



UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

COMMISSION CIRCULAR NO: 12/2019

No. 20, Ward Place
Colombo 07

November 22, 2019

Vice Chancellors of Universities
Rectors of Campuses
Directors of Institutes

Strategies/Actions to be implemented to combat Ragging and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in State Universities and Higher Education Institutes

There is evidence that large numbers of new entrants are harassed, bullied, and abused by their seniors under the disguise of “ragging” and these acts have now drawn major attention of the general public. Ad-hoc measures have been taken to address ragging by universities and these have had varying levels of success. Unfortunately, they have failed to create a sustained systemic positive change. While these studies provide valuable insights into the problem of ragging, they are not necessarily being tied to system-wide strategies and actions for prevention. Therefore, a set of strategies for combating Ragging and SGBV was developed through a system-wide research tied to policy and strategy conducted by the University Grants Commission.

A series of validatory consultative workshops with diverse stakeholders of all State Universities were then conducted and the outcomes were finalized at a consultative meeting of the University Grants Commission and the Ministry of City Planning, Water Supply and Higher Education held on 14th November 2019.

The Strategies/Actions are contained in this Circular.

Universities are directed to implement the Strategies and Actions given in this Commission Circular and develop relevant by-laws based on the strategies and Actions contained herewith.

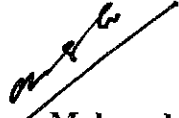
1. Universities are to conduct sensitization and awareness programmes regarding the dehumanizing effect of ragging and SGBV
2. Such awareness programmes are to be conducted for parents and students seeking university admission, religious leaders of the area, media and the general public

3. Networking and communications obtained from such awareness programmes to be used to convince parents that their children should never be involved in ragging and SGBV and that they should develop confidence not to be afraid of raggers
4. Vice-Chancellors and Deans are to create a network of community leaders including religious leaders and principals of local schools to use their influence on parents of potential university entrants to convince their children never to be involved in ragging and not to be afraid of raggers
5. Universities are to provide every new entrant, a printed leaflet detailing to whom he/she should turn for help and guidance when they face acts of ragging and SGBV. The UGC Centre for Gender Equity/ Equality and Prevention of SGBV and Ragging will help universities to create a common format for the leaflet
6. Universities are to create awareness programmes to educate students and staff of *Prohibition of Ragging and Other Forms of Violence in Educational Institutions Act No. 20 of 1998* and the *Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act No.04 of 2015*. Each year new entrants will also be receiving copies of Act No. 20 and Act No. 04 from the UGC.
7. Universities are to develop a system to establish a close relationship between university administration, academic staff and parents and develop a sustainable institutional mechanism for the parents to present their complaints regarding ragging and SGBV
8. Universities **shall** monitor the number of registered new students who have sat for the 1st semester examinations. Universities are to determine reasons for not sitting for the 1st semester examinations, counsel them appropriately and encourage them to continue with their studies
9. **All Universities shall submit the list of drop-outs at the end of all first semester examinations to the UGC**
10. Universities are to closely liaise with the outsourced services such as cleaning services, canteens and security personnel etc. to obtain intelligence regarding locations, events and the perpetrators of such acts
11. Vice-Chancellors and Councils are to ensure unstinted support and facilities to all involved in curbing acts of ragging and SGBV in the universities
12. Vice-Chancellors and Deans are to chair regular meetings of Wardens, Proctors, Marshals and Student Counsellors to streamline the activities involved in ragging and SGBV prevention
13. Universities are to enhance student-teacher interactions to support confidence building of students to report such experiences

14. Vice-Chancellors/ Deans are to obtain the support of University Teachers Associations in addressing ragging and SGBV
15. Faculties are to conduct regular workshops to inform students of their rights and responsibilities and the avenues available to them to air their grievances and the risks and punishments for getting involved in ragging
16. Universities are to establish anti ragging committees, both at university level and at the faculty level
17. University anti ragging committee to be headed by the Vice-Chancellor
18. Faculty anti ragging committee to be headed by the respective Dean
19. Composition of the anti-ragging committee should include representatives of academic staff, administrative staff, non-academic staff, proctors/marshals/senior student councilors, parents, new and senior students
20. Anti-raging committees shall hold regular meetings to monitor the ragging activities in the University/ Faculty, take appropriate decisions and keep the Council informed
21. Vice-Chancellors/Councils are to create appropriate mechanisms to reward students and staff who reject ragging and SGBV
22. Vice-Chancellors/Deans are to develop appropriate technology (eg: mobile phones, pocket cameras, etc. for surveillance personnel)
23. Surveillance mechanisms to include surprise visits to prevent ragging with the support of parents
24. Universities are to publicize *Student Code of Conduct* through the university web site
25. Universities are to ensure proper composition of the officials of Student Unions by insisting an equal representation from batches and appropriate gender representation
26. Universities are to ensure effective inquiry processes (preliminary and formal inquiries) when addressing student complaints to prevent students losing confidence in the system
27. Universities are to ensure that, those who are suspended shall be made strictly out of bounds in order to establish effective inquiry process
28. Suspension or reduction of penalties on the ground of sympathy shall not be made by the Vice-Chancellors/ Councils
29. Universities shall insist to the police to file ragging complaints under the **Section 2 of the Prohibition and other forms of violence Act No. 20 of 1998,**

and cases of criminal intimidation under the **Section 3 of Prohibition and other forms of violence Act No. 20 of 1998**

30. Concurrently, Universities are to continue with their inquiry process whenever a case of ragging is reported
31. Vice-Chancellors are to appoint a qualified, committed academic as the focal point at University level to address ragging and SGBV
32. Deans are to appoint a focal points at Faculty level to address ragging and SGBV
33. The Subject of ragging and SGBV shall be an agenda item at every Council meeting
34. Vice-Chancellors and Members of the Councils to be mindful of their responsibility, accountability and vulnerability in situations of official inaction in the context of an Fundamental Rights (FR) application by grieved parties
35. Vice-Chancellors/ Deans/ Council are to take adequate measures to protect the staff, students and witnesses under the *Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act, No.04 of 2015*


Professor Mohan de Silva
Chairman

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