

# CGS PEACE REPORT

*an initiative of BPO*

**CGS** CENTRE FOR  
GENOCIDE  
STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA



Volume 3, Issue 4  
July-August 2019



**Crime and Violence in  
Bangladesh:  
An analysis from BPO**

**Violence Free Campus in  
Bangladesh: A Far Cry**

**'Ragging' and 'Bullying in the  
University Campus: A Brief  
Overview in the Context of  
Bangladesh and India**

**Commentary on Campus Violence:  
Dr. Serajul Islam Chowdhury**

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**BPO- Bangladesh Peace Observatory**



**Volume 3, Issue 4**

**July - August 2019**

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## Contents:

From the Editor's Desk.....	1
Crime and Violence in Bangladesh: An Analysis from BPO .....	3
Violence Update: (June - July 2019).....	3
Violence Free Campus in Bangladesh: A Far Cry .....	12
'Ragging' and 'Bullying' in the University Campus: A Brief Overview in the Context of Bangladesh and India .....	19
Violence against Female Students at University Campus.....	30
Some Selected Micronarratives on Campus Violence.....	34
Commentary on Campus Violence: Dr. Serajul Islam Choudhury.....	37
Annex: .....	41

## Figures:

1: An Overview of Incidents (June- July 2019) .....	3
2: Consequences of the Violent Incidents (April-May 2019) .....	5
3: Consequences of the Violent Incidents (June - July 2019).....	5
4: Comparative analysis of Incidents (June- July 2019) .....	6
5: Number of violent incident (June- July 2019).....	7
6: Bi-Monthly Divisional Distribution of Incidents (June- July 2019).....	9
7: Quarterly Segregation of Violent Incidents at the University Campuses.....	15
8: Quarterly Comparison of Injured and Arrested Persons .....	16
9: Violence Types (From January 2018- September 2019).....	17
10: Universities with the Highest Number of Violent Incidents .....	18

## Tables:

1: Bi-Monthly Divisional Distribution of Incidents by Population (June- July 2019) ..	11
2: The number of incidents at different campuses from Jan 2018- September 2019	12
3: The number of injured and arrested persons in 2018 and 2019.....	16

## From the Editor's Desk

The origins of ragging ought to have alerted us that it should be made illegal and a punishable offense throughout the world, including Bangladesh. There are good reasons for this. In fact, tracing the history of ragging, one critic pointed out:

Ragging is an old practice of welcoming the fresher in a barbaric manner. This phenomenon can be traced back to as early as 7th or 8th century A.D. In Greek culture, new students of sport community were subjected to all kinds of humiliations and teasing to inculcate a team spirit in them. Gradually with the passage of time this technique was subjected to many modifications and was later adopted by the military forces, from there it finally entered in the education system.

Aside from having roots in barbarism, which itself is detestable, there is no denying the fact that ragging is intrinsically related to humiliation. Since nothing good can come out of humiliation, this fact alone should have sufficed for making ragging unlawful.

Humans, in fact, can tolerate many things, eating less than what is required, living in dilapidated houses or even under open sky, wearing torn clothes, soaking in rain, working under hot sun, facing icy cold weather, even forgetting hardships within a short span of time. But one thing humans cannot tolerate or forget easily is humiliation. And that is what makes them human. This is because once a person gets humiliated it gets registered in her/his brain, and if it is not addressed or dealt with to the satisfaction of the humiliated, it waits for an opportunity to react in a decisive manner. Take the case of Mohamed Bouazizi, the Tunisian street vendor from Sidi Bouzid, who felt humiliated when he was slapped for not having a permit to sell from a cart by a female municipal official named Faida Hamdi. Bouazizi ran to the governor's office to complain but no one paid attention to him. Instead, he was further rebuked, even after he had said: "If you don't see me, I'll burn myself." Feeling humiliated Bouazizi ran to a nearby gas station and bought a can of gasoline. He then doused and set himself on fire with a match. New technology recorded the event and had it visually transmitted to the Tunisians. They too felt humiliated and soon came to the streets, first one by one, and then in hundreds, and then in millions! The rest is now history.

The case of Abrar Fahad is no different. He refused to give in to humiliation, and that is what led to his brutalization and death. In fact, humiliation in the name of ragging and bullying have now become a norm in educational institutions. In fact, in Bangladesh, such incidents take place more in public universities than private universities. This factor is not difficult to understand, given the fact that public

universities suffer from partisanship, where academicians in high positions (or should we say, "partidemics") are often elected or selected based on their partisan credentials. As a result, dissent and non-conformity often become targets of humiliation. The bully-boy or bully-girl can get away doing almost anything, from harrising to whipping the dissenter, knowing well that the "partidemics" too depend on them in their rise to power and therefore would be 'soft' in their response even if they are found guilty of committing violence during ragging and bullying. But then, if this is the case with public universities then it is bound to filter down to colleges and schools, whether urban or rural, and create a culture of impunity with deadly consequences.

The only option is zero-tolerance to ragging, as it is the case with violent extremism and terrorism. The quicker it is made a punishable offense and enforced without delays the quicker it will save young lives in our educational institutions.

**Imtiaz Ahmed**

Professor of International Relations &  
Director, Centre for Genocide Studies  
University of Dhaka

# Crime and Violence in Bangladesh: An Analysis from BPO

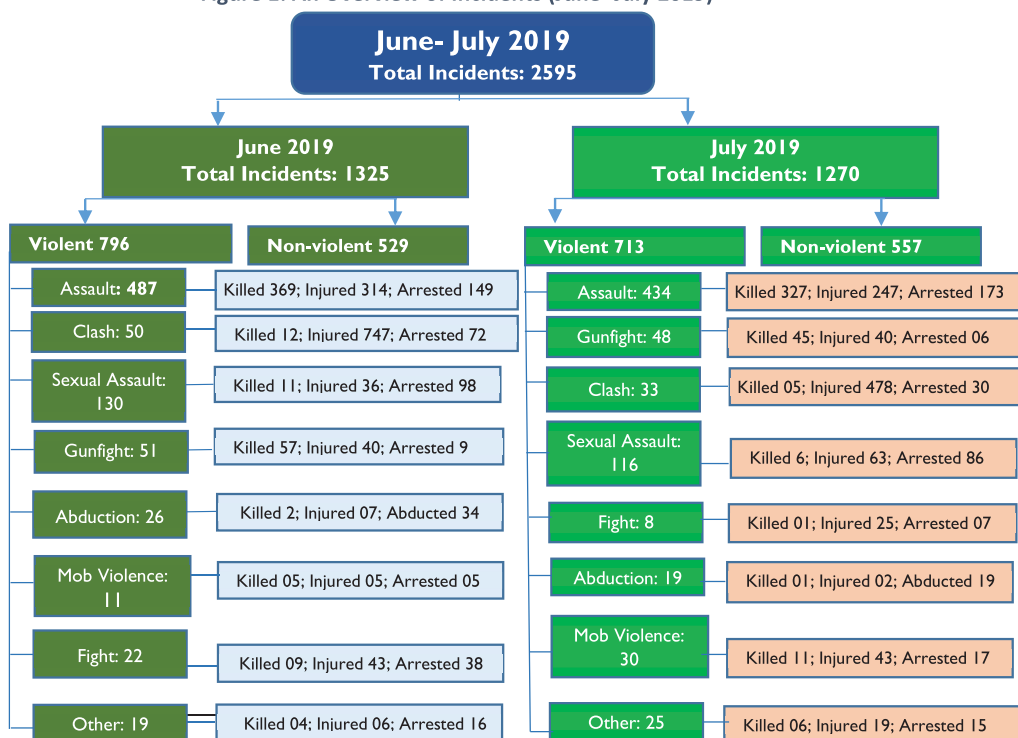
Farhana Razzak and Humaun Kabir

## Violence Update: (June - July 2019)

The Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO) brings together different streams of publicly available data on violence using news reports from prominent national dailies. From June 2019 to July 2019, BPO recorded 2595 violent<sup>1</sup> and

non-violent<sup>2</sup> incidents all over the country. **Figure 1** segregates these incidents into some general categories by type of violence. A brief description of each category is available in the Annex.

Figure 1: An Overview of Incidents (June- July 2019)



<sup>1</sup> **Violent Incident:** According to BPO Codebook: The reported incident involved the intentional use of physical force by an individual or group against another individual or group, in a manner that resulted or could have resulted in death, injury or any other form of physical harm to persons or property.

<sup>2</sup> **Non-violent Incident:** According to BPO Codebook: The reported incident did not involve the

intentional use of physical force by an individual or group against another individual or group, in a manner that resulted or could have resulted in death, injury or any other form of physical harm to persons or property, e.g. Arrest, Peaceful Protest, Rescue and Recovery.

According to BPO data, on a comparative basis the number of incidents has decreased in recent months in Bangladesh. During June-July 2019, incident prevalence slightly decreased by 0.20% (from 2,600 to 2,595) compared to April-May 2019 (**Figures 2 & 3**). This decrease was 5.69% (from 2,757 to 2,600) for April-May 2019 compared to February-March 2019 and 9.61% (from 3,050 to 2,757) for February-March 2019 compared to December 2018- January 2019. The data suggests that despite the nominal decrease in the total number of incidents, there is a rise of 18.66% in the number of victims of sexual assault, 32.07% in abduction, and 7.26% casualties. In the previous months, i.e., in April-May 2019, there was a 78.07% increase in sexual assault than February-March 2019 and 72.73% in February-March 2019 than December 2018- January 2019. During June-July 2019, a total of 267 persons were victims of sexual assault in which 17 were killed and 99 were injured. On the other hand, in 58<sup>3</sup> incidents, a total of 70 people were abducted and according to the reports, at least 26 of them were rescued and law enforcement agencies arrested 64 in this regard. The increase in the number of deaths can be associated with the increase in the

number of assaults during June-July 2019. In April-May 2019, a total of 630 people were reportedly killed in 869 incidents of assaults while a total of 696 people were reportedly killed in 921 incidents of assaults in June-July. Apart from these three, drop in the number of injured in violence (17.57%) and arrested by law enforcement agencies (4.46%) is noticeable during June-July 2019 compared to April-May 2019.

Earlier, in February-March 2019 the reported 7,157 arrests indicated a 1.86% decline than December 2018-January 2019. Also, in August-September 2018, a total of 5,774 people were arrested while in October-November 2018 the number of arrests was 7,104, indicating a 23.03% rise during the period in review while previously a decline of 23.55% was recorded in August-September 2018 than June-July 2018. In December 2018-January 2019, a 1.90% rise was observed with reported arrests 7,239 in 1,665 incidents. But again, in February-March 2019 the reported 7,157 arrests indicate 1.86% decline than December 2018-January 2019 while in the following two months the total number of reported arrests was 5,104 indicating a 28.68% drop in the number of arrestees.

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<sup>3</sup> 45 out of the 59 incidents were instances of abduction while the rest are incidents of rescues.

Figure 2: Consequences of the Violent Incidents (April-May 2019)

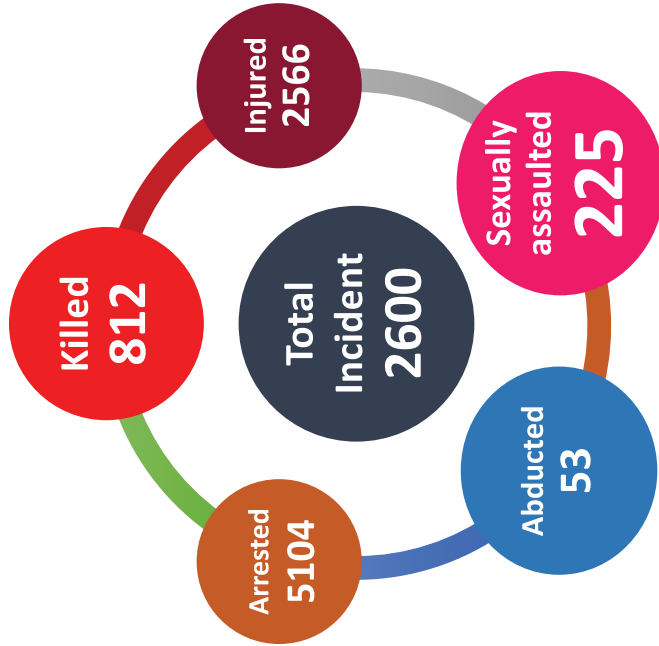
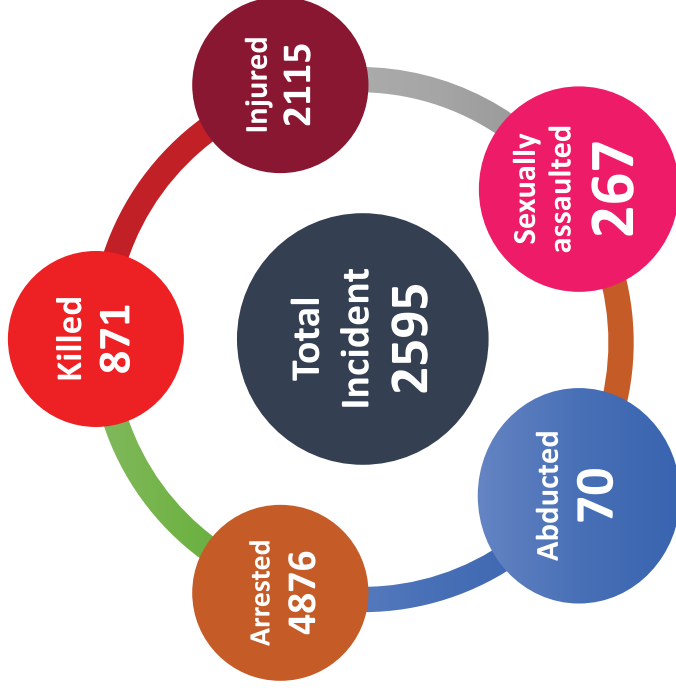


Figure 3: Consequences of the Violent Incidents (June - July 2019)



A monthly breakdown of June 2019 and July 2019 reflects a gap by incident prevalence and consequences (figures 4 & 5). The figures indicate that there is a trend of decrease in July 2019 than June 2019 in terms of the total number of reported incidents (4.15%), death (14.28%), and injured (23.45%) while the number of arrests increased by 38.91%. In case of the number of reported injuries, in June 2019, a total of 1,198 people were injured in 247 violent incidents while in July 2019, a total of 917 people were injured in 263 violent incidents. Most of the reported injuries were caused by assault, sexual assault, and clash related to political confrontation, establishing supremacy,

land dispute, personal issues, raid operations, and gunfight.

Figure 4 indicates an increase in the number of total people killed in violence in June 2019 compared to July 2019. A total of 469 people were reportedly killed in 440 incidents of violence in June 2019, while 402 were killed in 378 incidents of violence in July 2019. According to BPO data, the number of reported death are mostly prevalent in incidents like sexual assault, domestic violence, land related violence, gunfight, social issues, economic disputes, and robbery. Also during June-July 2019, a total of 155 people committed suicide of which 77 were women and at least 249 were reportedly killed by unknown perpetrators all over Bangladesh.

**Figure 4: Comparative analysis of Incidents (June- July 2019)**

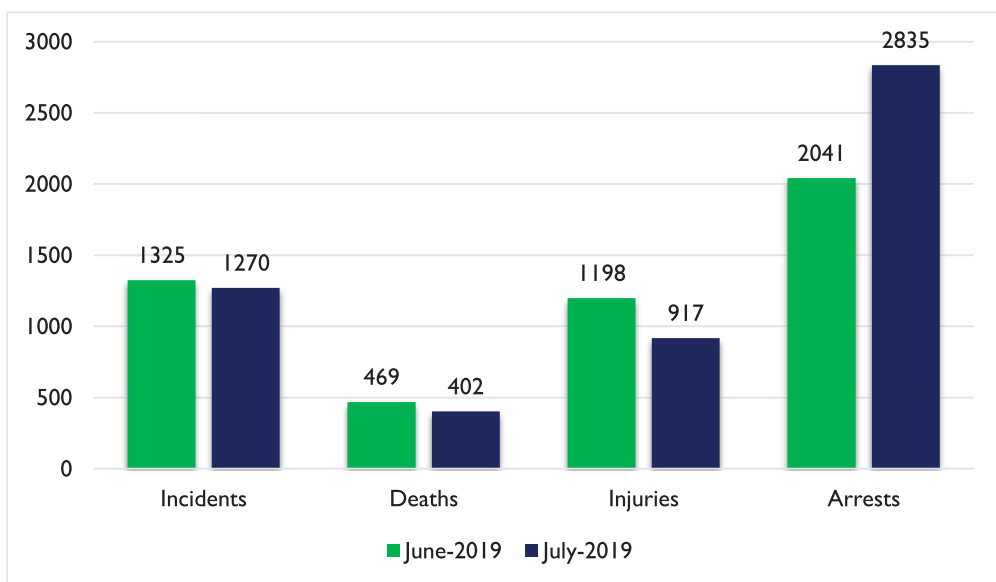
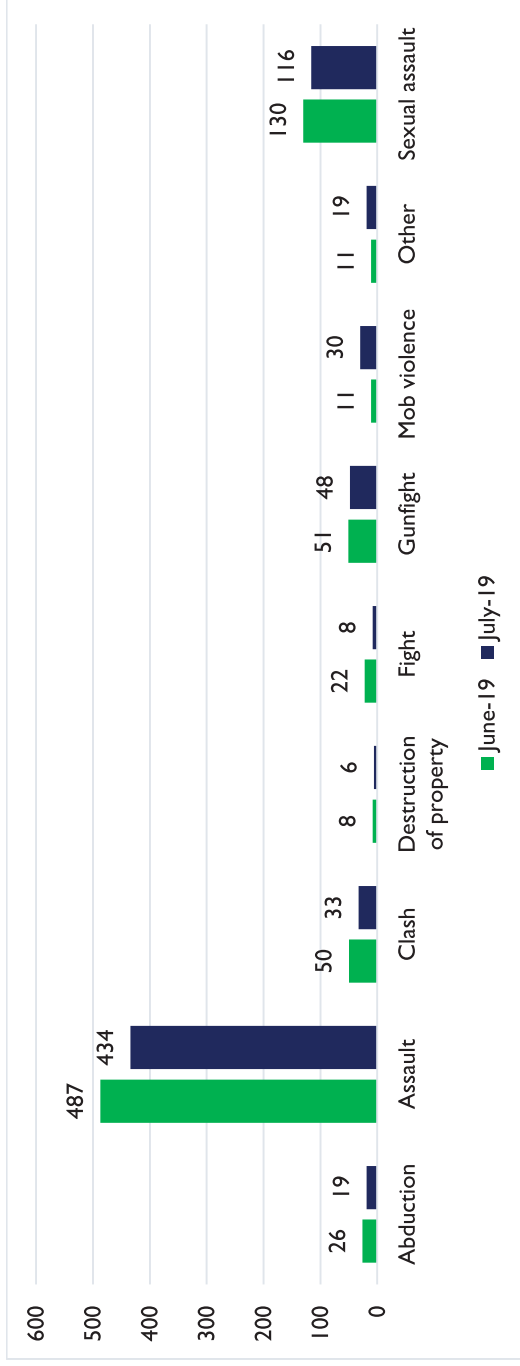


Figure 5: Number of violent incident (June- July 2019)



The figure above (figure 5) illustrates the comparative prevalence of violent incidents of the two months by numbers. This indicates that despite the decline in the number of total violent incidents as depicted in figure 1, there is a rise in mob violence in July 2019 than the previous month. A total of 11 people were killed and 43

injured in reported incidents of mob violence in July 2019. They were mostly subjected to mob beating caused by suspicion of theft, kidnapping of children, and rumors.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> CGS Peace Report: Volume 3, Issue 3 provides a rigorous and investigative analysis of the phenomenon based on BPO data. Available at: [http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#/peace\\_report](http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#/peace_report)

**Figure 6** provides a spatial glimpse through the divisional distribution of the recorded incidents in BPO and their consequences. Figure 6 indicates that Dhaka is at the top in terms of incident prevalence (690) and reported injuries (558) while Chattogram is second by the numbers 665 and 541 respectively. Notably, the number of reported deaths is almost the same for Dhaka (241) and Chattogram (240) divisions. On the other hand, despite the third position in incident

*A violent mob dragged Renu down from the head teacher's room alleging that "an abductor has been caught". As she was being thrashed at the main gate, eyewitnesses were busy filming the incident. The teachers called police, but the violent mob who were carrying metal rods killed her without paying heed to what others were saying and before the law enforcers could arrive.<sup>5</sup> Later, her nephew Nasir Uddin filed the case with Badda Police Station against 400-500 unidentified people and police scrutinized video footages to identify key perpetrators. According to news sources, police managed to arrest almost all the culprits, including Ria Khatun, 35, who started the ruckus by terming Renu a child lifter, and Ibrahim Hossain Hridoy, the man who was seen most active in beating Renu, even thrashing her seemingly lifeless body.<sup>6</sup> The probe report submission is due on 25 November 2019.*

prevalence (462) and reported deaths (143) and fourth position in reported

injuries (213); Rajshahi is at the top by the number of arrests (1427) during June-July 2019. In the previous bi-months, Dhaka

was in an allover top position with the highest number of incident prevalence (814), reported death (229), injuries (814), and reported arrests (2,349). During June-July 2019, a total of 623 (including 174 women) people reportedly died in 581 violent incidents in these three divisions. Notably, among them, 74 were victims of sexual and gender-based violence, 112 reportedly committed suicide, 90 allegedly killed in gunfight, 12 reportedly killed in clash, and 11 killed in mob beating. Among the reported death, a painful incident occurred on 20 July 2019 in the Uttar Badda area of Dhaka. On that day, a 42-year old single mother of two children became victim of a fatal mob lynching on the suspicion of her being a child abductor.<sup>7</sup> She was beaten to death outside a school in Dhaka by a mob where she had gone to inquire about the admission process for her children.

In terms of arrests in June-July 2019, BPO data suggests that Rajshahi (1,407), Dhaka (1,209), and Barishal (762) divisions have the maximum number of people arrested by the law enforcement agencies respectively. Most of the arrests occurred due to raids and special drives against drug peddling, subversive activities, and combing operations.

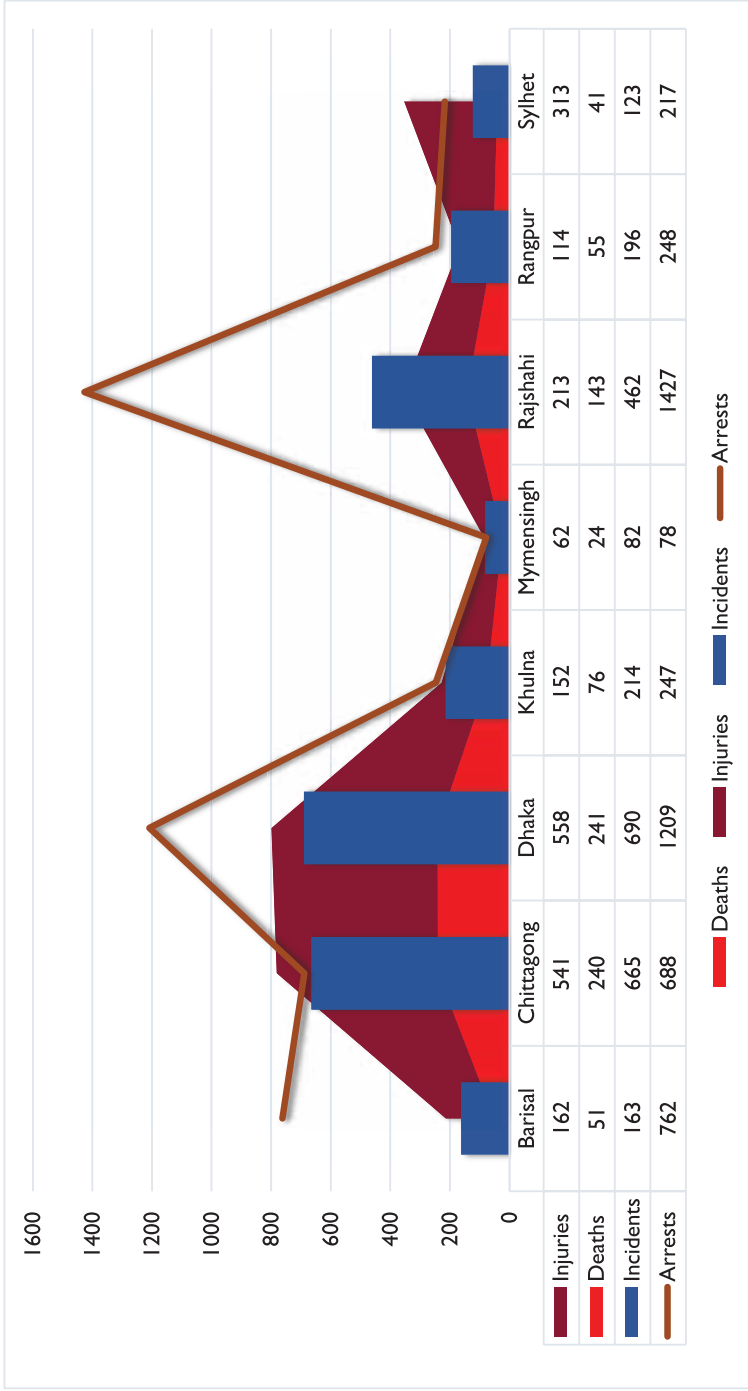
<sup>5</sup> Arafat, F. M. (2019). "Fake News Phenomenon in Bangladesh." CGS Peace Report, Volume 3, Issue 3, Pp. 19-20. Accessed: 15 November 2019. Available at: [http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/##/peace\\_report](http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/##/peace_report) ("No-one listened to what she said": Witnesses recount lynching of a mother in Bangladesh" 24 July 2019. Cited in <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2019/07/24/no-one-listened-to-what-she-said-witnesses-recount->

[lynchingof-a-mother-in-bangladesh](#) (Accessed August 22 2019).

<sup>6</sup> *The Daily Sun* (2019). "Probe report in Badda lynching case on November 25" Accessed: 23 November 2019. Available at: <https://daily-sun.com/amp/post/434331>

<sup>7</sup> The rumors of child abduction for human sacrifices are associated with the rumors of blood donation required for the construction of Padma Bridge.

**Figure 6: Bi-Monthly Divisional Distribution of Incidents (June- July 2019)**



In terms of crime and violence in the respective divisions, Dhaka, Chattogram, and Rajshahi interchangeably ranked in the top three positions because of the population factor. However, from a different angle, if the ratio of population<sup>8</sup> is understood from the nexus of incident prevalence and their consequences, a different picture is detected (Table I). By population ratio, considerably smaller and less violence prone (by total number of reported incidents) Barishal takes the place of being one of the divisions of Bangladesh which lies under the categories in which prevalence of incidents, reported deaths and injuries are high in frequency. The other division with such commonalties is Chattogram. Most of this violence occurred in the form of sexual violence, domestic violence, political violence, and clash among different actors over land, economic and natural resources. Among the divisions, despite

being the second lowest in incident prevalence, Sylhet has the highest reported injuries in Bangladesh in terms of population ratio. In Sylhet alone, at least four large-scale clashes<sup>9</sup> took place in which 180 people were injured. The reasons include past enmity, land dispute, and other trifling issues.<sup>10,11,12,13</sup> In Barishal six clashes took place in which more than 97 were injured. One of the largest clashes took place over rivalry between two groups in Patuakhali district while another occurred due to land related dispute.<sup>14</sup> In case of Chattogram, five large scale clash took place due to buyer-seller spat over product quality, protest against harassment, past enmity and other social issues.<sup>15,16,17</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The population data is based on the Population & Housing Census 2011, Bangladesh by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Available at:

<http://www.bbs.gov.bd/site/page/47856ad0-7e1c-4aab-bd78-892733bc06eb/Population-and-Housing-Census>

<sup>9</sup> Incidents of clashes in which 30-60 people were reportedly injured.

<sup>10</sup> *The Daily Karatoa* (2019). Accessed 23 November 2019.

[https://www.ekaratoa.com/2019/06/21/3/details/3\\_r7\\_c5.jpg](https://www.ekaratoa.com/2019/06/21/3/details/3_r7_c5.jpg),  
[https://www.ekaratoa.com/2019/06/21/7/details/7\\_r19\\_c4.jpg](https://www.ekaratoa.com/2019/06/21/7/details/7_r19_c4.jpg)

<sup>11</sup> *The Daily Ittefaq* (2019), 1 August 2019, Page 5.

<sup>12</sup> *The Daily Karatoa* (2019). Accessed 23 November 2019.

[http://www.ekaratoa.com/2019/07/24/14/details/14\\_r19\\_c5.jpg](http://www.ekaratoa.com/2019/07/24/14/details/14_r19_c5.jpg)

<sup>13</sup> *The Daily Karatoa* (2019). Accessed 23 November 2019.

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<sup>14</sup> *The Daily Ittefaq* (2019). Accessed 23 November 2019.  
[https://epaper.ittefaq.com.bd/2019/06/25/images/16\\_105.jpg](https://epaper.ittefaq.com.bd/2019/06/25/images/16_105.jpg)

<sup>15</sup> *The Daily Observer* (2019). Accessed 23 November 2019.

[http://epaper.observerbd.com/2019/06/09/7/details/7\\_r4\\_c1.jpg](http://epaper.observerbd.com/2019/06/09/7/details/7_r4_c1.jpg)

<sup>16</sup> *The Daily Ittefaq* (2019). Accessed 23 November 2019.  
[https://epaper.ittefaq.com.bd/2019/06/20/images/15\\_107.jpg](https://epaper.ittefaq.com.bd/2019/06/20/images/15_107.jpg)

<sup>17</sup> *The Daily Purbokone* (2019). Accessed 23 November 2019.

[https://www.edainikpurbokone.net/content/2019/2019-06-26/zoom\\_view/e01.jpg](https://www.edainikpurbokone.net/content/2019/2019-06-26/zoom_view/e01.jpg)

**Table 1: Bi-Monthly Divisional Distribution of Incidents by Population (June- July 2019)**

Division	Incident	Rate by pop*	Death	Rate by pop*	Female Death	Rate by pop*	Injury	Rate by pop*	Female Injury	Rate by pop*
Barishal	163	11.75 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	51	3.68 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	13	0.94 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	162	11.67 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	23	1.66 (1 <sup>st</sup> )
Chattogram	665	13.69 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	240	4.94 (1 <sup>st</sup> )	64	1.32 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	541	11.14 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	62	1.28 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )
Dhaka	690	8.33 (4 <sup>th</sup> )	241	2.91 (4 <sup>th</sup> )	64	0.77 (5 <sup>th</sup> )	558	6.73 (5 <sup>th</sup> )	65	0.78 (6 <sup>th</sup> )
Khulna	214	8.18 (5 <sup>th</sup> )	76	2.91 (4 <sup>th</sup> )	14	0.54 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	152	5.81 (6 <sup>th</sup> )	24	0.92 (5 <sup>th</sup> )
Mymensingh	82	4.33 (8 <sup>th</sup> )	24	1.27 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	5	0.26 (8 <sup>th</sup> )	62	3.27 (8 <sup>th</sup> )	13	0.69 (7 <sup>th</sup> )
Rajshahi	462	15.00 (1 <sup>st</sup> )	143	4.64 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	46	1.49 (1 <sup>st</sup> )	213	6.91 (4 <sup>th</sup> )	39	1.27 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )
Rangpur	196	7.45 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	55	2.09 (6 <sup>th</sup> )	20	0.76 (6 <sup>th</sup> )	114	4.33 (7 <sup>th</sup> )	18	0.68 (8 <sup>th</sup> )
Sylhet	123	7.53 (6 <sup>th</sup> )	41	2.51 (5 <sup>th</sup> )	14	0.86 (4 <sup>th</sup> )	313	19.15 (1 <sup>st</sup> )	18	1.10 (4 <sup>th</sup> )

\*Rate in per 100000 population



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# Violence Free Campus in Bangladesh: A Far Cry

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**Sourav Ghosh**

In a harrowing incident recently, a second-year student of Bangladesh University of Science and Technology (BUET), Abrar Fahad, was brutally beaten to death, which sparked outcry across Bangladesh.<sup>18</sup> The disturbing image of the bruises on his body raised questions about the safety of the students on the premises of higher educational institutions in the country. Campus violence over the years has significantly impacted our educational institutions, mostly those associated with higher education. A campus is considered as a sacred place where it is expected that the teachers and students will find a suitable environment for teaching and learning simultaneously. However, till date many incidents like the Abrar killing have pointed to the failure of higher educational institutions in creating a safe environment for the students. On many occasions, student groups in the name of politics wreaked havoc at the campuses, which hindered the regular academic activities.<sup>19</sup> The incident has raised the question, if student politics in Bangladesh is becoming more violent?

Historically, students played a pivotal role in the 1971 Liberation war through which Bangladesh got its independence from Pakistan. Even before that, in 1952, students were the pioneers in the Language movement which led to the recognition of Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan. Moreover, students were at the forefront in protecting the democratic rights of the people and their struggle for the parliamentary election.<sup>20</sup> However, the glorious past of the student politics in the country has been tarnished by the violent activities of the student wings of different political parties in the past few decades. Incidents like killing, torture, sexual harassment, or ragging are regularly happening in different university premises. According to political analysts and civil society members, the affiliation between student wings and mainstream political parties is the primary reason behind the rise of violent activities in university premises across the country.<sup>21</sup> Expert opinions have identified the culture of impunity as a prime factor behind the

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<sup>18</sup> "Getting tough on campus violence" 13 May 2019. Cited in <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/editorial/2018/05/13/getting-tough-on-campus-violence> (Accessed 11 November 2019)  
<sup>19</sup> "Abrar murder and campus violence" 11 November 2019. Cited in <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/education/news/abra>

r-murder-and-campus-violence-1811995 (Accessed 15 November 2019)  
<sup>20</sup> "Student Politics: Story of glory and degeneration" 16 December 2012. Cited in [https://archive.thedailystar.net/supplements/victory\\_day/2012/pg6.htm](https://archive.thedailystar.net/supplements/victory_day/2012/pg6.htm) (Accessed 19 November 2019)  
<sup>21</sup> "Abrar Fahad: Killing of Bangladesh student triggers protests" 8 October 2019. Cited in

continued incidents of violence in the campus premises.<sup>22</sup> Media reports suggest that since independence, perpetrators were not brought to book for at least 151 killings that took place at different universities across the country.<sup>23</sup> One of the primary reasons behind this was the perpetrators affiliation with the ruling party.<sup>24</sup> Also, the ruling party which has the responsibility of creating a safe environment on campuses most often end up providing shelter to those who are responsible for killing and subversive activities.<sup>25</sup>

Student politics cannot be considered as sparse across the world, and in many countries, student unions or groups are actively engaged in politics. However, in developing countries, student groups or unions are often found to be influenced and actively involved in national politics because of various socio-economic factors.<sup>26</sup> In the case of Bangladesh, it is challenging to separate student politics from national politics since mainstream political parties have strong affiliation with their student wings.<sup>27</sup> Historically, soon after the national

election it is common to see the student wing of the winning party dominating and capturing the residential halls of almost every major higher educational institution.<sup>28</sup>

Since in the political culture of Bangladesh, the winners in national elections dominate everywhere, so it is not surprising to see the top student wing leaders controlling armed men at campuses, to have the upper hand over the opposition followers and the general students.<sup>29</sup> However, the history of student politics in Bangladesh is not emblematic of the violence frequently occurring at the university campuses. History does suggest that from the 1971 independence war to the restoration of democracy in 1991 in Bangladesh, students and student wings of different political parties played an important role. However, still student politics has been used as a weapon by the political parties at different points of time.<sup>30</sup> Against this backdrop, in-depth studies are required to identify what caused the student politics lose its glorious past and become violence-prone in the post-independence

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<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-49979097> (Accessed 30 November 2019).

<sup>22</sup> "Commentary: It's culture of impunity that killed Abrar" 11 October 2019. Cited in <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/commentary-its-culture-impunity-killed-abrar-1812199> (Accessed 30 November 2019).

<sup>23</sup> "Killings on Campuses: No punishment in most cases" 9 October 2019. Cited in <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/killings-campuses-no-punishment-most-cases-1811218> (Accessed 10 November 2019).

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

<sup>26</sup> Philip G. Altbach, "The Politics of Students and Faculty", *Journal of Education and Social Change*, 1993.

<sup>27</sup> Mohammad Hannan, *Bangladesher Chatro Andolonar Itihas 1972-2000 (History of Bengal students' movement 1972-2000)* (Dhaka: Agami, 2016).

<sup>28</sup> Bert Suykens, "A Hundred Per Cent Good Man Cannot do Politics: Violent self-sacrifice, student authority, and party-state integration in Bangladesh", *Modern Asian Studies*, May 2018.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*

<sup>30</sup> M. Hossain, M. Alam and S. Sahriar, "Students' Perceptions Study on 'Student Politics' in Bangladesh", *International Journal of Economics and Empirical Research*, 2014.

era. This write-up tries to understand the trend of campus violence across Bangladesh since 2018 using data available

in the Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO) platform.

### An analysis of the events at different universities between January 2018-September 2019

According to BPO data, 2019 saw an increase in the number of incidents than 2018. The analysis of the BPO data, as reflected in table 2, suggests that in 2018, approximately 95 incidents took place at

different university campuses in Bangladesh, including both violent and non-violent incidents. However, the current year has already witnessed about 88 incidents at different campuses.

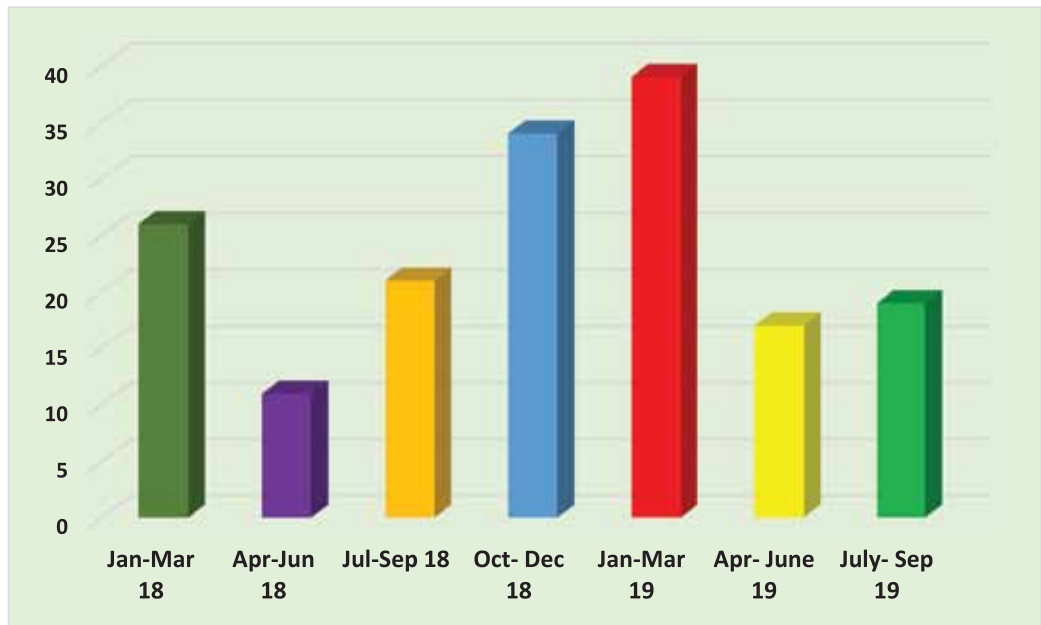
**Table 2: The number of incidents at different campuses from Jan 2018-September 2019**

Incidents between Jan 18- Sep 19			
Year	Violent	Non- Violent <sup>31</sup>	Total
2018	92	3	95
2019 (Up to September)	75	13	88
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>183</b>

<sup>31</sup> The reported incident did not involve the intentional use of physical force by an individual or group against

another individual or group, in a way that resulted or could have resulted in death, injury or any other form of physical harm to persons or property.

**Figure 7: Quarterly Segregation of Violent Incidents at the University Campuses**



The quarterly segregation of BPO data finds an exponential growth of campus violence incidents in the last quarter of the previous year and the first three months of the present year. As reflected in figure 7, at least 34 violent incidents took place across the campuses between October to December 2018. The number of violent incidents reached the apex in the first three months of 2019, with the highest

being 39 incidents until it plummeted in the following three months. However, the number of violent incidents at different campuses again started to increase between July to September in 2019. The current growth rate of the violent incidents suggests that the numbers may match with the figures of the early three months of the current year by the time it ends.

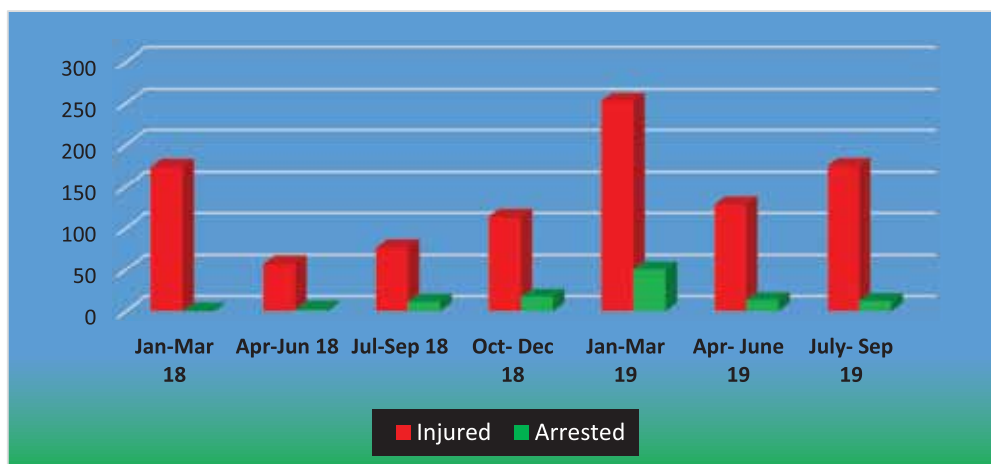
**Table 3: The number of injured and arrested persons in 2018 and 2019**

Year	Injured	Arrested
2018	419	30
2019 (Up to September)	555	75
Grand Total	974	105

The year 2019 saw a rise in violent activities across different campuses in Bangladesh. Based on this, one may predict that the numbers would increase in terms of injured and arrested persons associated with these incidents. Table 3 suggests that in 2018, a total of 419 persons succumbed to injuries while 30 others have been detained because of their association with different violent incidents across different campuses. In 2019, it has been observed that the number of injured people increased to 555 while the number of detainees doubled compared to the previous year. Besides, as

suggested by figure 8, the quarterly comparison shows that the number of injured persons has increased in the early months of both 2018 and 2019. In the first three months of 2019, at least 253 persons were injured, and 50 others were arrested for violence-related incidents. The numbers again increased between July to September 2019 when 174 persons were recorded wounded by the BPO data. However, in terms of detainees, the numbers saw a sharp fall as only 12 people have been detained by the law enforcers within this period.

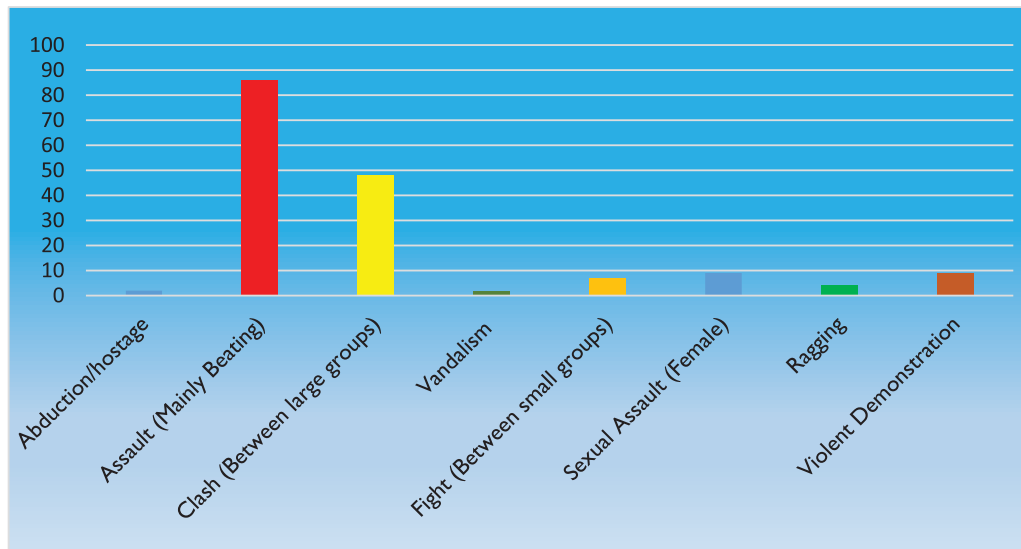
**Figure 8: Quarterly Comparison of Injured and Arrested Persons**



When one thinks of a university premise, the first thing that comes to mind is students having a group discussion or studying quietly or even performing recreational activities such as music, dance and drama. However, the scenario is a little different in Bangladesh since the media reports at different point of time showed students engaged in clashes holding both blunt and sharp weapons. From 2018 to 2019, sharp weapons such as machete and knife have been used at least on 12 occasions in different violent activities. Moreover, in 2018, at least on 42 occasions blunt weapons such as batons, sticks, stones and bottles were used at the university premises in different violent incidents. However, by September

2019, the numbers have declined to 26 in terms of using blunt weapons in violent activities. On the other hand, assault related incidents took place mostly at different university premises. Figure 9 shows that from January 2018 to September 2019, at least 86 assault related violent incidents have taken place while in 48 incidents, students were engaged in clashes. Bangladesh at different points of time has witnessed a disturbing spate of ragging incidents but mostly such incidents remain highly under reported. The BPO data found 9 ragging incidents on different campuses within this timeframe and 9 became the victims of ragging in these incidents.

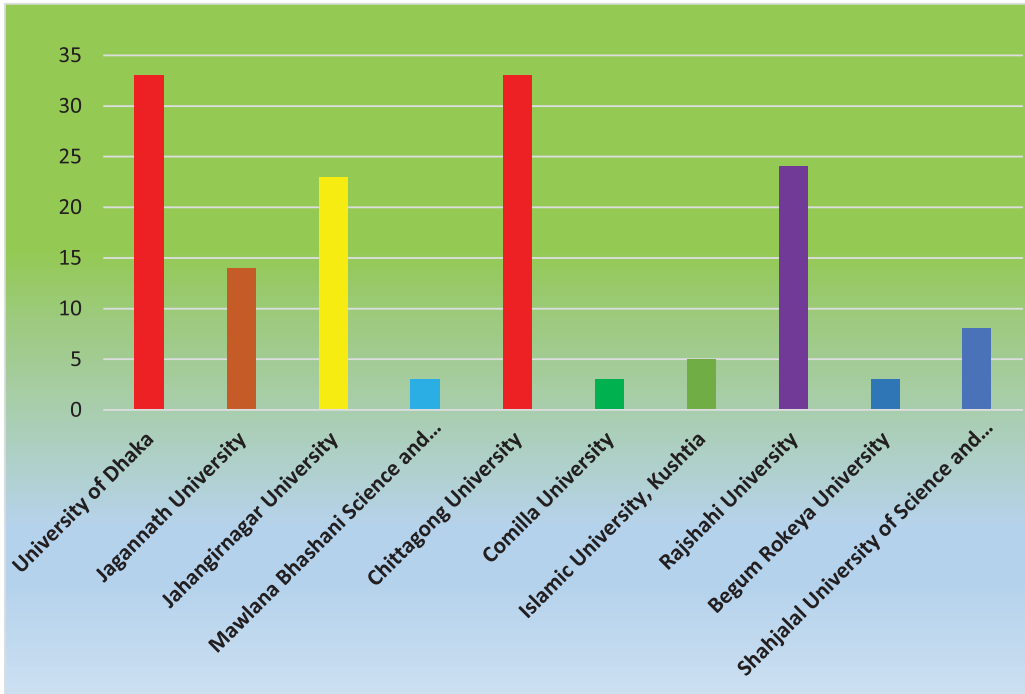
**Figure 9: Violence Types (From January 2018- September 2019)**



**Figure 10: Universities with the Highest Number of Violent Incidents**

In terms of violent incidents, Dhaka University and Chittagong University hold the first position jointly with 33 incidents each from January 2018 to September

2019. In this period, Rajshahi University witnessed 24 violent incidents, while 23 violent incidents took place in Jahangirnagar University.



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## 'Ragging' and 'Bullying' in the University Campus: A Brief Overview in the Context of Bangladesh and India

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**F. M. Arafat<sup>32</sup>**

'Ragging' and 'Bullying' are forms of physical, psychological, sexual abuse, humiliation or harassment of the new entrants or juniors by the seniors in the university campuses. It is a widespread practice in the educational institutions all around the world. The term, 'ragging' which is mostly interpreted as 'initiation ritual' is particularly used in South Asia especially in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.<sup>33</sup> Similar practice is known, with various nomenclatures such as 'hazing' in the US, 'bizutage' in France, 'praxe' in Portugal, 'doop' in the Netherlands, and 'Mopokaste' in Finland.<sup>34</sup> Ragging is a common practice in both India and Bangladesh. But India has progressed significantly in terms of dealing with ragging and bullying in the educational institutes. In Bangladesh, although there were frequent instances of ragging and bullying reported in the news media, the issue of ragging and bullying has recently been brought into limelight after the killing of Abrar Fahad, a second-year student of

electrical and electronic engineering department, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET).<sup>35</sup> The write-up explores the landscape of ragging and bullying in the educational institutions of both Bangladesh and India. In addition, it evaluates the anti-ragging movements including policies and legislations of India and Bangladesh.

Ragging is one of the most recognizable variations of bullying in which the new students are usually targeted to some sort of physical, mental or verbal abuse in various extents by the senior students. The practice is generally justified as the 'ice-breaking session' between the seniors and juniors. It is rigorously practiced at various extents in the different educational institutions subject to the legacy or tradition of such practices. The first cases of ragging similar to present variations were recorded in ancient Greece during the Olympics in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>36</sup> As far as the modern history

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<sup>33</sup> Dias, Diana, and Maria José Sá. "Initiation rituals in university as lever for group cohesion." *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 38, no. 4 (2014): 447-464.

<sup>34</sup> Garg, Rajesh. "Ragging: a public health problem in India." *Indian journal of medical sciences* 63, no. 6 (2009).

<sup>35</sup> "Expel all 25 accused of Abrar murder" 15 November 2019. Cited in <https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/expel-all-25-accused-abrar-murder-1827268> (Accessed 20 November 2019).

<sup>36</sup> "Ragging needs social ban, more than laws" 22 March 2019. Cited in <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/sunday-times/deep-focus/Ragging-needs-social-ban-more-than-laws/articleshow/4298362.cms> (Accessed 10 November 2019).

of ragging goes, the practice was spread to the educational institutions from the armed forces. The armed forces used ragging especially during the American civil war and World War I as a mechanism to breakdown new recruits so that success could be achieved through team efforts rather than personal goals or motivation. The military-style ragging; a severe form of abuse later entered into the educational institutions when the veterans from the World War I rejoined the colleges.<sup>37</sup>

Ragging with various forms of torture and violence is a very common practice in both Bangladesh and India. Reputed engineering and medical colleges in both countries have a longstanding legacy of the practice of ragging. Through this the seniors introduced themselves to new entrants. Until very recently, ragging was not considered a social evil in Bangladesh. It was widely known as playful banter or soft-core verbal bullying of the new entrants by the seniors of the universities to smooth the path of socializing in the future. But the killing of Abrar Fahad who was beaten to death by a few activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) has changed the perception

of ragging in the public discourse in Bangladesh.<sup>38</sup> Ragging is now widely discussed in different public platforms including media. Anti-ragging has become one of the staples of student activism.<sup>39</sup> Abrar was killed by a group of activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), a students' political organization in Bangladesh affiliated with the ruling party of Bangladesh, Awami League. The backlashes against bullying and ragging as well as student politics in the campus have turned into a movement. It has raised the debate whether student and organization-based politics should exist or end.<sup>40</sup> The issue of ragging has been discussed and debated more in India than Bangladesh over the years. The



A photo of students ragging freshers at a Delhi, India;  
Source: Hindustan Times

practice of ragging has brought severe consequences in India which led the government and the University Grant Commission (UGC) to bring some

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> "Abrar Fahad killing: Bangladesh student was beaten for four hours" 9 October 2019. Cited in <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-49986893> (Accessed 20 November 2019).

<sup>39</sup> "Breaking Ragging Bragging Culture" Cited in <https://www.daily-sun.com/amp/post/440834> (Accessed 20 November 2019).

<sup>40</sup> "Stop torture at public universities" 12 October 2019. Cited in <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/news/203159/Stop-torture-at-public-universities?fbclid=IwAR0SEGOQdvCmZG9AAAdSI-eNNsSKmZ8WRuFxooy4esjyaOG3ZWOOsVI t6ffY> (Accessed 20 November 2019).

structural changes to deal with ragging and bullying in educational institutions. A Delhi born second-year medical student, Aman Kachroo was killed by a group of drunk seniors in a medical school in Himachal Pradesh in March 2009.<sup>41</sup> The murder of Aman has brought significant legislative policy changes in dealing with ragging in India. Following his death, the UGC passed a regulation on curbing the menace of ragging in higher educational institutions, 2009.<sup>42</sup> A National Anti-Ragging Helpline was launched by the Indian government following the orders from the Supreme Court.<sup>43</sup>

There is a qualitative difference in the characteristics of ragging and bullying at the higher educational institutions between Bangladesh and India. Student politics is an important factor in the power dynamics of students in Bangladesh.<sup>44</sup> Students who actively participate in the politics and represent two of the leading political organizations of the students, BCL and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) tend to be in the upper half of the food

chain in their campus life. Few prominent news outlets recently reported that members of the BCL usually involve in ragging and bullying of students who do not want to join student politics and students who hold different views.<sup>45</sup> One of the most common complains against the BCL is that the members of BCL force the other students; not necessarily the members of BCL to join the activities of the organization such as meetings, processions etc. On the other hand, student politics is not an important factor in the student life of the reputed educational institutions in India, especially the medical and the engineering schools. Seniors of these schools tend to abuse the new entrants in the guise of generating fellow-feelings, camaraderie and or the ability to work in a team.<sup>46</sup> The issue of ragging and bullying in the campuses of India is so severe that it is often regarded as a public health problem.<sup>47</sup> A study funded by the UGC of India on the directions of the Supreme Court has found that almost 40% of all students

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<sup>41</sup> <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Medical-student-killed-in-ragging/articleshow/4247603.cms>

<sup>42</sup> "Curbing the menace of ragging in Higher Educational Institutions" Cited in [https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/0913656\\_ARC-Supreme-Court.pdf](https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/0913656_ARC-Supreme-Court.pdf) (Accessed 21 November 2019).

<sup>43</sup> "Time to criminalize ragging" 14 October 2019. Cited in <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/oped/2019/10/14/time-to-criminalize-ragging> (Accessed 21 November 2019).

<sup>44</sup> "The consequences of student politics" 18 October 2019. Cited in <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/oped/2019/10/18/the-consequences-of-student-politics> (Accessed 21 November 2019).

<sup>45</sup> "Stories of BCL torture at BUET coming out after Abrar murder" 10 October 2019. Cited in <https://bdnews24.com/campus/2019/10/10/stories-of-bcl-torture-at-buet-coming-out-after-abrar-murder> (Accessed 22 November 2019).

<sup>46</sup> "Society Against Violence in Education (SAVE)" Cited in <https://www.no2ragging.org/ragging.html> (Accessed 22 November 2019).

<sup>47</sup> *Op.cit*, Garg, Rajesh

across colleges in India have faced some sort of ragging.<sup>48</sup>

### What is 'Ragging' and 'Bullying'?

Ragging is the sub-continental version of 'hazing' in which students; mainly the freshmen and the new entrants were verbally, mentally, physically, and sometimes sexually tortured by the upperclassmen in the name of initiation or introduction.<sup>49</sup> Ragging has been an international phenomenon and a part of popular culture. Ragging was depicted in many popular fictional writings such as *Five Point Someone* by Chetan Bhagat, *Boy* by Roald Dahl, and *Schooldays* by Tom Brown.<sup>50</sup> Bullying was the theme of pop singer-songwriter Taylor Swift's chart-topper song, 'Mean'. According to the 3rd amendment which was ratified on 29 June 2016 to the UGC regulation on curbing the menace of ragging in higher educational institutions, 2009 in India, ragging is defined as "any act of physical or mental abuse (including bullying and exclusion) targeted at another student (fresher or otherwise) on the ground of

colour, race, religion, caste, ethnicity, gender (including transgender), sexual orientation, appearance, nationality, regional origins, linguistic identity, place of birth, place of residence or economic background."<sup>51</sup> Ragging constitutes a variation of different abuse which violates human rights such as 1. Verbal abuse by emails, post, public insults; 2. Physical abuse including sexual abuse, homosexual assaults, stripping, forcing obscene, lewd acts, and gestures; 3. Financial abuse, extortion or forceful expenditure burden; 4. Any act that disrupts academic activities; 5. Psychological abuse or forcing any student to perform any act that can torment him/her.

Ragging is a subset of bullying. Bullying is a repeated hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm someone verbally, physically, mentally, or sexually. According to a study, Bullying is a kind of 'aggressive behavior characterized by the following three minimum criteria: (1) hostile intent, (2) imbalance of power, and (3) repetition over a period of time.'<sup>52</sup> Bullying in grad

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<sup>48</sup> "40% are ragged, less than 9% speak out: UGC-funded study" 21 January 2016. Cited in <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/40-are-ragged-less-than-9-speak-out-ugc-funded-study/> (Accessed 22 November 2019).

<sup>49</sup> Castaldelli-Maia, João Maurício, Sílvia Saboia Martins, Dinesh Bhugra, Marcelo Polazzo Machado, Arthur Guerra De Andrade, Clóvis Alexandrino-Silva, Sérgio Baldassin, and Tania Córrea de Toledo Ferraz Alves. "Does ragging play a role in medical student depression—cause or effect?." *Journal of affective disorders* 139, no. 3 (2012): 291-297.

<sup>50</sup> Garg, Rajesh. *Op.cit*

<sup>51</sup> "Curbing the menace of ragging in Higher Educational Institutions" Cited in [https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/0913656\\_ARC-Supreme-Court.pdf](https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/0913656_ARC-Supreme-Court.pdf) (Accessed 21 November 2019).

<sup>52</sup> Nocentini, Annalaura, Juan Calmaestra, Anja Schultze-Krumbholz, Herbert Scheithauer, Rosario Ortega, and Ersilia Menesini. "Cyberbullying: Labels, behaviours and definition in three European countries." *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools* 20, no. 2 (2010): 129-142.

schools as well as primary and high schools is a common phenomenon in both Bangladesh and India. Ragging is usually restricted to the freshmen. Therefore, other kinds of violence that do not have senior-junior dynamic and could not fit the mold of ragging could be categorized as bullying.

### **Variations of Ragging and Bullying in Bangladesh and India**

The typologies of ragging and bullying in both Bangladesh and India are almost similar although the landscape and culture that enables such abuse is totally different. The types of ragging include verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, cyber abuse, dress code ragging, financial abuse, etc. All these variations are interlinked. Each type of abuse has one thing in common which is 'force'. The freshmen are usually forced to do things by their elders that can traumatize one for life.

#### **Psychological Abuse**

Ragging that can result in temporary or permanent psychological trauma can be listed as psychological abuse. Psychological abuse is the most common form of ragging in both Bangladesh and India. Psychological

abuse usually occurs in the student hostels. It includes constant fear of the seniors, mental trauma and inferiority complex originated from ragging. A female student of Rajshahi University (RU) was hospitalized after facing ragging from senior students on 3 July, 2018 as she failed to memorize the new rules of the dormitory.<sup>53</sup> A new entrant of Jahangirnagar University (JU) was so traumatized by ragging that he was unable to recognize anyone as he was mentally tortured by some senior students during ragging in the campus on 10 February, 2018.<sup>54</sup>

#### **Physical Abuse**

Ragging incidents in which the perpetrator physically harms someone is another common form of ragging common in both India and Bangladesh. The killing of Abrar in Bangladesh and the killing of Aman in India are the most cited incidents of physical abuse induced by repeated bullying and ragging. In both instances, the casualties are victim of beating or mob violence. Physical abuses by beating or slapping also occur in the hostels. First year students are usually called in a room of a senior student or in a common place where they are interrogated by the

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<sup>53</sup> "RU female student faces severe ragging, hospitalized" 3 July 2018. Cited in <http://www.theindependentbd.com/arcprint/details/156234/2018-07-03> (Accessed 21 November 2019).

<sup>54</sup> "JU student traumatised by ragging" 11 February 2018. Cited in

<https://en.prothomalo.com/youth/news/170935/JU-student-traumatised-by-ragging?fbclid=IwAR0EDxLP2C6BtWVrwAm39aunrqlEqRL2yP398TG6Libm7fhRxPMbcQ19dVWw> (Accessed 21 November 2019).

seniors. In 2012, a 17-year-old aeronautical engineering student of Bangalore, India, Ajmal PM was set on fire by his seniors.<sup>55</sup> On 24 June 2019, few of the freshmen students of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University were called for a 'meeting' in the dining hall where they were subject to mental and physical torture as they were wearing lungis and some had failed to 'salaam' (salute) the elders.<sup>56</sup>

### Dress code Ragging

The freshmen were asked to wear certain dresses or picked on for wearing very formal (eg. Suits) or very informal (eg. Lungis) outfit. A student of Crop Science and Technology (CST) Department of Rajshahi University (RU) was forced to leave the campus after receiving ragging as he wore formal suit in the orientation class.<sup>57</sup>

### Verbal Abuse

Verbal ragging includes indulging in loose talks or abusive languages. The freshmen are generally forced to recite the rules of

the dormitory, vulgar song lyrics or slangs repeatedly in presence of a large crowd. The form of verbal ragging differs from one institution to another. In some universities, freshmen are forced to recite



Source: Daily Thanthi, 17 September 2018

poems or sing songs or perform dances repeatedly.

### Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying is a form of harassment by electronic means. Cyber-bullying is usually used to humiliate someone or a group of individuals; mainly students or teenagers. One of the recent trends of cyber-bullying is to record the ragging incidents and circulate them in the social media platforms to harass the victims more.<sup>58</sup> Six students of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and

<sup>55</sup> "Bangalore ragging victim dies in hospital" 31 March 2012. Cited in <https://www.dnaindia.com/bangalore/report-bangalore-ragging-victim-dies-in-hospital-1669701> (Accessed 21 November 2019).

<sup>56</sup> "BCL 'torture cells' at Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University" 19 October 2019. Cited in <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/news/203495/BCL-%E2%80%98torture-cells%E2%80%99-at-Sher-e-Bangla-Agricultural?fbclid=IwAR2dHQrclqkxhbtWBDx5p6jX0lOKGt62OUe9fKwVnNnD9MUF4-z8SLj2fvgU> (Accessed 22 November 2019).

<sup>57</sup> "Terrible ragging at RU!" 28 January 2018. Cited in <https://www.observerbd.com/details.php?id=119205&fbclid=IwAR0et5z9LWwVnMdALjMzQxXQS2WGbwSFA90x5FNGMGh0drJjWLdQl6n0Y-w> (Accessed 22 November 2019).

<sup>58</sup> "BCL leader among six expelled for ragging at MBSTU" 12 March 2019. Cited in <http://www.newagebd.net/article/67149/bcl-leader-among-six-expelled-for-ragging-at-mbstu?fbclid=IwAR2UVvEMjauFnl809SUqNnObScbRzf-nXEQhXf3sdnU9GQhWliRUXObRH8> (Accessed 22 November 2019).

Technology University (BSMRSTU) in Gopalganj were expelled for ragging two first-year students and recording the incident.<sup>59</sup>

### **Obstructing Academic Activities**

The elders forced the new entrants to bunk the classes or participate in academic activities in this type of abuse. In the universities of Bangladesh, especially in the hostels, the seniors forced the juniors to attend the political programs, meetings and other activities. As a consequence of this, the academic performance of the juniors suffers.

### **Financial Abuse**

The financial abuse is very extreme. In this type of ragging, juniors are forced to forfeit their allowance to seniors.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse includes forced stripping, forced masturbation, forced unnatural sex, etc. In Bangladeshi universities, sexual abuse of freshmen by seniors is very underreported. But there are numerous

unreported incidents in which the admission seekers were teased and harassed by the current students during the admission test. Three students of Chittagong University were detained for their alleged involvement in harassing admission seekers on 26 October 2019.<sup>60</sup>

## **Reasons behind Ragging and Bullying in Bangladesh and India**

The suspects of the Abrar's murder used to torture other students if they failed to greet them with a Salaam [the standard salutation among Muslims] or smile at them so that other students would get the message.....there was no single motive behind the killing. Abrar's killers were used to violent behavior in the name of ragging.

-Mr. Monirul Islam, Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) Chief at the press briefing of the Abrar Fahad murder case at DMP media centre.<sup>61</sup>

Ragging is often compared to simple fun which involves singing, dancing, solving puzzles etc.<sup>62</sup> It is often mentioned in the public discourse that ragging builds character and it symbolizes heroism. But in reality, thousands of students from primary school to grad school are being harassed every year in the name of ragging and bullying in both Bangladesh and India. The practice of ragging and bullying in the

<sup>59</sup>“ 6 BSMRSTU students expelled for ragging freshers” 4 February 2019. Cited in [https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2019/02/04/6-bsmrstu-students-expelled-for-ragging-freshers?fbclid=IwAR0PLnDnjzPQ2-AmSHw9KOHJaEeNOlnVZyde7tldYJT9m06af0wu1HKe\\_Tl](https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2019/02/04/6-bsmrstu-students-expelled-for-ragging-freshers?fbclid=IwAR0PLnDnjzPQ2-AmSHw9KOHJaEeNOlnVZyde7tldYJT9m06af0wu1HKe_Tl) (Accessed 22 November 2019).

<sup>60</sup>“3 Chittagong University students detained over ragging” 26 October 2019. Cited in <https://tbsnews.net/bangladesh/3-chittagong-university-students-detained-over->

[ragging?fbclid=IwAR3dXOI54iavdhKFmMJrvLVcEPWlpYtaOWnr2WlzdviBILu-uuLoRrgTvck](https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2019/11/13/police-abrar-s-killers-created-reign-of-terror-on-buet-campus) (Accessed 22 November 2019).

<sup>61</sup> “Abrar’s killers abused political affiliation” 13 November 2019. Cited in <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2019/11/13/police-abrar-s-killers-created-reign-of-terror-on-buet-campus> (Accessed 22 November 2019).

<sup>62</sup> “Society Against Violence in Education (SAVE)” Cited in <https://www.no2ragging.org/ragging.html> (Accessed 22 November 2019).

school campus is profound for various reasons.

Firstly, one of the principal reasons behind the practice of ragging and bullying is legacy or tradition. Ragging is that invisible heirloom that is passed on from one generation of students to another generation. As the perpetrators of ragging and bullying were ragged by their seniors, it is common human trait that they want to rag their juniors. This type of legacy or tradition was carried on in the prominent medical and engineering schools especially in India.

Secondly, student party politics is the key reason behind the phenomenon of ragging and bullying in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is distinct in this aspect from India. As the cadres of student-based political organizations controlled the hostels, they usually take the mantle to rag juniors. In recent months, most of the ragging incidents reported in the daily newspaper indicts local leaders of BCL. The most discussed one among them was the beating and killing of Abrar at BUET.

Thirdly, ice-breaking, socializing, introduction or initiation of seniors to junior is another reason behind the practice of ragging and bullying. Seniors

feel the responsibility to teach the juniors about the whereabouts of the educational institutions by using so called 'fun method' of ragging.

Fourthly, sense of superiority or 'Machismo' is another logic behind the practice of ragging and bullying. The seniors want to demonstrate toughness to juniors in a twisted way by torturing them. Cruelty is seen as virtue here as demonstrated by Anik Sarker, one of the suspects of Abrar murder. He allegedly beat Abrar until Abrar was motionless to demonstrate to juniors how to beat a Shibir<sup>63</sup> (Abrar was labelled as 'Shibir'; student outfit of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh).

Fifthly, lack of supervision and anti-ragging steps from the authorities of the educational institutions are also responsible for the outbreak of ragging and bullying in the campuses. The BUET authority failed to inform the relevant authorities about the condition of Abrar.<sup>64</sup> The university authorities are always too late to respond to such incidents. The educational institutes usually want to cover up incidents to keep up the reputation of the institutions at the cost of the victim's misery.

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<sup>63</sup>"Beat him until he was motionless" 13 October 2019. Cited in <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/abrar-fahad-murder%3A-anik-sarker-beat-him-until-he-was-motionless-1812979> (Accessed 22 November 2019).

<sup>64</sup>"Abrar's killers abused political affiliation" 13 November 2019. Cited in

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2019/11/13/police-abrar-s-killers-created-reign-of-terror-on-buet-campus> (Accessed 22 November 2019).

Finally, Ragging and bullying are normalized to some extent in our society. It is often looked as fun game. Until the killing of Abrar, the phenomenon of ragging and bullying were fairly ignored in public discussions in Bangladesh.

### **Anti-Ragging Movements in India and Bangladesh**

India is more used to deal with ragging and bullying than Bangladesh as the educational institutes of India are traditionally ragging-prone. India has already enacted key legislations banning ragging. Bangladesh is yet to follow suit in that aspect. Some universities like Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, and Jahangirnagar University have taken separate steps against ragging and bullying but a collective effort is yet to be seen.

### **Anti-Ragging Movements in India**

Several Indian states have enacted anti-ragging legislations. Tamil Nadu was the first Indian state that passed a law against ragging culture. Additionally, the Supreme Court of India has issued two landmark judgements that enabled the anti-ragging movement in India. The first one was in 2001 and the second one was in 2009 after the murder of Aman in the Himachal Pradesh. The Supreme court appointed a seven-member panel headed by ex-CBI director Dr. R. K. Raghavan to recommend anti-ragging measures in response to a public interest litigation. The Raghavan Committee submitted their 209-page report in May, 2007 which recommended to include ragging as a special section under the Indian Penal Code. In 2009, in the wake of Aman Kachroo's death, the UGC passed regulation on curbing the menace of ragging in higher educational institutions, 2009.

## THE MENACE OF RAGGING IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND MEASURES TO CURB IT, The Raghavan Committee report, 2007

- Primary responsibility for curbing ragging rests with academic institution themselves
- Ragging adversely impacts the standards of higher education
- Incentives should be available to institutions for curbing the menace, there should also be disincentives for failure to do so
- Enrolment in academic pursuits or a campus life should not immunize any adult citizen from penal provisions of the laws of the land
- Ragging needs to be perceived as our failure to inculcate human values from the schooling stage
- Behavioral patterns among students, particularly potential 'raggers', need to be identified
- Measures against ragging must deter its recurrence
- Concerted action is required at the level of the school, higher educational institution, district administration, university, state and Central governments to make any curb effective
- Media and the civil society should be involved at all stages

### Anti-Ragging Movements in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has done little in terms of enacting anti-bullying and anti-ragging legislations. Recently, the UGC of Bangladesh has urged the authorities of the public and private universities to take proper and effective steps against bullying and ragging in the campuses of educational institutions in a newsletter.<sup>65</sup> Authorities

in Chittagong University (CU) have launched an online student complaint cell called the "CU Student Complaint Cell" on 23 October 2019 to prevent ragging and bullying in the campus.<sup>66</sup> Also a resolution was adopted at a meeting between the UGC and the JU authorities on 4 September 2018 to find out a solution to the ragging problem on its campus.<sup>67</sup> In addition, a 27-member committee has

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> "CU launches complaint cell to prevent ragging, torture" 23 October 2019. Cited in <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/education/2019/10/23/cu-launches-complaint-cell-to-prevent-harassment-ragging-torture?fbclid=IwAR1tEbr-kQnc-7ImET2GzVCiiaXF0tbcbjfFsSvRuP7Nlj7bnfHtIMly4> (Accessed 21 November 2019).

<sup>67</sup> "Body formed to end JU ragging problem" 4 September 2018. Cited in <https://www.daily-sun.com/post/333746/2018/09/04/Body-formed-to-end-JU-ragging-problem?fbclid=IwAR1sMONpnhbcl9DwQle6ikPI9QzWVlJMw0GcFG8HLTXGDK9b10nBTkzbGJM> (Accessed 21 November 2019).

been formed to stop ragging at Rajshahi University (RU) campus on 24 January 2019.<sup>68</sup> Following these steps, there is an urgent need of a collective step preferably from UGC to stop bullying and ragging in the educational institutions.

### Concluding Remarks

Any form of bullying such as ragging has a long-lasting effect on the psyche of the victims. The trauma induced by bullying can create major issues such as constant fear, loss of concentration, inferiority complex, guilt. It can certainly affect the academic performances of the victim. Also, it is widely reported that the bullying and ragging in the school campus significantly increase the suicide risks. Overall, the bullying and ragging do not add any good to the society. It only hampers the prospect of coming generations.

Anti-bullying and anti-ragging campaigns are now stomping in both Bangladesh and India. India has somewhat succeeded to restrict the bullying and ragging in the campus by inaugurating a free public helpline for the victims of ragging. Due to the importance of the issue, Bangladesh should enact a compact legislation and



Source: New Age; 3 April 2019

open a free helpline to tackle the issue of bullying and ragging in the educational institutions.

<sup>68</sup> "RU forms anti-ragging body following incident" 24 January 2019. Cited in <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/print/ru-forms-anti-ragging-body-following-incident->

[1548257710?fbclid=IwAR2H3RvbsifMOD-IOhfFBKbXmAuUSJ3kZGI1O02oM\\_U0L9g8sMqSOqL2IZw](https://www.newagebd.com/1548257710?fbclid=IwAR2H3RvbsifMOD-IOhfFBKbXmAuUSJ3kZGI1O02oM_U0L9g8sMqSOqL2IZw) (Accessed 21 November 2019).

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## Violence against Female Students at University Campus

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Faizah Sultana

### Introduction

In Bangladesh, access to higher education is limited for both men and women.<sup>69</sup> Many women set foot in tertiary level of education after struggling with existing stereotypes, gender bias, discrimination and violence in addition to those faced by general students. After passing many obstacles, their dreams of pursuing higher education often get marred by the dark shadows of violence.

Bangladesh achieved remarkable progress in girls' enrollment in primary levels but the dropout rate increases as the level of education goes higher.<sup>70</sup> In 2018, female enrollment in tertiary education was 16.98% against 24.02% of male enrollment.<sup>71</sup> Child marriage, early marriage, social constraints, violence against women are major causes for female student dropout and inability to pursue higher studies. These social

constraints follow them continuously to their academic lives causing difficulties.

### Violence against female students: Drawn from BPO Platform, Micro-narratives and secondary sources

Most of the public universities and some affiliated and private universities offer residential facilities to the female students. Though the number of seats is inadequate, allocation system is questionable, and living standards are below average, female students from the remote areas have few choices other than to live under such hardship. These young women face ragging<sup>72</sup> and bullying by their seniors sometimes for no specific reasons,<sup>72</sup> they have to participate in the political events, they were often forced to have romantic relationship with senior male students and sometimes they are asked to imitate sexual gestures and dance moves.<sup>73</sup> In

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<sup>69</sup>World Bank, *Bangladesh: Country Summary of Higher Education*, 2 December 2007, Cited in- <https://bit.ly/379XDSZ>, last access on- 18 November 2019.

<sup>70</sup>Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2017, *Education Scenario in Bangladesh: Gender Perspective*, Cited in- <https://bit.ly/37glcL>, last access on- 18 November 2019.

<sup>71</sup> UNESCO, Bangladesh, <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/bd>, last access on- 18 November 2019.

<sup>72</sup> 'সম্পর্ক বজায় রাখতে' ছাত্রী হলে র্যাগিং (Ragging in the Girls' Dormitory to 'Maintain Bond'), 30 September 2018, Cited in- <https://bit.ly/2YNCx9g>, last accessed on- 15 December 2019.

<sup>73</sup> ইবিত্তে র্যাগিং স্টাইল : ছাত্রীদের মুখে সিগারেট, প্রেমের প্রস্তাব! ( Ragging Style in IU: Release smoke in the female students' faces, Love proposal), 21 February 2019, Cited in- <https://www.amadershomoy.com/bn/2019/02/21/799818.htm>, last access on- 15 December 2019.

most of these cases women faced physical and mental trauma after the incidents.<sup>74 75</sup>

Female students also faced torture carried out by the members of the Ruling Party student wing in political and internal conflicts.<sup>76 77</sup> There is a culture among the parties to place female protesters in front of the procession so that the attackers hesitate to attack on women if they attack from the front.<sup>78</sup>

In addition, female students become victims of unwanted sexual advances by the university staffs like faculties, students, outsiders, etc. It is the most severe and under-reported violence faced by female students in the universities/<sup>79</sup> 76% of female students experienced at least one type of sexual violence from university staffs, students or outsiders. The prevalence is the highest in the public universities.<sup>80</sup> These kinds of violence exist not only in Bangladesh, but prevails in different universities of the

world.<sup>81</sup> Sexual violence can seriously hamper a female student's academic life, to some extent it may result in self-destructive actions. Unwanted sexual advances from the faculties, students, outsiders corrode female students' self-esteem gradually. There are plenty of evidences from BPO data, other secondary sources, and micro-narratives of different students on the sexual violence they have experienced in campus.

Female students experience sexual harassment mostly from their classmates, fellow students and faculties. One incident registered at BPO was collected from The Daily New Age which reported the news of a Rajshahi University teacher harassing a female student sexually and mentally several times and the victim filed a complaint against him in her department.<sup>82</sup> A student experienced such offenses from an octogenarian foreign language instructor of her university. She

<sup>74</sup> শাবিপ্রবর্তে র্যাগিংয়ের সময় জ্ঞান হারালেন ছাত্রী ( Female student senseless while being ragged in SUST), 29 January 2016, Cited in- <https://bit.ly/2YQ6dTp>, Last accessed on- 15 December 2019

<sup>75</sup> সিকুবিতে র্যাগিং স্টাইল, কাঁদতে কাঁদতে বেরিয়ে যান ছাত্রী! ( Ragging in SAU: Female student left crying), 24 January 2019, Cited in- <https://bit.ly/36CYavS>, Last accessed on- 15 December 2019.

<sup>76</sup> 50 injured in BCL attacks at DU, 24 January 2018, Cited in- <http://epaper.newagebd.net/24-01-2018/1>, last access on- 18 November 2019.

<sup>77</sup> ইডেন কলেজে ছাত্রীকে পেটাল ছাত্রলীগ ( Chhatra League beat up a student at Eden College), 09 February, 2017, Cited in- <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/article/1077497>, last access on- 15 December 2019.

<sup>78</sup> Micro-narrative of Kaneta Eya Lam-Lam, collected by BPO team.

<sup>79</sup> Jahan, N, *A deafening Culture of silence*, The Daily Star, 06 April 2016, Cited in- <https://www.thedailystar.net/star-weekend/spotlight/deafening-culture-silence-1558549>, last access on- 15 December 2019.

<sup>80</sup> *Situational Analysis of Sexual Harassment of Tertiary Level Education Institutions in and around Dhaka*, UNWomen & HDRC, 2013, Cited in- <https://bit.ly/2qX8YFA>, last access on- 15 December 2019.

<sup>81</sup> *Guidance Note: On Campus Violence Prevention and Response*, UNWomen, 2018, Cited in- <https://bit.ly/32XEMaQ>, Last accessed on- 15 December 2019.

<sup>82</sup> *RU teacher accused of sexual harassment*, 26 June 2019, Cited in- [http://epaper.newagebd.net/images/26\\_06\\_2019/regular\\_41945\\_news\\_1561496082.jpg](http://epaper.newagebd.net/images/26_06_2019/regular_41945_news_1561496082.jpg), Last accessed on- 15 December 2019.

also complained against the accused and action was taken<sup>83</sup>. Another news reported in The Daily Ittefaq stated that a Jahangirnagar University student attempted to rape his female classmate after his romantic proposal was refused.<sup>84</sup> Female students experience sexual assaults and violence during festivals and public gathering inside the university campuses.<sup>85</sup> A female student was victim of sexual assault by an outsider in her campus during a festival.<sup>86</sup>

### Analysis from the BPO data and Micro-narratives

Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO) has recorded information on campus violence against female students and also collected micro-narratives from different students about the topic. Through the narratives and BPO data, the types of violence discussed above were substantiated.

But one cannot safely say that all the information related to sexual violence

against female student are covered especially when a teacher-student power relation exists<sup>87</sup> and lots of 'fear factors'<sup>88</sup> which facilitate the exploitation of such power relations. As long as under-reporting and fear factors are not overcome, we cannot see the rest of the iceberg beneath the tranquil surface.

### University regulation for preventing sexual harassment

High Court of Bangladesh has given a directive to the University Grants Commission to incorporate sexual harassment prevention committee comprising of five members with a majority of female and if possible, to be headed by a female person. After ten years of that directive, several investigative reports published in renowned newspapers depicted that, nearly 40% of the universities have not yet realized the HC directive in their institutions.<sup>89</sup> <sup>90</sup> There are also complaints against some of

<sup>83</sup> Micro-narrative of Antara Islam, Collected by BPO team.

<sup>84</sup> শিক্ষার্থীকে শ্রীলতাহানির চেষ্টায় জাবি ছাত্রকে পুলিশে সোপর্দ (A JU student handed over to the police for attempting to rape a female students), 6 April 2018, Cited in- [https://epaper.ittefaq.com.bd/2018/04/05/images/14\\_109.jpg](https://epaper.ittefaq.com.bd/2018/04/05/images/14_109.jpg), last access on- 18 November 2019.

<sup>85</sup> On Facebook, They open up, 8 March, 2018, Cited in- <http://epaper.thedailystar.net/index.php?opt=view&page=2&date=2018-03-08>, last access on- 18 November 2019.

<sup>86</sup> Micro-narrative of Kshema Chakma, collected by BPO team.

<sup>87</sup> Benson, Donna J., and Gregg E. Thomson. "Sexual Harassment on a University Campus: The Confluence of Authority Relations, Sexual Interest and Gender Stratification." *Social Problems* 29, no. 3 (1982): 236-51.

doi:10.2307/800157, Last accessed on- 15 December 2019.

<sup>88</sup> World Health Organization 2012, Understanding and addressing violence against women, Cited in- <https://bit.ly/2OjVnQt>, Last accessed on- 15 December 2019.

<sup>89</sup> Abdullah, M, *No sexual harassment committees in 40% universities, despite 10 years of HC directive*, The Dhaka Tribune, 28 September 2019, Cited in- <https://bit.ly/2OhCYns>, Last accessed on- 15 December 2019.

<sup>90</sup> Alamgir, M, *Cell to Fight Sexual Harassment: 10 yrs on, 60pc schools yet to act on HC order*, The Daily Star, 23 May, 2019, Cited in- <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/cell-fight-sexual-harassment-1747621>, Last accessed on- 15 December 2019.

the existing committees for not functioning properly.

### **Conclusion**

There are many obstacles prevalent in the road of women's empowerment in this country like child marriage, early marriage and other discriminatory practices. These social constraints have already slowed

down female participation in higher education. The reports of violence against the female students in the university campuses may reinforce those causes. Formation of sexual harassment committees in every educational institution is necessary now more than ever.

## Some Selected Micronarratives on Campus Violence

“The present scenario is same like I/II. If anyone holds different views, raises voice against the government, speaks in favor of truth or against falsehood then they all are exposed to violence in the Dhaka University campus and in other universities as well. They are tortured both mentally and physically. It is also seen that students are deprived of their rights because of holding different political stance. As a student leader, I myself think no one has the right to torture members from other student organizations if they disagree with them politically. They have no right to take law in their own hands even if they speak against democracy or state or have seditious sentiment. If any kind of crime is committed, the criminal must be brought under the jurisdiction of law according to the laws of Bangladesh. What we can do is to report such crime or incidents to the concerned authorities”.

- Anisur Rahman Khandoker Anik, GS Candidate, DUCSU 2019, JCD Panel.

“I did not face any kind of extreme violence but I experienced teasing in the campus. I faced teasing for being a girl with indigenous ethnicity. While walking people tease me from behind by making fun of my language. Besides, I was also victim of physical assault. The assault took place during the Saraswati Puja in 2018. I usually don't visit Puja pavilions. But that year, some of my friends came to visit me. Therefore, I went to visit Jagannath Hall with them in the afternoon. So, we were roaming around and we went to food stalls to buy food. I was standing at the food stall and suddenly I felt someone touched me. At first, I ignored it thinking it to be a mistake as the place was very crowded. But I felt something again and I realized someone was trying to grab me from my back. I turned back to identify who he was and I remembered him doing the same with some other girls also. I immediately decided to get hold of him and hand him over to the police as they (Puja organizers) were miking to report any kind of untoward incident. After catching him red handed, he started apologizing. Nevertheless, I handed him over to police. But what was most surprising was that no one came forward to help me.”

-A Female Student of Indigenous Origin, University of Dhaka.

“I enrolled in a German Language course at the Institute of Modern Language (IML) back in 2016. The teacher was almost 80 years old who created a good impression in the very first class by presenting himself as a grandfather figure. One day while attending his class I felt that he slid his hand in my back. I was taken aback and thought if it was actually possible because I was taking notes sitting on my chair and he was standing. I thought it was all in my head because, it was not physically possible for him to do this. So, I overlooked it thinking it as a mistake. Later, I used to notice that he tried to single me out in the class. There were many times when he tried to hug me in front of everyone in the class to show affection towards me but I felt very awkward. Gradually, I became suspicious and thought that it was not normal. I started maintaining distance from him.

After two months, the result of our first exam was published and I was one of the top students. He told me that I could apply for scholarships in Germany. From the very beginning of our course, he said he had very good relations with the German ambassador and he could help us in getting scholarships. Upon asking him about the procedures, he never answered our queries properly. However, he asked me to meet him after class regarding the scholarship. As I was already suspicious, I asked one of my friends to stay with me because I did not want to go to him alone. After waiting for a long time, he came and saw that my friend was still with me and there were other students also. He said that he would like to tutor me in private to prepare me for scholarship. Hearing this, I immediately understood that his intention was not good. I left the course after that day.”

- Antara Islam, student of International Relations, University of Dhaka.

“Violence in university campus is inescapable. One reason for this is seat shortage in residential halls. Because of seat shortages five students are staying in an area that is allocated for one. It is true that student organizations control the seat distribution of the resident halls. But if hall administration controls the seats, I think, they too cannot solve the problem. Because, it is not possible to accommodate 2000 students in a space allocated for 500 students.”

- Mazharul Kabir Shayon, Department of Anthropology, University of Dhaka, Literature affairs secretary, Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU).

“I personally faced problems in first year when I went to stay in dormitory. As I am a member of Bangladesh Students Union (a progressive student organization), they did not allow me to stay in hall. In first year, my friend Anindya Mandal started staying in a room controlled by the members of the student organization of the ruling party. After a few months, he became a member of Bangladesh Student Union. After joining the Bangladesh Student Union, he changed his room and started staying with union activists. One day he went to his old room to collect his books, box, cloths etc. but ruling party activists refused to give him his essentials. When Anindya resisted, the ruling party activists started beating him. Rajib Das, secretary of Student Union, Dhaka University Unit tried to stop them but he was also beaten. Anindya’s fault was that he joined the politics of student union. Jagannath Hall administration did not take any legal action against the culprits.”

- Abdul Karim, student of Drawing and Printing, University of Dhaka, Science and Technology affairs Secretary, Bangladesh Student Union, Dhaka University Unit.

“During my 1st year of campus life I had to live in the ‘Gonoroom’ (30/40 students live together in a hall like room)”. My hall had the capacity to give accommodation to all the newcomers. But as the political big brothers were occupying many rooms, the freshmen had to live in the ‘Gonoroom’.”

- Abdul Momin, Surja Sen Hall, University of Dhaka.

“I was a candidate in the DUCSU election. My experience was not good. My family, relatives, friends even teachers got scared for my safety. To be a candidate, I needed two running students as my supporter. But at first no one was ready to support me out of fear. They were scared if they support me, then they will be in trouble.”

- Kaneta Eya Lam-Lam, Session: 2013-14, student of Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka.

“I remember the day of 29 July, 2017. On that day, Vice Chancellor's panel election was taking place in senate building and we were in strike outside the building. Our demand was ‘no panel election before DUCSU election’. We were protesting peacefully but suddenly the teachers attacked us. They physically abused us and some of them were not even our university teachers. They were from other universities.”

-Abu Rayhan Khan, student of Mass Communication and Journalism, President, Bangladesh Chhatra Federation, University of Dhaka.

“I was involved in ‘Quota Reform Movement’ and ‘Safe Road Movement’ last year. I was also in the ‘Anti-Oppressive Students Movement’ in the VC sir's office. Chhatra League attacked us and we were locked in a room. The male leaders physically assaulted the boys and the female leaders assaulted the girls. They also filed a case against the general students.”

- Nusrat Zabin Biva, student of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Dhaka.

\*Micronarratives were collected by Mashiat Zafrin Heea, Marium Islam, Nazrul Islam, and K.M. Shahriar Hossain (Students of International Relations, University of Dhaka and Intern at CGS) during November 2019 at University of Dhaka campus.

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## Commentary on Campus Violence



**Dr. Serajul Islam Choudhury<sup>91</sup>**

Campus violence can be defined as the power projection of a few strayed people on general students with a view to establishing their hegemony. The violence includes sending students to showdowns and rallies forcefully, eating the meal in the dormitory canteen without paying the bill and even involvement in sexual assault nowadays. Violence reaches to the ultimate level when any person/student dies due to it. Their power is derived from their loyalty to the ruling party and assurance of immunity. This campus violence really started during the Ayub Khan regime when Abdul Monem Khan became the Governor of East Pakistan. He created an organization called 'National Students Federation (NSF)' that started the use of violence first, though it was not so widespread. NSF boys used blunt weapons like hockey sticks or cricket stumps rather than firearms. Besides, the

ragging culture was also in practice but was not so violent as it is now. However, after the independence of Bangladesh, violence in university campuses increased to a greater degree. The use of violence has not only increased qualitatively (in terms of using firearms) but also quantitatively (in terms of widespread use of violence).

I can illustrate two major incidents of violence in the past. The first one is the murder of seven students in the Mohsin Hall of the University of Dhaka. Seven Students of Surja Sen Hall were called in to the TV room of Mohsin Hall where they were brush fired. They were murdered because of a conflict between the two factions of Chhatra League (student wing of Awami League) which ultimately resulted in violent confrontation. Another occurrence took place during the Dhaka

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<sup>91</sup> Professor Emeritus, University of Dhaka.  
The interview was recorded by Ashique Mahmud, RDA, CGS.

University Central Students' Union (DUCSU) election in 1973. The Chhatra League was divided into two wings- the pro-government, tagged as Mujibbadi and the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) who called themselves scientific socialists. There was rivalry between the two factions. During the election, when Mujibbadi noticed that JSD was winning, they snatched the ballot papers from the Arts Building where the final counting was scheduled to be held. This resulted in panic, particularly because of the bomb blasts. These two incidents added a new dimension to campus violence.

In my opinion, there are two underlying root causes of these violence. Firstly, there is the invisible support from the government that helps the pro-government students to incite violence and, secondly there is the guarantee that they are beyond the reach of the law. To cope with this problem, I think the power of the dominating students has to be challenged. The first challenge has to come from the authority of the universities itself. It is the responsibility of the university authority to ensure the discipline, security, freedom of movement of general students. Chhatra league at present, controls the seat allotment process in the dormitories against which neither the house tutors nor the Provost of the Halls can exert their authorities. The university administration must take strong measures to stop this. The student's organizations can also

challenge their control. With the domination of Chhatra League, other student organizations like Chhatra Dal and Chhatra Union are not able to work in the universities. Lastly, law enforcement agencies can of course play a vital role by bringing them under the control of law and by punishing them for their activities.

Owing to the absence of all these challenges, violence-prone students can practice their perversions in the university campuses. A very effective way to control them would be, I think, to arrange for regular annual election of the students' union. Elections of teachers' association, officers' association and also of employees' association are held regularly; the only exception is that of the students'. In the last 28 years, no students' election was held in any universities. The DUCSU election that took place recently which has not been satisfactory and remains questionable in numerous respects. If the elections are held regularly, then the elected bodies would be able to establish their authority. A democratic environment would be created which would ensure the participation and inclusiveness of general students and accountability would also be established. The absence of all these engenders violence in the universities.

Teachers can play an active role in fighting against this violence. There are teachers' association in every university

and their role should not be limited to the promotion of professional interests but should include to watch the ensuring of academic atmosphere in the universities. However, it is a matter of regret factionalism has infiltrated into the teachers' associations as well and hindering the discharge of their academic responsibilities. In the teacher recruitment process, this partisan attitude works and candidates who are pro-government, get the preference. These teachers fail to fulfill their expected academic obligations.

If we look at the recent statistics of violence, what we see clearly is that the situation is alarming. This reflects the absence of security for students. University campus and dormitories are supposed to be the most secure places for the students after their own homes. However, they are exposed to violence in their very own campus. This is indicative of a large phenomenon which is the absence of security in the society. Universities are supposed to nurture the future generations, allowing them to act freely to develop their creativity. Unfortunately, universities have failed to do what is expected of them. They are not in advance of the society, they embody and reflect, almost passively, the violence prevailing everywhere.

The murder of Abrar Fahad, student of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), is

illustrative of the situation in the university campuses. The murder was planned and executed by the activists of Chhatra League. This incident shows us how people's right to freedom of expression is being stifled, even physically attacked. It also exposed the university authority's indifference and incompetence to fight against violence. Universities have to create opportunities for students to be creative and promote critical thinking and the ability to ventilate their opinions. To be sure, the death of Abrar Fahad indicates the failure of the administration to create such an environment for the students.

It is high time we stood against this type of campus violence. We are living in a system where people lack their right to security. Murder and forced disappearance go on occurring regularly. This system needs to be changed. Besides, the regular annual election of students in the universities has to be ensured so that a democratic atmosphere can prevail, setting an example for the whole country to follow. The role of law and order authorities and administration has to be made more visible and effective. The administration should not be biased, which is an offence. All these are to be ensured to establish a violence-free university campus.

Students should be creative in their activities and in their thinking. They should nurture creativity and enquiry. This

cannot be done in isolation. For it, they should be allowed and encouraged to be united on the basis of ideology. The absence of democracy that is now seen in the campuses must be eradicated from the

academic life to function properly. Human mutual tolerance has to be developed within the students for creating a better university atmosphere.

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**Annex:**

Some definitional clarification according to BPO Codebook.

**Gunfight.** Shootout opposing the police or security forces to criminals, militants or other irregular forces that do not match the definition of a non-state armed group.

**Clash.** Two-sided violence between groups, outside of the context of war or insurgency. *Example: supporters of rival political parties fight each other.*

**Assault.** One-sided violence by an individual or small group against another individual or small group. *Example: stabbing, shooting of someone by a perpetrator*

**Fight.** Two-sided violence between individuals or small groups. *Example: brawl between 3-4 people.*

**Sexual assault.** One-sided sexual violence, such as rape or attempted rape, by an individual or small group against another individual or small group.

**Destruction of property.** One-sided violence perpetrated with the intent of damaging property. *Examples: vandalism, arson.*

**Mob violence (large group assault).** One-sided violence by a mob or large group against an individual or a comparatively small and/or defenseless group. *Examples: lynching of a thief, looting of shops and houses owned by a religious minority.*



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