

Let it be a happy freshers' welcome

TAKING ACTION Institutes are trying hard to put an end to the ragging menace

Light The Spirit

Say.....

No to Ragging



■ The poster of an anti-ragging campaign of Jadavpur University in 2013.

HT PHOTO

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KOLKATA: With the admission season here, one of the major concerns for Class 12 pass outs, other than getting admission to a good college, is the situation they might have to face once they are inside the institute premises. Despite the ban imposed by Supreme Court on ragging, it remains one of the major concerns for the students. The government, too, has prohibited it, but despite all efforts, West Bengal ranks second in cases of ragging across the country after Uttar Pradesh.

According to the National Anti-Ragging Helpline data, between June 2009 and September 2013, 283 cases of ragging have been registered. This is the second highest after Uttar Pradesh with 432 ragging cases.

With the admission procedure going on across colleges and universities of the state, colleges are gearing up for anti-ragging campaigns.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has asked educational institutions to set up an anti-ragging committee and highlight the contact details of the members of the committee. Posters reading - 'It is brought to the notice of the public that ragging is a criminal offence and UGC has framed regulations in order to prohibit, prevent and eliminate ragging' are also put up across colleges of the state.

'Like every year, Jadavpur University is likely to design an anti-ragging campaign soon.

also put up posters that clearly mention the contact details of the committee members so that students feel free to come up and report cases of ragging to them," said an active member of the JU anti-ragging cell.

The UGC has also asked institutions to install CCTV cameras and alarm bells at different places on the campus.

"Installing cameras can be very effective to curb ragging menace. The CCTV footage works as an authentic proof against ragging. Over the years there has not been much of a change in the number of ragging cases registered, but students are aware of the cameras around. This also instils a sense of fear among the students," said Taranjit Singh, president, Association of Professional Academic Institutions (APAI), West Bengal.

Statistics show that ragging incidents were more common in engineering institutions.

"Over the years, it has been observed that the cases reported in medical colleges are not as high as engineering colleges," added Singh.

Besides CCTV cameras and alarm bells, other measures to check ragging include regular interaction and counselling, identification of troublemakers, mention of anti-ragging cell in the institution's prospectus and surprise inspection in hostels.

However, there are professionals who feel that despite all efforts, miscreants are not taking any lessons.

"With UGC bringing in strict rules, I thought students would

RAGGING: NATIONAL BANE

■ West Bengal ranks second in cases of ragging across the country after Uttar Pradesh

State	2012	2013
Uttar Pradesh	85	58
West Bengal	38	59
Odisha	44	63
MP	32	60
Maharashtra	15	20



WHAT CONSTITUTES RAGGING?

It constitutes one or more of any of the following acts

- Any conduct by any student, 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
- physical or psychological harm or apprehension in any fresher or any other student
- Asking any student to do any act which he or she wouldn't otherwise do and which has the effect of causing or generating shame or torment or embarrassment so as to adversely affect the physique or psyche of the student.
- Indulgence in rowdy or undisciplined activities by any student or students, causing or is likely to cause annoyance, hardship,

heinous crimes, but this is unfortunate that troublemakers are not taking lesson," said Dhurjoti Banerjee, general secretary, APAI, West Bengal.

Despite UGC strictly asking institutions to follow anti-ragging guidelines, Supreme Court banning it, calling it a heinous crime and even colleges and universities organising anti-ragging campaigns, there are a considerable number of cases that go unreported.

"There are many victims who fail to muster the courage to even report it. They either leave the college or just move out of the city, but do not complain. It is important to bring in a system, where a victim does not hesitate to report

At a time when colleges are putting in place a system to fight ragging, parents and for that matter, some students are extremely apprehensive of taking admissions in colleges.

"My daughter aspires to become an engineer. Having heard so much about ragging across engineering colleges puts me in a dilemma. But, I cannot keep her at home while safeguarding her from all kinds of crimes. I have to let her achieve her dreams. But I will always be apprehensive," said Geeta Rupani, mother of Nancy Rupani, who is awaiting a round of counselling in engineering colleges.

Students and parents should be made aware of the anti-ragging helpline, website and mot