



National Human Rights Commission

Minutes of the Open House Discussion on ‘Re-examining Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions: Creating Safer Campuses through Awareness, Accountability, and Action’

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) convened an Open House Discussion on ‘Re-examining Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions: Creating Safer Campuses through Awareness, Accountability, and Action’ on August 25, 2025 at Manav Adhikar Bhavan, New Delhi. The meeting was chaired by Shri Justice V Ramasubramanian, Chairperson, and attended by Members, NHRC, Dr. Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi and Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani; Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General; Joint Secretaries, Shri Samir Kumar and Smt. Saidingpuui Chhakchhuak, along with other officials of the Commission. A distinguished gathering comprising representatives from various ministries, Professors from various Central and State Universities, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and other eminent subject-matter experts participated in the discussion. The Open House Discussion was organized in hybrid mode and the list of attendees is annexed.



Shri Justice V Ramasubramanian, Hon'ble Chairperson, NHRC

2. At the outset, **Shri Samir Kumar**, Joint Secretary, welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda focused on addressing the issue of ragging in higher educational institutions. He referred to the recent Kottayam case and outlined the key themes for

deliberation: i.) understanding the impact of ragging, ii.) reviewing legal and institutional frameworks, and iii.) exploring preventive measures through, awareness, accountability, and inclusion.

3. In his opening remarks, **Shri Bharat Lal**, Secretary General, NHRC, Bharat Lal highlighted that medical institutions account for 38.6% of ragging incidents, marking them as critical areas of concern. Referring to the R. K. Raghavan Committee, he reiterated the foundational principles of *Prevention*, *Prohibition*, and *Punishment*. He identified key challenges, including poor enforcement, under-reporting due to fear, lack of sensitization, and cultural normalization of ragging. He emphasized the need for increased awareness, better institutional monitoring, and safer reporting mechanisms. Stressing the pivotal role of NHRC, he called for actionable and outcome-oriented discussions. He also mentioned that ragging is against the Indian ethos. Highlighting the three issues to be discussed in the open house, he also posed a question whether all ragging complaints registered on UGC portal are automatically get transferred to NHRC for taking appropriate action.



Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC, delivering opening remarks to the participants

4. **Dr. Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi**, Hon'ble Member, NHRC, in his address stressed on identification of the causes and appealed to the participants to give concrete preventive measures to underscore the problem of ragging. **Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani**, Hon'ble Member, NHRC, further highlighted the prevalence of caste-based ragging in certain parts of the country and emphasised the need for inclusive, targeted interventions.

5. Chairing the meet, **Justice V. Ramasubramanian**, Hon'ble Chairperson, NHRC, reflected on the contrast between traditional student welcoming practices and the current menace of ragging in educational institutions. Despite the abundance of laws, statutes, committees, and regulations, such as the 2001 guidelines, the R. K. Raghavan Committee, and the 2009 UGC Regulations, he noted that enforcement remains a major challenge. He called for stronger monitoring mechanisms, greater sensitivity in handling complaints, and strict anonymity for complainants, to ensure victims' protection and justice.



Shri Justice V Ramasubramanian, Hon'ble Chairperson, NHRC, delivering inaugural address to the participants of the meeting

6. **Prof. Manas K. Mandal**, IIT, Kharagpur initiated the discussion by emphasizing the pressing need to create a new ecosystem within campuses. He described this process as 'nudging,' as outlined by Nobel Laureate Richard H. Thaler whereby the decision architecture of institutions is gradually transformed over time. Prof. Mandal highlighted that cultural norms play a pivotal role in shaping behavior, both in society at large and specifically within campuses. Hierarchy, he observed, is deeply ingrained and accepted as a societal norm, and this same hierarchical mindset manifests itself in academic environments as well. He concluded by proposing that a collective group of educators should take up the responsibility of initiating change through the systematic use of nudging strategies.

7. **Smt. Rina Sonowal Kouli**, Joint Secretary, Dept. of Higher Education, Ministry of Education provided an overview of the higher education ecosystem in India. She also mentioned a committee constituted to review the existing guidelines, which will function through a process

of stakeholder consultation to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness. Furthermore, she drew attention to the National Task Force on Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) and referred to the guidelines on suicides on campuses, applicable not only to universities but also to coaching institutions. She concluded her intervention by welcoming the directions issued by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on this subject.



[Smt. Rina Sonowal Kouli, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education, providing an overview of the higher education ecosystem in India](#)

8. **Prof. Manish R. Joshi**, Secretary, University Grants Commission (UGC) elaborated on the UGC's regulatory framework and the comprehensive Anti-Ragging Policy that has been in force since 2009. He underscored the importance of the online affidavit system and highlighted the role of district-level committees in ensuring compliance. He explained that in cases of non-compliance, show-cause notices are duly issued to institutions. In terms of recommendations for the NHRC, Shri Joshi suggested the possibility of conducting joint awareness campaigns in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, strengthening psychosocial support systems in higher educational institutions, establishing real-time grievance dashboards with anonymized data, holding quarterly review meetings with NHRC and other stakeholders to monitor progress, and mandating the inclusion of anti-ragging modules in student induction programs.

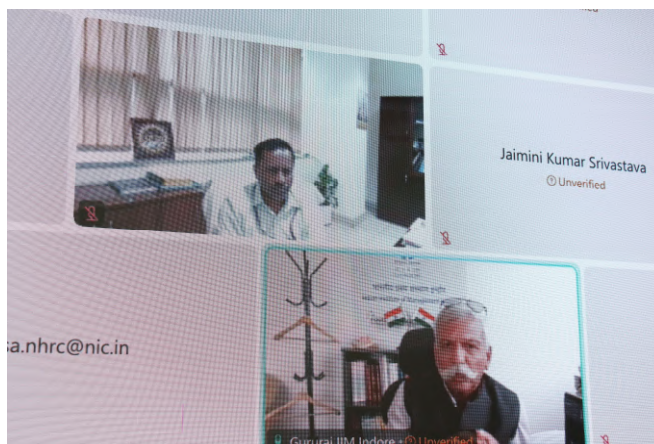
9. **Smt. Alka Tomar**, Chairperson, Centre for Youth outlined the Centre for Youth's role in ensuring the anti-ragging system functions effectively. She highlighted the online student undertaking process and compliance requirements, such as anti-ragging cells in every HEI,

display of posters, CCTVs, helpline numbers and accessible anti-ragging links on their websites and uploading of compliance reports with dashboards to track submissions. In conclusion, she stressed the accountability of HEIs, the importance of student mental health, and the need to address systemic ragging.

10. **Shri Bharat Parashar**, Member Secretary, National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) raised concerns over the weak enforcement of anti-ragging regulations, noting that institutions often prioritize reputation over student welfare. He stressed the need to clearly define ragging and criticized the current reactive approach focused on punishment rather than prevention. He stated that awareness campaigns and undertakings are symbolic, proposing that NALSA collaborate with the University Grants Commission UGC for awareness programmes across HEIs. He recommended mandatory reporting of all complaints, FIR registration, and sensitization of police personnel. He further emphasized independent monitoring, inclusion of SC, ST, women, and marginalized groups in anti-ragging cells, anonymous complaint mechanisms, and protection and follow-up for victims after reporting a complaint. Highlighting mental health as a central issue, he called for the inclusion of mental health modules and the development of a prevention-oriented institutional culture. He concluded by calling for regular audits of anti-ragging systems, publication of data to ensure transparency and accountability and recognition of ragging-free campuses.

11. **Dr. Rakesh Lodha**, Associate Dean, AIIMS, New Delhi stressed on the importance of prevention in addressing the issue of ragging. He highlighted the role of awareness and proper induction processes. He also underlined the need for ongoing student wellness initiatives that are accessible to all, including the provision of counseling services to support students' mental health. According to him, a multi-pronged approach is essential, combining awareness, clear guidelines, mental health support, and strict enforcement of rules. He stressed the need to clearly define and communicate the fine line between healthy interaction and ragging. Additionally, he acknowledged a troubling pattern where ragging becomes a self-perpetuating cycle, those who were once victims of ragging often feel justified in inflicting the same on others. Breaking this cycle, he suggested building a safe and inclusive campus environment.

12. **Dr. Gururaj Gopinath Pamidi**, Chief Administrative Officer, IIM, Indore emphasized the responsibility of institutions in preventing ragging and advocated for the creation of a strong and collaborative ecosystem where institutions can learn from each other and adopt best practices. He also spoke about the importance of establishing Centres for Wellness and Inclusion (CWI) on campuses, which would offer comprehensive mental health services, including access to professional counselors. A strong mentor-mentee program, coupled with sensitization initiatives, was recommended to foster student safety and emotional well-being. He called for transparent, efficient, and well-structured grievance redressal mechanisms and emphasized the importance of prevention by integrating awareness campaigns from the point of student induction.



Dr. Gururaj Gopinath Pamidi, Chief Administrative Officer, IIM Indore, sharing suggestions on curbing ragging in higher educational institutions

13. **Dr. Arvind Kumar Drave**, Consultant, National Medical Commission (NMC), recommended that institutions must provide complete and timely responses to NMC's structured inquiries to ensure accountability in reported cases. To minimize ragging, he advocated for the separation of freshers and seniors in hostels and the installation of CCTV cameras at all entry points to monitor activity. He stressed the need for wellness centres in all colleges, which should offer yoga, cultural programs, and similar activities to support students' mental health. Recognizing the high pressure faced by postgraduate students, he called for reducing workload and addressing harassment by academic guides. Additionally, he urged the reactivation of district advisory committees, pointing out their critical role in case review

14. **Prof. Sampa Saha**, IIT, Delhi, highlighted the structured initiatives already in place to prevent ragging at the institution. She emphasized that cyber-bullying is emerging as a

significant challenge in the context of anti-ragging measures and sought the Committee's suggestions on effective ways to address and manage such cases. The Chair acknowledged that ragging need not necessarily be physical; it can also be in the form of emails, letters, or indirect threats. Therefore, cyber bullying should be treated as part of ragging under the anti-ragging framework.

15. **Prof. Rajendar Kachroo**, Founder, Aman Movement focused on the systemic crisis of student suicides in India by drawing insights from data and surveys. Prof. Kachroo recommended that ragging be treated not just as a disciplinary issue but as a human rights violation, requiring structural prevention and strict enforcement. He called for confidence-building measures, such as mandatory referral of unresolved or unsatisfactorily addressed complaints to the Human Rights Commission. He urged the NHRC to broaden its interpretation of 'negligence' to include systemic institutional failures, not just individual lapses. He advocated for acknowledging and addressing the three layers of discrimination social, institutional, and peer-based while recognizing the damaging psychological impact of ragging. He said that ragging may not be the largest cause of suicides, but it is the most significant source of distress and mental health deterioration among students. Ragging stifles creativity, undermines emotional intelligence, and enforces blind obedience, damaging nation-building. He also emphasized maintaining and enhancing effective mechanisms like online affidavits, helplines, and monitoring systems from the 2009 regulations to protect students and create awareness among parents.

16. **Dr. Meet Ghonia**, National Secretary, The Federation of Resident Doctors Association highlighted the gap between India's comprehensive anti-ragging laws and their ineffective implementation on the ground. He stated that there is a need to review national and state laws, as well as the intervention of the Supreme Court and UGC, for the creation of a comprehensive national policy. He also stressed the issue of underreporting of ragging incidents due to fear, with institutions often prioritizing their image over student safety. He further called for proactive intervention and engagement from the National Medical Commission (NMC) and medical associations, and urged all stakeholders — the NMC, UGC, and medical institutions — to commit to zero tolerance of ragging in practice, and not just on paper.

17. **Shri Gaurav Singhal**, Vice President, Society Against Violence in Education (SAVE) emphasized that colleges and universities must adopt strict anti-ragging measures to ensure student safety and legal compliance. To safeguard freshers, he recommended providing an information leaflet at admission with emergency contacts, rights, and reporting mechanisms. He also stressed the importance of accommodating freshers in separate hostel blocks wherever possible, along with active monitoring, surprise checks, CCTV surveillance and strict enforcement by Anti-Ragging Committees and Squads. Furthermore, he underlined the crucial role of parental involvement in preventing and addressing ragging.



Shri Gaurav Singhal, Vice President, Society Against Violence in Education (SAVE)

18. **Ms. Meera Kaura Patel**, Legal head, Society Against Violence in Education (SAVE) emphasized that ragging has been made a cognizable offence only in a few states and stressed the need for a National Anti-Ragging Act to make it cognizable across the country. She noted that even where such provisions exist, victims are often unwilling to disclose their identity, and anonymous reporting limits proper inquiries. To address this, she suggested granting locus to not-for-profit organisations to represent victims and underlined the importance of institutional accountability in reducing ragging cases. She further recommended a compliance mechanism requiring all academic institutions to upload an annual anti-ragging report, which would strengthen adherence to regulations. Lastly, she called for collaboration between the NHRC, NALSA, and UGC to expand legal assistance for victims and urged the NHRC to play a supervisory role in monitoring the closure of ragging cases.

19. **Dr. N. H. Siddalinga Swamy**, Advisor, AICTE highlighted that AICTE oversees 13,065 institutions, most of which also follow UGC's regulatory framework and directions. He further clarified that AICTE has its own regulations to curb ragging and sexual harassment with strict punitive measures, including withdrawal of approval, and highlighted its public grievance redressal mechanism for accountability.

20. In his concluding remarks, **Shri Justice V Ramasubramanian**, Hon'ble Chairperson of the NHRC, expressed his gratitude towards the participants and requested written submissions for actionable recommendations. He underscored the need for categorizing actionable points based on whether they are within the mandate of the NHRC or require coordination with other government agencies. He proposed that all cases of murder or suicide linked to ragging be reported to the NHRC and stressed the need for a shift from an *accused-centric* to a *victim-centric* approach in view of the sensitivities associated with Ragging cases.



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21. The meeting ended with a formal vote of thanks proposed by **Lt Col Virender Singh**, Director of the NHRC.

List of participants

National Human Rights Commission

1. Justice V Ramasubramanian, Hon'ble Chairperson
2. Dr. Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Hon'ble Member
3. Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Hon'ble Member
4. Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General
5. Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary
6. Smt. Saidingpuui Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary
7. Lt Col Virender Singh, Director
8. Shri Sanjay Kumar, Deputy Secretary
9. Dr. (Ms.) Rajul Raikwar, Consultant (Research)
10. Ms. Perna Hasija, Junior Research Consultant

Participants from Ministries and other Organizations

1. Smt. Rina Sonowal Kouli, Joint Secretary, Dept. of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India
2. Prof. Manish R. Joshi Secretary, University Grants Commission (UGC)
3. Dr. N. H Siddalinga Swamy, Advisor, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), New Delhi
4. Prof. Manas K. Mandal, Professor, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur
5. Shri Bharat Parashar, Member Secretary, National Legal Services Authority, New Delhi
6. Dr. Rakesh Lodha, Associate Dean, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi
7. Dr. Gururaj Gopinath Pamidi, Chief Administrative Officer, IIM, Indore
8. Dr. Arvind Kumar Drave, Consultant, National Medical Commission (NMC), New Delhi
9. Prof. Sampa Saha, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi
10. Prof. Royana Singh, Professor, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi
11. Prof. Rajendar Kachroo, Founder, Aman Movement;
12. Smt. Alka Tomar, Chairperson, Centre for Youth
13. Dr. Meet Ghonia, National Secretary, The Federation of Resident Doctors Association
14. Shri Gaurav Singhal, Vice President, Society Against Violence in Education (SAVE)
15. Smt. Meera Kaura Patel, Legal head, Society Against Violence in Education (SAVE)