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JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

Techie once ragged at Jadavpur University speaks to 17-year-old boy's father

'It is unfortunate... that things have gone so bad (in JU) that there is a death,' says ex-student, now a senior executive in Delhi

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY | PUBLISHED 23.08.23, 05:43 AM



Representational image

File picture

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A Jadavpur University engineer who graduated three decades ago and is from the same Nadia village as the 17-year-old boy who died after falling from the main hostel said she had suffered ragging, too, and it "has only got worse" over the years.

"The death made me feel that the ragging I had encountered during my days on the campus has only worsened and the authorities have to take the blame for this," she said.

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This newspaper is withholding her identity so the identity of the dead student, who was a minor, is not compromised.

She spoke to the boy's bereaved parents on Sunday.

"It is unfortunate... that things have gone so bad (in JU) that there is a death. As the mother of a young daughter, I did not know how to console his father," the engineer told The Telegraph.

Now a senior executive in a public sector undertaking in Delhi, the former JU student said the boy's father was a year senior to her in a village school. The 17-year-old went to another school in the same village.

Some of the former students from the local school went to meet the parents together.

"He (the father) has always addressed me as 'bon' (sister). As I spoke to him on Sunday, he broke into tears and said: 'Bon, ora amar chhele-ke kere nilo (Sister, they took away my son).'"

The first-year student was allegedly ragged and thrown from a second-floor balcony of JU Main Hostel on the night of August 9. He died at a hospital early on August 10.

An internal committee of JU set up to probe the death of the first-year student has said in its interim report that ragging seemed to be one of the "probable causes" of the death.

The former student said: "One of the common instances of ragging was having to rub our nose to the ground while entering the department. There was no respite when it rained.... In the hostel, you had to be at the beck and call of the seniors. They did not let me sleep in the name of taking an 'intro'. I remember I used to run away from the hostel (the girls' hostel on the campus) during weekends to escape the clutches of the seniors."

"My mother used to wonder why I was returning home so frequently. Since we were from a humble background, it was difficult to arrange money for train tickets. But I did not have an option."




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The engineer said the tragic end to the first-year student's life made her realise that the pattern of preying on those who are vulnerable and soft in nature "still persists".

"The seniors behave like they have an obligation to groom those coming from underprivileged families. A pattern of treating this category as outcasts continues. But the seniors do not know where to draw the line. This must have been the case also with the first-year undergraduate student, who was ragged in the main hostel," she said.

The Telegraph reported on Tuesday about a graffiti in the stairway of JU Main Hostel that suggests that life there transforms a timid cat into a tiger with ferocious teeth and claws.

Between the cat and the tiger are the words "hostel life", written in the shape of an arrow.

The former student said that during her time there were not enough mechanisms to curb ragging.

"Now you have anti-ragging squad, anti-ragging committee at the level of an institution. Students are asked to give affidavits during admission. Why could my alma mater not enforce discipline? What prevented them from keeping a hostel exclusively for first-year students, in keeping with a UGC directive issued in 2009? The authorities are as much responsible for the death of the student. They, too, should be prosecuted. The buck stops with them," she said.

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