Anti-Ragging Measures in India

Why in news?

Recently, an 18 year old student was dead in Jadavpur University due to ragging.

What is defined as “ragging”?

- Ragging is defined as an act that involves an activity violating the dignity of a student.
- Ragging is done in the name of fresher’s welcome i.e. shows that what extent a person or human imagination can fall to prove his supremacy
- It includes any act
    - That generates a sense of shame, torment or embarrassment adversely affecting the physique or psyche of a student.
    - That affects the mental health and self-confidence of any student.
    - That would prevent, disrupts or disturbs the regular academic activity of any student
    - Of financial extortion or forceful expenditure burden put on other students by students
    - Of physical abuse, sexual abuse, homosexual assaults, stripping, forcing obscene and lewd acts, gestures, causing any kind of bodily harm or any other danger to health or person.

> *According to a survey in the year 2017, about 40% of India's students had to face some form of ragging and bullying, of which medical and engineering colleges reported the most.*

What are steps taken by government against ragging?

- **Unny committee-** It was formed by *University Grants Commission (UGC)* to examine and submit a report on ragging.
- It put forward a Prohibition, Prevention and Punishment proposal.
- Central and state governments should enact laws against ragging.
- It suggested punishments ranging from fines to rigorous imprisonment of up to 3 years.
- Measures that can be taken includes
    - Sensitisation against ragging
    - Incentivizing wardens and students for their good conduct and anti-ragging activities.
    - Institutions failing to curb ragging should be disaffiliated.

University Grants Commission (UGC) is a statutory body set up under UGC Act 1956 under the Ministry of Education.

What is the Supreme Court's stand on ragging?

- In 2001, the Supreme Court banned ragging across India.
- **Guidelines**- Setting up *proctoral committees* to prevent ragging and internally address complaints against ragging.
- Ragging if it becomes unmanageable or amounts to a cognizable offence the same may be reported to the police.
- **R K Raghavan committee**- It was appointed by Supreme Court in 2006 to suggest
- means and methods to prevent ragging.
- possible action that can be taken against persons/institutions that indulge/ fail to curb ragging
- Its recommendations were subsequently formalised by the UGC.

What are the guidelines specified by UGC?

- UGC adopted guidelines in 2009 under "*The Regulations on Curbing the Menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions".*
- **Definition**- It includes 9 explanations of what could constitute ragging.
- **Institutional level-** UGC requires universities to take measures for prevention of ragging.
- Universities must require students to sign an undertaking that they will not engage in ragging activities.
- The institution shall set up appropriate committees, including the course-incharge, student advisor, wardens and some senior students as its members.
- If found guilty by the anti-ragging committee, then any member of the committee may proceed to file a First Information Report (FIR) *within 24 hours* of receipt of such information.
- **Helpline**- Anti Ragging helpline is available in 12 languages for helping victims of ragging.
- **Anti-Ragging Website** - *https://www.antiragging.in/* portal contains the record of registered complaints received and the status of the action taken thereon.
- **Awareness-** All the educational institutions in the country observe August 12-18 as anti-ragging week.

What does the law say about ragging?

In 1997, Tamil Nadu became the first state where ragging was completely banned.

- **Prohibition of Ragging Act 1997**- Ragging is defined 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 a fresher or any other student".
- **Section 339 of IPC-** It criminalises the offence as *wrongful restraint.*

- Wrongful restraint is an offence when a person is prevented from proceeding in any direction in which that person has a right to proceed.
- **Section 340 of IPC-** It criminalises wrongful confinement which is defined as wrongfully restraining any person in such a manner as to prevent that person from proceedings beyond certain circumscribing limits.
- **Separate regulations** - All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the Medical Council of India have made their own regulations under their respective acts.

References

1. Indian Express- Jadavpur University student death
2. The Hindu- Ragging rage

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