AILET

For CLAT Aspirants: A Brief Note on Ragging and How To Deal With It

The Admin · 29 Oct 2021

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Dear would-be law student,

A few days back, I got a call from a would-be law student's dad. When he was done with queries regarding the college, the things his son would need, placements etc. he handed the phone over to his son who I could make out, reluctantly, only reluctantly, took it.

The conversation

'Hi', he said. A reluctant Hi, mind you. 'How are you', he said. A reluctant greeting again. The chap was nervous. I was amused. But then a very sure question from his mouth, surprisingly:

"*How is ragging*"?

"*You don't need to worry about it at all*", I answered smiling.

"*5 Point Someone*"?, he asked.

"*Sorry*"?, (I didn't get him).

"*Ermm…Have you read Chetan Bhagat*"?, he clarified.

"*A bit*".

"*Do the things mentioned there happen during ragging*"? he asked. The kid was keeping me in good mood. I was amused first, I had smiled before and now I laughed.

Five point someone

The thing is this: if you are going to make 'The Five Point Someone' a Bible for deciding what constitutes ragging, you better be an atheist. Read five point someone for a perspective on

ragging and you are a ten point loser. I don't care if you adore Bhagat or think he is trash. I am not concerned. I am concerned about ragging. Why so serious, son?

Now, I am going into a little pedantic mood. Excuse me for that.

What is not ragging?

If a senior asks you to sing a song, dance, do a pole dance etc. and you consider this to be ragging; you'll be ragged.

Now, this is not ragging. This is interaction. Positive or not; I don't know. Some would say it demeans the junior. Not really. If it does, then you and I are being demeaned day in and day out by various stakeholders. Being demeaned then should be a habit by now.

So here is the verdict: interaction (read singing, cat-walking, pole-dancing) happens and a 'reasonable' person ought to take this in his stride. How and why? Read on.

Psychology

Understand the psyche of such seniors. I did psychology till grade twelve. Even if you haven't should have heard of 'peer pressure'. These seniors want to be cool and a part of the 'in-group'.

Secondly they are playing 'tit-for-tat'. They were made to do to such things and thus they make you do it. They are playing with you. Just like your boss will play with you. Just like he'll make you do menial tasks because he was made to do menial tasks when he was not the boss. But that is it. Most of them don't want to harm you.

Strategy

Now, be reasonable. If you are asked to sing; sing. If you are asked to dance; dance. They aren't judging you for a competition. So don't be conscious or shy. If you feel uncomfortable, do it still. Life makes you to do a lot many uncomfortable things, anyway. These are little, innocuous things. Just do it. Get over with it.

Another thing: feign sycophancy. Pretend that you can boot lick till the boot is shiny (just kidding). But still, be humble. I mean pretend that you are a humble guy.

Do this with your seniors as you will have to do this with your boss. Don't be cocky. Cut the red, upright cock's plume for a while. Cut down the volume of the cock-a-doodle-doos. You will be fine.

Taking a stand

Do I support this sort of interaction? No. I am all for having fun for a while, getting to know each other and then helping the junior out. But yes, some people will demean you, through words. Let them go on and on. You don't listen.

"Sticks and stones may break my bones

But words can never hurt me".

Sticks and stones? No.

And yes, no one can dare use physical violence. I know gory stories that happen. These are sad, and very unfortunate. Its great that a great many voices were raised and action taken. But please don't take these incidents to be the norm. Nobody will get physical. They won't even touch you. You can take me on my word.

What if they do or try to do so? Most probably they'll be stopped at the 'trying' stage. And even this is a one in hundred cases or less. If they do hit, don't hit back. You'll be sacked as will be your senior. It is a lose-lose situation. Instead complain to a senior or the warden. And complain it as loud as possible. Like a wounded cock. Fear no one.

The senior who did hit you (took you by the collar?) or tried to do so will be punished real bad. Some 20 thousand rupees fine will be slashed, letters sent to his mom and dad or even an expulsion. He might even be put in a correctional home. I mean 'Jail'. And people hate jails. All thanks to the rules on ragging have really hardened in the last couple of years.

It's fun. Really.

Someone may ask you to 'moot' on some problem. That happened to us. It is a law school, after all. I also did recite some Hindi poem when I told them that by hobbies included poetry. And yes, we were made to do some Indian army style marching, some Western pole dancing. All this was fun.

Some of those 'raggers' are now very good friends. And regarding sticks and stones and ragging, I'll leave it to Chetan Bhagat. That happens in his books. Not here. You know, he needs some masala for his books. Just kidding.

Yours reassuringly,

LegalPoet

PS 1- The recent definition of ragging is very wide and includes causing mental and psychological harm etc. Someone in IITD tells me how their seniors ran away from the first years fearing that they might accidentally rag their juniors. Ha! Food for thought for Bhagat.