

UGC finds varsity violated anti-ragging norms, but lets it off

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THAT even Aman Kachroo's brutal death caused due to ragging has not adequately sensitised the government to the menace of ragging has come to the fore yet again.

Months after 20-year-old Abhishek Sah was found dead in mysterious circumstances on his college campus amidst allegations of ragging, a University Grants Commissions (UGC) committee has found that the SRM University violated anti-ragging regulations. But the Commission, which had after Kachroo's death come out with new stringent anti-ragging norms and launched a 24-hour toll-free anti-ragging helpline to act on related complaints, has proposed no better 'punitive action' against SRM University than issuing a 'censure' against the varsity and expressing 'grave concern'.

Incidentally, the UGC can under the new anti-ragging regulations take strict action like withdrawing of grants to an institute found violating the regulations.

Sah was allegedly subjected to ragging and then killed in August last year. The varsity had claimed he accidentally fell to death from an under-construction building. The police had, however, filed a case of ragging and murder after they discovered Sah had sent out a message to his friend mentioning ragging. Sah's parents had all along claimed that his death was caused due to ragging.

While the case is still under police investigation, Sah's postmortem report also indicates a possibility of ragging before his death.

The UGC had set up a fact-finding committee to investigate allegations of ragging and the institute's role, if any, in the incident. The committee is said to have concluded that while there was no circumstantial evidence to hold the institute responsible, the administration's role in the whole episode was certainly not becoming of an educational institute and in fact violated UGC regulations.

Accordingly, the UGC decided that "punitive action should be taken against the university. However, this punitive action is no more than a censure and expressing 'grave concern' over the incident.

"The Commission considered the fact finding committee report relating to the alleged case of ragging leading to the unfortunate death of Abhishek Sah... and decided that the university should be censured for violation of UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of Ragging in Higher Education Institutions, 2009," read the minutes of the UGC meeting. "The commission further decided that the grave concern expressed by it with regard to this incident be conveyed to the university..."

SRM University Dean Manoj Kumar Pandey said the varsity had not yet received any communication from the UGC in this regard and so won't be able to comment.