary (a parallel might be working on co-dependency with family members of people with addictive behaviours). Setting up legal and institutional mechanisms against ragging have helped to make authorities more responsible in institutions of higher learning and forced them to devise methods through which freshers are initiated into the college community through extra-curricular activities and supported during the 'initiatory' period. Guidelines for similar institutional policies with mechanisms for implementation need to be considered for schools, with the caveat that bullying appears to happen throughout the school year, unlike ragging, which peaks in the early part of the academic year. Hence such mechanisms would need to be alert throughout the school year.

## Chapter 4: Recommendations

---

One of the most striking findings of our study is the widespread acceptance of ragging in our educational institutions and indeed in our society. It is frequently described as a rite of passage, of preparing youth for a tough and competitive world, and of being masculine. The findings clearly indicate that ragging occurs in the context of power relationships, in a deeply hierarchical and unequal society and is reflective of these social processes. It also occurs as a result of a lack of appreciation of the diversities we need to celebrate in a country like ours—of ethnicity, language, religion etc. Our study of bullying in schools indicates a continuum commencing from families to schools and finding expression in ragging in colleges and higher educational institutions. Indeed the Quality Education Study 2010-11 echoes this, revealing children's bias against the girl child, the disabled, religious minorities, 'lower castes' and children from other states and speaking other languages<sup>51</sup>. What is therefore alarming is the finding that people do not perceive ragging as a problem and consequently, do not feel the need to address it. In the light of this pervasive approval of what is clearly detrimental to students and the educational system, and a phenomenon that extends to the larger social fabric, making recommendations to respond to this issue is a complex and a rather daunting task; it cannot be met with a 'magic bullet' approach. Thus, the surveillance/CCTV law and order approach is not sufficient or sensitive to address the magnitude of the problem.

Thus, the recommendations made in this report are unanimous, and based on a wide range of sources and reading, including the Raghavan Committee Report, our review of literature and the findings of this study. Broadly, there are two sets of recommendations: i) short-term recommendations that are more top-down in nature, at the level of institutional systems and administrations; ii) long term recommendations that call for multi-pronged approaches, that move beyond the educational system to look at root causes of the problem within the larger society. These are process-based approaches that (re)examine transformation of education,

---

<sup>51</sup>Quality Education Study 2010-11 available at: [http://www.ei-india.com/wp-content/uploads/Executive\\_Summary-Low\\_Resolution-25-01.pdf](http://www.ei-india.com/wp-content/uploads/Executive_Summary-Low_Resolution-25-01.pdf); date of access: 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

inclusive growth and development, gender relationships (including the construction of masculinity), social hierarchies and perceived inequities.

#### A. Short-Term Recommendations

##### 1. Institutional Role in Fostering Inclusion, Belonging and Acceptance of New Students

Our study shows that where the institution takes the responsibility of organizing welcome and orientation programs, it fosters a sense of inclusion and belonging, reassuring new students of their social acceptance into the institution. The role of ragging as a rite of inclusion to foster belonging to the new institution and to forge new bonds must be replaced by other mechanisms that meet the same purpose, are systematic, public, and involve the whole institutional community and not just the students. In particular, teachers, in collaboration with an elected/representative body of students, may play an important part in helping new students settle down by dealing with their anxieties, and making them feel welcome. Other institutional agencies must also be involved at this stage itself. For instance, faculty in charge of Equal Opportunity Cells should also spell out what steps the institution plans to take to reach out to students who need academic and other kinds of support, for example through remedial English courses, academic support for the learning disabled etc. Counselors should be introduced at such sessions and clear instructions should be provided to students on who to contact in case of need for assistance. In fact, some of this information, including on key contact personnel, should be part of an orientation package that students should receive upon their admission to the institution.

The recommendation is therefore for institutions to organize such welcome and orientation programs involving the student as well as the rest of the institutional community. Secondly, these orientation programs must also set out clear messages of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. This includes zero tolerance to ragging, sexual harassment and discrimination based on caste, religion, ethnicity, etc. It may be desirable for faculty to engage the student community in debate and reflection on these issues, drawing from some of the findings and recommendations of this report as well as the Saksham Report<sup>52</sup> on sexual harassment.

---

<sup>52</sup>University Grants Commission (2013), *Saksham: Measures for Ensuring the Safety of Women and Programmes for Gender Sensitization on Campus* (Saksham Report), New Delhi.

## 2. Maintenance of Support Systems

Surveillance systems are largely understood to mean CCTV cameras. However, surveillance systems cannot be limited to such impersonal policing. In fact, they are illegal as they intrude upon privacy. Data from other countries shows that they do not decrease the incidence of hazing and violence. While they may act as partial deterrents, i) they cannot be relied for complete coverage; ii) they also induce a sense of complacency in administrators and prevent what needs to be done i.e. building a sense of community. This sort of intervention does not address the root causes of ragging.

‘Surveillance’ therefore needs to comprise of a human system of guardianship—of wardens, mentors, including senior students to be in regular contact with newcomers and to include them in activities such as games/ sports and extra-curricular, in colleges and in their residential facilities (hostels), where ragging frequently occurs. In contrast to the dominance-submission relationship enforced through the intimidation and fear associated with ragging, newcomers can be exposed to another version of authority— one that is firm, yet fair and caring.

## 3. Institutional Response to Ragging: Implementation of UGC Protocol and Guidelines:

A disconcerting truth is that no matter what mechanisms one puts in place, instances of ragging will continue to surface now and then. Complete eradication can be the goal but as we have seen in the case of child sexual abuse, putting in CCTV cameras in schools will not prevent a motivated perpetrator from attempting to abuse. Thus, there is a need for institutions to follow a clear protocol of response in instances where ragging does occur. The UGC has a protocol for institutional response to incidents of ragging and can be found on its website. This has been conveyed to all institutions and the anti-ragging committee of the institutions should be familiar with it. Furthermore, institutions should have operationalized the protocol with clear procedures and designated staff/faculty to take action as per guidelines. Thus, students should be made aware of these rules as well as how to file a complaint, who to approach and their contact information, and the procedure that will follow, with assurance of anonymity of complainant.

Our study showed a reluctance to take action against perpetrators in incidents of ragging for fear of damage to the reputation of institutions. Consequently, the perpetrators themselves are reassured by the culture of impunity that pervades our social lives and feel that they can get away because they have the 'right' social and political contacts and/or because they rely on the institution's concern about its reputation. We feel, on the contrary, it is to the credit of the institution if incidents of ragging are reported and responded to; this indicates not only the anti-ragging position of the institution, and its commitment to maintain this stance, but it is also reassuring to the student community and indeed civil society of the safe and enabling nature of the institution. Further, it counters the cultures of impunity, denial and silence that problems such as ragging and abuse are shrouded in.

#### 4. Widening the Role of the Anti-ragging Cell of UGC

Currently, the primary focus of the anti-ragging cell in the UGC is to deal with the complaints of ragging. The cell should also actively function as a nodal body to disseminate various information/literature pertaining to harmful effects of ragging, ways to curb the practice and improve psychosocial climate in institutions, etc. through booklets, website and audio-visual material. The cell should also conduct seminars, workshops, essay-writing competitions, etc. and engage students, faculty and college management in its endeavor to eradicate ragging.

#### 5. Accountability

While the NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) takes into account the issue of institutional response to ragging, this is attended to by most institutions in a perfunctory and mechanical manner. In order to instill greater accountability, it is necessary for the NAAC to actually check whether the institutions are fulfilling the conditions required for accreditation. Therefore, in addition to the mandatory form, institutions need to be regularly and systematically visited or inspected by the NAAC to ensure adherence to accreditation guidelines.

## 6. Psychosocial Support and Counseling

Psychosocial support and counseling should be offered to victims as well as perpetrators so that the potential for cyclical abuse is neutralized. While it is desirable to have counselors in every college, we recognize that there is a shortage of human resources and skills in this area. Therefore, we recommend that every college identifies a nodal agency offering counseling/training services and nominate one or two faculty volunteers to train at these agencies and, in collaboration with them, offer support to affected students. Also, the UGC should budget for the provision of counselors and should have a list of recognized nodal agencies which can be accessed for counseling services, till such time as these capacities are developed within institutions.

For victims, counseling would need to focus on issues of support, reassurance and safety on the one hand, and on identity, assertiveness and efficacy on the other; for some victims, the impact may be in the nature of trauma in which case, referral systems for more specialized care, must be made accessible. The counselor or mentor may facilitate this process. For perpetrators, counseling requires to focus on sensitization, empathy-building and perspective-taking issues.

Counselors must also extend their roles beyond individual interventions to larger contact and engagement with student communities who face a great many problems such as first-generation literates, rural-urban and inter-state migration. Many of them are unable to deal with the 'freedoms' they are dealing with for the first time, in impersonal institutional spaces. Above all, our young people are not socialized to deal with issues of gender and sexuality. Ragging is a college-related custom that reflects social power dynamics around seniority compounded by compulsions related to gender. Thus, the counselor's community engagement should be in collaboration with existing committees within the institution, such as the gender sensitization committee, to foster a culture of conversations towards an egalitarian ideology formation. This engagement could be in the form of sensitization/training modules on power inequalities, prejudice, discrimination, exclusion, harassment and violence, using creative methods such as drama, art, films and other media. Involving the new students early in this process will foster inclusion and a sense of belongingness in them.

## 7. Promotion of Diversity

It is important for all educators in our country to appreciate and celebrate the huge diversities of India, in terms of ethnicity, language, religion, sexuality etc. One platform to flag off this idea of diversity is, for example, for students to organize food festivals celebrating cuisines from different states and communities of India.

Sexual minorities face a great deal of discrimination, including sexual violence and ragging. For instance, our study shows that ragging is often the manifest expression of homo-phobia. This again calls for synergistic interventions by various college committees (anti-ragging, gender-sensitization and sexual harassment committees). There are also colleges that have Queer student groups, who can be drawn upon to create an inclusive atmosphere through their activities.

Another group that is frequently discriminated against is people with disabilities. Institutions need to be disability-sensitive in a proactive manner such as providing for toilets and other infrastructure that is disabled-friendly. What is not adequately appreciated is that all of us are potentially people with disabilities. Indeed, more people acquire disabilities than are born with it. It is important that issues of access should be addressed. All public places should be disabled-friendly, commencing with our schools.

As also discussed in the Saksham Report, students from rural and more 'traditional' backgrounds moving into larger city universities and colleges may need assistance to address experiences of discrimination as well as ideas about 'appropriate' behaviour for men and women because this creates confusion and alienation among students. Thus, the rural-urban cultural clashes manifested through dressing sense, language, accent, kind of schooling, economic background, etc. is often a critical factor in ragging. Institutional residential facilities or hostels are spaces where these issues need to be addressed. One way of doing so is to allot hostel seats through lottery so that they reflect diversity; students from different batches of the colleges, from varied geographic and socio-economic backgrounds interact and learn from each other, fostering a sense of respect and a spirit of acceptance and not merely tolerance. Institutions that encourage students to cluster, based on region/religion/community, with an apparent objective of ensuring safety and protection, are counter-productive to

fostering the spirit of diversity; in fact, such measures lead to exacerbating parochialism that feeds into ragging.

Lastly, in order to address diversity-related concerns, assessments and monitoring of the social climate of institutions through regular surveys of students and staff, especially when there are significant changes in the student community such as increase in student intake/method of admission/social composition of student population .etc., would help enhance diversity interventions.

## B. Long-Term Recommendations

### 1. Interventions at School Level: Inclusive Education

Enough evidence about the prevalence, range and severity of bullying practices has emerged from this limited exploratory study to suggest that there is need for a national study or series of studies on the phenomenon. Such studies need to take into consideration urban, peri-urban, semi-urban and rural schools; government schools (which vary from the better resourced Kendriya, Navodaya and Sainik Schools, to poorly resourced rural or municipal schools) and private schools (where again, there is a very wide range); residential and non-residential schools; and religious schools (e.g., Vedic Pathashalas, seminaries and Madrassas). Studies need to make strong recommendations on operationalizing two major concepts—inclusive education and life skills education.

Despite the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Right to Education (RTE) initiatives, there are indications of exclusion and intolerance within the school, triggered and maintained by school systems, by parental prejudices and the warped hierarchies of the larger community surrounding the school. We are convinced that this intolerance forms the roots of later discrimination in institutions of higher education. Thus, we recommend that issues on religious and caste-based bullying should receive adequate attention in subsequent studies, as should sexual bullying, and exertion of peer pressure to engage in smoking, drinking or the use of other psychotropic substances. The foundation of such initiatives should be fostering the spirit of egalitarianism.

While awaiting the conduct and results from such studies, training teachers in providing students with life skills education, including conflict resolution, and assertiveness skills will be very important. In addition, designing meaningful, non-academic, practical modules on rights-based issues from a children's perspective, will be important for teachers as well as students to begin to work against deep-seated patterns of social prejudice which are continuing to play themselves out in our schools. These should be designed to actively work against notions of using bullying to 'teach a lesson' or 'for fun'. Likewise, active strategies to teach the general student community not to condone bullying behaviours, so that bullies are not perceived as 'popular' or powerful will be necessary.

## 2. Peer Support

It is recommended that the student body be actively involved in planning and implementation of programs to foster belongingness and inclusion. Such interventions include student mentors, student guides and buddy systems. Further, life skills education needs to be continued into college addressing issues that perplex youth—such as sexuality and intimate relationships, contending with academic and peer pressure. However, life skills programs at this stage need to move from individual and personal to the public and social spheres addressing issues such as by-stander response to situations of violence and social injustice.

## 3. Institutional Cultures and Pedagogies

Institutional cultures and pedagogies play a formative role in the lives of students. They influence the ways in which students think and respond, not only in the immediate present but also in the distal future. This is a crucial concern since it lies at the core of value education, a goal that all educational institutions profess. Sadly, as the present study has shown, there is a large gap between the stated ideals of institutions and ground realities. Indeed, there is a widespread belief that ragging serves as a 'socialisation' device equipping youngsters to meet the demands and be successful in the 'real' world – becoming tough mentally and physically, even if that entails aggression and manipulation of the existing power dynamics. In this regard, ragging reflects a set of values actually prevalent, perhaps deeply embedded, in our society. Educational institutions must live up to their lofty ideals by providing an alternate reality where students learn the values of democratic, mutually respectful relationships, non-

violent conflict resolution, autonomous and critical thinking, compassion and caring, respect for differences, fairness and so on. Some examples of how this may be done are:

- i) Programs and activities that foster civic engagement and responsibility, critical reflection on social issues and deliberation on values;
- ii) Co-curricular activities such as sports, music, theatre, social service to enable a sense of aesthetic engagement, openness and affiliation;
- iii) Creation of opportunities for student engagement and voice in college decisions, including student membership on college boards/committees so as to foster ideas of responsible agency and citizenship;
- iv) Pedagogies that stimulate students to question and seek answers on their own so that sensitive reflection is the style of responding;
- v) An institutional climate that is supportive and fair, with faculty who are attuned and interested in student development, that will become the foundation of a dynamic culture that is just, progressive and open to change towards an egalitarian society.

## References

- Ahmed, E., & Braithwaite, V. (2004). "Bullying and victimization: Cause for concern for both families and schools". *Social Psychology of Education*, 7(1), 35-54.
- Allan, E. J., Madden, M., (2008). *Hazing in view: college students at risk: initial findings from the National Study of Student Hazing*. Retrieved from [http://www.stophazing.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/hazing\\_in\\_view\\_web1.pdf](http://www.stophazing.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/hazing_in_view_web1.pdf)
- Athanasiades, C., & Deliyanni-Kouimtzis, V. (2010). "The experience of bullying among secondary school students". *Psychology in the Schools*, 47(4), 328-341.
- Boyles, S., & Martin, L. J. (2010). *What Motivates Kids Who Are Bullies?* Retrieved from <http://www.webmd.com/parenting/news/20100325/what-motivates-kids-who-are-bullies>
- Byers, D. L., Caltabiano, N. J., & Caltabiano, M. L. (2011). "Teachers' attitudes towards overt and covert bullying, and perceived efficacy to intervene". *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(11), 8.
- Capretto, A. D. (2011). *Hazing In Sport: Evaluation of an Educational Workshop*. (Masters Thesis, California State University)
- Chirilă, T. (2012). "Social and psychological implications of bullying in schools". *Journal of Psychological and Educational Research (JPER)*, (20/1), 59-67.
- Darmawan. (2010). *Bullying in School: A Study of Forms and Motives of Aggression in Two Secondary Schools in the City of Palu, Indonesia* (Doctoral dissertation, Centre for Peace Studies, Universitetet i Tromsø).
- Durand V, Hennessey J, Wells DS, Crothers LM, Kolbert JB, et al. (2013) "Bullying and Substance Use in Children and Adolescents". *Journal of Addiction Research & Therapy* 4: 158. doi: 10.4172/2155-6105.1000158
- Ellsworth, C. (2004). *Definitions of hazing: Differences among selected student organizations* (Master's Thesis, University of Maryland).
- Fleming, W. J., Howard, K., Perkins, E., & Pesta, M. (2005). "The college environment: Factors influencing student transition and their impact on academic advising". *The Mentor*, 7, 1-9.

- Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development (2007), *The Menace of Ragging in Educational Institutions and Measures to Curb It*. (Raghavan Committee Report), New Delhi
- Groah, J. S. (2005). *Treatment of fourth class midshipmen hazing and its impact on academic and military performance and psychological and physical health* (Doctoral dissertation, Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School).
- Hafner, L. (2003). *Bullying report: How are Washington state schools doing?* Seattle: Washington State PTA and the Safe Schools Coalition.
- James, A. (2010). *School bullying. NSPCC Inform Briefing on School Bullying*. From <http://www.nspcc.org.uk> (Retrieved on 10 October 2014)
- Johnson, J. (2011). "Through the liminal: A comparative analysis of communitas and rites of passage in sport hazing and initiations". *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers Canadiens de sociologie*, 36(3), 199-227.
- Keating, C. F., Pomerantz, J., Pommer, S. D., Ritt, S. J., Miller, L. M., & McCormick, J. (2005). "Going to College and Unpacking Hazing: A Functional Approach to Decrypting Initiation Practices Among Undergraduates". *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 9(2), 104.
- Kim, S. J. (2004). *A study of personal and environmental factors influencing bullying* (Doctoral Dissertation, lmu).
- Konstantina, K., & Pilios-Dimitris, S. T. A. V. R. O. U. (2010). School characteristics as predictors of bullying and victimization among Greek middle school students. *International Journal*, 94.
- Levine, M., & Crowther, S. (2008). "The responsive bystander: how social group membership and group size can encourage as well as inhibit bystander intervention". *Journal Of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95(6), 1429.
- Manani, P. (2014). *Peer pressure and ragging as the determinants of suicidal ideation among the students of professional and non-professional courses* (Doctoral dissertation, Dayalbagh Educational Institute).
- Masterson, John (1997) Florida Safe and Drug-Free School (SDFS) notes, Vol. 1, Issue 3.
- McCreary, G. R. (2012). *The impact of moral judgment and moral disengagement on hazing attitudes and bystander behavior in college males* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Alabama).

- Mestry, R., van der Merwe, M., & Squelch, J. (2006). "Bystander behaviour of school children observing bullying". *SA-eDUC Journal*, 3, 46-59.
- Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell. .
- Owen, S. S., Burke, T. W., & Vichesky, D. (2008). "Hazing in student organizations: Prevalence, attitudes, and solutions". *Oracle: the research journal of the association of fraternity advisors*, 3(1), 40-58.
- Padgett, M. S., & Notar, C. E. (2013). "Bystanders are the Key to Stopping Bullying". *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 1(2), 33-41.
- Protogerou C, Flisher A 2012. Bullying in schools. In: A van Niekerk, S Suffla, M Seedat (Eds.): *Crime, Violence and Injury in South Africa: 21st Century Solutions for Child Safety*. Tygerberg: MRC, pp.119- 133.
- Reason, R. D., & Rankin, S. R. (2006). "College Students' Experiences and Perceptions of Harassment on Campus: An Exploration of Gender Differences". *College Student Affairs Journal*, 26(1), 7-29.
- Richards, D. (2013). *Creating Healthier Environments and Making Schools Safer: Strategies to Decrease Bullying Behavior in K-5 Schools to Improve Academic Performance* (Doctoral Dissertation, Northern Michigan University).
- Salmivalli, C. (2010). "Bullying and the peer group: A review". *Aggression and violent behavior*, 15(2), 112-120.
- SooHoo, S. (2009). "Examining the Invisibility of Girl-to-Girl Bullying in Schools: A Call to Action". *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning*, 13(6), n6.
- Srisiva, R., Thirumoorthi, R., & Sujatha, P. (2013). "Prevalence and Prevention of School Bullying-A Case Study of Coimbatore City, Tamilnadu India". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 2(1), 2319-7714.
- Staszak, J. F. (2008). "Other/otherness". *International encyclopedia of human geography*, 1-7.
- Stuart-Cassel, V., Terzian, M., & Bradshaw, C. (2013). "Social bullying: Correlates, consequences, and prevention". *American Institutes for Research*, 1-13.
- Thornberg, R. (2010). "Schoolchildren's social representations on bullying causes". *Psychology in the Schools*, 47(4), 311-327.

Xing, J. (2013). *General Education and the Development of Global Citizenship in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mainland China: Not Merely Icing on the Cake*. New York: Routledge.

## **List of Acronyms**

<b>AICTE</b>	All India Council for Technical Education
<b>CBI</b>	Central Bureau of Investigation
<b>CURE</b>	Coalition to Uproot Ragging from Education
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>IERB</b>	Institutional Ethics Review Board
<b>JNU</b>	Jawaharlal Nehru University
<b>MCI</b>	Medical Council of India
<b>NAAC</b>	National Assessment and Accreditation Council
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organisation
<b>NIMHANS</b>	National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences
<b>PIL</b>	Public Interest Litigation
<b>SPACE</b>	Society for People's Action Change and Enforcement
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
<b>UGC</b>	University Grants Commission

## Appendix I

### College Coding

The research team gave undertakings to the Institutional Ethics Review Board (IERB) of the Jawaharlal Nehru University and the individual colleges/universities and schools that have participated in the study that the identities of the participating institutions will not be revealed in the report. Therefore, college codes were devised that kept the identity of the college hidden while revealing some fundamental aspects (region, state, nature of course, government or private) about it.

We have therefore given a code to each college and the same has been used throughout the report. College codes have been framed considering the following domains (i) Region (ii) State (iii) Type of management (Govt. Or Private) and (iv) Type of course. Suitable alphabets are assigned to represent each of the above domains and have been placed in the following order. **Region → State → Government/Private → Type of Course**

For eg. In college code NPuGM, N represents region of the country; Pu represents State; G represents type of management and M is for type of course.

College code key

**Region:** N=North, S=South, E=East & W=West

**State:** Hr=Haryana, Pu=Punjab, Dl=Delhi, Up=Uttar Pradesh, Kr=Karnataka, Kl=Kerala, Tg=Telangana, Tn=Tamil Nadu, Mh=Maharashtra, Rj=Rajasthan, Wb=West Bengal, Or=Orissa

**Type of Management:** G=Government, P=Private

**Type of Course:** M=Medical, E=Engineering, D=Degree Course, L=Law, A=Ayurveda, P=Polytechnic, H=Hotel Management, V=Veterinary, N=Nursing, C=MCA

For eg. A college with code NUpGM will be a Government Medical college in North India in the state of Uttar Pradesh

Also, number 1 and 2 after the alphabets have been used if there are two colleges in the same state with the same type of course and management.



**1. How has life changed after joining college?** (Tick as many that apply)

- a) No change
- b) I feel grown up
- c) I feel more independent
- d) I feel more responsible
- e) I feel the pressure of parents' expectations
- f) I feel more stressed
- g) Any other (please specify) .....
- h) None of these

**2. How were your first few days in college?**

- a) Fun
- b) Difficult
- c) Both fun as well as difficult

**3a. Did college authorities take specific steps to help students adjust smoothly to college life?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

**3b. If yes, tick the activity and whether it was helpful or not?** (Tick as many that apply)

- a) Teachers made us feel comfortable in college *helpful/not helpful*
- b) Organised orientation programme *helpful/not helpful*
- c) Organised activities to encourage friendship with batch mates *helpful/not helpful*
- d) Organised activities to encourage introduction with seniors *helpful/not helpful*
- e) Organized measures to control ragging *helpful/not helpful*
- f) Any other (please specify) .....
- g) None of these

**4. What extra-curricular activities does your college actively support?**

- a) Sports
- b) Societies for Theatre/Dance/Music/Debate
- c) Excursion/Workshop/Symposium
- d) Student bodies/union
- e) Others (please specify) .....

f) None of these

**5. Do you have a professional counselor/psychologist in college?**

a) Yes

b) No

**6. Is there a gender sensitization or a sexual harassment committee in your college?**

a) Yes

b) No

**7. Does your college have an anti-ragging cell?**

a) Yes

c) No

**8. Is it hard for you to make new friends?**

a) Always

b) Often

c) Sometimes

d) Never

**9. Is it important for you to be accepted by the popular students in your class?**

a) Very important

b) Somewhat important

c) Not at all important

**10. Do you find it difficult to communicate in English?**

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

**11. Are you comfortable in talking to students of the opposite gender?**

a) Very comfortable

b) Not so comfortable

c) Very uncomfortable

**12. Would you like to have a girlfriend/boyfriend while you are in college?**

- a) Very much
- b) May be
- c) Not at all

**13. Do you think that sometimes you are treated differently or discriminated against in college on the basis of? (Tick as many as apply)**

- a) Region
- b) Caste
- c) Religion
- d) Language
- e) Gender
- f) Looks/physical appearance
- g) Economic background
- h) Rural/Urban background
- i) Public school background
- j) Any other (please specify)....
- k) None of these

**14. From the following, tick the one that you most agree with**

- a) Ragging should be stopped completely
- b) Ragging should be allowed
- c) Ragging should be allowed within limits

**14b. If so, what kind of ragging should be allowed? (Tick those you feel should be allowed)**

- a) Introduction session
- b) Singing and dancing
- c) Wishing seniors and addressing them as Sir/Ma'am
- d) Following a dress code
- e) Doing assignments for seniors
- f) Buying things for seniors
- g) Speaking abusive words
- h) Punishments (sit-ups, running, etc)
- i) Physical beating

**15. Do you agree with these statements about ragging and college life? Tick all those you agree with.**

- a) Ragging adds fun to college life

- b) Ragging helps making friendships in college
- c) Ragging helps students develop close attachment to one another and to their hostel/college
- d) Those who participate in ragging become popular students
- e) Ragging keeps freshers disciplined
- f) Ragging makes freshers respect seniors
- g) Ragging enables juniors to take the help of seniors when necessary
- h) Ragging makes it harder to settle into college life
- i) Ragging makes it difficult to make friends
- j) Ragging makes freshers fear seniors
- k) Ragging affects studies negatively

**16. Do you agree with these statements about the effects of ragging?**

**Tick all those you agree with.**

- a) Ragging helps in building confidence and developing personality
- b) Ragging makes students mentally tough
- c) Those that cannot bear ragging are weak or cowardly or effeminate
- d) Ragging prepares students to deal with the harshness of the outside world
- e) Ragging harms self confidence
- f) Ragging has long-lasting emotional effect

**17. Why do you think some seniors enjoy ragging? Tick all those you agree with.**

- a) They want to follow the college tradition
- b) They like to do what others in their group do
- c) They enjoy doing what is forbidden or taboo
- d) Ragging allows them to feel powerful, to be in control, to be the boss
- e) Sexual ragging helps them feel more sexually confident themselves
- f) Physical and sexual ragging makes them appear tough to others
- g) Ragging juniors helps them get over their own ragging
- h) They enjoy embarrassing and humiliating others
- i) They feel more grown-up
- j) It makes them look tough/ strong in their own batch

**18. If you have experienced bullying/harassment/teasing, when did it happen?**

- a) Home
- b) School
- c) Neighbourhood

- d) Anywhere else .....
- e) Not applicable

**19. Were you ragged by your seniors in college?**

- a) No
- b) Mildly ragged
- c) Severely ragged

**20. Did ragging involve any of the following factors? (Tick as many that apply)**

- a) Caste
- b) Region
- c) Religion
- d) Language
- e) Gender
- f) Looks/physical appearance
- g) Economic background
- h) Rural/Urban background
- i) Public school background
- j) Any other (please specify)
- k) None of these

**21. What kind of ragging did you face?**

- a) None
- b) Giving introduction to seniors *Yes/No*
- c) Wishing seniors and addressing them as Sir/Ma'am *Yes/No*
- d) Following a dress code *Yes/No*
- e) Singing & dancing *Yes/No*
- f) Approaching opposite sex on some pretext eg. proposal
- g) Drinking and smoking *Yes/No*
- h) Doing assignments for seniors *Yes/No*
- i) Spending/giving money to seniors *Yes/No*
- j) Physical ragging (beating, physical punishments, etc.) *Yes/No*
- k) Using bad language/words *Yes/No*
- l) Sexual ragging *Yes/No*
- m) Other (please specify).....

**22a. Did you face any sexual ragging?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

**22b. If yes, what kind of sexual ragging did you face?**

- a) Stripping
- b) Acting sexual scenes
- c) Watching pornography
- d) Narrating stories with sexual content
- e) Being forced to masturbate
- f) Sodomised
- g) Other (please specify).....

**23. Did ragging affect your studies in any of the following ways?**

- a) Loss of focus/concentration *Yes/No*
- b) Missed classes *Yes/No*
- c) Couldn't complete assignments on time *Yes/No*
- d) Decrease in Grades/performance/marks *Yes/No*
- e) Any other.....
- f) None of these

**24. How was the experience of ragging for you? (Tick as many as apply)**

- a) I enjoyed it
- b) I felt bad initially but later felt it was alright
- c) It made me feel ashamed and humiliated
- d) It made me feel very angry.
- e) It made me feel helpless.
- f) It made me feel anxious.
- g) It still upsets me when I remember it.

**25. Do you like the seniors who ragged you?**

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Indifferent

**26. Are you friends with seniors who ragged you?**

- a) Yes all of them became my friends after ragging
- b) Only some of them are my friends
- c) No

**27a. Do you get help from the seniors who ragged you?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

**27b. If yes, what kind of help do you get from seniors who ragged you?**

- a) They help me with notes, assignments, old question papers
- b) They guide me during exams
- c) They protect me from other seniors/students
- d) Any other (please specify).....

**28a. Did you complain when you were ragged? Yes/No**

**28b. Did you want to complain but did not do so? Yes/No**

**28c. If yes, why did you not complain? Tick as many as apply.**

- a) I would be made fun of
- b) I would be boycotted by other students
- c) Seniors would beat me
- d) I did not want to harm my career
- e) I was not sure whether authorities would take action against the seniors
- f) I did not know who to approach and how to make a complaint
- g) Any other (please specify).....

**29. How has your college responded to complaints of ragging?**

- a) No ragging complaint made
- b) College tries to save its name/reputation
- c) Tries to explain that ragging is a part of college life
- d) Takes disciplinary action against the seniors
- e) Sends the fresher for counseling
- f) Sends ragger/senior for counseling
- g) Doesn't take any action

**30. If you were ragged, how did your parents react to your ragging in college?**

- a) Not ragged
- b) I didn't tell them about my ragging
- c) They encouraged me to complain
- d) They supported me but asked me not to complain
- e) They explained that it is normal to get ragged
- f) They encouraged me to be brave and bear the ragging
- g) Other (please specify).....

**31. Do you have any other views on ragging? .....**

**32. Any comment or suggestion.....**

**33. How important is it for you that your juniors respect and obey you?**

- a) Not at all important
- b) Not so important
- c) Important
- d) Very important

**34. Do you like being addressed as Sir/Ma'am by juniors?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

**35. Do you feel offended if juniors don't address you as Sir/Ma'am?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

**36. Do you think juniors who do not obey seniors or behave disrespectfully towards seniors should be disciplined or punished?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

**37. In general, do you believe physical punishment is necessary to correct and teach people what is right?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

**38. What do you do when you see seniors ragging juniors?**

- a) I enjoy watching
- b) I sometimes join them
- c) I ignore it since it does not concern me
- d) I feel bad for the junior but cannot help
- e) I try to persuade them to stop ragging
- f) I feel upset and want to complain but am afraid of the consequences
- g) I complain about the incident

**39. Do you support your classmates when they rag juniors?**

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't participate actively but just accompany them when they rag.

**40. Why do you support your classmates in ragging juniors?**

- a) I think ragging is fun
- b) If I don't support them they will make fun of me
- c) If I don't support them they will beat me
- d) If I don't support them I will lose their friendship
- e) If I don't support them everyone will think I am weak.
- f) Any other (please specify)

**41. Do your seniors put pressure to rag juniors?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

**42. Are you still being harassed by your seniors (Third and Fourth year students)?**

- a) Yes
- b) Sometimes
- c) No

## Appendix III

### Indicative List for Individual Interviews with Students

**1. Title:** General experiences after joining college and the experience of settling in

**Probe question:**

Would you share what were your general experiences after joining college and that of settling in?

**Sub questions:**

What was college initially like?

What were you expecting?

How was the process of settling in?

Did you have any problems during the process?

How important do you think it is to obey and respect your seniors? Why is it important/not important to obey and respect them?

**2. Title:** Institutional rules and structures pertaining to grievances

**Probe question:**

Can you brief me about your knowledge of your institution's prevailing rules and structures pertaining to complaints made about ragging?

**Sub questions:**

Were you aware of helpful systems in the college?

How did the awareness happen, were you informed about the same?

**3. Title:** Factors that facilitate/inhibit ragging in colleges

**Probe question:**

Can you now tell me what according to you leads to ragging in colleges?

**Sub questions:**

What makes it easy for ragging to take place?

What steps do you take to minimize/curb ragging in your college?

What role does students' union play in curbing or encouraging ragging?

**4. Title:** Perspectives, opinions and beliefs on ragging

**Probe question:**

Would you now please share your perspectives, opinions and beliefs on various degrees of ragging?

**Sub questions:**

What do you think constitutes mild/severe ragging?

Is ragging an important issue?

What according to you is mild ragging?

Do you think ragging should be continued/ curbed?

Is there tradition of some special sort of ragging in your college?

Have you heard/experienced about any incidence of ragging which went up to physical harm/violence or even death? What are your views about it? What do you think made it happen?

**5. Title:** Personal experience, perception and circumstances around ragging

**Probe question:**

Can you share now your own personal experiences with ragging (if present) as well as the circumstances which led to the same?

**Sub questions to the victims:**

Were you ragged?

Tell me what happened?

How did you feel at that time?

How do you feel now?

What do you think the senior is getting when he/she is ragging?

Did you experience any particular form of ragging?

Why do you think it happened to you?

**Sub questions to the perpetrators:**

Have you ever ragged somebody?

Tell me what you did?

How did you feel at that particular point of time?

What do you think about that incident right now?

What made you rag your junior or what were the circumstances leading to the act?

**Sub questions to the bystanders:**

Have you ever seen anyone being ragged?

Tell me what happened?

How did you feel/do at that particular point of time?

What do you think about the incident right now?

**6. Title:** Impact and response

**Probe question:** How were you impacted by ragging and what were your subsequent responses?

**Sub question:** Do you think ragging leaves an impact on the psyche/self of an individual?

Has it impacted your sense of self?

Has it impacted your relationships?

Has it impacted your confidence?

Has it impacted your trust upon others?

Has it impacted your mood?

Has it impacted your concentration?

Has it impacted your performance, etc.?

Do you think ragging helps in keeping the freshers' disciplined? (Asked both to victims and perpetrators)

Is it true that those students who were ragged severely in their first year are the ones most actively involved in ragging their juniors? (asked to perpetrators)

**7. Title:** Actions taken

**Probe question:** Share me your personal actions taken toward ragging, will you?

**Sub questions:**

What did you do when you were ragged?

What action did you take?

Did it make a difference when you took a stand?

Are you aware that ragging takes place in college/hostel but you feel helpless to take action?

**8. Title:** Impact on education/ atmosphere of class or college

**Probe question:**

Can you brief me now on how the college/class atmosphere was like when ragging was actually taking place?

**Sub questions:**

Was there any test or exam going on?

Was there any class on at that time?

Were you restricted from attending class at that particular point of time?

Was there any general unfriendly atmosphere present at that time that you can think of (e.g. general disruption which might have instigated the act)?

Was the atmosphere vitiated as a result of ragging?

Did your performance suffer in any way because of ragging?

Were police called in to deal with the matter?

Were there any visible physical violence/clashes in the campus?

What is your assessment of the change in the nature of ragging over the years?

**9. Title:** Opinion on caste and communal angles

**Probe question:**

Do you think ragging occurs as a result of caste differences and communal distance?

**Sub question: :**

Are students ragged more by students of their own region/caste, etc. leading to groupism in college/hostel? Or are they ragged more by students of other religion/castes?

**10. Title: Opinion on associated disinhibiting factors (e.g. group strength, alcohol)**

**Probe question:**

Do you believe that ragging takes place also because of the strength of a larger group supporting the practice and/or under the influence of alcohol?

**Sub questions:**

How do you think being in a group supports ragging?

How do you think alcohol is related to ragging?

**11. Title: Provisions for and access to counselling help**

**Probe question:**

Do you have access to counselling help at your college to address the issue of ragging among many other issues?

**Sub questions:**

Is there an anti-ragging cell at your college?

Is there a gender sensitization/ redressal committee for sexual harassment?

**12. Title: Psychosocial contextual factors (vision of the 'real' world, acceptance of hierarchical values, acceptance of violence)**

**1. Probe question:**

What are your views regarding the world outside your home, school or college?

**Sub questions:**

Do you think the world outside your home or school is going to be different? How?

Do you think your experience in school or college shape the way you deal with the outside world?

Do these experiences (especially ragging) prepare you to face the outside world?

**2. Probe question:**

In general do you think respect and obedience to those who are senior (in age, social standing, work relations) is an important value we must uphold? Why yes/why not? Under what circumstances?

**3. Probe question:** What is your opinion about using physical violence in order to punish or discipline someone? What about taunting and shaming people to correct them?

## Appendix IV

### Indicative List for Individual Interview with Faculty/Staff/Admin of Educational Institutions

#### 1. Student welfare provisions:

What arrangements are made to facilitate the adjustment of newcomers to college and hostel life? (E.g. Freshman Orientation program – its elements, duration, follow-up)

What other student welfare arrangements exist? (Student advisor/mentor, counselling service, career placement cell, special support for SC/ST students, gender sensitization cell)

What is student-faculty ratio?

#### 2. Ragging:

a) What do you know about the directives from UGC/ AICTE/ MCI regarding ragging? Do you think ragging is not as important an issue and too much attention is being given to it?

b) What has been the history of ragging within the institution? Have there been any notable events or turning points? Is it considered a tradition?

c) What measures have been taken to prevent ragging and to discipline offenders in this regard?

d) Some colleges themselves conduct an interaction where seniors are allowed to tease and challenge the freshman as a sort of mild 'ragging'. What is your opinion regarding this?

e) What are the pros and cons of ragging in your opinion? When senior rag, what do you think they are getting out of it?

f) There are cases where ragging has led to injury and death. How do you think this comes about?

g) What is the academic, personal and social impact of ragging on individual students and on college life?

h) Has ragging been influenced by caste, class or regional factors? How so?

### 3. Discipline:

Do you think sometimes harsh forms of punishment like physical beating or verbal abuse or public shaming is necessary to teach people what is right?

What are the common disciplinary problems that come up in college? (Drinking, drug use, cheating in exams, forging signature, cyber crimes, fighting/rowdy behaviors, impersonation in exams, sexual harassment, disrespectful/rude behaviour to faculty/staff, bringing shame to the college....) How are these handled? (Stern lecture, fine, suspension for some period of time, expulsion from institution, removal from hostel, police/legal action, etc).

Do you think a teacher must inspire fear in order to maintain discipline in class?

### 4. Vision of education:

In your opinion, what should be the goal of education? (To impart specific knowledge in specific area, holistic development, enable student to get good employment, become good citizen, prepare student for adult world, serve society, develop critical thinking, develop moral values, contribute to national development.....)

To what degree does your institution successfully foster this/these goal/goals?

What are the obstacles it faces in striving for this/these goal/goals? (Interference from regulatory bodies like UGC, AICTE, etc., inadequate number of staff, poor quality of teachers, financial constraints, lack of visionary leadership, lack of facilities/infrastructure.....)

Do you think ragging in a way contributes to a person's education?

Do you sometimes think that you too, in your position, face a sort of ragging by the system?

If yes, please elaborate.

### 5. Respect for authority:

Do you think that respect for and obedience to seniors is an important social value?

Elaborate.

## Appendix V

### Indicative List for Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with Students

#### 1. *Reasons*

- a. Do a listing of reasons given
- b. A consensus on most prevalent reasons (ordering, most important/common reason)
- c. Beliefs on compliance to ragging (toughness, wanting to belong, etc.)

#### 2. *Circumstances*

- a. Patterns (time, place, person)
- b. Practices (the range from fun and frolic to hurtful/traumatic forms, nature and content, for eg. sexuality)

#### 3. *Psychological Impact*

- a. Immediate Impact after the experience
- b. Current situation
- c. Manner in which affected -emotionally/psychological (academics, relationships, wellbeing, issues of trust, negative thoughts, etc.)
- d. Relationship between circumstances and the impact as above

#### 4. *Impact on Education*

- a. What impact
- b. How much impact
- c. Ideas on changes that can be brought about
  - Additional agenda when FGDs are done with teachers- student faculty interaction, view on ragging as a psychosocial vs. law and order problem, ragging as a larger education issue and not something specific that happens

in college, perspectives on education/good education, opinions on the ideal vs. reality, influence of family and civil society issues including gender , class, caste, etc.

## Appendix VI

### Institutional Study: A Report

---

#### Terms of Reference

Ragging is a practice in educational institutions involving existing students bullying new students. It often takes a malignant form wherein the newcomers may be subjected to psychological or physical torture. Despite several legislations and anti-ragging movements in effect at present in India, ragging incidents of serious injury to the victims, and ragging deaths are often heard of. Out of the many directives of the Supreme Court on the issue, guided by the UGC, the present study aims to investigate the psychosocial impact of ragging in educational institutions in India.

Also, as part of the study, an institute is chosen and its roots are traced using various data- collection methods. The aim is to understand the genesis of the institute, its policies and practices regarding student welfare, specific incidents of ragging or any other that threatened the integrity of the institute, and the institute's reaction to the same and also to understand the nature of relationship that exists between the staff, faculty and students that may have an impact on the overall functioning. .

#### Evaluation Method

The following evaluation tools were used to collect institutional data:

- Key Informant Interviews (audio- tapes, notes)
  - Administrative Staff
  - Faculty
  - Students
- Annual Reports of two years (2005-2006 and 2012-2013)
- Prospectus for two years (2004-2005 and 2013-2014)
- Observation

#### Procedure

Prior to visiting the institute, the project staff contacted the registrar of the institute and took a formal appointment and permission to visit the place. Upon reaching the institute on the appointed day, key people were identified who have been in the institute for atleast the past 8-10 years (except the students). Each of the key informants was interviewed separately. They were explained the purpose of the visit and after obtaining their verbal consent, the interviews were audio-taped. Also, one of the project staff maintained notes on the interview session. Keeping the broad areas of interest in mind, open- ended questions were used to elicit information along with probes as and when necessary.

Each interview was then transcribed and analyzed for themes and sub-themes that emerged. Help was also taken from the annual reports, prospectus and notes to prepare the current report.

The various themes and sub-themes covered in this report are:

- Brief historical sketch
- Life in the campus
- Academic structure
- Rules and regulations
- Attitude towards ragging: ragging seen as a menace
- Incident (s) of ragging and consequences
- Other incidents and actions taken thereof
- Observation of the team and comments

### **The Institute: A Brief Historical Sketch**

The institute is a premiere institute and since its inception, it is a fully residential university with separate hostels for men and women, two separate hostels for post- graduate men and women, three blocks for faculty quarters and two blocks for non-teaching administrative staff besides the academic block.

Right from the first batch, , the students are chosen on the basis of a National Entrance Test. Initially, the batch strength was about 50 students, and now it has increased to 80 students. Twenty batches have completed their education so far and the university boasts of excellent placements as well as opportunities to pursue higher education in both India as well as abroad. With its 500 odd students, teaching as well as non- teaching staff from all over the country, the place gives a feel of being pan-India.

Apart from twelve professors, four associate professors and five assistant professors, the institute has several other esteemed professors as visiting faculty.

### **Life on the Campus**

The institute boasts of a lush- green campus situated away from the hustle- bustle of the main city. It has always been a fully residential complex and houses more than 500 students, faculty as well as non- teaching staff. The hostels are separate for men and women. The focus of this report would be on the life of under-graduate students. It was told to us that right from the time, the institute got its own building, the then- vice chancellor decided to have a separate hostel for 1<sup>st</sup> years, though the mess would be kept common. Since there were hardly any females taking admission to the institute, the need was not felt to have a separate 1<sup>st</sup> year hostel for the girls. However, with the increasing number of females in each batch (with almost majority of each batch being females in the past few years), a new women's hostel has been built up to accommodate the first year students. On enquiry, it was revealed that it was felt that the first years should be given time for "transition" and therefore should have a personal space where there would be no seniors. However, since one cannot keep juniors and seniors separate all the time, the mess was kept common where all could interact freely and informally. Despite repeated probing, none of the interviewees believed that this rule was made after any incident and maintained it to be the result of foresight of the vice-chancellor. It was further reported that the 1<sup>st</sup> year hostels are strategically located at a "shout's" distance from the faculty quarters and no senior is allowed to enter the 1<sup>st</sup>years hostel without permission.

On interviewing the students, it was revealed that they had no objections with this arrangement and actually found it helpful as it gave them time to adjust to their new surroundings and make friends.

Since it's a fully residential complex, the faculty admitted that romantic liaisons were bound to develop between men and women and thus there are no rules in this regard. One of the faculty reported that as a preventive measure, the campus was well- lit and also said that *“though, the older faculty may see it as morally wrong, but in all my years, I have never come across any incident where I felt embarrassed due to behavior of the students.”* The hostel caretaker and warden echoed similar feelings.

Apart from academic work, the students are enrolled in one of the various committees right from the time they join the institute. It was reported that the students manage each of these committees and the faculty primarily acted as advisors. As reported by one of the interviewees that the idea was to *“have more work than time”* for students and staff alike.

The university also boasts of a very open culture where *“everyone knows everyone else”*. Though one of the faculty reported that they had this advantage primarily because it was a small community. However, this provided an opportunity for healthy interaction within student fraternity as well as between students and staff. The registrar of the university reinforced that he knew each student by name and the students were free to walk in any time as there were no visitation hours. The students also echoed the same feeling that they could approach any faculty, however, they also reiterated that most of the times their seniors were able to solve their issues and there was no real need to go to the faculty.

On enquiring about whether regional differences cropped up in the institute, the faculty, staff as well as students strongly denied it. They reported that since people were from all over India and anyway, one tends to find someone from a region near to hometown, so regional differences were never felt. Also, the chief warden told us that the cooks were employed from both North as well as South India so that the cuisines could be altered to match everyone's taste.

## **Academic Activities**

It was reported that the institute followed a trimester system. In each trimester, there were four subjects and the students were expected to make a project for each of the subject. One of the faculty members reported that though the classes finished in the afternoon, the academic work and extra-curricular activities (like committees) left little time for anything else. However, the students said that they did have time to watch movies, relax and enjoy and still were able to complete all their tasks.

One faculty also compared the students of the institute with those in other traditional universities and said that the former were much more academically- oriented and updated and showed keen interest in publications and attending conferences.

It was also stated that the institute gives freedom to faculty to design their own syllabus, set their own question papers and decide on the best method to teach, which may be case- studies, field- trips etc. The institute follows an open- book examination. Across interviews, it was reflected that this system of examination was preferred by all as it encouraged *“students to apply what they had learnt”*.

## Rules and Regulations

We asked the interviewees about the rules and regulations followed in the institute in general and specifically to ragging; their implementation and how they are inculcated into the students.

It was reported that the institute has a printed rule- book that clearly specifies the rules and consequent reaction if the rules are broken. The book has clearly stated guidelines about hostel timings, entry into women's hostel, maintaining discipline and anti- ragging. This rule book is provided to each student at the day of the orientation and each faculty member as well as non- teaching staff needs to have a copy of the same. Moreover, even before the orientation, at the time of counselling, it is clearly stated to the student that the university is anti- ragging and no incident of ragging, no matter how small, would be tolerated.

All the interviewees emphasized that rules were strictly implemented and usually punishments in terms of fines were immediately imposed on students. Moreover, it was reported that there are well-understood hierarchies in terms of rule –implementation. For both men and women separately, there is a disciplinary committee consisting of about eight students (from 3<sup>rd</sup> year onwards). This committee is primarily responsible for managing discipline in and out of the hostel. The next in hierarchy was the caretaker and then moving to the warden, chief warden and finally the registrar.

The warden reported that they conducted surprise raids in the hostel specifically if there were complaints of library books not being returned or someone consuming alcohol. The concerned person would first be warned to return the book and on refusal, a raid would be conducted in their rooms. The policy, in case of finding alcohol/drugs in a student room, was to confiscate the stuff and the warden would be responsible to prepare the report and submit to registrar. However, the warden emphasized that she never faced the need to do the same.

The faculty members emphasized that the learning environment facilitated the inculcation of rules. A few factors responsible for the same were given by different interviewees. One faculty member said that, *“a lot of venting happens in classrooms. All rules are discussed along with the pros and cons and this allows taking out frustrations and promotes understanding.”* Another faculty gave example of China to emphasize his point by saying, *“You know China's condition. That is why their food habits are very stringy. Anything that walks or crawls can be eaten. How were they able to take care of their diseases. It wasn't by any systematic, strategic public health policy. They only said when you drink water, drink only boiled water. So 65-70 per cent of their public health issues, they eradicated. So water-borne diseases are not at all their in China despite their polluted environment. So it is just about changing their habits. So, today people don't even think why this practice was even started. Water, for them means, boiled water. Similarly, we have tried to do that over a period of time.”* In this way, he reiterated that students accept rules unquestioningly over a period of time. The students also did not seem to think that any rule was unjustified or imposed unnecessarily.

The warden also reported that each student had to sign a register at the time of leaving and entering the campus, which was monitored. Also, the parents/local guardians were advised to stay in touch with college authorities and comply with rules regarding their ward staying out of the campus after restricted hours.

### Attitude towards Ragging: “Ragging as a Menace”

All the people interviewed maintained that the institute had a “zero tolerance” to any form of ragging, which has been prevalent ever since the inception of the institute and *“even before ragging actually*

*became a menace and UGC decided to take action against it.” The registrar emphasized that, “other institutes followed a compliance approach, that is, when UGC sent a circular, they would put it on notice boards; make their own internal circulars and distribute it to all departments. So just in case, something happened, they could shed responsibility. However, our institute maintains that ragging is a menace, no matter if anyone else says it or not and would not be tolerated.” Another faculty quoted that the institute and students followed the “no harm” principles by J S Mills.*

It was reported that every first year student was aware of his/her right to refuse to do a particular thing and each senior was aware of the consequences of crossing their limits. One of the faculty reported that an important reason that students maintained their limits was because of the “carrot and stick” principle. Going back in history, he reiterated how the institute established its brand value in the market and where it stands now. Each student is aware what they would get if they maintain their boundaries (“carrot” in form of respectable and highly paying job) and what they would get if they broke these boundaries (“stick” in form of rustication or severe punishment). According to this faculty, this approach kept the students focused on their goals.

Also, the university emphasized a lot on “positive interactions”, that is, students were encouraged to interact with each other, but at a positive level. For example, *“a senior can ask a student, “What do you like to do?” if the student answers, “singing”, then it is incumbent on the fresher to sing. However, if the fresher says that he/she is not comfortable doing something, then the senior needs to withdraw.”*

The students were specifically asked about how they felt about telling a senior that they were not comfortable doing something. They reported that there was an initial hitch about saying no, but they gradually realized that it was alright to do so and nobody minded it. For example, one girl cited her example, *“when my seniors asked me to sing, I told her that I was uncomfortable as we were told that we had a right to refuse. I was very hesitant, but I still said no. After that I had some work from that senior and for many days, I was reluctant in approaching her. But one day, I finally did and she acted as if nothing had happened and helped me.”*

It was seen during the tour of the campus that on every notice boards, there were posters, which talked about “no ragging policy” along with images depicting the same. Also, next to it the numbers of important faculty as well as non- teaching staff were prominently displayed.

The institute also has developed few innovative approaches as highlighted below:

- “The Grandpa, Pa and Grand-child Approach”- This system was started in 1996. Each fresher is assigned mentors. These mentors can be the one who share their roll numbers, who were in their rooms in their previous years or who belong to the same region as students. So at an informal level, each student has about four or five mentors. These mentors are responsible for taking them out for treats, helping them academically as well as personally. All interviewees reported that over time, each student developed close personal relationship with one or two of these mentors and always went to them for support. One of the faculty reportedly over-heard a senior saying to a junior, *“Do you know I am your grandpa... and today I would like to take you out for a burger party.”* They all felt that this system inculcated a family- bonding and prevented seniors from bullying or ragging juniors. The students specifically said that this system helped them emotionally as well as academically. Also, it encouraged them to do the same with their juniors. So it was more like a culture passing on from one generation to another.

- “Ice- breaking Session”: A day after the orientation program, the institute holds a session inviting all seniors and juniors to come together and have informal interactions. Usually, in this session, the mentors approach the fresher and ask them out for treat/party.
- “Essay”- This system has been recently introduced in the university. After a week of beginning college, each fresher is asked to write an essay on, “ My First Day at \*\*\*\*”. The registrar emphasized that this gave a wonderful glimpse into the activities of the college. He reported that, on an average, 40 per cent of the essays resolved around interactions with seniors and majority of the times, it was found to be positive.

## **Incident (s) of Ragging and Consequences thereof**

Across the interviews, only one stray incident of ragging emerged that had happened more than a decade back. None of the students were present when it had happened, but all had heard about it. The faculty provided specific details. It was told that one of the senior students who was a position- holder in student association and also had political connections entered the fresher’s hostel without permission and asked a fresher to do something that he/she said was not comfortable doing. The matter was reported to the authorities and the student was immediately rusticated from the college. It was the time when ragging, all over the country, was rampant and the university’s Vice- Chancellor felt that this would serve as the best example for all future generation of students. The registrar reiterated that the incident was dealt with strictly and the VC did not take back his decision despite getting calls from prominent political leaders and in fact handled it “tactfully”. All the faculty and student maintain that it was this one stray incident of ragging and no incident before or after that has ever come to light.

The registrar also emphasized that though no incidents of ragging have taken place, they still make sure all staff and students are sensitized regarding the same and also remain vigilant.

## **Other Incidents**

The interviewees were asked about any other mishaps or incidents unrelated to ragging that the institute has witnessed over the last three decades of its existence. One of the faculty who was also a student here in the 1990s reported that “*Mandal did not affect the college atmosphere, but Babri masjid did.*” He said that at time of Babri masjid demolition, there were some communal tensions in the college. However, the Vice- Chancellor of that time “*dealt it with iron hand*” and he would sit in the middle of the campus and call hearings. He further stated that, “*it would be embarrassing enough for any student to stand in front of VC and answer for their actions*” and soon things were back in control.

The warden also narrated an incident in which a female student violated the hostel time rule and was sexually assaulted outside the campus. Though the student had broken a rule, however, the nature of the mishap was such that cooperation was extended by all. The college has a “Sexual Harassment Advisor” and the student was sent to her. The advisor was able to guide her and convince her to attend counselling sessions by a trained counsellor, which helped her greatly.

The interviewees were specifically questioned about conflicts arising out of regionalism, technological changes, reservation rules, or increase in number of female students. But apart from these two incidents, no other incidents were mentioned. On being specifically asked about conflicts of clash of ideas, the interviewees maintained that they were curtailed to the classroom situation only. However, one of the faculty members elaborated that in case the arguments went outside the classroom or 'looked' to be getting out- of- hand, the disciplinary committee was responsible for tackling it.

## **Observation**

On the face of it, the institute can be considered as a model institute with well- defined and innovative ideas to increase cohesiveness and prevent not only ragging but any form of conflicts and mishaps. It was observed that it was a well- knit community with good networking amongst all stakeholders. The team was warmly welcomed by all and was allowed to freely look at the campus and talk to anyone. It was also seen that everyone (students, non- teaching staff etc.) was aware of our visit and was keen to talk. Across interviews, no inconsistencies were observed in any of the information provided.

However, one needs to keep the feasibility issue when it comes to have a close- knit community structure. The advantage for the current institute lies in the fact that it has small strength of students (about 450-500 under-graduates) at a time and therefore the teacher: student ratio allows for more personal interaction. Moreover, having a well- established network sends an unwritten but strong message to all students as well as staff that any conflict/mishap/misdeed would immediately come into light and swift action would be taken and that perhaps acts as a deterrent.

With respect to ragging, right from the prospectus to each notice board, it is clearly and boldly stated that the institute does not tolerate ragging and offenders would be punished. Though no UGC guidelines/rules are circulated to students, but are put on notice boards, the institute has an anti-ragging cell and all notice boards display numbers of wardens and faculty to be contacted at the event of any kind of ragging. It was felt that over the years, probably that anti- ragging culture has built on and people follow it unquestioningly.



- c) Helpline number publicized (31)
  - d) Minimizing contact with seniors -separate hostels, no contact policy, different class timings, etc. (18)
  - e) Strict surveillance – CCTV, security guards, midnight raids, etc.(24)
  - f) Other (21)
8. Alternative routes to integration through sports, cultural activities, etc. (12)
9. Other(21)

### **DOMAIN 3: Reasons for ragging**

#### Themes

1. 'Introduction'(65)
2. Entertainment, fun, 'kill time' (35)
3. Continue college tradition (35)
4. Conformity, 'unquestioning' attitude, maintain belonging to group (16)
5. 'Revenge' – for own experience of being ragged (56)
6. Enhance social status - win popularity, be attractive to girls, project image of being 'cool', looking strong, in command (24)
7. Enforce respect for seniors; ensure deference (33)
8. Jealousy of 'better' juniors (physical appearance, public school, English, metro, etc) (5)
9. To make one strong and confident (15)
10. Socio-political factors - Region, caste, community, metro vs. small town/rural, etc., Student politics – increase strength of own group (7)
11. Making distinction between mild-severe ragging; introduction/interaction vs. ragging; unacceptable ragging vs. 'within limits' ragging (71)
12. Other (43)

### **DOMAIN 4: Ragging practices**

#### Themes

1. Location of ragging
  - a) Hostel (51)
  - b) On campus, outside hostel (21)
  - c) Off-campus (14)
2. Time of ragging
  - a) Class hours (8)
  - b) Outside class hours (26)
3. Introduction, talent search, doing 'funny or silly things'- singing, dancing, 'swimming' on ground, etc. (129)
4. Daring tasks – balance on parapet ledge, getting off train track in split second, doing something that may get person in trouble, etc. (14)
5. Behaviour with seniors – looking down, standing position, etc.; punished or hit if deference or obedience not maintained (46)

6. Serve seniors – copy notes, fetch things, buy things, do laundry, etc.(43)
7. Verbal – abuse, vulgarity, denigration (26)
8. Physical – exercise, tedious tasks (like filling bucket with bottle cap), physical positions like ‘murga’, wear wet clothes, sleep in corridor, etc. (26)
9. Physical violence – slapping, beating (29)
10. Sexual ragging – stripping, enacting sexual scenario, watching porn, etc. (17)
11. Forcing to drink or smoke (5)
12. Enacting romantic scenario; ragging opposite sex (14)
13. Group ragging (17)
14. Other (4)

### **DOMAIN 5: Reasons for compliance**

#### Themes

1. Forge relationship with senior, ensure help from seniors in college and future life, learn ways of the world from them (32)
2. Fear, threat if does not comply (25)
3. Enjoys being ragged (10)
4. Wants to be accepted by group; ‘unquestioning’ attitude regarding obedience, deference for seniors (16)
5. 'Resisted, refused to comply' (3)
6. Getting ‘right to rag’(12)
7. Other (6)

### **DOMAIN 6:Anti-ragging actions and outcomes**

#### Themes

1. Complaints
  - a) Formal complaint – institutional authorities, police, helpline, etc. (5)
  - b) Informal complaint – parents, peers, super-seniors, teachers, etc. (9)
2. Outcome of formal complaints and informal complaints to institutional authorities such as teachers, wardens, anti-ragging unit, helpline, etc.
  - a) Positive outcome – cessation of harassment, action against offenders, etc. (15)
  - b) Negative outcome – continuing fear and harassment; backlash/boycott of complainant or non-compliant fresher; etc. (4)
3. Discouraged, threatened or afraid to complain (15)
4. Family friends supportive but encouraged enduring (10)
5. Anti-ragging interventions and complaints not taken seriously by institution (7)
6. Institutional action to cover-up – to protect own reputation, to protect career of ragging offender, etc.(0)
7. Anti-ragging interventions and complaints strictly handled by institution (3)
8. Independent student group initiatives against ragging (27)
9. Other (10)

## **DOMAIN 7: Student social relationships**

### Themes

1. Seniors:
  - a) Supportive, helpful, friendly (63)
  - b) Some seniors continue to harass severely – bullying relationship (4)
  - (c) No interaction with seniors/ indifference (26)
  - d) Other (17)
2. Peers:
  - a) Mutual support; joint action if required (0)
  - b) Fellowship among all those who underwent ragging (7)
  - c) Rejection of, hostility towards peer who resists ragging or complains (10)
  - d) Other (12)
3. Juniors:
  - a) Expect them to show respect, deference (10)
  - b) Empathy for juniors; help, guide, support them (24)
  - c) Other (22)

## **DOMAIN 8: Personal encounter with ragging**

### Themes

1. As victim
  - a) Introduction, talents, ‘funny-silly things’ (90)
  - b) Work for seniors, random physical tasks (17)
  - c) Verbal abuse – vulgar epithets, threats, verbal humiliation, etc.(13)
  - d) Physical abuse – slapping, beating, physically punishing exercises, tasks, postures, etc. (17)
  - e) Sexual ragging (13)
  - f) Behaviour with seniors – looking down, standing position, etc.; punished or hit if deference or obedience not maintained (26)
  - g) Forcing to drink or smoke (3)
  - h) Enacting romantic scenario; ragging opposite sex (27)
  - i) Group ragging (24)
2. As bystander/witness/second-hand report
  - a) Introduction, talents, ‘funny-silly things’ (12)
  - b) Work for seniors, random physical tasks (12)
  - c) Verbal abuse – vulgar epithets, threats, verbal humiliation, etc.(7)
  - d) Physical abuse – slapping, beating, physically punishing exercises, tasks, postures, etc. (7)
  - e) Sexual ragging (6)
  - f) Enjoyed spectacle (7)
  - g) Intervened to curb ragging; complained (0)

3. As perpetrator
  - a) Introduction, talents, 'funny-silly things' (6)
  - b) Work for seniors, random physical tasks (1)
  - c) Verbal abuse – vulgar epithets, threats, verbal humiliation, etc. (0)
  - d) Physical abuse – slapping, beating, physically punishing exercises, tasks, postures, etc. (16)
  - e) Sexual ragging (6)
4. Other (0)

### **DOMAIN 9: Impact of ragging**

#### Themes

1. Negative impact
  - a) Emotional (anxiety, fear, anger, shame, depression, etc) (24)
  - b) Psychological (self-esteem, confidence, etc)(11)
  - c). Relations with other students adversely affected, vengeful feelings to rag in turn, etc.(16)
  - d). Academic performance impaired, study concentration affected, etc. (2)
2. Positive impact
  - a) Relationships forged. (13)
  - b) Psychological: Self-growth, confidence, experience (28)
3. Other (22)

### **DOMAIN 10: Disinhibiting factors**

#### Themes

1. Group-related factors –group beliefs justifying actions, anonymity within group (14)
2. Use of alcohol, other substance (19)
3. Secrecy (12)
4. Lack of surveillance (14)
5. Belief that institution does not take ragging seriously (5)
6. Other (7)

### **DOMAIN 11: Extreme situations/escalation in severity**

#### Themes

1. Extreme situations – serious injury, fatal or near-fatal consequences, suicide, mental breakdown (3)
2. Not recognizing endurance limit; pushing victim beyond his limit (2)
3. Resistance/refusal to obey or show subordination leading to severe punitive ragging (22)
4. Senior who is known to be 'bad', a bully, sadistic, egoistic (27)

5. Other (0)

### **DOMAIN 12: Psychosocial contextual factors**

#### Themes

1. Beliefs about 'real' world - role of ragging in becoming 'worldly', tough, smart, knowing rules by which 'real world' operates (38)
2. Beliefs about hierarchy; respect, deference and obedience regarding seniors (78)
3. Beliefs about legitimacy of physical and psychological punishment in order to discipline, to teach what is right and wrong, to command respect, etc. (11)
4. Teachers and other institutional authorities share above beliefs (14)
5. Teachers, etc. participate in 'othering' those who speak a different language, from other regions, religions, etc. (10)
6. Belief in legitimacy of mild ragging (10)
7. Other (0)

### **DOMAIN 13: Gender relations and sexuality**

#### Themes

1. Distance between sexes – segregation; punished for having friendship with girl( 9)
2. Desire to make friends with opposite sex; have romantic relationship(7)
3. Difficulties in relationships with opposite sex - misinterpretation of relationship, shyness, etc. (0)
4. Harassment of girls, 'eve-teasing', threat of abduction, lewdness, etc.(4)
5. Beliefs that sexual confidence will increase if one uses vulgar language, watches porn, participates in sexual ragging, etc (0)
6. Other(9)

### **DOMAIN 14: 'Othering'**

#### Themes

1. Ethnic and caste groups – 'aggressive Muslims', etc (28)
2. Elite vs others – accents, 'regional' background, non-metro background (6)
3. Regionalism (Marathi speaking vs others, etc) (10)
4. Student politics using 'othering' to enhance own strength and polarize(9)
5. Other (20)

### **DOMAIN 15: Practices akin to ragging**

#### Themes

1. Harassment of peers; harassment of others from different social class, regional background, etc.(6)
2. Bullying relationships – 'dadas', individual bullies (4)
3. Intimidation and harassment related to student politics.(5)
4. Societies, clubs that have practices similar to ragging; initiation-type activities (2)
5. Group ragging of juniors by seniors beyond first year (2)

6. Other (0).

### **DOMAIN 16: Students' suggestions regarding ragging**

#### Themes

1. Student bodies should monitor and control ragging (20)
2. Counselling of parents (10)
3. Laws made more strict, punishment enforced; all ragging including mild forms to be curbed (19)
4. Public humiliation of offenders (2)
5. Emotional support to victims and offenders teaching them to cope with difficulties an life skills (17)
6. Gender sensitization (4)
7. Ragging within limits should continue – 'Introduction', mild ragging, within-department ragging, etc.(72)
8. Other (10)

### **DOMAIN 17: Role of education**

#### Themes

1. Role of education :
  - a) path to career (15)
  - b) Enrichment; development of potential; critical thinking (11)
  - c) Development of values; becoming responsible social agent (0)
2. Disenchantment with educational system – rote learning, gap between what is preached and what is practiced, disappointment with teachers, commercialism, etc.(5)
3. Teacher's role – support, guide; overlap with parent's role at home; difference from school, etc.(9)
4. Other(5)

### **DOMAIN 18: Attitudes/reactions to research**

#### Themes

1. Distrust, skepticism of research outcome (15)
2. Fear of repercussions if participates (16)
3. Hope, enthusiasm (14)
4. Other (15)

## Appendix VIII

### FACULTY-STAFF INTERVIEWS (Domains & Themes)

(Figures in the brackets denote the frequency of that theme in the total number of interviews)

#### Respondent information:

Designation

Gender

Govt/Pvt Institution

Direct involvement in anti-ragging

#### DOMAIN 1: Institutional resources & interventions

##### Themes

1. Existence of student welfare units (such as counselling, gender sensitization, SC/ST support, etc) (63)
2. Specific anti-ragging measures (such as warning posters, anti-ragging cell, separation of freshers from seniors, college helpline, patrolling, etc) (73)
3. Attention to faculty-student interaction (such as teacher-guardians, student advisers, etc) (44)
4. Other (41)

#### DOMAIN 2: Views about ragging

##### Themes

1. Distinction between acceptable & 'ugly' ragging, ragging & 'introduction', intermingling; ragging within & beyond limits, etc (23)
2. 'Introduction', intermingling is essential (38)
3. Minimization, denial of ragging as problem (for instance, importance of ragging is exaggerated; incidents are fabricated/exaggerated by 'shrewd' juniors, those who want attention; media misreporting; problem is created by elements outside institution; anti-ragging measures have created more problems, are used to threaten; ragging is a problem in other institutions not in own institution, etc.) (18)
4. Ragging has some beneficial outcomes (such as getting to know everyone, fun, it is a 'psychological treatment', etc.) (29)
5. Ragging is wrong, it should be stopped in any form (20)
6. Other (6)

#### DOMAIN 3: Reasons for ragging & extreme cases

##### Themes

1. Individual psychological problem (32)
2. Boost ego (14)
3. Custom in institution (13)
4. Establishing respect for seniority, authority (20)
5. Serious outcomes due to lack of maturity, accident (8)
6. Extreme cases due to lack of maturity; unintentional harm (2)

## 7. Other (23)

### **DOMAIN 4: Education & challenges faced by institution**

#### Themes

1. Wide gap between ideals of education (total personality development, humane individuals, good citizens, etc.) and reality of existing system (40)
2. Commercialization affecting education and people (7)
3. Heterogeneity of student body – social class, caste, religion, region, age (23)
4. Student politics - dadagiri related to student unions, political parties, etc. (9)
5. Disciplinary problems of students – cheating, drinking, rowdy behavior, etc.(30)
6. Co-education related problems (0)
7. Politics within institution – factions, rivalries, etc.(6)
8. Quality of teachers – low standard, dishonest, ‘stuck in petty things’(6)
9. Government colleges – special problems (9)
10. Social change and impact on college (5)
11. Other (17)

### **DOMAIN 5: Gender issues**

#### Theme

1. Romantic involvements – such as problem of ‘love triangles’, pressure to have girlfriend, etc. (8)
2. Harassment of girls, ‘eve teasing’ – need for protection (7)
3. Ensuring girls do not go ‘astray’ (5)
4. Other (6)

### **DOMAIN 6: Psychosocial contextual factors**

#### Themes

1. Beliefs about hierarchy, deference and respect for seniors (54)
2. Beliefs about legitimacy of physical punishment to discipline, to teach what is right and wrong, etc. (27)
3. Feeling that one is ‘ragged’ by system (10)
4. Comments that ‘other’ different group – minority, low social class, ‘reservation’, foreigners, etc.(12)
5. Other (8)

### **DOMAIN 7: Contradictions, ambivalences**

#### Themes

1. On-record/off-record differences in view (5)
2. Denial that ragging is a problem but use of CCTV, security guards, physical separation of freshers (7)
3. Contradiction between views expressed and actual behavior (such as rejection of physical punishment but using it to deal with miscreants; involvement in college anti-ragging measures but personal experience positive and own children advised to enjoy it) (8)
4. Other (3)

## Appendix IX

### Bullying Survey Schedule for Students

#### STUDENT INFORMATION

This survey is anonymous. Please **DO NOT** put your name in the survey. To start, we would like to know a few basic things about you.

Age (in years) \_\_\_\_\_

What grade are you in \_\_\_\_\_

Which class did you join the school in \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a male or a female?    Male                       Female

What is the first language you learned to speak (at home)? \_\_\_\_\_

Which religion do you follow: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your parent's education?

Father: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your parent's occupation?

Father: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

Who all stay in your house: \_\_\_\_\_

How many siblings do you have? \_\_\_\_\_ (specify number)

**We would now like to know more about you and your school.**

**1. I like coming to school because...** (tick as many as applicable)

- I like spending time with my friends
- I get to participate in sports/extra-curricular activities
- I like my teachers
- I enjoy my time in school
- I enjoy studying

**2. I don't like coming to school because...** (tick as many as applicable)

- I don't like my classmates
- I don't like my teachers
- I don't like studying
- I don't have friends
- People make fun of me

**3. In school I am active in...** (tick as many as applicable)

- Cultural activities (dance, music, arts etc.)
- Student bodies/committee/class captain (debates, disciplinary etc.)
- Sports
- Picnic/outings
- I do not participate in any extra-curricular activity

**4. My classmates and I...** (tick as many as applicable)

- Have lots of fun together
- Only study together
- Don't talk much
- Fight with each other
- Do other activity, please specify.....

**5. Have you ever experienced any of the following?**(tick as many as applicable)

- Made fun of/ignored
- Was the target of gossip in school?
- Snatching of personal belongings
- Verbally abused/insulted/threatened
- Physically abused (pushing, slapping, hitting etc.)

6. If yes to Q5, then where have you experienced it/them?(tick as many as applicable)

- School
- Bus
- Neighbourhood
- Home
- Internet/phone (facebook, whatsapp, e-mail, sms)
- Any other place, please specify.....

7. This was done by..... (Please tick one that applies)

- People Individually
- People in groups
- Both individually as well as in groups

8. Others make fun of me because of..... (tick as many as applicable)

- My looks (height, complexion, weight, etc)
- The way I speak (tone, accent, language, stammering, etc)
- My family background (income, occupation, place of residence, type of vehicle, etc.)
- Performance in studies
- Caste
- Religion
- Others, please specify.....

9. When my classmates/friends teased/troubled me, I..... (tick as many as applicable)

- Did the same to them
- Complained to the teacher
- Complained to friends
- Did not do anything
- Cried/ felt helpless
- Complained to my parents/siblings
- Fought with them
- Took the anger out on somebody else (e.g. another friend, junior, sibling)
- Any other, please specify.....

10. When spoken or complained was any action taken?

Yes

No

**11. When I am troubled/ teased by others, it makes me feel.....** (tick as many as applicable)

Sad

Lonely

Angry

Embarrassed

Scared

Other (please specify)

I don't care/bother

**12. When my friends/classmates trouble others, I.....** (tick as many as applicable)

Enjoy watching

Sometimes join them

Do nothing

Feel bad for the student, but don't do anything

Try to help the student later

Try to stop them

Complain about it

Any other, please specify.....

**13. Sometimes I join my friends in troubling others.....** (tick as many as applicable)

I never join them

Because I think it is fun

Else they will make fun of me

Else they will beat me

Else they will break the friendship

**14. At times, I have .....**(tick as many as applicable)

Made fun of/ignored someone

Gossiped about someone

Snatched someone's personal belongings

- Verbally abused/insulted/threatened someone
- Physically abused someone (pushing, shoving, hitting, slapping)
- Sent lewd SMS's/comments on facebook to hurt someone's feelings

**15. What makes you tease or bully others?(tick as many as applicable)**

- I think it's alright to do this
- I think it's fun
- Others will respect and fear me
- It will make me popular
- It will help me make friends
- I wanted to teach a lesson

**16. I feel that students who bully others have power and are popular in school**

- Yes
- No

**17. My teachers favour students who are.....(tick as many as applicable)**

- Good looking
- Speak well
- From privileged background
- Good in studies

**18. I feel that my teacher(s) do not support me because.....(tick as many as applicable)**

- Of my looks (height, complexion, weight, etc)
- The way i speak (tone, accent, language, stammering, etc)
- Family background (income, occupation, place of residence, type of vehicle, etc.)
- My Performance in studies
- Others (please specify.....)

**19. At home..... (tick as many as applicable)**

- We have lots of fun together
- We all love each other
- My parents fight with each other
- My parents like my siblings more than me

No one cares for me

My siblings bully me

My siblings are scared of me

**Thank You**

**Appendix X**  
**Bullying Survey Schedule for Teachers**

**Age:**  
**Sex:**  
**Position:**  
**Grades taught:**  
**Tenure at School:**

**1. What constitutes bullying in your opinion?**

- a. Teasing
- b. Making fun of people
- c. Ignoring/boycotting someone
- d. Discriminating against someone
- e. Making someone a target of gossip/ spreading rumours
- f. Name-calling
- g. Verbal abuse
- h. Snatching personal belongings
- i. Physical abuse (Slapping, hitting, etc.)
- j. Others (please specify).....
- k. All of the above

**2. When do you think Bullying starts?**

- a. From a very young age/Kindergarten
- b. In Primary School
- c. In Middle School
- d. In Senior School
- e. No specific time

**3. Which of these aggressive behaviours are commonly seen in school?**

- a. *Physical aggression* – Students hitting someone, shoving, kicking, spiting, damaging or stealing another student’s property
- b. *Verbal aggression* – name-calling, mocking, hurtful teasing, humiliating or threatening someone, making people do things they don’t want to do
- c. *Social aggression* – excluding others from the group, spreading gossip or rumours about others, making others look foolish, making sure others do not spend time with a certain person
- d. *Electronic aggression/Aggression on social media e.g. facebook*– using computer, e-mail, phone or cellular phone text messages to threaten or hurt someone’s feelings, single out, embarrass or make someone look bad, spread rumours or reveal secrets about someone

e. Any other (please specify).....

f. All of the above

**4. Where do you think bullying mostly occurs?**

- a. At school
- b. At home
- c. In the Bus
- d. In the neighbourhood
- e. Other (please specify).....

**5. Where in school do you think bullying mostly occurs?**

- a. In classrooms
- b. In playgrounds
- c. In toilets/washrooms
- d. On the staircase
- e. In the dining hall
- f. In the school bus
- g. All of the above

**6. How serious do you think is the problem of bullying?**

- a. Very serious
- b. Serious
- c. Moderately serious
- d. Not very serious
- e. Not serious at all

**7. What impact can Bullying have on students?**

- a. Causes serious mental health problems
- b. Harms their self-esteem
- c. Negatively affects their mood – makes them sad, lonely, angry
- d. Injures their self-confidence
- e. Enhances their self-confidence
- f. Toughens them and prepares them for the real world
- g. Any others (please specify).....
- h. Don't know

**8. How long do you think the impact of Bullying lasts?**

- a. Temporarily
- b. Permanently
- c. For 1-2 years
- d. Throughout school life
- e. Throughout student life

**9. What do you think is the reason behind Bullying?**

- a. To gain popularity
- b. To gain respect
- c. For entertainment
- d. To make friends
- e. To teach someone a lesson
- f. To take revenge
- g. To feel powerful
- h. Others (please specify).....

**10. Which children, in your opinion, are more likely to become bullies?**

- a. Aggressive children
- b. Children who are bullied
- c. Children who are powerful
- d. Mischievous students
- e. High achievers
- f. Only a select few
- g. Any child can become a bully

**11. What is your judgment of the extent of bullying at your school in the following ways?**

- a. Students are being bullied by being hit or threatened by others.
  - i) Never
  - ii) Sometimes
  - iii) Often
- b. Students are being bullied by being called unpleasant names.
  - i) Never
  - ii) Sometimes
  - iii) Often
- c. Students are being bullied by being deliberately left out of things by others.
  - i) Never
  - ii) Sometimes
  - iii) Often

**12. What do you do when you witness Bullying?**

- a. Intervene and reprimand the Bully
- b. Talk to all those involved to find out the problem
- c. Complain to the principal/Anti-Bullying Committee
- d. Inform the parents
- e. Counsel the students
- f. Make them aware of the ill-effects of bullying
- g. Ignore/ Don't do anything
- h. Explain to the bullied that this is normal
- i. Others (please specify).....

**13. What are the policies in place at your school to deal with/spread awareness about Bullying?**

- a. Anti –Bullying Committee
- b. Counselor
- c. Awareness Committee
- d. None
- e. Any other (please specify).....

**14. If there is an Anti-Bullying Committee, what is the role of this Committee in school? How does it handle cases of Bullying?**

**Please answer in detail.**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**15. Do you think it is, or would be, a good idea?**

- a. To have a “specific policy” addressing bullying at the school  
Yes / No
- b. For teachers to talk to students about bullying  
Yes / No
- c. For students to be trained to be “peer helpers” to assist in countering bullying  
Yes / No
- d. Informing the parents of children involved in bully-victim problems  
Yes / No

**16. Personally do you ever feel bullied by any of the following people?**

- a. Teaching staff
- b. Students
- c. Parents
- d. Administrators

**17. Were you ever bullied when you were young?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. May be

**18. If yes, what did you do when you were bullied?**

- a. Didn't do anything
- b. Accepted it as a part of life
- c. Informed the parents
- d. Informed the teachers
- e. Tried to make friends with bully
- f. Tried to bully others
- g. Other (please specify).....

**19. Add any other comments that will assist us in understanding the scope of problems related to**

**Bullying.** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---