



Combating Ragging in Educational Institutions

For Prelims: Legal Consequences of Ragging in India, Raghavan Committee, [Supreme Court](#)

For Mains: UGC Guidelines to Curb the Menace of Ragging, Issues Related to Higher Education System in India.

Source: [IE](#)

Why in News?

The issue of **ragging**, a persistently troubling phenomenon in Indian educational institutions, has once again captured national attention due to a **recent incident at Jadavpur University**.

- The [Supreme Court](#) of India has taken significant steps to address this issue through various cases and guidelines.

What is the Current State of Anti-ragging Measures in India?

- **Defining Ragging: Supreme Court's Perspective**
 - In the 2001 (Vishwa Jagriti Mission) case, the **Supreme Court** provided a **comprehensive definition of ragging**.
 - It described ragging as **any disorderly conduct that involves teasing, treating, or handling fellow students with rudeness**, engaging in undisciplined activities causing **annoyance or psychological harm**, or generating fear among junior students.
 - The Court also noted that the **motives behind ragging often include deriving sadistic pleasure**, showcasing power, authority, or superiority by seniors over freshers.
- **Key Guidelines Issued by the Supreme Court:**
 - The Supreme Court guidelines emphasized the importance of setting up **proctoral committees within educational institutions** to prevent and address ragging.
 - Furthermore, it highlighted the **possibility of reporting ragging incidents to the police** if they become unmanageable or amount to cognizable offenses.
- **Raghavan Committee and UGC Guidelines:**
 - In 2009, the Supreme Court revisited the ragging issue and appointed a committee led by former **CBI Director RK Raghavan** to address it comprehensively.
 - The committee's recommendations were later **adopted by the [University Grants Commission \(UGC\)](#)**.
 - The UGC issued detailed guidelines that universities were required to follow in order to counter ragging effectively.
 - The UGC guidelines, titled "**Regulations on Curbing the Menace of Ragging in [Higher Educational Institutions](#)**," highlighted several forms of ragging, including teasing, causing physical or psychological harm, generating a sense of shame, and engaging in financial extortion.
 - The guidelines also **mandated universities to publicly declare their commitment to**

preventing ragging and required students to sign undertakings that they would not engage in such activities.

- The UGC also placed **responsibility on educational institutions to take proactive measures against ragging.**
 - Universities were required to establish committees comprising course-incharges, student advisors, wardens, and senior students.
 - These committees were tasked with monitoring and regulating interactions between freshers and seniors, ensuring a healthy and safe environment.

Note: UGC also recognised gender identity and sexual orientation as grounds for ragging in 2016.

▪ **Legal Consequences of Ragging in India:**

- While ragging itself is **not categorized as a specific offense**, it can be penalized under various provisions of the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)**.
- For instance, **wrongful restraint, as defined under Section 339 of the IPC**, can lead to imprisonment for up to one month or a fine of up to five hundred rupees, or both.
- **Wrongful confinement**, governed by **Section 340 of the IPC**, can result in imprisonment for up to a year or a fine of up to one thousand rupees, or both.

▪ **Related State-Level Legislation:**

- Several Indian states have introduced special legislation to combat ragging.
 - For instance, the **Kerala Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1998**, Andhra Pradesh Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1997, The Assam Prohibition of Ragging Act 1998 and Maharashtra Prohibition of Ragging act, 1999.

Way Forward

- **Strengthening Anti-Ragging Measures:** There is a need to institute collaborative audits involving external experts, students, and faculty members to assess the effectiveness of anti-ragging measures.
 - These **audits can provide insights into gaps**, areas of improvement, and successful practices.
 - The **findings can be used to refine and adapt governance strategies**, ensuring a proactive approach to preventing ragging.
- **Digital Reporting Tools:** There is a need to develop a dedicated reporting portal or mobile app where students can report ragging incidents anonymously.
 - The system could **incorporate real-time notifications to relevant authorities**, ensuring swift intervention.
- **Community Engagement Events:** There is a need to organize regular community events that involve students in **volunteer work, community service, and social outreach**. Building a sense of responsibility and unity can help reduce the inclination towards ragging.