

# Prevalence of Ragging and Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Sri Lankan State Universities



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ஒவ்வொரு சிறுவர்களுக்காகவும்

**Prevalence of Ragging and Sexual and Gender Based  
Violence in Sri Lankan State Universities**

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## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	v
List of Abbreviations .....	viii
Abstract .....	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction and Background .....	1
1.1 Research Questions and Objectives .....	3
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	5
2.1. Introduction .....	5
2.2. Ragging and its Definition .....	5
2.3. History of Ragging .....	7
2.4. Ragging: An international phenomenon .....	8
2.5. Ragging in the Sri Lankan Context .....	10
2.6. Ragging as a Subculture in Universities .....	14
2.7. Reasons for the Prevalence of Ragging.....	15
2.8. Forms of Ragging.....	16
2.9. Effect of Ragging .....	16
2.10. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence .....	19
2.11 Gender, Masculinities and SGBV in Sri Lanka .....	21
2.12. The Prevalence of SGBV in Sri Lankan State Universities .....	23
2.13. Legal and Policy Frameworks Pertaining to Gender, Youth and Violence .....	25
Chapter 3: Methodology .....	29
3.1. Introduction .....	29

3.2. Study Management.....	30
3.3. Study Design for Quantitative and Qualitative Studies .....	31
3.4. Survey.....	32
3.4.1. Online questionnaires on detailed experiences of ragging and SGBV.....	36
3.4.2. Analytical strategy for quantitative data.....	37
3.5. Qualitative Study.....	37
3.5.1. Data collection methods .....	38
3.5.2. Sampling.....	39
3.5.3. Gaining consent .....	40
3.5.4. Planning and conducting interviews.....	40
3.5.5. Transcribing the interviews and FGD's .....	45
3.5.6. Qualitative analysis .....	45
3.6. Secondary Data .....	45
3.7. Ethical Issues and Clearance .....	46
<b>Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings .....</b>	<b>47</b>
4.1. Introduction .....	47
4.2. Students' (Victims') Experience on Ragging and their Backgrounds .....	47
4.2.1 Different types of violent acts and experiences.....	47
4.2.2 Relationship between ragging experiences and characteristics of victims .....	53
4.2.3 Impact of ragging on students' attendance to lectures .....	60
4.2.4 Impact of ragging on mental and physical health.....	61
4.3 Background of the Perpetrators.....	67
4.3.1 The number of perpetrators .....	67

4.3.2	Characteristics of perpetrators .....	69
4.3.3	Performance of the perpetrators at GCE A/L .....	73
4.3.4.	Tendency to seek medical assistance by perpetrators .....	76
4.4	University Students' Experience on SGBV .....	81
4.4.1	Types of SGBV experienced by university students .....	81
4.4.2	Background of university students who experienced SGBV .....	86
4.5	University Staff's Perspective on SGBV .....	91
4.5.1	Types of SGBV experienced by university staff members .....	92
4.5.2	Gender and position of university staff members who have been sexually harassed at the university .....	96
4.5.3	University staff members' views on the availability of supportive mechanisms to protect themselves from harassments .....	98
4.6	Handling Students' Complaints on Ragging and SGBV .....	100
4.6.1	Students' inclination to complain about ragging and SGBV .....	100
4.6.2	Students' views and perception on how university administration deals with complaints on ragging and SGBV .....	101
4.6.3	Students' views and perception on the ragging and SGBV environment at the university .....	102
<b>Chapter 5: Conclusions .....</b>		<b>105</b>
5.1	Research Questions and Main Findings .....	105
5.2.	Students' (Victims) Experience on Ragging and their Backgrounds.....	106
5.3	Background of the Perpetrators.....	109
5.4.	Students' and Staff Members' Experiences on SGBV .....	109
5.5.	Handling Students' Complaints on Ragging and SGBV .....	110
5.6.	Limitations .....	111

References .....	113
Appendices .....	121
Appendix 1- Questionnaires.....	121
Appendix 2- Interview schedule .....	138
Appendix 3- Information Sheet.....	140
Appendix 4- Interview Consent Forms .....	141
Appendix 5: Establishment of Higher Education Institutions in Sri Lanka.....	142

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1: Types of Questionnaires Administered.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Table 2: Types of verbal acts .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Table 3: Types of negative psychological experiences .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Table 4: Types of physical acts .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Table 5: Table Types of sexual harassments .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Table 6: Intensity of negative experiences in different academic years.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Table 7: Intensity of ragging experiences in different locations of the university .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Table 8: Intensity of ragging experiences in relation to different perpetrators.....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Table 9: Cross tabulation between type of accommodation and the intensity of ragging (N = 6225) .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Table 10: Chi-Square tests results based on table 9 .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Table 11: Cross tabulation between faculty enrolled and intensity of ragging (N = 6236) ....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Table 12: Chi-Square tests results based on table 11 .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Table 13: Cross tabulation between gender and intensity of ragging (N = 6219) .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Table 14: Chi-Square tests results based on table 13 .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Table 15: Impact of Ragging on Attending Lectures (N = 3710).....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Table 16: Receiving medical care due to effects of ragging (N = 5629) .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Table 17: Chi-Square tests results based on table 16 .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Table 18: Impact of ragging on sleep disorders (N = 6102) .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Table 19: Chi-Square tests results based on table 18 .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Table 20: Composition of perpetrators (N=7084) .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Table 21: Information of perpetrators based on year of study .....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Table 22: Cross tabulation between the Faculty and perpetrators (N = 6528) .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Table 23: Chi-Square Tests Results Based on table 22 .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Table 24: Cross tabulation between Medium of instructions and perpetrators (N = 5224) .</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Table 25: Chi-Square tests results based on table 24 .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Table 26: Cross tabulation between gender and perpetrators (N = 6200) .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Table 27: Chi-Square tests results based on table 26 .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Table 28: Cross tabulation between being victims and becoming perpetrators (N = 5976) ..</b>	<b>72</b>



<b>Table 29: Chi-Square tests results based on table 28 .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Table 30: Cross tabulation between Z-Score and perpetrators (N = 2740).....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Table 31: Chi-Square tests results based on table 30 .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Table 32: Cross tabulation between Students’ attendance and perpetrators (N = 3928) .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Table 33: Chi-Square tests results based on table 32 .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Table 34: Cross tabulation between understanding of ragging act and students’ engagement in ragging (N = 6401) .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Table 35: Chi-Square tests results based on table 34 .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Table 36: Tendency to Seek Medical Assistance by Perpetrators (N = 5569).....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Table 37: Chi-Square tests results based on table 36 .....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Table 38: Sleep Disorders of the Perpetrators (N = 6044) .....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Table 39: Chi-Square tests results based on table 38 .....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Table 40: Instances of feeling insecure.....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Table 41: Verbal sexual violence .....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Table 42: Instances of being embarrassed by students due to other people's behavior.....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Table 43: The ways of soliciting sexual bribes .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Table 44: Type of physical sexual violence.....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Table 45: Cross tabulation between gender and discrimination (N = 4921) .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Table 46: Chi-Square tests results based on table 45 .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Table 47: Cross tabulation between ‘gender’ and ‘had sex without their consent’ (N = 4697) .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Table 48: Cross tabulation between ‘having or not having a partner’ and ‘had sex’ without their consent with the partner or other parties (N = 4697).....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Table 49: Cross tabulation between ‘students’ GPA’ and ‘students who had sex without their consent’ (N = 1826) .....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Table 50: Chi-Square tests results based on table 49 .....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Table 51: Cross tabulation between ‘students’ GPA’ and ‘students who were asked to perform sexual acts in return for higher grades’ (N = 1823).....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Table 52: Chi-Square tests results based on table 51 .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Table 53: Verbal sexual violence (N = 1257) .....</b>	<b>92</b>

<b>Table 54: Instances of University Staff Members being Embarrassed due to the behavior of others (N = 1257) .....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Table 55: Type of Sexual Bribes (N = 1257) .....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Table 56: Physical sexual harassments experienced by university staff members at the university (Had sex or attempted have sex without consent) (N = 1257) .....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Table 57: Sexual bribes based on the gender (N = 916) .....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Table 58: Physical sexual harassments based on job category (N = 901) .....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Table 59: University staff's views the availability of legal and social protection.....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Table 60: Students' inclination to complain about ragging and SGBV .....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Table 61: Students' views and perception on how university administration deals with ragging and SGBV complaints .....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Table 62: Students' views and perception on the raging and SGBV environment at the university .....</b>	<b>102</b>

## List of Abbreviations

<b>CGEE</b>	Centre for Gender Equity and Equality
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>HEI</b>	Higher Education Institutions
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>JVP</b>	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna
<b>KI</b>	Key Informant
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
<b>SL</b>	Sri Lankan
<b>SLMA</b>	Sri Lanka Medical Association
<b>UGC</b>	University Grants Commission
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Funding
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

## Abstract

This research examines the prevalence of ragging and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Sri Lankan public sector universities. The research questions include how serious ragging and SGBV are within the university system, as well as what societal, communal, interpersonal, and individual-related aspects of universities allow ragging and SGBVs to persist. It also examines the effectiveness of the structures and procedures that are in place within the system to handle the issue of ragging and SGBV. According to the literature, ragging in Sri Lankan public sector universities leads to harassment, including SGBV. Thus, there have been reports of physical and mental harm as well as instances of student deaths. The study used eight public sector universities as the sample and adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions were used as the methods of data collection. Findings are broadly categorized as students' (Victims') experience on ragging, background of the perpetrators, students' experience on SGBV, staff's perspective on SGBV and handling students' complaints on ragging and SGBV. Overall, the results indicate that ragging is a significant issue at state universities. It is important to note that the findings of the study are mostly consistent with the existing literature. However, there are differences in the form of ragging and SGBV experiences among universities, such as ragging that continues even after the first year, which is only observed in a few universities. Further, ragging takes different forms such as verbal harassments, physical harassments including assaults and at times sexual harassment which result in severe mental stress for victims. Sexual related violence is taking place through unwelcome sexual comments or jokes. The perpetrators, have traits such as belonging to low income households coming from rural backgrounds, staying largely in university dormitories, and having had a troubled upbringing. The findings also reveal that university subcultures are made up of rural and urban class divisions that have resulted in the formation of two subcultures, with urban students opposing the subculture that uses ragging as the main tool to transmit a particular subculture. It is also important to note that incidents related to SGBV were reported only from a single university. Furthermore, it was shown that the majority of the students do not have faith in university administration's anti-ragging measures. The participants felt that a strong student-teacher relationship and a higher level of teacher involvement during the induction of newcomers can contribute to minimize ragging to a greater extent. The perpetrators, have traits such as being from low income households, coming from rural backgrounds, staying largely in university dormitories, and having had a troubled upbringing. The findings also reveal that university subcultures are made up of rural and urban class divisions that have resulted in the formation of two subcultures, with urban students opposing the subculture that uses ragging as the main tool to transmit a particular subculture. It is also important to note that incidents related to SGBV were reported only from a single university. Furthermore, it was shown that the majority of students do not have faith in the university administration's anti-ragging measures. The participants felt that a strong student-teacher relationship and a higher level of teacher involvement during the induction of newcomers can contribute to minimize ragging to a greater extent.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction and Background**

Bullying which is commonly known as ragging of first year students or the freshers by senior students has been a regular phenomenon in Sri Lankan public sector universities since the time of the University of Ceylon which now has become a menace. There is evidence to prove that the violent nature of ragging has resulted in many negative consequences on the academic as well as the personal lives of the victims.

Ragging in the early phases would have been a mild version practiced for socializing purposes, as accounts of severe ragging or torture have not been recorded, during the early period of Ceylon University history (Gamage, 2017: 35). Thus, 'Ragging' in the early years had been perceived as a tool to 'equalize' all new entrants for which students used certain acts to depict 'humour and pranks' that seems to have got institutionalized in the Sri Lankan State University System. Although the severity of ragging was mild at the beginning gradually it increased resulting in some victims being permanently crippled or some even attempting to commit suicide. Specially, female students are severely traumatized by the ragging experience, as many are unable to cope with the vulgarity, humiliation, sadism, obscene language, mental torture and cruelty perpetrated on them (Premadasa, Wanigasooriya, Thalib, Ellepola, 2011: 55).

Moreover, there is evidence to prove that thousands of new entrants are harassed, bullied, and abused by their seniors, under the disguise of "ragging" with sexualized and gendered overtones. With social media and newspapers publicizing the harassment the victims face, ragging has now drawn major attention of the general public and organizations fighting for transparency and accountability of the higher education system. There is evidence that ragging in the present form may be a manifestation of a deeper and more pervasive problem, indicative of deep-rooted unhealthy norms and reflective of a culture of violence that is itself gendered and sexualized (Spencer, 1990).

Having recognized the prevalence and the gravity that resulted in one student committing suicide, in 1997, an Act titled, 'Prohibition of Ragging and Other Forms of Violence in Educational Institutions Act', No. 20 of 1998, was gazetted to deal with such forms of violence at Educational Institutions including universities. The Act specifies and criminalizes certain

kinds of intimidation, such as hostage-taking, wrongful restraint, unlawful confinement, forcible occupation and damage to property of an educational institution. Responding to same, in 2010, University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka (UGC) released the Circular No. 919 (2010), 'Guidelines to be introduced to curb the menace of ragging in the Universities or Higher Education Institutes (HEIs)', to provide specific strategies to address and combat ragging. Unfortunately, two decades after the Act became law and nearly a decade after the release of Circular 919, the problem continues to escalate.

Realising the need to address this serious issue, the UGC developed 'Policy Guidelines on Equity and Equality'. This is an attempt:

- To create an environment of freedom and safety within universities that allows students, academics and non-academics to pursue their work without any hindrance;
- To encourage research on the internal organizational structure/working of universities so as to create consciousness on social and gender issues'.

Furthermore, in 2016, the UGC established the UGC Centre for Gender Equity/ Equality (CGEE) and Prevention of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and Ragging. The centre attempts to ensure that institutions within its purview to provide "a conducive, gender-just, working and learning environment to all its members and are recognized for their excellent practices'. Within this institutional structure, the newly established center took a proactive stance towards ragging, by recognizing the role ragging plays in supporting and propagating unhealthy gender norms, and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

In 2017, a 24-hour helpline was set up by the UGC as a complaining mechanism to assist students who are in distress or actively facing violence. From 2017 the UGC - CGEE has been accepting complaints of harassment occurring at universities through in-person submissions, letters, calls, and web entries. A total of 557 complaints have been submitted during the 2017-18 period with roughly equal numbers each year.

Within this backdrop, studying ragging has become the responsibility of the relevant authorities. The common understanding is that ragging is conducted in secret and therefore the depth and the extent of the problem is not generally known to many. There is a common

understanding among the public that certain political parties are also acting as an invisible hand in the prevalence of ragging and SGBV in Sri Lankan state universities.

However, in certain instances it may appear to occur with the consent and willingness of victims and participants (Spencer, 1990). In some studies, first year students insist that they quite enjoyed being ragged or that it was the best part of their university life. ‘Milder’ forms of ragging such as enforced dress codes, singing and dancing upon request have now become common. A majority of respondents in an Indian study did not view them as ragging at all. They viewed only physical and sexual violence as ‘ragging’ (Rao et al 2015)

Nevertheless, realizing the gravity of the problem, research has been conducted to understand the problem. However, such research had a limited scope, and was based on the interests of individual researchers. While these studies provide valuable insights into the problem of ragging they are not designed to address the question of what system-wide conditions support such phenomena and allow incidents of ragging and sexual and gender-based violence to persist year after year. Furthermore, research on ragging is not necessarily tied to action and seems to have done little to inform policy makers even at the local level.

Apart from the research conducted by individuals to understand the nature of the problem and its prevalence, efforts have been made by the UGC as well as individual universities during the last decade to combat ragging and to minimize SGBV. Irrespective of the strengths of the efforts made by the relevant parties to address and redress the issue, there is evidence of the prevalence of ragging and SGBV in Sri Lankan state universities. Therefore, system-wide research tied to policy and action is deemed crucial to understand the nature of ragging and SGBV within the university system and how institutions may allow such practices to persist. Thus, this study attempts to fill the existing gap.

## **1.1 Research Questions and Objectives**

This research was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the nature of ragging and SGBV within the university system,

2. What elements of the universities allow ragging and SGBVs to persist, and
3. Within the university system, what mechanisms exist to address these problems and how effectively are they able to address these problems?

The objectives of the research are:

1. To describe the nature of ragging and SGBV within the Sri Lankan University System,
2. To identify the conditions that support the persistence of ragging and SGBV.
3. To identify the strategies used to address ragging and SGBV and the effectiveness of the methods used.

This report consists of six chapters. Following the chapter on introduction, the next chapter discusses the literature relevant to the issues studied within the report. To make the reader understand the background in which the study is being conducted, the third chapter consists of a discussion on the higher education system in Sri Lanka. With a justification on the selected research approaches and methods, the fourth chapter contains the research methodology. Fifth chapter is on the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data. The final chapter consists of the conclusions of the study.

The next chapter contains a review of the relevant literature to better understand the theoretical underpinnings of the nature and prevalence of ragging.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature relating to the prevalence of ragging and SGBV. This includes the definition of ragging, its history, its presence in the international arena, ragging in the Sri Lankan (SL) context, ragging as a University subculture, reasons for the prevalence of ragging, different forms of ragging and effects of ragging on academic and personal lives of undergraduates. Further, it includes literature reviews on SGBV such as Gender and SGBV in Sri Lanka, significance of SGBV in the SL Universities and the legal and policy issues relating to gender, youth and violence in universities.

### 2.2. Ragging and its Definition

Ragging is mostly found in universities or institutions. Ragging, hazing, fagging, bullying, pledging and horse-playing are different terms used in different parts of the world, but each signifying the same old practice of welcoming the fresher in a barbaric manner (Wajahat, 2014: 129). Ragging is practiced all over the world, with different nomenclature; *baptême* in French; *doop* in Dutch and *mopokaste* in Finnish (Garg, 2009: 264). Accordingly, the term ‘ragging’ can be applied to any unruly behavior that involves mocking or treating any student offensively so as to cause nuisance, frustration or feelings of fear to adversely affect his or her state of mind (Garg, 2009: 263). The ‘freshers’<sup>1</sup> are traumatized both physically and mentally deriving sadistic pleasure by the seniors amounting to gross violation of basic human rights. A number of students every year are being forced to go through this experience. Ragging is associated with physical, behavioural, emotional and social problems among victims (Nallapu, 2013: 33). Furthermore, it has been noted that various incidents of suicides, violence, physical

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<sup>1</sup> A term used to denote the first year students entering into Sri Lankan State Universities

injuries, sexual abuses and psychological disorders, caused by ragging are also reported (Shinde, 2017: 664).

Numerous definitions have been given by different authorities regarding ragging. The Supreme Court of India has given a comprehensive definition of ragging; it is any disorderly conduct, whether by words spoken or written, or by an act which has the effect of teasing, treating or handling with rudeness any student, including in rowdy or undisciplined activities which causes or are likely to cause annoyance, hardship, or psychological harm or to raise fear to junior student and which has the effect of causing or generating a sense of shame or embarrassment so as to adversely affect the psyche of a fresher or junior student; ragging is a form of abuse of newcomers to educational institutions, wherein some senior does it in terms of verbal, physical and sexual aggression (Garg, 2009: 264).

Ragging is also considered as any act, conduct or practice by which dominant power of senior students, former students or outsiders, is brought to bear on students freshly enrolled or students who are in any way considered junior by other students and includes individual or collective acts or practices. It encompasses the following:

- (a) involve physical or psychological assault or threat or use of force or wrongful confinement or restraint;
- (b) violate the status, dignity and honour of such students; or
- (c) expose students to ridicule and contempt and affect their self-esteem; or
- (d) entail verbal abuse and aggression, indecent gestures and obscene behaviour (Chitkara University, 2009: 55).

Ragging is an age old practice in most professional institutions, where in-coming junior students are subjected to a certain amount of 'good natured' teasing by seniors. This is intended to break the ice and to allow the juniors to get to know the seniors (Nallapu, 2013: 33). However, this act is not limited to schools, colleges, universities and hostels, but it has penetrated every field in the society. A noticeable increase has been observed in ragging all over the world and especially in Southern part of Asia which includes Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka. Ragging has become a fashion or one can say a routine in institutions especially after the

establishment of residential campuses known as hostels, where seniors involved find a sense of pride and satisfaction in it. However, in recent years, ragging has changed from normal human methods to cruel, brutal and inhuman methods which is mainly due to lack of supervision and absence of adequate guidance (Wajahat, 2014: 132). Therefore, this act of annoying, teasing and torturing a person mentally and physically at times goes out of control and results in severe psychological harm. There are cases where such treatment had led to serious physical injuries and sometimes even to a student's death in the form of suicide (Wajahat, 2014: 132). Moreover, these will not only cause humiliation or harassment but will also have far-reaching negative effects on an individual's self-esteem, self-confidence and personality. Accordingly, ragging is the biggest fear of any student entering college, especially those moving away from home to live in hostels. Scholars suggest that ragging is a criminal problem which has psychological roots and is a social ignorance (Nallapu, 2013: 35).

### **2.3. History of Ragging**

Ragging has been in existence since the Anno Domini era (A.D.). At that time, it was not inhumane; rather it existed in its mild form as a sort of tradition during the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. It has been noted that Olympics in Greece, and later the armed forces of several countries started practicing this ritual. From the army training institutions, the practice of ragging came into the field of engineering, medical and other residential institutions. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century several students' organizations were formed in Europe and the United States. Accordingly, this practice became a part of the army and English public school tradition. They started practicing ragging on the new entrants in their community in a mild form. However, ragging became a major problem in the west after World War I. During the World War ragging underwent massive transformations as new techniques were introduced. These were introduced by students who returned from war and re-joined college. These techniques were actually severe forms of ragging which had been practiced in army camps (Shinde, 2017: 664-665).

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, master's degree students needed to obtain a document that affirmed they had gone through the equivalent of middle ages hell night. Veteran students' extorted money from the freshers, ill-treated them physically and forced them to dress in old garbs. One such French custom that immigrated to American universities was the cap or beanie that

American freshers and many Greek pledges routinely wore for a term or even a year. The custom still exists on a voluntary basis at a few American colleges such as Phillips University in Edin, Oklahoma. The systems of penalizing, disappeared from the continent, but not before many young men were humiliated, injured and killed. It has been recorded that Early Egyptians, Romans and Greeks were aware of ragging. The Duke of Exeter is supposed to be responsible for the beginning of ragging in England. Racking was also in practice parallel to ragging with a special instrument of torture known as 'rack'. However, later, it got mixed up with ragging. In the Netherlands in 1962 there was an uproar because freshers were given treatment, a reference to the dreaded World War II concentration camps. Accordingly, at one time a fresher suffered a brain injury when a senior student tried to knock a ball off his head with a hockey stick.

In another custom, more than 200 young men were packed naked or half naked into a small room. The seniors then performed various kinds of barbarities on them. France has also had experienced problems controlling young men. The French term 'brim a de' includes hazing, ragging, silly and dangerous jokes and forced drinking. During the 1920s in France, a national campaign raged against brim a des. The minister of public instruction forbade them in all French schools, and the minister of war ordered an end to such practices. According to a 1928 notice in the New York Times, brim a des had too often gone beyond the limits of fun with restless boys, who often voiced persecution and cruelty. In the military schools, practical jokes had been pushed much further. The ministers of instruction and war emphasized that new boys must be welcomed cordially, fairly and kindly. Brim a des have also been a problem in Canada, perhaps because that country had imported such customs from the British, French and American Greeks. Hazing activities flourished on the Canadian border. Many incidents were reported in Canada during the orientation week, which was the conventional method for introducing new students to college life (Wajahat, 2014: 130).

#### **2.4. Ragging: An international phenomenon**

Ragging or bullying is not limited to a particular country or continent; rather it has been an international phenomenon. Ragging has been highlighted in western literature too (e.g.: in Britain, Tom Brown's Schooldays and Boy by Roald Dahl and C. S. Lewis's The Silver Chair) (Garg, 2009: 264). In a comparative, cross-sectional, multilevel study in 35 countries in Europe

and North America for the period 2001-2002, it was observed that adolescents from families of low affluence reported higher prevalence of being victims of bullying (Srabstein, Piazza, 2008: 114). Adolescents who attended schools and live in countries where socio-economic differences are greater are at a higher risk of being bullied. Bullying is a substantial problem affecting Canadian children as well (Srabstein, Piazza, 2008: 115). In a survey on final year medical students in 6 medical colleges in Pakistan, 52% of respondents reported that they had faced bullying or harassment during their medical education (Garg, 2009: 264).

The ill effects of bullying are not only restricted to the victim alone. The catastrophe experienced by a victim of ragging seems to be limited to that individual and his family; but if we look deep, then we come across the vast ill effects on the conscience of the masses. What about the batch mates of Aman Kachroo in India? After the Aman Kachroo episode, the parents who had sent their wards to professional colleges for achieving their desired goals were constantly in fear regarding the safety of their children. This fear is certainly going to hamper the future prospects of the next generation, the future of the country (Garg, 2009: 264).

Ragging represents a form of violence (e.g., Parent & Fortier, 2018). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person or against a group that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, or deprivation” (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002). Violence, therefore, involves intentionality and results in either actual or the potential for psychological or physical harm. Violence directed at others could be between individuals, groups or institutions (see Krug, et al., 2002) and these violent acts may be physical, sexual, and psychological (Parent & Fortier, 2018).

According to Parent & Fortier (2018), ragging as a form of violence includes some distinctive characteristics. Ragging, although intentional, may not be conducted with malicious intent (Allen & Madden, 2012). It is generally conducted from year to year as traditions or rituals (Silva, Caldeira, Mendes, & Botelho, 2014) with fresh perpetrators and victims, and with past victims taking on the role of perpetrators in subsequent cycles of ragging. Each cycle is a process of initiation and acceptance into a particular organization, or continued membership in the organization (Campos et al., 2005). This cyclic nature makes ragging distinct from other forms

of collective violence such as group-on-group violence (Allen & Madden, 2012; WHO, 2018). With the broader understanding of the nature of ragging in general, the next section focuses on how ragging takes place in the Sri Lankan public sector universities.

## **2.5. Ragging in the Sri Lankan Context**

Bullying (commonly known as ragging) of first year students, called freshers, by senior students is a form of severe ragging at the beginning of each academic year. This has been a regular phenomenon in Sri Lankan state universities since the time of the University of Ceylon, later Peradeniya, in the late 60s to early 70s (Gamage, 2017: 35). Perhaps a form of ragging existed since the inception of the residential university located in a picturesque landscape providing a romantic atmosphere for the students embarking on a learning experience distinct from what they received in schools, many of which were located in rural settings. However, ragging in the early phases would have been a mild version practiced for socializing purposes, as there are no accounts of severe ragging, or torture, during the early period of Ceylon University history (Gamage, 2017: 35).

Generally, in Sri Lankan universities, ragging takes place within university premises, including in locations like outside lecture halls, tutorial rooms, canteens, the library, roads and parks. Students are asked to read a book upside down, smoke a cigarette putting the lighted side in the mouth, remove shoes, kneel down, give a political speech or even go in front of a female fresher and say something silly. In extreme cases, boys are asked to smoke cigarettes if they disclose they are non-smokers and they are asked to drink a cocktail of alcoholic drinks if they disclose they are not alcohol consumers. Freshers are forced by seniors who engage in ragging to engage in pseudo sexual acts and acts that are against normal etiquette in society; most importantly including removing clothes and displaying personal sides of the body. In the case of males, they would even be forced to masturbate in front of the seniors if the event takes place in a residence hall room or similar space. In these instances, freshers are powerless compared to the seniors who perform these acts (Gamage, 2017: 35). However, such acts are considered to be very rare.

Nevertheless, verbal and emotional abuse is much more frequent than sexual or physical abuse in Sri Lankan universities. Physical abuse of the new students is not widespread, and when it occurs, it is not of a severe type (Premadasa, Wanigasooriya, Thalib, Ellepola, 2011: 556). Specially, female students are severely traumatized by the ragging experience, as many are unable to cope with the vulgarity, humiliation, sadism, obscene language, mental torture and cruelty perpetrated on them (Premadasa, Wanigasooriya, Thalib, Ellepola, 2011: 558). For instance, Miss Rathnaseeli of Sangamitta Hall could not bear the harshness of the rag which forced her to jump from the second floor of the hall crippling her for life and thereby destroying her future. This is a result of a severe and ugly ragging the freshers had to face at the University of Peradeniya in 1973 (Panditharatne, 2008: 355).

It has been observed that there is an element of class jealousy on the part of seniors who engage in ragging in Sri Lankan universities which reflects social deviancy (Gamage, 2017: 35). The ragging has to do with the general stratification of society along various hierarchies and the power imbalances between the various social classes. Being young and coming from socially deprived backgrounds, most senior students are not in a position of power derived from social, political, and economic hierarchies. It is possible to hypothesize that senior students who come to the university from well to do or urban backgrounds are not inclined to engage in ragging (Gamage, 2017: 36). Also, if they see some freshers who come to the universities with the trappings of urban middle class backgrounds, they are taken to task. For example, wearing jeans, expensive shoes or shirts, mod haircuts, and expensive watches can be an attraction to good-looking female freshers. Seniors who engage in ragging force freshers to either remove such items or confiscate these items temporarily to prevent social imbalance in the university premises. Students from lower socio-economic, rural and low urban backgrounds, as well as students from minority caste backgrounds, have been coming to universities since mid to late 1960s. This made the percentage of students entering universities from high socio-economic and urban backgrounds a minority. This imbalance in class composition made those from the latter background the subject of class jealousy in the eyes of those from the former background (Gamage, 2017: 36). Those from lower socio-economic and rural backgrounds saw those from well to do families and urban schools or with western outlooks in behaviour (dress, hair style,

English language ability, social contacts, etc.) as class enemies who needed to be tamed and put in their place (Gamage, 2017: 37).

Another hypothesis regarding ragging in Sri Lankan universities is that it is associated with university student politics. There are formally established branches of national political parties in universities. In order to take control of the Students' Association, an entity sanctioned by university regulations to address the welfare needs of students, politically motivated groups compete among each other. In most campuses, office bearers of the Students' Association usually have been elected in the past from the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), a leading leftist party in Sri Lanka. However, since it was not in the ruling coalition, it could not offer employment or other benefits to graduates. Nonetheless, given the elitist nature of national politics and mainstream political parties, the JVP had become attractive to sections of the electorate that did not have access to these parties, including many students in universities. These student bodies or associations with JVP officials tended to adopt a radical platform in relation to education and employment matters. Today the situation has changed somewhat. The Frontline Party (FP) also known as Peratugamee Pakshaya, is a JVP breakaway that has taken over student politics and associations in universities. It is possible that student activists of the FP or those affiliated with the JVP who come from rural and urban but marginalized socio-economic and caste backgrounds, engage in forms of ragging to maintain their superiority over those who come to the university from more privileged socio-economic and caste backgrounds. With the added muscle of the JVP (which has of late entered into winning coalitions and thus been part of the government), they are better organized to create an encompassing consciousness among students who feel marginalized from the mainstream socio-politico-economic landscape and the opportunities it offers (Gamage, 2017: 37).

However, although the victims had felt irritable and had outbursts of anger, it is reassuring that these situations did not lead to any violent confrontations between the two parties and the long-term consequences seem to be minimal as the students perceived such treatment by senior students to be more of a joke or as light-hearted and not a discriminatory practice (Premadasa, Wanigasooriya, Thalib, Ellepola, 2011: 556).



Additionally, all universities are government institutions and the total number of seats available for the prospective students is limited. In 2017, out of 253,330 students who sat the General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) Examination, 163,104 (64%) had qualified for university entrance, but only 24,000 (14%) of them were able to get enrolled in university education (Department of Census and Statistics, 2017). The vast minority that gets selected for higher education, may, therefore, view any harassment that they would suffer at the hands of the senior students as something that they have to live with if their long term goals are to be achieved. Also, many students still find it considerably difficult to finance their secondary and tertiary education. An attitude that may have implications in this context is how violence, especially against women in domestic settings, is perceived by the victims themselves in countries such as Sri Lanka, who tend to tolerate and conceal it even when it is extreme and physical (Wanasundera, 2000: 253).

The government and higher education authorities have been grappling with the issue of ragging for several decades primarily by way of adopting a legal approach. Although many attempts have been made to address this issue, the complexity involved does not allow them to reach the root cause or identify the prime suspects with ease. In the act of ragging both the sexes are equally involved and they both take advantage of being seniors which makes it difficult to identify the culprits. Majority of the students do not support ragging in the universities as it has resulted in serious mental stress, psychological disorders and others physical disabilities. Ragging has left an impact on those who have experienced ragging even for a day. Students entering colleges and universities are faced with study related burdens and careers related issues, and therefore if ragging results in ruining their personality and career then it should be strictly banned from all colleges and universities (Premadasa, Wanigasooriya, Thalib, Ellepola, 2011: 561).

Apart from the measures introduced in the past by the government (Prohibition of Ragging and other Form of Violence in Educational Institutions Act, No.22 of 1998 (Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka 1998)), the UGC, which oversees all higher education institutions in Sri Lanka, has recently promulgated additional regulations aimed at preventing harassment of the new students by their seniors. The university authorities are now

required to report such incidents to the police, and those found guilty of the offences are liable to rigorous imprisonment of up to 10 years, expulsion from the institution of higher education and payment for damages suffered by the victim (University Grant Commission, 2010). An additional stipulation is that all students pledge in writing that they will not engage in harassment of the new entrants.

## **2.6. Ragging as a Subculture in Universities**

The notion that ragging in Sri Lankan campuses is part of a university subculture pervades the literature. A subculture frequently holds on to notions and beliefs which are at variance with that of the parent culture. In this instance, especially in the post-1970s phase, the parent culture would refer to the larger Sinhala and Tamil-speaking rural poor and lower-middle class and working-class urban strata from which the student population is largely drawn (Hemantha 2006; Weeramunda 2008; Ruwanpura 2011). Ragging is also a form of indoctrination (Keating, Pomerantz, Pommer, Ritt, Miller, & McCormick, 2005) and in the university context; it is to the university 'subculture'. Ragging therefore is presented as a process of inculcating values of equality in students.

Some argue that ragging is part of the university subculture. Maintaining seniority among the student population (also as a way of defying social hierarchies existing beyond the boundaries of the university), or indeed finding suitable partners for romantic relationships can be the precursor to the emergence of ragging in universities (Gamage, 2017:38).

The extent to which ragging has evolved from a simple exercise by senior students to establish their power and authority over freshers for individual motives, to a complex phenomenon where the subject of ragging becomes harmful physically and psychologically has to be understood in relation to the broader changes that have occurred in universities over the decades, student mentality, and the prevailing subculture (Wajahat, 2014: 133).

According to Ruwanpura (2011) ragging is a really important aspect of the university subculture because it makes the campus a space of social levelling. This is because, ragging establishes unity and a sense of community among newcomers to an organization (Allen & Madden, 2012; Silva et al, 2014; Weeramunda, 2008)

Regrettably, ragging has evolved into a socially, culturally, and perhaps legally unacceptable practice in various universities. Such practices amounting to torture cannot be condoned purely on the basis of other justifications including the argument of a subculture and even social justice (Gamage, 2017: 38).

One argument for its tolerance by authorities is the assumption that it is a temporary phenomenon limited to the first few weeks of the new academic year. Thus, many academic staff members also tend to tolerate and overlook acts of ragging. However, this is only relevant if ragging is conducted publicly. Research indicates that the more sinister aspects of ragging take place away from the public eye (Gamage, 2017: 39).

## **2.7. Reasons for the Prevalence of Ragging**

According to scholars, it is observed that the main causes for the prevalence of ragging are:

- importance the seniors get in the initial stages of admission by helping and guiding the new comers for various things in the absence of or ineffectiveness of institutional mechanisms (ragging is justified by these students on the ground that ragging is the only way by which the new students can be taught about the traditions of the institution),
- eagerness of seniors to show off their power, authority and superiority and influence over their junior students,
- being a means of retaliation (seniors were ragged, so they also do the same thing to their juniors),
- introduction of juniors to the use of alcohol in hostels, satisfaction of sadistic pleasures, and making a ‘fashion statement’ (many senior students live under the misconception that ragging makes a style statement and will put them in the ‘influential crowd’ of their university),
- lack of supervision and lack of implementation of serious anti-ragging measures by college authorities,
- vacant or no posts of wardens in the hostels. Many wardens are not actually staying in the hostel and ragging is not considered a social evil (Chopra, 2009: 55-58)

## 2.8. Forms of Ragging

There are various forms of ragging observed in the universities and other institutions and they are as follows:

- 1. The verbal torture:** Verbal torture involves engaging in loose talk. The fresher men may be asked to sing the lyrics of any vulgar song or use abusive language while talking to the seniors.
- 2. Dress code ragging:** The fresher men are asked to dress in a specific dress code for a particular period to time. The dress code ragging may make the fresher men feel awkward and uncomfortable as it often brings them unnecessary attention from everybody.
- 3. Formal Introduction:** This involves asking the fresh men to introduce themselves in different styles.
- 4. Sexual Abuse:** This is the severest form of ragging that takes place in universities. The seniors are mainly interested in juicy details such as the anatomical description of one's body parts, his or her sexual interests, etc. In many cases, the fresh men have been asked to strip before the seniors.
- 5. Playing the fool:** The fresher men may be asked to enact scenes from a particular movie or mimic a particular film state. In many cases, the seniors may also ask the fresher men to do silly acts.
- 6. Hostel Ragging:** Outstation students who stay in the hostel are most vulnerable to ragging. They may be asked to do all odd acts from cleaning the room of seniors to washing their clothes, from fetching them water or milk to completing their assignments.
- 7. Drug Abuse:** This can be the worst form of ragging wherein the fresher men are forced to try drugs thereby driving them into addiction etc. (Shinde, 2017: 665)

## 2.9. Effect of Ragging

The persons who have been ragged have developed psychological, physical, emotional and behavioural problems. It is stress, which is believed to be caused mostly by external events.

Ragging mainly induces stress. Even the very thought of ragging provokes enough stress among the first year undergraduates who enrol for various courses at state universities in Sri Lanka. It has physical, emotional and behavioural effects on students and can create negative feelings. Stress is a mind and body response or reaction to a real or imagined threat, event or change. It is somewhat a nonspecific biological, emotional and behavioural process that occurs when physical or psychological well-being is disturbed or threatened and it produces severe anxiety. Any environmental condition or event, that disrupts or is perceived as a threat to physical or psychological well-being, may evoke stress.

Stress is one of the most important variables of ragging which leads a person towards psychological, physiological, cognitive and behavioural problems. These problems are specified below:

- physiological problems (nausea, headaches, hypertension, sleeping disorders, elevated blood pressure, increased heart rate, skin disorders, asthma and rheumatoid arthritis),
- psychological problems (anxiety disorder is the most common reaction to stress, anxiety affects the performance level, negative self-image, reduced self-esteem and loss of faith, anger, irritability and nightmares, depression, lack of interest, and withdrawal behaviour, panic disorder, social phobia, and obsessive compulsive disorder),
- changes in cognitive pattern (lack of concentration and attention, reduced productivity, forgetfulness, errors in judgment and constant fear, - Inferiority complex and guilt because of decline in academic performance and feeling of insecurity arising out of financial exploitation,
- behavioural problems (change in attitude towards their career and at times even leaving universities and careers, alcohol and drug addiction, and increased smoking, compulsive behaviour, itinerant lifestyle, aggressive behaviour and criminal activities may also be the reaction to stressful experiences),
- other reactions to stressful events (prolonged stress gradually minimizes the abilities of effective functioning, stress may produce much stronger psychological reaction

than simple anxiety, stress may generate Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that is the most long-drawn-out and serious of all reactions to severe stress,

- Interpersonal relationships may get disturbed (Wajahat, 2014: 130-131).

Other than the psychological, cognitive and behavioural disorders, the physical injuries that could result from beating, hitting by objects or by forcing to perform dangerous tasks to sexual abuse by forced stripping, forced masturbation, forced unnatural sex, etc. could also occur (Garg, 2009: 266).

While students who support ragging may provide instrumental and ‘positive’ reasons for it, others provide a starkly different perspective. It is a process of reinforcing a particular hierarchy within an organization to establish and maintain a structure of privilege (Silva et al., 2014). It cannot be denied then, that any ‘enjoyment’ of ragging entails a total compliance with one’s assigned place in the social hierarchy of the university (at the bottom as a fresher), and thus an uncritical acceptance of ascriptive markers such as ‘seniority’. As Rao et al (2015) argue, ragging is not the harmless rite of passage into an academic community as is sometimes presented, but about exerting power; about setting up a relationship of dominance and submission, with penalties for noncompliance. Further, there are more severe forms of ragging such as asking a male student to smoke a cigarette from the lighted side, drink alcohol mixtures and getting them drunk, or remove clothes and engage in masturbation, or sexual engagement between two male students which cannot be accepted under any conditions (Premadasa, Wanigasooriya, Thalib, Ellepola, 2011: 565).

Although ragging is mostly perceived with a negative connotation, some of the literature highlights different explanations. Perception on ragging is not the same for everyone, but for certain people ragging appears to be a memorable experience with good feelings. Some students who come to the university from deprived backgrounds display signs of submerged personality such as extreme backwardness resulting in a failure to communicate with peers and lecturers. They may display excessive forms of subordination due to the cultural, social, familial and economic backgrounds they come from and the resultant dependencies they experienced in early life. If their parents were labourer’s, landless farmers or those earning a living by selling physical

labour, in Sri Lankan society they are seen as subservient to those in high economic or social positions, particularly in the countryside (Gamage, 2017).

When students from such backgrounds enter the university, they bring with them and reflect the dispositions of such background, which have been passed down to them as an inevitable consequence of the process of socialization in their respective life conditions. Through acts of minor ragging such as singing a song, talking to a female student, acting as a lover in front of an imaginary girl or acting as a bus conductor or fishmonger, seniors believe that they can eliminate or at least curb subservient character traits that these freshers inherited from their family and school contexts (Gamage, 2017: 39).

## **2.10. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence**

SGBV is a phenomenon that exists worldwide and yet is rarely acknowledged openly. It includes all forms of violence involving women and men based on their sexuality and gender. SGBV may be experienced throughout the lifecycle of an individual, starting from intrauterine life. In all societies, globally and at the local level, violence against women and men is a social problem.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women 1993 (DEVAW) defines violence against women to mean;

**Article one:** For the purpose of this declaration the term ‘violence against women’ means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or private life’.

**Article two:** Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.

2. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community; including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution.
3. Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state, wherever it occurs (Perera, Gunawardane, Jayasooriya, 2011).

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) document states that ‘UNHCR consciously uses the term SGBV to emphasize the urgency of protection interventions that address the criminal character and disruptive consequences of sexual violence for victims/survivors and their families’ (UNHCR, 2011).

The Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guideline provides a definition that is commonly used in humanitarian settings: ‘Gender-based violence (GBV) is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females’ (Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings, Focusing on Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence in Emergencies IASC, 2005). The Guideline emphasizes that women and girls are the primary victims of GBV and it focuses on strategies for addressing violence against women and girls.

However, SGBV is not properly confined to violence against women, but can include inter-gender and intra gender-based sexual and gender-based violence (involving men against boys, senior students against women freshers during ragging, marital rape, etc.) (UGC, Federation of University Teachers’ Association and CARE, 2015). Unlike other types of violence, SGBV is often shrouded in secrecy possibly due to its location in unequal/inequitable gender and sexual relations based on power and its psychosocial consequences on victim-survivors. Societal and cultural attitudes towards SGBV tend to be ambiguous with violence condemned in general, yet, sometimes condoned in patriarchal and gender-unequal discourses.

SGBV has wide-ranging implications for health and well-being, such as loss of confidence or self-worth, psychosocial trauma, suicide and homicide (Axemo, Wijewardena, Fonseka, Cooray, Darj, 2018)



## **2.11 Gender, Masculinities and SGBV in Sri Lanka**

Gender is society's set of expectations, standards and constructed characteristics about how men and women are supposed to act (Meyerowitz, 2008, 15). It varies from society to society and can be changed. Each culture has beliefs and informal rules about how people should act based on their gender. For example, many cultures expect and encourage men to be more aggressive than women. This gender inequality is familiarised with the difference between men and women. This distinction considers the man as strong, patriarchal and heterosexual and the woman holds a secondary position (Manoj, 2018).

Organizations such as families, schools, workplaces, religious institutions and political organizations are arranged in accordance with these social manners by viewing biological male and female as normative and constant. There are inherent gender roles for the two genders. According to the existing social norms, the task of the woman is the transfer of sexuality, reproduction and motherhood from generation to generation. This can be applied similarly to the man; he is compelled in taking part in the roles related to sexuality, reproduction, fatherhood and continuing the family name. Gender roles are expectations of society about behaviours, thoughts and characteristics that go along with a person's assigned sex. Accordingly, gender is also a social and legal status as men and women (Manoj, 2018).

Masculinity refers to the social roles, behaviours and meanings prescribed for men in a given society at a given time. The concept can be seen as founded on gender and not on the biological understandings of sex; as well as a diversity of identities amongst and within different groups of men – leading to the notion of different versions of masculinities. However, the ideology and practice of masculinity is produced within the institutions of society and through everyday interactions (Kimmel, 2000).

Masculinities can vary within a culture as well as between cultures; over time and during the course of a man's life. It may be dependent on the intersections of ethnicity, race, religion, sexuality, language, nationality etc. Moreover, each culture may have more than one hegemonic ideology or expression of masculinity and these may be constructed 'in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women' (Connell, 1987). It is constructed on psycho-social and cultural factors and not only on biological sex (the physical, chemical,

chromosomal, gonadal, and anatomical composition of an individual). However, the expression of masculinities and femininities are the most important factors amongst a number of factors that are critical in determining acts of and responses for SGBV.

In Sri Lanka, many segments in society have been made vulnerable by the recent three-decade civil conflict, exposing people to a higher risk of SGBV. Additionally, the country's militarization and the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators have aggravated the situation causing the normalization of a culture of violence (De Mel, Peiris, Gomez, 2013).

A survey covering 11 districts in 2011 showed that 51.2% of the respondents, both men and women, reported experience of domestic violence (De Mel, Peiris, Gomez, 2013). A more recent study performed by United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) indicated that 90% of women are affected by sexual harassment on public transport (UNFPA, 2017), and a Sri Lankan study among 1322 undergraduates, with 41% male and 58% female, and a mean age 22 years, indicated that 44% have faced sexual abuse, while 36% have faced physical abuse (Fernando, karunasekere, 2011). Another study in 2013 highlighted that one in three ever-partnered men, reported having committed physical and/or sexual violence against an intimate partner in their life time, 20% reported having committed sexual violence against an intimate partner and 28% of the men had themselves experienced sexual violence (De Mel, Peiris, Gomez, 2013).

According to a study conducted by the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) in 2011, the prevalence of SGBV in Sri Lanka ranges between 20% - 60%. The same study also shows different forms of violence present in the Sri Lankan context such as incest, rape, intimate partner violence and dating violence. The settings in which they occur, namely are industrial sector, plantation sector, garment industry, public transport and among internally displaced persons due to the war and tsunami (SLMA, 2011). Further, among both young and older children in Sri Lanka, more girls than boys are exploited for child labour as domestics. Boys are exploited more in child prostitution, theft and the sale of drugs (Department of Probation and Childcare services, Ministry of Social Services, 1998). The 2016, a Demographic and Health Survey highlighted that 17 % of women interviewed had suffered some form of domestic violence in the last 12 months (Department of Census and Statistics, 2017).

SGBV in Sri Lanka remains a hidden practice; and these incidences are underreported although it reinforces such acts as criminal action under the Penal Code, Prevention of Domestic Violence Act and other laws (UGC, Federation of University Teachers' Association, CARE, 2015).

## **2.12. The Prevalence of SGBV in Sri Lankan State Universities**

SGBV is also a grave concern within the government University System in Sri Lanka, especially in the forms of dating violence; coerced sexual relations, verbal abuse and physical abuse (Gunawardena, Weerasinghe, Rajapaksa, Wijesekara, Chathurangana, 2011, 54-59) that colludes with ragging and is overlooked by the authorities (UGC, Federation of University Teachers' Association, CARE, 2015) The presence of SGBV within the university premises, notwithstanding its regularity and widespread prevalence, especially during ragging continues to be ignored. Yet, each time the university administration and even the victims, shield the perpetrators, they are contravening the law of the land and preventing the rule of law being enforced. In fact, universities may well provide university-sanctioned opportunities for the practice of SGBV and may very well incite and promote sadistic tendencies in some individuals aside from normalizing the practice (UGC, Federation of University Teachers' Association, CARE, 2015).

The study on 'Gender based Harassment among Medical Students' conducted among 250 medical students who spent three years or more at the University of Colombo by Perera, Abeynayake and Galabada (2006) highlighted that 55.6% of the students (25.2% males and 72.2% females) had faced gender-related violence during the time spent in the university. With regard to types of harassment, 20.7% had been physical, 5.0% sexual, 92.9% verbal and 6.4% psychological/emotional. Moreover, in 5.8% of the cases the perpetrator had been the current partner and in 5.8% a previous partner. Academic staff members (faculty and extended faculty) were mentioned by 48.2% of the study group where 8.6% had been by office staff and 6.5% by the minor staff (UGC, Federation of University Teachers' Association, CARE, 2015).

The study conducted by Gunawardena et. al (2011) 'Romance, Sex and Coercion: Insights into Undergraduate Relationships' showed that 283 unmarried female undergraduates from the faculties of Arts, Science and Law in a Sri Lankan university conveyed that 52% were

engaged in romantic relationships. On inquiring whether they knew of instances where girls were forced to commence a romantic relationship, 36% responded positively while 73% knew of instances where girls were forced to continue relationships. Also, a fear of being physically harassed by males and a fear of social unacceptability if the relationship was discontinued were the most cited reasons for being coerced into commencing or continuing a relationship. The results showed that 81% of romantic relationships were sexual and verbal abuse in romantic relationships was indicated by 57% of students while 23% were aware of physical violence in such relationships. Furthermore, 64% of females reported that they unwillingly agreed to sexual relationships due to the fear of losing the relationship and 21% reported that violence was used by male partners to coerce females into sexual activities (Gunawardena et.al, 2011, 54-59).

Assault and sexual harassment also takes place under the guise of ragging. Ragging incidents may involve being beaten and 'bucketed', being forced to perform vigorous exercises, being forced to wear particular clothes, being insulted and forced to repeat profanities (UGC, Federation of University Teachers' Association, CARE, 2015).

According to the presentation on 'Sexual and Gender-based Violence with Special Reference to Higher Educational Institutions' by Professor Camena Guneratne (Dean Faculty of Humanities – Open University of Sri Lanka), some reported cases of SGBV and deaths related to ragging are as follow:

- 1975 – Rupa Rathnaseeli of the University of Peradeniya leapt off the second floor of Ramanathan Hall to avoid grave sexual abuse. She was paralyzed and many years later she committed suicide.
- 1992 – Female student was stabbed to death by her ex-boyfriend at the University of Kelaniya.
- 1993 – Chaminda Punchihewa died as a result of ragging at the University of Ruhuna.
- 1997 – A first year female student of the University of Ruhuna committed suicide after she was subject to severe sexual harassment.
- 1998 – The death of Varapragash in University of Peradeniya due to injuries sustained in ragging.

- 2002 – Ovitigala Vithanage Samantha was murdered in university of Sri Jayewardenepura when he tried to stop ragging.
- 2002 – A female student was stabbed to death by her ex-boyfriend at the University of Kelaniya.
- 2011 – A female student became semi-paralyzed in one limb due to physical ragging at the University of Ruhuna.
- 2011 – Three students from the University of Peradeniya were arrested for sexually assaulting a fresher.
- 2013 – Three second year female students of the University of Peradeniya, were charged with ragging a group of female freshers in a toilet. The freshers had been stripped naked during the ragging and forced to perform indecent sexual acts. The university suspended them for three weeks. According to the internal report the victim was afraid to lodge a complaint, as the university authorities, did not take female ragging incidents seriously.
- 2014 – A former male student committed suicide at the University of Peradeniya who had been forced to leave the University due to ragging.
- 2015 – Suicide of fresher Amali Chathurika due to ragging at the Sabaragamuwa University.
- Actress Ms. Yashoda Wimaladharma has revealed that she had been subject to severe ragging at the University of Kelaniya (UGC, Federation of University Teachers' Association, CARE, 2015)

### **2.13. Legal and Policy Frameworks Pertaining to Gender, Youth and Violence**

The following are the legal and policy frameworks that deal with instances of SGBV in universities.

## **1. International Standards**

Sri Lanka has ratified the foremost United Nations international standard on women, the *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* in 1981 and its *Optional Protocol*. In 1993, Sri Lanka signed the *Vienna Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* - which specifically recognizes violence against women as a social phenomenon. Promoting gender equality and empowering women are part of the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs). Sri Lanka has also ratified the following ILO conventions: *Equal Remuneration Convention* (No. 100), *Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention* (No.111) and *Revision of Maternity Benefits Convention* (No. 103) (UGC, Federation of University Teachers' Association, CARE, 2015).

## **2. Legislation**

Legally, SGBV is addressed under the *Penal Code 345* of 1995 (sexual harassment), 363 (rape), 364A (incest) and the *Prevention of Domestic Violence Act* of 2005. The *Prevention of Domestic Violence Act* recognizes the phenomenon of violence within the family or domestic sphere.

The *Prohibition of Ragging and Other Forms of Violence in Educational Institutions Act* No. 20 of 1998, Section 2 (2) is of specific importance to universities as it has been drafted to prevent and punish sexual harassment that can occur during the course of ragging (UGC, Federation of University Teachers' Association, CARE, 2015). Although this Act does not define ragging, it specifies and criminalizes certain kinds of intimidation, such as hostage-taking, wrongful restraint, unlawful confinement, forcible occupation and damage to property of an educational institution.

At the level of policy, UGC Circular No 919 (2010), titled 'Guidelines to be introduced to curb the menace of ragging in the universities or higher education institutions', provides strategies to address ragging. Unfortunately, two decades after the Act became law and nearly a decade after Circular 919 was issued, the problem persists.

### 3. University Policies

Commission circular No. 919 by the UGC dated 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2010 titled *Guidelines to be introduced to curb the menace of ragging in the Universities or Higher Education Institutions* provides clear instructions on how to prevent ragging and procedures to be followed in the event of ragging (UGC, Federation of University Teachers' Association, CARE, 2015).

As a means of implementing the above mentioned legal acts, in 2017, a 24-hour helpline was set up by the UGC as a complaining mechanism to assist students who are in distress or actively facing violence.

Although different initiatives have been taken by different parties, to enable victims to lodge complaints against perpetrators, the prevailing conditions and contexts during ragging, might not allow victims to officially lodge complaints. Ahmed (2018) describes the contested nature of the complaint, as a complaint may manifest as a simple act of walking away or as a formally lodging document. Even when a formal complaint is lodged, however, the institution may not recognize the complaint. At other times, acts unintended by victim to be complaints may be treated as a complaint because institutionally they are recognized as such.

Lodging a complaint is itself harassing (Ahmed, 2018;). An individual who lodges a complaint becomes an object of harassment the moment they construe an act as harassing. At this decisive moment, the complainant has difficulty playing along and acting 'appropriately' as perceived by prevailing institutional norms. They become 'odd' and sense isolation for not being able to play along. In other words, the complaint does not simply address the act of violence that results in the complaint, but also the culture that perpetuates it and the individuals that enable it. Therefore, reactions to complaints stem not only from perpetrators, but also the system and culture as a whole as the complaint also identifies broader system-wide problems that had enabled the harassment to occur in the first place (Ahmed, 2018). The complainant, in the process of lodging the complaint, portrays what the 'we' associated with a particular culture represents and informs what membership in the social group entails (Whitely & Page, 2015). Therefore, the complaint, and more so the complainant, are perceived as divisive, selfish and disloyal, and of wanting to destroy the group.

Bacchi (1999) proposes that institutions address acts of harassment as situated within an institution rather than situated within individual perpetrators to avoid such disconnect between acts of harassment and cultural and structural environments that enable them. Such a perspective does not mean, however, that individuals are completely exonerated, but simply that the significance of environments in perpetuating harassment is recognized (Whitley & Page, 2015).

Despite the efforts made to address ragging and SGBV the problems persist. As a result, students who disagree with ragging resist by developing an anti-ragging movement.

### **Anti-ragging movement (Resistance of students towards ragging)**

The emergence of this subculture has of course created the conditions for the advent of a counterculture among those actively victimized by it as well as those who are critical of the rationale behind the pro-ragging subculture and have the means (psychological, social, and economic) to resist ragging. In some universities, such students are termed 'boggu' or 'ala'. Thus, the anti-raggers are a minority within the campus community and disproportionately comprised of those studying in English medium but span all faculties of the universities (Weeramunda 2008; Ruwanpura 2011).

(A detailed description of Sri Lanka's higher education system is offered in Appendix 5 to help comprehend the background in which state institutions originated and how they function).

With the understanding of the existing studies on the nature and prevalence of ragging, the next chapter will discuss the methodology adopted in conducting the study.



## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

As stated in the previous chapter, the issues of ragging and sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) prevails within universities. Sri Lankan public sector universities have specific time periods where students are ragged and there have been circumstances where ragging went to extremes and resulted in unfortunate deaths of undergraduates. However, there are only a very few studies on university ragging and even fewer studies on SGBV within the universities. The methods used in this research were designed to address three objectives, namely to describe the nature of ragging and SGBV in the Sri Lankan University system, to identify the conditions that support their persistence, and to identify the effectiveness of methods used to address the issue of ragging and SGBV within universities and the system as a whole. Ragging and SGBV were conceptualized as systemic in nature, but with different manifestations in different universities and for different populations of students and staff. The system, in this context, represents the network of universities that fall under the purview of the UGC. The scope of the study was between 2014 and 2018 to roughly represent the time during which the current students were likely to have been registered as students.

### **Research Questions and Objectives**

The study focuses on the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of ragging and SGBV within the university system,
2. What elements of the universities allow ragging and SGBVs to persist, and
3. Within the university system, what mechanisms exist to address these problems and how effectively are they able to address these problems?

The objectives of the research are:

1. To describe the nature of ragging and SGBV within the Sri Lankan University System,
2. To identify the conditions that supports the persistence of ragging and SGBV.
3. To identify the strategies that are used to address ragging and SGBV and the effectiveness of the methods used.

Along with the research questions and objectives, this chapter discusses the different steps of designing and carrying out the research. The chapter begins with a justification for using both quantitative and qualitative methods. It then discusses the methodology adopted to administer the questionnaires, to conduct interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), produce written transcripts of the interviews and focus group discussions and how the data was analysed. Finally, the awareness of the problems in the fieldwork process, and how an ethical approach was ensured regarding the research participants are discussed at the end of the chapter.

### **3.2. Study Management**

The study was initiated by the Standing Committee on Gender Equity and Equality through a partnership with UNICEF. In addition to the funding, UNICEF also contributed to the study by appointing a senior scientist to the research team, whose role was to support the implementation of the qualitative components of the project.

The investigations focused on eight selected universities within the university system. The Vice Chancellor of each university was requested to appoint university research coordinators (URCs) who liaised with the UGC through the Senior Research Coordinator. Each university also identified two additional core team members who were invited to workshops held at the UGC during the five months in which the study design was formulated. Ethical clearance was sought to conduct the study during this period. The URCs also worked with the research teams created at each site by each selected university. The task of these teams was to address local issues and concerns that may arise during the process of designing the study and to assist with the implementation of the study design. Thus, all decisions regarding the study were made in consultation with the URCs and other core team members. The URCs were also expected to follow up with their respective university research teams to ensure that the research strategy and design were consultatively developed. When university research teams required additional input, at the request of the University Research Coordinator, the Senior Research Coordinator visited universities to address these concerns.

To ensure maximum support from each selected university, Deans of Faculties and other relevant personnel were informed by the UGC, through the Vice Chancellors, regarding the

nature of the study and its objectives. The Deans of the respective universities were requested to make an announcement regarding the study at a faculty board meeting to create awareness among all staff members.

### **3.3. Study Design for Quantitative and Qualitative Studies**

The study focused on the state university system under the preview of the UGC. As a result, the population of the study at the institution level included all universities and affiliated institutions. A randomly selected sample of eight universities within the state university system was selected for the study. The selected universities included older established universities, recently created universities, and those situated in war affected areas, and therefore captured the diversity of universities within the system. Specific universities selected have not been identified by name to protect the anonymity of participants. For the purpose of the study, a selected university, and its affiliated institutions and campuses were all included in the study design.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were adopted to gather data. Quantitative methods consisted of three different types of questionnaires while the qualitative methods comprised of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The following section discusses the methods adopted.

#### **Quantitative Study**

The study is mainly based on positivistic paradigm. The positivism could be viewed as a truth-seeking paradigm where reality of the truth can be disclosed by technical and scientific facts. Aliyu et al (2014), argues that positivism is a research strategy and approach that is rooted on the ontological principle and doctrine that truth and reality is free and independent of the viewer and observer.

The aim of this research is to find out how ragging and SGBV in the Sri Lankan Public Sector Universities prevail. In order to identify specific relations among variables to reason out the causes of ragging and SGBV, quantitative methods were used. As Creswell (2009) stated through a quantitative research design it would be easier to specify how and why variables and

relational statements are interrelated. Moreover, a quantitative research design is highly structured and laid out in advance of the study that will therefore help the results of the prevalence of ragging and SGBV to be documented in an objective language.

However, as Baxter (2008) argues researchers that use quantitative research tends to face problems to control the environment as responses from respondents depend on a particular time which is dependent on the conditions occurring during the particular time frame.

Questionnaires are relatively one of the easiest and economical quantitative tools to reach a large number of respondents. Bertsch and Pham (2012) stated that questionnaires are practical means of gathering data as the relevant respondents could be managed the way the researcher wants. Moreover, unlike other primary data collection tools the respondents do not feel pressurized in responding as they will take their own time to respond freely (Schwab, 2005).

### **3.4. Survey**

The survey consisted of three different types of questionnaires which were administered physically as well as online. Two of the questionnaires namely, questionnaire on ‘Social Climate and ragging’ and ‘experience of SGBV’ were administered among students while the questionnaire on ‘staff climate’ was administered among the academic and non-academic staff members. A survey of this nature, both in terms of scope and sensitivity, had never been carried out at universities.

Substantial time was spent at workshops considering how students and even staff may react to the survey. Further, because of different levels of access to technology, across universities and faculties, it was decided not to use the online method as it was considered not practically possible, even though an online form would provide respondents with more privacy than a paper-based survey form. The researchers were concerned about the possibility that both the online and paper-based versions might be subject to false responses. As a result, it was decided to conduct the study through both modalities, one online and one paper-based. Since it was uncertain if either study would be contaminated, it was also agreed to treat them as separate studies. The researchers also felt that students or staff who may have felt uncomfortable or

‘compelled’ to complete the paper version in a particular way should have the opportunity to complete the questionnaire a second time through the online version.

Finally, several questionnaire versions were developed (see Table 1) in English and translated to Sinhala and Tamil and subjected to several rounds of face validation and pretesting. Due to concerns of contamination, the research team decided to limit data collection to three dates. One university even decided to administer the paper-based survey to be completed within a span of a morning to avoid contamination. It should be noted however that no overt organized reactions against the surveys were reported from any of the eight study sites. All English versions of questionnaires are available in Appendix 1.

**Table 1: Types of Questionnaires Administered**

<b>Questionnaire</b>	<b>Target population</b>	<b>Versions</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
1. Social Climate and Experience of Ragging	Students	Paper-based and online	7084
2. Experiences of SGBV at the University	Students	Paper-based and online	7080
3. Staff Climate Questionnaire	Staff	Paper-based and online	1261

It transpired that some respondents had deliberately or inadvertently entered incorrect information. As a result, a significant amount of effort was spent cleaning and filtering the data. After data cleaning and filtering, the sample was made up of 7084 respondents from the first questionnaire, 7080 respondents from the second questionnaire, and 1261 respondents from the third questionnaire. Due to flaws in some of the variables in some of the surveys, the whole sample size was not employed in several analyses.

The population of the study, the sampling methods used, criteria used to include or exclude participants are given in the section below. The measures used for each of the questionnaires, and the data collection procedures are also described. This information is provided for all three of the questionnaires listed in Table 1.

## **Study populations and sampling with criteria for inclusion and exclusion for all questionnaires**

### **Paper-based Questionnaires for Students (1) on Social Climate and Experience of Ragging and (2) Experiences of SGBV at the University**

For ethical considerations, all first-year students who had been at the institution for less than six months were omitted from the study, since they were likely to lack the necessary expertise to reply to the questionnaire as new students. The social climate and ragging experience questionnaire was given to half of the students, and the SGBV questionnaire was given to the other half.

It should be noted, however, that there were deviations in the process followed in some of the universities due to unexpected issues that arose at each site. For example, questionnaires were not administered to one faculty because of a conference scheduled on those particular dates. Another two faculties were not included because faculty administrators requested additional documentation on the morning of the date in which the questionnaire was to be administered, which was not practically possible for the CGEE to supply.

### **Paper-based Questionnaire for Academic and Non-academic Staff on Staff Climate**

Questionnaires were administered to 50% of all categories of permanent staff and temporary academic staff who represented the population. Temporary staff members who held non-academic positions were excluded from the study. Systematic sampling was used through staff lists gathered at the university level from the Senior Assistant Registrars of Academic and Non-Academic Establishments, through Dean's offices of each faculty, or with the assistance of Department Heads.

### **Data collection procedure followed in administering the paper-based questionnaires for students**

Initially, the UGC sent letters to each Vice Chancellor informing him/her of the dates on which data collection was to be conducted and requested his/her support with the process. University research teams then created a data collection plan in which classrooms and timetables of each batch were identified in order to access all members of the relevant batches. For example, if all students of a particular batch were enrolled in a particular course, the coordinator of the course was contacted and permission was obtained to collect data from that batch through the identified course session.

At each session, participants were first introduced to the study and informed of their rights as participants. Consent forms and questionnaires were distributed to all students in the selected classrooms, with questionnaires arranged in counter balanced order to ensure that participants sitting next to each other would be given different questionnaires. Questionnaires were collected through sealed boxes kept on either outside of the classrooms, Dean's offices, or close to other public spaces. Participants were thanked and given instructions to access both the follow up questionnaire and the online version of the distributed questionnaires. In some locations, the procedures differed slightly. For instance, in one university, because of a sudden and unanticipated cancellation of classes due to inclement weather, some faculties administered the survey in the hostels with the assistance of the respective Wardens.

### **Data collection procedure followed in administering the paper-based questionnaires for staff**

Data were collected through self-completion questionnaires which were distributed to the selected sample along with consent forms, debriefing forms and two envelopes, one for the consent form and the other for the questionnaire. The two envelopes allowed respondents to remain anonymous. Completed questionnaires could be submitted or posted to the Gender Centre of each university or to the internal address of the research coordinator. The procedure of distributing questionnaires was left for universities to decide. However, research coordinators noted that when they visited workplaces during this time to remind people about the

questionnaires, they were sometimes handed completed questionnaires. Therefore, there were some variations in procedure across universities.

### **Data collection procedure followed in administering the online questionnaires for students and staff**

All three sets of questionnaires (*Survey on Social Climate of University Students*, *Experiences of Sexual Harassment at the University*, and *Staff Climate Questionnaire*) were emailed to all students and staff members whose email addresses were available at the respective universities. A common observation across five of the eight universities surveyed was the lack of updated email addresses of students. In three of the five universities, email addresses of students were not available. In four universities the students were given access to the links through their e-learning portals and university websites. Hence, there was generally a low response rate for the online survey.

Staff surveys were sent to categories of staff members whose email addresses were available at the university or at faculty level. Email addresses of academic, executive, and technical staff categories were available at all universities. In one faculty, despite repeated requests by the research coordinator and the representatives of the university research team, the questionnaires were not emailed to the staff members.

#### **3.4.1. Online questionnaires on detailed experiences of ragging and SGBV**

All participants eligible take part in the paper-based questionnaires on *survey on Social Climate of University Students*; *Experiences of Sexual Harassment at the University*, and *Staff Climate* were eligible to respond to the detailed online questionnaires on detailed experiences of ragging and SGBV. They were given access to the information log in the online questionnaires when they participated in the paper-based questionnaires.



### **Study implementation and data collection procedure.**

Student and staff questionnaires were available through different web addresses. Students and staff could access web links for this segment of the study through two modalities.

1. Students and staff who accessed the paper version of the questionnaire were informed of the link through the information sheet provided to them and/or, for students only, through announcement of the web address in class.
2. Those who completed the questionnaires online (Social Climate and Experience of Ragging, Experiences of SGBV at the University, Staff Climate Questionnaire), were directed to the web links associated with the detailed questionnaires, once they had completed the questionnaires online.

#### **3.4.2. Analytical strategy for quantitative data**

Analyses were primarily descriptive in nature and included tabular and cross tabular forms of analysis and presentation. Exploratory factor analyses and internal consistency reliability were tested when items were merged to construct composite measures.

### **3.5. Qualitative Study**

In addition to quantitative measures, qualitative methods were employed to determine how ragging and SGBV are prevalent in Sri Lankan public sector universities. Qualitative methods attempted to explore the experiences of students and staff members within the university that would help to bring out what societal, community, relationship and individual related elements of the universities allow ragging and SGBVs to persist. Qualitative research can record real-life experiences in the words of participants, both individually and in groups, allowing for a deeper understanding of the issues at hand. Further, qualitative methods are selected because they are intended to uncover the complexities of situations (Hankivsky, 1999), and to enable the researcher to produce authoritative and valid knowledge about participants' experiences in their natural setting (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; Creswell, 2013). Moreover, qualitative methods offer a voice to participants because the data consists mainly of their own

perceptions of their experiences in their own words (Bluhm *et al.*, 2010). Within qualitative research it is also possible to alter some data gathering methods as the process unfolds. Interviews and focus groups were two qualitative methods chosen to obtain in-depth understanding on ragging and SGBV that prevail in the Sri Lankan public sector universities.

However, using interviews and FGD's need careful consideration as ethical issues were very challenging. Informed consent was integral part of the ethics of qualitative research (Wiles *et al.*, 2007). Later in this chapter, how these ethical issues were handled will be discussed.

### **3.5.1. Data collection methods**

Interviews and focus groups were the two qualitative tools used to obtain multiple sources of evidence (Iacono, 2011). Due to time and money constraints, it was agreed that interviews and focus groups would allow participants to tell their stories in their own words, emphasizing the in-depth and holistic representation of the issue.

#### **Interviews**

It was decided to conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews with undergraduates and staff to understand their experiences at the university. Interviews were necessary because the forms taken by ragging and SGBV are highly sensitive topics that undergraduates or staff members were not always comfortable sharing with a group. Semi-structured interviews are particularly useful (Bryman, 2016) as they allow more scope for clarifications because the interview proceeds as a conversation between the interviewer and interviewee (Alshenqeeti, 2014). Further, an interview is an interactive process and the interviewer can probe to clarify answers and both the interviewer and interviewee can go into depth on topics that emerge during the interviews (Bryman, 2016).

## **Interview Schedule**

Semi-structured interviews were used to enable the interviewees to express their views freely. To ensure that the same information is obtained from all of the participants an interview schedule was used as a guide.

## **Focus Group Discussions**

It was decided to conduct focus group discussions with undergraduates and staff members to understand their experiences at the university. FGD's help to identify and clarify shared knowledge among groups and communities, which would be difficult to obtain through individual interviews (Eeuwijk & Angehrn, 2017). Since ragging was a typical occurrence among undergraduates and staff members at the institution, sharing their thoughts and experiences as a group was both interesting and enjoyable. However, because the study is focused on a sensitive topic such as SGBV, some participants were hesitant to relate their personal experiences at the university for fear of being judged by their peers, which worked as a barrier to data collection in the SGBV component.

### **3.5.2. Sampling**

Initially it was decided to paste notices on faculty notice boards in all six faculties calling for volunteers to participate in interviews and FGD's. However, in due course, it became evident that it was not working as intended; therefore it was decided to invite interviewees and participants for focus groups using personal contacts and the snowball sampling technique. Even though snowball technique is time consuming, it provides the researcher with the opportunity to communicate better with the samples, as they are acquaintances of the first sample, and the first sample is linked to the researcher (Naderifar, Goli & Ghaljaie, 2017). As this research is on a sensitive topic, the snowball technique worked well to get participants who were not willing to reveal their identities.

### **3.5.3. Gaining consent**

Consent forms along with the information sheet to be read and signed were distributed to questionnaire respondents, interviewees and focus group participants (Appendix -5). The nature of the research and how the data would be utilized solely for academic purposes were both verbally conveyed. Consent forms were distributed in both Sinhala and English languages to suit the participant's preference. The ethical component of the consent form would be discussed later in the chapter.

### **3.5.4. Planning and conducting interviews**

Twenty in-depth interviews were planned to be held in each of the selected universities. For this purpose, the Vice Chancellors, the UGC appointed council members, four to five persons in key positions such as senior assistant registrars (welfare), proctors, deputy proctors, marshals, chief security officers, student counsellors, wardens, and sub-wardens were identified as key informants. The four to five individuals in key positions were selected by the university research teams. Approximately 10-12 interviews were to be held with the students and four to six interviews were to be carried out with members of the academic and non-academic staff. Ten focus group interviews were planned of which six were to be with students and the rest with the staff members.

Within these constraints, each URC decided who they would invite as participants at each university, taking into account both subject matter expertise and uniqueness of voice. Students who were taking examinations at the time of interviews and discussions and non-academic staff members on non-permanent contracts were excluded. Instead of focusing on each university as a unit, attempts were made to represent different groups of individuals in the system as a whole.

### **Interview Content and Procedure**

Contacting participants varied from university to university. Each research team was asked to use methods consistent with the ethics protocol to select participants for each interview and focus group discussions. Locations for the sessions were decided by the university research teams as the contexts varied widely from university to university.

As most members of the academic and nonacademic staff were likely to have attended Sri Lankan universities as students, it was planned to base the indepth interviews on their experiences as students and professionals. The researchers were particularly interested in learning why people at various hierarchical levels in the university act or fail to act in certain ways. Furthermore, it would enable the investigators to travel back in time to different periods in the history of the Sri Lankan university system in order to gain a better understanding.

Since it was expected that some participants might be uncomfortable with their interview being recorded, all those who participated were asked if they consented to be recorded. In the instances where they did, detailed notes of the discussions were maintained. Documentation was further strengthened with notes of recorded conversations taken by the interviewer as well as the designated note-taker.

The university level research teams were trained on how to interview respondents without being intrusive. Since the respondents were expected to provide information based on how well the interviewer identified or empathized with them and how comfortable they felt with them, the best and possibly the only method for the interviewer to do this was to show genuine interest in the respondent's life.

This entailed placing himself/herself in the shoes of the interviewee for at least the duration of the interview. Interviewers were encouraged to spend 15-20 minutes on talking about the background of the person concerned, their family, friendships in the village, challenges overcome to get to the university, until they have a sense of what kind of person they are talking to.

Since all students are victims before they become perpetrators, we approached all participants as the victims they once were, rather than the perpetrators they may now be. This would also help the participants to revisit his or her early anxieties, which would help them to empathize – at least momentarily - with those who are in the same position now and rethink about the validity of their present actions.

At the same time, the respondent might very likely be in denial about harsh experiences he or she had as a first year student, which becomes normalized and distanced with each unfolding year. Alternately, respondents may begin to reveal important aspects of their

experience on campus. They may offer their own experiences as something which happened to someone else. While each disclosure may not appear to be significant in and of itself, it will serve to corroborate what another participant has stated and to form a picture of what is going on.

### **Interviewing Second Year Students**

This is a critical group because some of them could be engaged in ragging, and those who are not, may not want to implicate those who are involved. Since they are not likely to admit that they in fact participate in ragging activities or sexual or gender-based violence, it was thought that the best strategy is perhaps to focus on their experiences in their first year, when they may have undergone ragging themselves.

### **Interviewing Third and Final Year Students and Union Leaders**

This group probably feels empowered by their level of seniority. It was considered useful to ask them about their experiences in their first and second years because telling another person about their painful experiences may open the door for them to talk about unpleasant things they have done to others that they now regret.

Responding to feedback from the university level research coordinators and their teams, the initial target of 20 in-depth interviews was scaled down to 10 and focus group discussions to 05. It was also decided to interview council members, which brought up the in-depth interviews to a total of 11 for each of the participating universities. The UGC Chair and the Director, CGEE were also interviewed as key informants.

Each university team decided who their key informants would be, and how their focus groups would be constituted, since the distribution of faculties and departments varied significantly. Factors such as examinations in progress and vacations in some faculties affected the availability of students and staff who could be interviewed at a given time. For instance, University H was closed for 4 weeks due to student disturbances and interviews were delayed. In other universities, busloads of students were taken away for demonstrations unexpectedly which

complicated the interview schedule. In the end, only 94 of the 130 interviews and focus group discussions scheduled for this study were completed. Moreover, the actual conduct of the interviews was not without issues on many levels. Even though confidentiality was assured, some research coordinators were reluctant to identify the specific designation or even the faculty of the member of staff interviewed, or faculties of students. This in itself captures the trust deficit even among those participating in the study. Given below in Table 3b are the participants of in-depth interview and focus group discussions at the 8 participating universities.

**Table 3.b: University-level data: Qualitative study**

University	Key informants/ In-depth interviews*	Focus group discussions	Total
A	VC, Medical officer, Council Member, male final year science student, male third year student, female first year student, female first year t student, (n=6).	Temporary staff, Faculty of Management, junior staff, (n=3).	9
B	VC, Chief Student Counsellor, Director, Gender Centre, Legal Officer, Warden, (n=6).	Senior academics (all faculties), second year 1 students (female), marshals & security guards, (n=2).	8
C	VC, senior student counsellor (1), Senior student counsellor (2), female member of academic staff (1), female member of academic staff (2), female member of academic staff (3), female member of staff (4), male first year student (1), male first year student (2), male first year student (3), security officer, (n=10).	Senior academics (all faculties), first years (male), second years (female), second year students (male), nonacademic staff, admin staff, (n=6).	16
D	DVC, Council Member, Senior Assistant Registrar (welfare), (n=2).	Warden, Sub-wardens, & Martial (n=2).	4

E	DVC, Dean, Council member, Proctor, warden, male final year student, Female final year student, Male third year student, (n=9).	Temporary staff, Arts Faculty, Senior staff, Arts Faculty, second year students (mixed), third year students (female), third year students (male), (n=5).	14
F	Acting VC, Council member, Medical officer, Director, Gender Centre, female member of nonacademic staff, female senior student counsellor, female Sub-warden, female member of staff (1), female member of staff (2), female Student counsellor, first year (Sinhala, male), second year (Sinhala) student (female), second year student (female, Tamil)	Junior staff, Faculty of Arts, members of the student union (male), third years (female), first years (male), student counsellors, Sinhala second year students (female), Sinhala second years (male)	20
G	VC, DVC, Proctor, council member, Deputy Proctor, Dean (1), Dean (2), Professor, Senior member of staff (Technical Office), chief marshal	Second year students (mixed), first year female science students	12
H	VC, Proctor, Senior Assistant Registrar (Welfare), senior student counsellor, male first year student, second year male Arts student,	Female second year Arts students, female third year Arts students	9
UGC	Chairman, Director, CGEE		2

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Notes: \*Numerous attempts to interview leaders of the Inter-university Student Federation and Student leaders at each university and faculty failed, except for University F. In one instance, a student leader expressed suspicion regarding the study, but in most instances expressed interest but never followed through with the interview.



### **3.5.5. Transcribing the interviews and FGD's**

With the fieldwork completed, the task of transcribing interviews, focus groups, and data analysis awaited. The way these tasks were handled is discussed in this section.

### **Preparing Transcripts**

Transcribing interviews and FGD's were the most time consuming as there were 94 interviews and FGD's to be transcribed. The relevant transcripts were prepared after each interview and focus group discussion. Finally, 94 recordings and transcripts were produced.

### **3.5.6. Qualitative analysis**

In order to analyze qualitative data, different levels of coding and thematic analysis are used. Accordingly, the findings are based on the experiences of undergraduates in relation to the prevalence of ragging and SGBV and the experiences of academic and non-academic staff members on the prevalence of SGBV while they are at work. Quotes are used as evidence within the analysis, and are labelled for the purpose of clarity. Accordingly, each quote has a label including the pseudonyms used for each university (A-H) and indication of whether the quote is taken from an interview of a Key Informant (KI) or from a Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

### **3.6. Secondary Data**

At the university level, information was gathered on whether there existed a policy related to ragging and harassment, whether active committees or other bodies to address ragging and SGBV existed and what they had done. Complaints submitted to the CGEE through the hotline, walk-ins and letters were also analysed.

From 2017 the UGC - CGEE has been accepting complaints of harassment occurring at universities through in-person submissions, letters, calls, and web entries. A total of 557 complaints had been submitted during the 2017-18 period with roughly equal numbers each year. Generally, complaints peak in volume just after student registration begins and continues for roughly three to four months after which complaints decrease. Using systematic sampling, 50 examples were retrieved to capture the types of complaints filed to the CGEE.

The qualitative study component also built on more than 80 complaints of ragging and sexual violence addressed to the UGC Chairman, the UGC's website and its helpline from the selected universities. These complaints are handled by the Centre for Gender Equity/Equality. Out of these, detailed case studies were compiled of 7 complainants.

### **3.7.Ethical Issues and Clearance**

Prior to starting the actual data collection, the Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura gave it consent (on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September, 2018). Due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, ethical considerations played a pivotal role during the process of designing of the study. As a result, research coordinators were instructed to follow procedures to ensure the anonymity of responses, to ensure that participation was voluntary and consent was given with adequate knowledge of study objectives, procedures and participant rights (Appendix 3 for details). Due to the sensitivity of the subject matter students who were sitting for examinations were excluded from the study. All the Vice Chancellors were informed that all material associated with the study were to be stored at the UGC- CGEE. Moreover, protocol for destroying study material and the storage of data at the UGC were also clearly stated.

## **Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings**

### **4.1. Introduction**

Data is acquired through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions after the surveys have been administered between November 2018 and January 2019. This chapter covers both quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

4.2 Students' (Victims') Experience on Ragging and their Backgrounds

4.3 Background of the Perpetrators

4.4 Students' Experience on SGBV

4.5 Staff members Perspective on SGBV

4.6 Handling Students' Complaints on Ragging and SGBV

### **4.2. Students' (Victims') Experience on Ragging and their Backgrounds**

The main purpose of this section is to present the analysis on different experiences of ragging which the victims highlighted along with their backgrounds.

#### **4.2.1 Different types of violent acts and experiences**

The following section consists of different types of violent acts and experiences including verbal, psychological, physical and sexual acts.

Table 2 depicts the composition of **verbal acts** experienced by students due to ragging.

**Table 2: Types of verbal acts**

Type of verbal act	Valid Cases	Experienced	Not experienced	Percentage of students experienced
Name calling, humiliated or made fun	5172	1661	3511	32.1%
Threatened with harm to your family if you do not comply	4552	120	4432	2.6%
Threats of violence	4663	400	3263	8.6%
Verbal aggression/shouting/scolding	5490	2296	3194	41.8%
At least one type of verbal act	5709	2920	2789	51.1%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

Table 2 indicates that most students experienced verbal aggression/shouting/scolding during early days of their university life. The most important result here is that more than half of the sample (51.1%) had experienced at least one type of verbal act.

Table 3 presents the composition of **negative psychological experiences** of the students in the university due to ragging.

**Table 3: Types of negative psychological experiences**

Type of psychological experience	Valid Cases	Experienced	Not experienced	Percentage of students experienced
Other persons controlling what you do	4919	925	3994	18.8%
Made to feel alone/social isolation	4703	433	4270	9.2%
Being treated as a child or a servant	4674	357	4317	7.6%
Having rumors spread about you	4692	525	4167	11.2%
Harassment through social media	4604	248	4356	5.4%
Harassment through the phone	4794	511	4283	10.7%
Stalking following in and maintaining them in humiliating way	4657	421	4236	9.0%
At least one type of psychological experience	5273	1811	3462	34.3%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

Controlling their actions by other people is the main negative psychological experience of university students during ragging. Table 3 indicates that harassments through social media are relatively low. According to the table above, 34.3 % of students have experienced at least one form of unpleasant psychological experience.

Table 4 consists of the composition of **physical acts** experienced by students due to ragging.

**Table 4: Types of physical acts**

Type of physical acts	Valid Cases	Experienced	Not experienced	Percentage of students experienced
Subjected to physical force which has resulted in pain, discomfort or injury	4647	269	4378	5.8%
Forced exposure to severe weather, physical exercises/forced to stay in uncomfortable/painful passion for long time periods	4788	521	4267	10.9%
Forced to engage in physical acts in groups	4897	905	3992	18.5%
At least one type of physical act	5068	1206	3862	23.8%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

According to Table 4, the percentage of students who have experienced at least one type of physical act during ragging is 23.8%. The table above further reveals that many students (18.5%) have gone through harmful physical acts in groups.

Findings of the quantitative analysis given above reveal the presence of different forms of physical and mental harassments during ragging. The qualitative analysis, on the other hand,

discloses similar conclusions. Accordingly, the participants highlight that they experienced severe physical ragging such as sitting on the ground for long hours and having to do push-ups. They also explained the mental stress experienced due to severe scolding in front of a large gathering and the fear due to harmful assault. Some of the participants emphasized that these experiences are unbearable. Thus, experiences of physical harassments narrated by the students, academic and non-academic staff members of different universities are given below:

Mostly at meetings they assault. Students are asked to keep legs and hands together and sit for five six hours or may be until the dawn (3rd year student/Male/ KI/University A).

It was physically, you know, damaging physically. You have to do push-ups in a toilet like that and you have to eat others food. So like that. It is unbearable (Senior officer/ Male/ KI/University G)

Verbal harassment also takes place and given below are the view of participants:

They ask us to stand while the others are seated and scold us properly. This happens during common ragging and in front of about thousand students (Third year student/ Female/ FGD/University F).

When they use words they use harsh words ah..... (Waiting for a while before answering) then I have experienced a fear I mean mentally (4<sup>th</sup> year student/ Female/KI/University E).

Table 5 includes the composition of **sexual harassments** experienced by students due to ragging.

**Table 5: Table Types of sexual harassments**

Type of sexual harassment	Valid Cases	Experienced	Not experienced	Percentage of students experienced
Touching you in a sexual manner without consent	4537	111	4426	2.4%
Forced to engage in sexual relations	4528	66	4462	1.5%
Forced to write or say obscene words	4682	424	4258	9.1%
Forced to perform sexual acts that are degrading or painful	4532	80	4452	1.8%
Forced to watch pornographic material	4533	94	4439	2.1%
Forced to expose private/sexual parts of your body	4534	97	4437	2.1%
Unwelcome sexual comments or jokes	4616	336	4280	7.3%
Stared or leered at	4573	291	4282	6.4%
At least one type of sexual harassment	4793	804	3989	16.8%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*



As illustrated in Table 5, unwelcome sexual comments or jokes have been experienced by the highest percentage of students (7.3%). From the total sample, 16.8 % of students have experienced at least one type of sexual harassment due to ragging. It is alarming to note that 1.8% of students have been forced to perform sexual acts that are degrading or painful.

#### **4.2.2 Relationship between ragging experiences and characteristics of victims**

The main purpose of this section is to discuss the above in relation to the following:

1. Academic year and experience
2. Location in which students had the experiences
3. Experiences with different types of perpetrators
4. Type of accommodation
5. Faculty enrolled
6. Gender
7. Students' attendance for lectures
8. Mental and physical health

Table 6 indicates a cross tabulation between the year of study and intensity of negative experiences of university students.

**Table 6: Intensity of negative experiences in different academic years**

Year of study	Intensity of negative experiences		
	Not at all	A few times	Most of the time
1 <sup>st</sup> year	2434 (48.1%)	1884 (37.3%)	739 (14.6%)
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	2427 (75.1%)	686 (21.1%)	117 (3.6%)
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	1452 (84.9%)	184 (10.8%)	75 (4.4%)
4 <sup>th</sup> year	880 (88.7%)	69 (7.0%)	43 (4.3%)
5 <sup>th</sup> year	598 (89.0%)	49 (7.3%)	25 (3.7%)

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

Table 6 implies that students are most likely to have negative experiences due to ragging during their first year of study. However, there is a strong possibility that they go through negative experiences in other academic years as well.

Table 7 depicts a cross tabulation between the locations at which ragging occurs and intensity of ragging experiences of university students.

**Table 7: Intensity of ragging experiences in different locations of the university**

Place of ragging	Intensity of ragging experienced		
	Not at all	A few times	Most of the time
University canteen/Common hall	2598 (61.7%)	1168 (27.7%)	445 (10.6%)
University hostels	2783 (72.9%)	727 (19.0%)	308 (8.1%)
University lecture halls/labs	2933 (79.1%)	568 (15.3%)	209 (5.6%)
University grounds	2880 (77.2%)	700 (18.8%)	150 (4.0%)

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

The table above indicates that students are most often experienced ragging in university canteens and common halls, which is followed by the university hostels, university lecture halls/labs and university grounds respectively.

Table 8 depicts a cross tabulation between the different type of perpetrators and intensity of ragging experienced of university students.

**Table 8: Intensity of ragging experiences in relation to different perpetrators**

People who are ragging	Intensity of ragging experienced		
	Not at all	A few times	Most of the time
A peer	2868 (80.4%)	509 (14.3%)	190 (5.3%)
A group of peers	2809 (78.8%)	542 (15.2%)	214 (6.0%)
A senior student	2356 (61.7%)	1019 (26.7%)	442 (11.6%)
A group of senior students	2292 (57.1%)	1202 (30.0%)	518 (12.9%)
Teacher/academic staff	2987 (90.9%)	192 (5.8%)	110 (3.3%)
Other university employee	3071 (94.5%)	124 (3.8%)	55 (1.7%)
University administration	2959 (91.2%)	188 (5.8%)	98 (3.0%)
Student union	2830 (84.4%)	382 (11.4%)	142 (4.2%)
Student association/societies	2909 (89.4%)	246 (7.6%)	98 (3.0%)

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

Table 8 indicates that senior students ‘as groups’ are most likely to be involved in ragging and as a percentage it is 15.2%.

Table 9 presents the number of students who have been ragged based on their type of accommodation. Further, Chi-square test has been performed in order to check the dependency of ragging experiences on type of accommodation of students.

**Table 9: Cross tabulation between type of accommodation and the intensity of ragging (N = 6225)**

Type of accommodation		Have you been ragged		
		No	Yes	Total
University hostel	Count	2191	1161	3352
	Percentage within university hostels	65.4%	34.6%	100.0%
Outside hostel	Count	295	201	496
	Percentage within outside hostels	59.5%	40.5%	100.0%
Boarding house	Count	907	632	1539
	Percentage within boarding houses	58.9%	41.1%	100.0%
Home	Count	434	384	818
	Percentage within homes	53.1%	46.9%	100.0%
Other	Count	12	8	20
	Percentage within other places	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%

**Table 10: Chi-Square tests results based on table 9**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	50.932	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	50.568	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	48.059	1	.000

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Since Chi-Square test value is statistically significant, the place of accommodation can be considered as a significant factor that decides the intensity of the ragging experience. Table 9 shows that students who commute to the university daily from home account for the largest percentage of students who have experienced ragging (46.9%).

Table 11 has evidence of patterns experienced by students during ragging depending on the faculty they have enrolled. Further, Chi-square test has been performed in order to check the dependency of experiences of been ragged in the faculty where students are studying.

**Table 11: Cross tabulation between faculty enrolled and intensity of ragging (N = 6236)**

		Have you been ragged		
		No	Yes	Total
Arts	Count	674	551	1225
	Percentage within art faculties	55.0%	45.0%	100.0%
Management	Count	1058	708	1766
	Percentage within management faculties	59.9%	40.1%	100.0%
Medical	Count	259	121	380
	Percentage within medical faculties	68.2%	31.8%	100.0%
Engineering	Count	361	65	426
	Percentage within engineering faculties	84.7%	15.3%	100.0%
Other sciences	Count	1494	945	2439
	Percentage within science faculties	61.3%	38.7%	100.0%

Source: *Sample survey 2018*

**Table 12: Chi-Square tests results based on table 11**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	121.111	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	141.629	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	18.784	1	.000

Source: *Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Since Chi-Square test value is statistically significant, the faculty where students are studying can be considered as a key factor influencing the intensity of students' ragging experience. Table 11 indicates that the largest percentages of students who have been ragged are

attached to the arts faculties (Humanities and Social Sciences). As a percentage, the least likely to be ragged are students in engineering faculties.

Table 13 presents number of students who have been ragged based on their gender. Further, Chi-square test has been performed in order to check the dependency of ragging experiences on their gender.

**Table 13: Cross tabulation between gender and intensity of ragging (N = 6219)**

Gender		Have you been ragged?		
		No	Yes	Total
Male	Count	1213	728	1941
	Percentage within male students	62.5%	37.5%	100.0%
Female	Count	2556	1607	4163
	Percentage within female students	61.4%	38.6%	100.0%
Other	Count	59	56	115
	Percentage within other students	51.3%	48.7%	100.0%

**Table 14: Chi-Square tests results based on table 13**

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.872	2	0.053
Likelihood Ratio	5.746	2	0.057
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.508	1	0.113

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Since Chi-Square test value is statistically insignificant, and accordingly the gender of a student cannot be considered as a crucial factor influencing students' ragging experience.

Following the discussion on the experiences regarding violent acts, the section below intends to present the repercussions of ragging experiences.

### 4.2.3 Impact of ragging on students' attendance to lectures

Table 15 shows the percentage of students that attended lectures whether they were ragged or not.

**Table 15: Impact of Ragging on Attending Lectures (N = 3710)**

Have you been ragged?		Attendance			
		Less than 25%	25%-50%	50%-75%	Greater than 75%
No	Count	542	24	163	1610
	Percentage within level of attendance	68.6%	58.5%	51.1%	62.9%
Yes	Count	248	17	156	950
	Percentage within level of attendance	31.4%	41.5%	48.9%	37.1%
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

According to Table 15, the students who have not experienced ragging have maintained a very high level of attendance (62.9% and 51.1%). However, certain number of students (542) have maintained a low level of attendance even without experiencing ragging.



#### 4.2.4 Impact of ragging on mental and physical health

Table 16 shows the frequency with which students seek medical help, whether they have been ragged or not. A Chi-Square test was also used to see if medical attention had been sought as a result of the ragging.

**Table 16: Receiving medical care due to effects of ragging (N = 5629)**

Have you been ragged?		Medical care			Total
		Once a semester or less	Once a month	More than once a month	
No	Count	2624	662	188	3474
	Percentage within “No”	75.5%	19.1%	5.4%	100.0%
Yes	Count	1675	376	104	2155
	Percentage within “Yes”	77.7%	17.4%	4.8%	100.0%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

**Table 17: Chi-Square tests results based on table 16**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.582	2	0.167
Likelihood Ratio	3.602	2	0.165
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.326	1	0.068

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Chi-Square test value is statistically insignificant. Thus, the data reveals that there is no difference between students who experienced ragging and those who have not experienced it, seeking mental health assistance. For example, 5.4% of the students who have not experienced ragging had sought mental health support while 4.8% of the students who have experienced ragging had sought mental health support more than once a month.

As an outcome of mental health issues, students had experienced sleep disorders. Table 16 has evidence regarding nightmares/bad dreams/sleepless nights experienced by students both who have been ragged and not ragged. In addition, Chi-Square test is also performed to examine whether such experiences are dependent on ragging.

**Table 18: Impact of ragging on sleep disorders (N = 6102)**

Have you been ragged?		Sleep Disorders		
		No	Yes	Total
No	Count	2816	942	3758
	Percentage within "No"	74.9%	25.1%	100.0%
Yes	Count	1290	1054	2344
	Percentage within "Yes"	55.0%	45.0%	100.0%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

**Table 19: Chi-Square tests results based on table 18**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	259.708	1	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	256.604	1	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	259.665	1	0.000

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Since Chi-Square test value is statistically significant, it can be concluded that having nightmares/sleepless nights/bad dreams is dependent on ragging experiences. According to the table above, about 25 percent out of all students who have not been ragged, have experienced sleepless nights and about 45 percent out of all students who have been ragged, have had sleepless nights.

According to the quantitative analysis presented above, students experience certain negative repercussions due to ragging. Similar experiences have emerged within the qualitative analysis and are given below.

It is significant to note that most of the participants from different universities highlighted that there are some common places in each university, at which the ragging is happening. These places include university playground, hostels, and student canteens and sub-culturally accepted specific places (e.g., “Thel Bemma”). As a result, it is evident in each university; there are distinct locations that are known for ragging. Apart from that, boys experience ragging even late in the night at premises such as university grounds. It is important to note that girls cannot enter hostels after 8.30p.m and it is also prohibited for girls to be at the university premises after 8.30p.m. The latter is a cultural norm in most of the universities. However, girls experience ragging in the night while being at the hostel. Views given below are the evidence.

They take hostellers to the ground at 12 o'clock in the night to rag  
(Academic staff member and a Sub Warden of a hostel /  
Male/FGD/University D).

In most of the universities, as a sub-cultural norm, girls are not allowed to stay on campus in the night after a specified time.

Girls are ragged in hostels because after 08:30 pm they can't go out. For  
boys, there is no one specific place (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Female/ FGD/  
University E).

Some of the participants added to the same and discussed how they faced risky situations during the ragging season. As first year students, senior students make it compulsory for the first year students to participate in student protests taking place outside universities such as in front of the UGC and Lipton Circus, Colombo 07. These protests last for a long time and mostly end with dangerous conditions such as battering, firing water cannons and tear gas. Sometimes, these incidents results in students getting injured severely. Following are their viewpoints.

We walk to UGC, Kollupitiya, Fort and parliament. We have no idea what will happen, whether we would be sprayed with tear gas or water. But we had to go in the front. Suddenly a huge amount of water was sprayed (laughing loudly). With that, tear gas was sprayed above our heads and we

started running. But there was nowhere to run as well because the parliament is just one road and we had to run straight through the Diyawanna road (Temporary assistant lecturer/ Male/ FGD/University F).

Because students who live in Colombo don't come to the hostel. Also everyone is aware about the prevailing rag in hostels, therefore most students thinking that it'll affect their results and therefore decide to stay in a boarding. Then the students in a lower economy background stay in the hostel (Final year student/ Female/FGD/University H).

Dress code is a significant mode of identifying first year students during the rag season. It is significant to note that there are specified dress codes for first year girls as well as for boys. Participants highlighted the difficulties they faced due to the requirements of adhering to a dress code. Thus, for girls, travelling in buses while wearing long skirts is difficult and for both boys and girls, buying new clothes to fit in to the dress code is hard because of poor financial conditions. For some girls, wearing long skirts with platted hair and travelling in busses had made them frustrated. Their views on dress code are expressed below.

As the dress code was skirt and blouse it was difficult (laughing) but to think of it now it wasn't that bad. It was a good experience. But those days the dress code was a severe frustration. It was very difficult to travel in buses wearing long skirts with platted hair (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Female/ FGD/University F).

The dress code is difficult for male students. They come in long sleeves shirts. That is difficult for us also. So it is more difficult for the students. Those students don't have facilities like us. But there have been no complaints from male students. Complaints come from female students about their long skirts (Medical officer/ Male/ KI/University A).

Going beyond the physical and mental harassments experienced by the participants, it is evident that there are negative effects of ragging on academic performance of students. It is evident that first year students are getting marginalized during the rag season. Accordingly, they have restrictions in using certain facilities of the university and they fail to attend lectures due to long hours of ragging and taking part in protests. Further, they are unable to fulfill the attendance requirements and face difficulties in meeting deadlines for assignments. Following are some of the experiences.

Everyone had to face the appeal board in the first year first semester. It was not the students' faults. It was the fault of the seniors because they took us to pickets and as a result, we were not able to attend lectures. Seniors did the mistake there. They promised us that they would somehow get our attendance but after all the pickets we were left alone with no attendance. We trusted the seniors a lot. They said they would be involved in the appeal board but we became helpless when it came to the appeal board. In the appeal board we are excused for medical issues but we are not excused for going for pickets (3<sup>rd</sup> year students/ FGD/ University E).

In the first year, there were many assignments but we didn't have any place to discuss them because some of the areas were prohibited for us. If we go somewhere and discuss then they get to know that as well and it creates more problems (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Male/ KI/University A).

Another thing is, we were taken to pickets and 10 of our students were suspended (Temporary assistant lecturer/ Female/ FGD/University F)

A considerable number of participants discussed the fact that they were harassed and it developed a severe mental stress. Following views describe such situations.

The main problem I had was the mental harassment (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Female/ FGD/University E)

A few participants pointed out the fact that the perpetrators' use of abusive language created stress. Some of them have experienced loose motion due to fear developed when listening to scolding with filthy words. They explained how the seniors address them well on the first day and started harassing from the next day. Being depressed, getting fed-up of life and dislike to recall bad memories are some of the highlights from qualitative analysis. Quotes given below are a few examples.

They used abusive language and it developed stress (2<sup>nd</sup> year student/ Female/ FGD/University C).

The thing is, we are not used to getting such scolding. The first two weeks my friend and I experienced loose motion. We were not able to tolerate the tension we had to face (Temporary assistant lecturer/ FGD/University A).

I do not like to talk even..... I am experiencing heavy mental pressure. I am afraid to come to the campus. If seniors get to know that I told these things they will kill me. On the first day they called us as sister and brother

and now what are they doing? I am fed up of life because of the heavy mental pressure (Medical officer/ Male/KI/University F).

I am a poor student. Both my mother and father are not alive. I grew up in a children's home. However, I made a great effort to pass the A/L and entered the university. I had bought five long sleeve shirts, spending money that I earned, facing many difficulties. I wore all the five shirts. They were cut. I lost what I earned through hard working and suffered a lot. I missed my sports activities. I got nothing. It was depressing. I am fed up with my university life; Filthy language was used to address me (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Male /KI/University E).

An important view that emerged is that there is a direct relationship between student politics and ragging. The participants expressed the fact that indoctrination takes place during ragging to attract new members to different political parties. Following are the views of participants:

Politics is linked to it because at present everything is about politics. Because they need students to paste posters when required, to take to rallies when required, so they make groups for it (Probationary lecturer/ Male/ KI/University C).

They come to our rooms and ask us to do tin collections on certain days. There have been such instances when we were taken forcefully (laughing) but no sexual harassment (Senior academic staff member/ a Sub Warden of a hostel / Female/ KI/University A).

Inter University Student's Federation is just a ploy of the Frontline Party. The ones who lead get a fair salary (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Male/ FGD/ University C).

Whatever everyone says only the political situation influences, not anything else. The two political parties, JVP and the Frontline Party are always behind ragging. They just want to increase the numbers even though they talk about changing the system. I've been staying in the hostel since 2005 and I have heard everything they say (Academic staff member/ Male/Sub Warden of a hostel/FGD/University A).

They are many political conflicts. Whatever we say there is SLFP, JVP, Frontline and UNP groups inside the university. They are the ones who influence the students depending on the power they hold outside (Academic staff member/ Male/ Sub Warden of a hostel/KI/University H).

Some of the participants revealed that being second year students who are not interested in getting involved in ragging they had difficulties in staying in hostels. This is because if they stay in hostels there is a pressure from the peers to get involved in ragging.

Some of second year students also don't like to stay in hostels, because if they stay they will also have to live according to the culture of the hostel. (Probationary lecturer/ Male/ FGD/University A).

With the use of quantitative and qualitative analyses, the discussion above highlighted the negative experiences of participants with regards to physical and mental harassments during ragging.

In order to understand the characteristics of the perpetrators who are involved in ragging the section below consists of an analysis including both quantitative and qualitative data.

### 4.3 Background of the Perpetrators

The purpose of this section is to discuss the characteristics and experiences of the perpetrators who are involved in ragging.

#### 4.3.1 The number of perpetrators

Table 20 depicts the number of students who are involved in ragging.

**Table 20: Composition of perpetrators (N=7084)**

Have you engaged in ragging?	Frequency	Percentage within grand total	Percentage within respondents
No	6245	88.2	95.2
Yes, to juniors	302	4.3	4.6
Yes, to other batch mates	13	.2	.2
Total respondents	6560	92.6	100.0
Did not respond	524	7.4	
Grand Total	7084	100.0	

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Out of all the respondents, only 4.5% were involved in some form of ragging. Accordingly, 4.3% agrees with the fact that they ragged juniors and 0.2% accepts that they ragged their own batch mates. It is important to note that 7.4 % of students did not respond to the question about whether they have engaged in ragging. However, out of the respondents 88.2% disagree with the fact that they got involved in ragging.

Table 21 presents information of the perpetrators on a year-by-year basis at the time of the survey.

**Table 21: Information of perpetrators based on year of study**

Year of study		Have you engaged in ragging?	
		No	Yes
1st year	Count	2113	47
	% within year	97.8%	2.1%
2nd year	Count	2202	108
	% within year	95.3%	4.7%
3rd year	Count	1570	131
	% within year	92.3%	7.9%
4th year	Count	325	29
	% within year	91.8%	8.2%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

This table provides information on the current academic year of the students and the percentage of students who were engaged in ragging. Accordingly, 8.2 % of fourth year students, 7.9 % of third-year students, 4.7 % of second year students and 2.1 % of first year students had engaged in ragging.



### 4.3.2 Characteristics of perpetrators

Table 22 presents number of students who engaged in ragging according to faculties. Chi-Square test also is performed to check whether students' involvement in ragging is dependent on the faculty of study.

**Table 22: Cross tabulation between the Faculty and perpetrators (N = 6528)**

Faculty		Have you engaged in ragging?		
		No	Yes, to juniors	Yes, to other batch mates
Arts	Count	1227	71	4
	Within Arts faculties	94.2%	5.5%	0.3%
Management	Count	1744	97	6
	Within Management faculties	94.4%	5.3%	0.3%
Medical	Count	375	7	0
	Within Medical faculties	98.2%	1.8%	0.0%
Engineering	Count	430	8	0
	Within Engineering faculties	98.2%	1.8%	0.0%
Other sciences	Count	2423	133	3
	Within science faculties	94.7%	5.2%	0.1%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

**Table 23: Chi-Square Tests Results Based on table 22**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.81	8	0.003
Likelihood Ratio	28.546	8	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.080	1	0.777

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Since Chi-Square value is statistically significant, it is evident that the number of students who got involved in ragging differed according to faculties. As a percentage, students of the Faculties of Arts (Humanities and Social Sciences) are more likely to be engaged in ragging. However, students' involvement in ragging is relatively low in both Faculties of Medicine and Faculties of Engineering.

Table 24 indicates the number of students who were engaged in ragging based on their medium of instructions of the study program. In addition, Chi-Square test is performed to check whether students' involvement in ragging is dependent on the medium of instructions.

**Table 24: Cross tabulation between Medium of instructions and perpetrators (N = 5224)**

Medium of instructions		Have you engaged in ragging?		
		No	Yes, to juniors	Yes, to other batch mates
English	Count	567	12	0
	Percentage within "English"	97.9%	2.1%	0.0%
Sinhala	Count	3284	160	8
	Percentage within "Sinhala"	95.1%	4.6%	0.2%
Tamil	Count	1373	76	0
	Percentage within "Tamil"	94.8%	5.2%	0.0%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

**Table 25: Chi-Square tests results based on table 24**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.621	4	0.006
Likelihood Ratio	19.194	4	0.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.292	1	0.021

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Since Chi-Square test value is statistically significant, it can be concluded that the students' tendency to harass other students by ragging, depends on the medium of instructions.

As a percentage, students studying in the Tamil medium are the most likely to engage in ragging. Secondly, students studying in the Sinhala medium are more likely to rag other students, whilst students studying in the English medium are less likely to do so.

Table 26 displays the number of students who engaged in ragging based on their gender. Chi-Square test is also performed to check whether students' involvement in ragging is dependent on their gender.

**Table 26: Cross tabulation between gender and perpetrators (N = 6200)**

Gender		Have you engaged in ragging?		
		No	Yes, to juniors	Yes, to other batch mates
Male	Count	1875	104	9
	Percentage within "Male"	94.3%	5.2%	0.5%
Female	Count	4202	186	3
	Percentage within "Female"	95.7%	4.2%	0.1%
Other	Count	123	9	1
	Percentage within "Other"	92.5%	6.8%	0.8%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

**Table 27: Chi-Square tests results based on table 26**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.935	4	0.002
Likelihood Ratio	15.470	4	0.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.144	1	0.042

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Since Chi-Square test value of Table 27 is statistically significant, it is possible to conclude that gender is a factor that motivates students to harass other students through ragging.

In terms of gender, the highest percentage of students in other categories such as transgender and gender neutrality etc. tend to harass other students through ragging.

It is the nature of human beings to make decisions based on their past experiences. Therefore, it is important to examine the relationship between experiences of ragging and motives to get involved in ragging. Information on the relationship between experiences of ragging and incitement to harass others through ragging is presented in Table 28. Chi-Square test is also performed to check whether motive to engage in ragging is decided by experience of ragging.

**Table 28: Cross tabulation between being victims and becoming perpetrators (N = 5976)**

Have you been ragged?		Have you engaged in ragging?		
		No	Yes, to juniors	Yes, to other batch mates
No	Count	3788	46	8
	Percentage within “No”	98.6%	1.2%	0.2%
Yes	Count	2188	200	3
	Percentage within “Yes”	91.5%	8.4%	0.1%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

**Table 29: Chi-Square tests results based on table 28**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	200.122	2	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	199.074	2	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	161.700	1	0.000

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Chi-Square value is statistically significant and therefore the motive to harass others through ragging is decided by their ragging experiences. About 1.2 % of all the students who

have not experienced ragging have harassed their juniors through ragging. The most important thing to consider here is that 8.4% of all students who have experienced ragging have harassed their juniors through ragging. Although the majority of students who have ragged others have had similar experiences, 1.4 % of students became involved in ragging without having been ragged previously.

### 4.3.3 Performance of the perpetrators at GCE A/L

Table 30 indicates the relationship between Z-Score of students at G.C.E. Advanced Level examination and students’ engagement in ragging. In addition, Chi-Square test is performed to examine the dependency of the value of the Z-Score of students on engagement in ragging.

**Table 30: Cross tabulation between Z-Score and perpetrators (N = 2740)**

Z-Score of students at G.C.E. Advanced Level examination		Have you engaged in ragging?		
		No	Yes, to Juniors	Yes, to other batch mates
Less than 2	Count	2570	270	7
	Percentage within “Less than 2”	90.3%	9.5%	0.2%
Greater than 2	Count	170	3	0
	Percentage within “Greater than 2”	98.3%	1.7%	0.0%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

**Table 31: Chi-Square tests results based on table 30**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.409	2	0.002
Likelihood Ratio	17.928	2	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.217	1	0.000

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Chi-Square value is statistically significant and therefore the students' engagement in ragging is dependent on their Z-Score value at the G.C.E Advanced Level examination. Only 1.7 % of students with Z-Score greater than 2 were found to be harassing their juniors through ragging. As many as 9.5% of students who scored less than two Z-score at the G.C.E Advanced Level examination were found to be harassing others through ragging. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that students who perform relatively low at the G.C.E. Advanced Level examination are more likely to be engaged in ragging in the university.

Table 32 shows the association between the percentages of students who attend university lectures and the percentage of students who engage in ragging. Chi-Square test is also conducted to examine the link between students' engagement in ragging and students' attendance at lectures.

**Table 32: Cross tabulation between Students' attendance and perpetrators (N = 3928)**

Percentage of Attendance		Have you engaged in ragging?		
		No	Yes, to juniors	Yes, to other batch mates
Less than 25%	Count	857	62	3
	Percentage within "Less than 25%"	93.0%	6.7%	0.3%
25%-50%	Count	39	2	0
	Percentage within "25%-50%"	95.1%	4.9%	0.0%
50%-75%	Count	310	19	2
	Percentage within "50%-75%"	93.7%	5.7%	0.6%
Greater than 75%	Count	2558	72	4
	Percentage within "Greater than 75%"	97.1%	2.7%	0.2%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

**Table 33: Chi-Square tests results based on table 32**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35.245	6	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	32.438	6	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	28.502	1	0.000

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Chi-Square value is statistically significant and therefore students' engagement to harass others through ragging is dependent on their attendance at lectures in the university. Only 2.7 % of students who completed more than 75 % of attendance found to be harassing their juniors through ragging. As many as 6.7 % of students with less than 25 % of attendance were found to be harassing others through ragging. On the basis of these findings, it may be stated that students who indulge in ragging are more likely to miss university lectures.

Table 34 indicates the relationship between students' understanding of the ragging act and students' engagement in ragging. Chi-Square test is performed to test students' dependence on ragging based on their understanding of the ragging act.

**Table 34: Cross tabulation between understanding of ragging act and students' engagement in ragging (N = 6401)**

		Have you engaged in ragging?		
		No	Yes, to Juniors	Yes, to other batch mates
No	Count	2236	120	7
	Percentage within "No"	94.6%	5.1%	0.3%
Yes	Count	3893	139	6
	Percentage within "Yes"	96.4%	3.4%	0.1%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

**Table 35: Chi-Square tests results based on table 34**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.956	2	0.003
Likelihood Ratio	11.617	2	0.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.928	1	0.001

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Chi-Square value is statistically significant (Table 35). According to table 34, 5.1 % of students who were unaware of the Ragging Act have harassed their juniors through ragging. A relatively lower percentage of students who were aware of the Ragging Act, such as 3.4%, have harassed their juniors through ragging. Further, it seems that students who were unaware of the Act are relatively more likely to harass their other batch mates as well. In light of these facts, the absence of knowledge about the Ragging Act can also be identified as a factor influencing students to engage in ragging.

#### 4.3.4. Tendency to seek medical assistance by perpetrators

Table 36 displays tendency to seek medical assistance by perpetrators. In addition, Chi-Square test is performed to test students' dependency on ragging based on their health condition.

**Table 36: Tendency to Seek Medical Assistance by Perpetrators (N = 5569)**

		Have you engaged in ragging?			
		No	Yes, to juniors	Yes, to other batch mates	
Have you sought medical care while at the university?	Once a semester or less	Count	4257	172	8
		Percentage within "once a semester or less"	95.9%	3.9%	0.2%
Once a month	Count	1034	49	2	
		Percentage within "once a month"	95.3%	4.5%	0.2%



More than once a month	Count	278	18	3
	Percentage within “more than once a month”	93.0%	6.0%	1.0%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

**Table 37: Chi-Square tests results based on table 36**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.546	4	0.014
Likelihood Ratio	8.442	4	0.077
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.912	1	0.009

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Chi-Square value is statistically significant and therefore students’ engagement to harass others through ragging is dependent on their tendency to seek medical assistance. Only 3.9 % of students who receive medical treatments once a month or less found to be harassing their juniors through ragging. About 6 % of students who receive medical care more than once a month found to be harassing others through ragging. Considering these facts, it is statistically concluded that students with poor health are more likely to harass other students through ragging.

Table 38 indicates sleep disorders experienced by students who engage in ragging. In addition, Chi-Square test is also performed to examine whether students’ engagement in ragging is dependent on sleep disorders.

**Table 38: Sleep Disorders of the Perpetrators (N = 6044)**

		Have you engaged in ragging?		
		No	Yes, to Juniors	Yes, to other batch mates
No	Count	4085	142	5
	Percentage within "No"	96.5%	3.4%	0.1%
Yes	Count	1959	113	8
	Percentage within "Yes"	94.2%	5.4%	0.4%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

**Table 39: Chi-Square tests results based on table 38**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.504	2	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	19.454	2	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.362	1	0.000
Number of Valid Cases	6102		

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Since Chi-Square value is statistically significant, it can be concluded that students' engagement to harass others through ragging is dependent on their mental health status. Only 3.4 % of students who did not experience sleep disorders found to be harassing their juniors through ragging. About 5.4 % of students who experience sleep disorders found to be harassing others through ragging. Taking these factors into account, the deterioration of their mental health of students can be identified as an influencing factor to engage in ragging. This conclusion further confirms the conclusion given in table 36.

Following the quantitative study, the qualitative analysis reveals the following findings. There is a direct relationship between the students who got involved in ragging and those who did not, their social class, and their place of origin, whether urban or rural. Accordingly, students who come from rural backgrounds, stay in hostels and had disturbed childhood are mostly

involved in ragging. In contrast, students from financially stable families and coming from urban backgrounds are less likely to get involved in ragging. The evidence is the following points of view.

Later when I became a lecturer what I experience is that a student who has a good family background, economic status and a happy childhood has a very low tendency to get in to ragging (Probationary lecturer/ Male/ FGD/ University F).

Those who get heavily involved in ragging are mostly those who are from remote areas and stay in the hostel (2<sup>nd</sup> year student/ Female/ FGD/ University B).

In our batch, there were around 900 students and out of it, there were about 75-80 from the beginning with us they are non-raggers and most of them are either from Colombo or suburbs (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Male/ FGD/University F).

Those who are from rural poor backgrounds. They have experienced difficulties may be at home or at school. We can see that. Even the physical makeup of the body indicates the background (Probationary lecturer/ Male/ FGD/University A).

Special characteristics..... first thing is they are from rural very rural (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Male/FGD/ University F).

When you take those who assault others or who harass others they have not had a good childhood. They have had a very pathetic situation. I contact the Gramasevaka's when offering scholarships and I got to know their background. They have faced sadism from the childhood. Probably the mentality due to facing the conflicts at home (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Male/ KI/ University A).

Next thing is those who did not have enough economic background and had pressure during childhood become raggers (Lecturer/ Male/ Sub Warden of a hostel/KI/ University F).

Colombo students try to stay as anti-raggers most of the time (Temporary Assistant Lecturer/ Male/ FGD/ University F).

Another important determinant of those who are involved in severe ragging is their outer-appearance. It is highlighted that the perpetrators have a liking to imitate strong leftist political

figures. These characteristics enabled the new comers to identify the perpetrators. Following is an evidence:

Some students think that when they grow hair and beard they look like Marx, I mean like Carl Marx. Colombo students usually trim their hair and beard and students from schools like Ananda and Nalanda are disciplined so when we see a person with hair and beard it indicates that we have to avoid the person. (Probationary lecturer/ Male/ FGD/ University E)

Apart from the evidence given above, there are certain other perspectives highlighted by the participants. Accordingly, some of the participants are of the view that ragging is used to transmit the university sub culture. Following are the evidence.

By the sake of ragging they did a good cause. They taught us the history of the University. They gave us a book and taught us about the university (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Female/ FGD/ University E).

They taught us certain terms that helped to us to adapt to the university culture (Lecturer/Female/ FGD/ University B).

Seniors taught us how to get along with the university culture (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Female/ FGD/ University E).

With the cultural adaptation, freshers are developing a feeling of security, unity as well as the understanding to behave according to accepted norms is another view that the participants pointed out. Given below are their viewpoints.

When the boarding is closer to the hostel in any emergency, everyone in the hostel comes to help. I feel like there is such a protection (4<sup>th</sup> year student/ Female/ KI/University E).

So I think unity is being taught through ragging (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Female/ Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences).

With less ragging, our students don't know how to respect our lecturers and to behave in a classroom (Temporary assistant lecturer/ Male/ KI/University A).

The above evidence expressed the views of participants regarding the characteristics of the perpetrators and different perspectives regarding ragging experiences. Going beyond ragging,

there is evidence regarding experiences of university students' on SGBV and following is a discussion of the same.

#### 4.4 University Students' Experience on SGBV

The main purpose of this section is to analyse the nature of SGBV experienced by students while studying at the university.

##### 4.4.1 Types of SGBV experienced by university students

Based on the questionnaire, SGBV experienced by the university students can be divided into the following components for simplicity of the analysis.

1. Feeling insecure
2. Verbal sexual violence
3. Behaving in a way that is embarrassing
4. Sexual bribes
5. Physical sexual violence (Had sex or attempted to have sex without consent)

Table 40 indicates an analysis of the instances in which students felt insecure at university due to SGBV.

**Table 40: Instances of feeling insecure**

Type of harassment	Valid Cases	Experienced	Not experienced	Percentage of students experienced
Asked to meet at a time or place that feels unsafe	4788	129	4659	2.7%
Asked to meet teachers at late hours	4772	77	4695	1.6%
Having to attend field visits which did not feel safe	4780	79	4701	1.7%
Forced to start or continue an affair or prevented from ending it	4775	87	4688	1.8%
At least one type of harassment	4814	191	4623	4.0%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

According to table 40, suggesting other parties to meet at unsafe times and places can be identified as a major harassment to students. In addition, 4 % of students experienced at least one form of harassment.

Table 41 depicts the types of verbal sexual harassments experienced by university students while they are in the university.

**Table 41: Verbal sexual violence**

Type of violence	Valid Cases	Experienced	Not experienced	Percentage of students experienced
Repeatedly told sexual stories/jokes that were unpleasant to you	4936	516	4420	10.5%
Whistled, called, or hooted at in a sexual way	4958	496	4462	10.0%
Experienced unwelcome attempts to draw you into a discussion of sexual matters	4869	281	4588	5.8%
Offensive remarks made about the appearance of your body.	4953	486	4467	9.8%
At least one type of violence	5195	1092	4103	21%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

The table above indicates that 21 % of students are subjected to verbal sexual violence. As many as 10.5 % of the students have experienced unpleasant incidents due to narrating other people's sexual stories and sexual jokes.

Table 42 presents information on how university students are disappointed and embarrassed by the other people's behavior.

**Table 42: Instances of being embarrassed by students due to other people's behavior**

Type of harassment	Valid Cases	Experienced	Not experienced	Percentage of students experienced
Treated you differently because of your gender	4996	760	4236	15.2%
Forcefully exposed to unwanted sexist or suggestive materials	4794	129	4665	2.7%
Gestures or body language of a sexual nature made that embarrassed or offended you	4901	375	4526	7.7%
Stared at you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable	5058	823	4235	16.3%
Exposed themselves physically in a way that embarrassed you or made you uncomfortable	4819	188	4631	3.9%
Made unwanted attempts to have physical contact with you	4788	121	4667	2.5%
At least one type of harassment	5250	1466	3784	27.9%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

Table 42 depicts that about 27.9 % of university students are embarrassed by other people's behavior. These harassments also contribute to making the university an unpleasant place. “Staring at students in a way that made them feel uncomfortable” and “Treating differently because of gender” could be identified as main types of harassment.

Table 43 presents information on how university students have been harassed by solicitation of sexual bribes by various parties.

**Table 43: The ways of soliciting sexual bribes**

The way of soliciting sexual bribes	Valid Cases	Experienced	Not experienced	Percentage of students experienced
Implied promotions or better treatment if you were sexually cooperative	4762	60	4702	1.3%
Asked to perform sexual acts in return for university services.	4766	75	4691	1.6%
Asked to perform sexual acts in return for grades	4764	86	4678	1.8%
At least one type of sexual bribe	4774	114	4666	2.4%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

According to the table above, approximately 2.4 % of students have been approached by various parties seeking sexual favours. In exchange for grades, about 1.8 % of university students have been requested for sexual bribes. In addition, 1.6 % of university students have been asked for sexual favors in exchange for a variety of academic services



Table 44 depicts information on physical sexual violence (had sex or attempted to have sex without consent) experienced by university students.

**Table 44: Type of physical sexual violence**

Type of violence	Valid Cases	Experienced	Not experienced	Percentage of students experienced
Made to feel afraid that you would be treated badly if you didn't cooperate sexually	4776	95	4681	2.0%
Tried to have sex without your consent	4763	83	4680	1.7%
Treated you badly for refusing to have sex	4768	72	4696	1.5%
Had sex with you without your consent	4770	72	4698	1.5%
At least one type of violence	4788	152	4636	3.2%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

The table above provides information on the most serious sexual violence experienced by university students while they are in the university. About 3.2 % of students have experienced at least one type of violence listed in the table. About 1.5 percent of students were treated badly due to refusing to have sex. The most serious issue is that about 1.5 % of students who had sex without their consent.

#### 4.4.2 Background of university students who experienced SGBV

Table 45 depicts a cross tabulation between gender and gender-based differentiation. Chi-Square test is also performed in order to test the dependency of discrimination on the gender.

**Table 45: Cross tabulation between gender and discrimination (N = 4921)**

Gender		Were you treated differently because of your gender?	
		No	Yes
Male	Count	1488	150
	Percentage within "Male"	90.8%	9.2%
Female	Count	2642	600
	Percentage within "Female"	81.5%	18.5%
Other	Count	33	8
	Percentage within "Other"	80.5%	19.5%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018 (N = 4921)*

**Table 46: Chi-Square tests results based on table 45**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	73.536	2	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	79.256	2	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	71.484	1	0.000

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

It can be concluded that there is an unequal treatment based on gender in the university since Chi-Square value is statistically significant. About 18.5 percent of female students and 9.2 percent of male students were treated differently based on the gender. About 19.5 percent of the category called 'others' also were treated differently. According to the table above, female students were treated differently than male students.

In contrast to the findings of statistical analysis, within the qualitative analysis, it was found that during ragging the female students are more pressurised than their male counterparts are.

It's a huge pressure for female students than male students (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Male/ KI/University E).

It was also found that female students experience strict rules and regulations when staying in the hostels, but it does not apply to boys' hostels.

Hostels of girls have a good administration where no one can enter after 8:30pm. If they are coming after 8:30pm they have to get a gate pass. But in boys' hostels they have made student unions and made it easy for anybody to enter and exit the hostel at any time (Senior academic staff member/ Female/ KI/University A).

Table 47 presents a cross tabulation between gender and students who had sex without their consent.

**Table 47: Cross tabulation between 'gender' and 'had sex without their consent' (N = 4697)**

Gender		Had you sex without your consent?	
		No	Yes
Male	Count	1556	31
	Percentage within "Male"	98.0%	2.0%
Female	Count	3033	39
	Percentage within "Female"	98.7%	1.3%
Other	Count	37	1
	Percentage within "Other"	97.4%	2.6%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

The important fact highlighted in table 47 is that students in every gender were subjected to involve in sex without consent. These incidents have occurred during the students' tenure at the university. However, it is not specifically stated the location at which the incidents occurred (may or may not be within the university).

Table 48 indicates a cross tabulation between the students who had sex without their consent and type of partner.

**Table 48: Cross tabulation between ‘having or not having a partner’ and ‘had sex’ without their consent with the partner or other parties (N = 4697)**

Partner		Have you had sex without your consent?	
		No	Yes
I don’t have an intimate partner	Count	1939	18
	Percentage within the row	99.1%	0.9%
A student at the university	Count	947	2
	Percentage within the row	99.8%	0.2%
An academic staff member	Count	10	0
	Percentage within the row	100%	0.0%
A nonacademic staff member	Count	11	0
	Percentage within the row	100%	0.0%
Someone outside the university system	Count	674	4
	Percentage within the row	99.4%	0.6%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

As shown in the table 48, it can be concluded that those who had sex without consent are mostly the students who do not have an intimate partner. However, the location at which these incidents occurred cannot be clearly identified with the available data. Further, in relation to students with partners, it is not clear whether ‘having sex without consent’ has happened by their partners or by any other party.

Table 49 indicates information of students who had sex without a consent based on their educational performance at the university. Chi-Square test also is performed in order to test whether afore said violence is dependent on university educational performance (University GPA).

**Table 49: Cross tabulation between ‘students’ GPA’ and ‘students who had sex without their consent’ (N = 1826)**

Students’ GPA		Had you sex without your consent?	
		No	Yes
Less than 2	Count	274	8
	Percentage within “Less than 2”	97.2%	2.8%
Greater than 2	Count	1539	5
	Percentage within “Greater than 2”	99.7%	0.3%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

**Table 50: Chi-Square tests results based on table 49**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.304	1	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	17.897	1	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	21.292	1	0.000

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Chi-Square value is statistically significant and relatively low-performing students at the university are more likely to have sex with another party without consent.

Table 51 depicts information of students who were asked to perform sexual acts in return for grades (sexual bribes). Chi-Square test also is performed in order to test whether educational performance (University GPA) of the students depends on afore said incidents.

**Table 51: Cross tabulation between ‘students’ GPA’ and ‘students who were asked to perform sexual acts in return for higher grades’ (N = 1823)**

Students’ GPA		Were you asked to perform sexual act in return for higher grades?	
		No	Yes
Less than 2	Count	274	6
	Percentage within “Less than 2”	97.9%	2.1%
Greater than 2	Count	1535	8
	Percentage within “Greater than 2”	99.5%	0.5%

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

**Table 52: Chi-Square tests results based on table 51**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.206	1	0.004
Likelihood Ratio	6.091	1	0.014
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.201	1	0.004

*Source: Data analysis by the authors based on sample survey 2018*

Chi-Square value is statistically significant and, relatively low-performing students at the university are more likely to be victims of sexual bribes.

Along with the evidence presented above regarding the presence of SGBV, it was found that boys had to remove clothes and stand naked during ragging and some perpetrators use sexually driven comments when talking to girls. Following are the different views that emerged through the qualitative analysis.

I heard that they remove the clothes of boys and make them stand naked  
(2<sup>nd</sup> year student/ Female/ FGD/ University F)

They look at our physiques and make comments. By doing that they enjoy  
(2<sup>nd</sup> year student/ Female/ KI/ University H).

Harassment nowadays takes many forms, and one of the respondents mentioned that social media is also used to harass others.

What they do is they send petitions, they write to newspapers, social media. And they blast the characters of good people. But now because of this social media, they publish anything (Senior officer/ Male/ Administration/KI/UGC).

It is important to note that some academics sexually harass female students. Occurrence may be low but students face difficulties in completing their academic assignments. Following are the views of participants.

This has happened during research supervision. The academic staff member a man has sexually harassed a girl during supervision. From the beginning, he has kept on looking at the girl's face. He has asked unnecessary questions such as whether the girl has a boyfriend, why the girl is communicating through her eyes and so on. The girl shared these with me..... He also has taken a photo of the girl during supervision and has sent it to the girl's phone using Viber. None of these has happened with the consent of the girl (Male/Medical Officer/KI/University A).

I have heard about a lecturer who teaches us and that he is passing the subject with some favour for sexual bribes. I mean some of my friends have accidentally seen some emails of that lecturer and they have seen invitations to girls to sexual chats (2<sup>nd</sup> year student/ Female/ FGD/University H).

The above discussion pointed out the experiences of students in relation to SGBV and following section focuses on the perspectives of academic and non-academic staff on SGBV.

#### **4.5 University Staff's Perspective on SGBV**

The main purpose of this section is to describe and analyse sexual and gender-based violence experienced by academic and non-academic staff members of universities.

#### 4.5.1 Types of SGBV experienced by university staff members

Based on the questionnaire, SGBV experienced by the university staff members at the university can be divided into the following categories for simplicity of the analysis.

1. Verbal sexual violence
2. Behaving in a way that is embarrassing
3. Sexual bribes
4. Physical sexual violence (Had sex or attempted to have sex without consent)

Table 53 presents the types of verbal sexual harassments experienced by university staff members at the university.

**Table 53: Verbal sexual violence (N = 1257)**

Type of violence	Experienced	Not experienced	Percentage of staff experienced
Made offensive sexist remarks at you.	449	808	35.7%
Repeatedly told sexual stories or jokes that were offensive to you	374	883	29.7%
Whistled, called, or hooted at you in a sexual way	440	817	35.0%
Made unwelcome attempts to draw you into a discussion of sexual matters	288	969	22.9%
Made crude and offensive sexual remarks, either publicly or to you privately	259	998	20.6%
Made offensive remarks about your appearance, body, or sexual activities	269	988	21.4%
At least one type of violence	586	671	46.7%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

The table above indicates that 46.7 % of university staff members in the university system are subjected to at least one type of verbal sexual violence. As many as 35.7 % of staff



members are verbally harassed by other people's offensive sexist remarks. As almost all of the incidents were reported from one university, the analysis shows that this is not a widespread issue across the university system.

Table 54 presents information on how university staff members are disappointed and embarrassed by the other people's behavior.

**Table 54: Instances of University Staff Members being Embarrassed due to the behavior of others (N = 1257)**

Type of harassment	Experienced	Not experienced	Percentage of staff experienced
Been treated badly because of your gender	298	959	23.7%
Displayed, used, or distributed sexist or suggestive materials	229	1028	18.2%
Put you down or was condescending to you because of your gender	408	849	32.4%
Made gestures or used body language of a sexual nature which embarrassed or offended you	261	996	20.8%
Stared in a way that made you feel uncomfortable	296	961	23.5%
Exposed themselves physically in a way that embarrassed you or made you feel uncomfortable	370	887	29.4%
Made attempts to establish a romantic sexual relationship with you despite your efforts to discourage it	249	1008	19.8%
At least one type of harassment	558	699	44.4%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

Analysis of Table 54 indicates that about 44.4 % of university staff members are embarrassed by the behaviour of others. These harassments also contribute to making the university an unpleasant place. “Putting down or condescending because the gender” could be recognized as the main harassment. Since almost all of the cases have been reported from one university, it appears that this is not a problem that affects the entire university system.

Table 55 presents information on how university staff members have been harassed by asking for sexual bribes by various parties at the university.

**Table 55: Type of Sexual Bribes (N = 1257)**

The types of sexual bribes	Experienced	Not experienced	Percentage of staff experienced
Made you feel like you were being bribed with some sort of reward or special treatment to engage in sexual behavior	238	1019	18.9%
Implied faster promotions or better treatment if you were sexually cooperative	234	1023	18.6%
At least one type of sexual bribe	280	977	22.3%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

According to the table above, about 18.6 % of staff members have been asked for sexual bribes for faster promotions or better treatment at the university. About 22.3 % of staff members were subjected to at least one type of harassment listed in the table above. As with the analyses of table 55 above, at the end of this analysis it appears that this is not an issue relevant to the entire university system because almost all the cases have been reported from one university.

Table 56 presents information on physical sexual harassments experienced by university staff members at the university.

**Table 56: Physical sexual harassments experienced by university staff members at the university (Had sex or attempted have sex without consent) (N = 1257)**

Type of harassment	Experienced	Not experienced	Percentage of staff experienced
Touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable	244	1013	19.4%
Made unwanted attempts to have physical contacts with you against your will	244	1013	19.4%
Sexual contact against your will	210	1047	16.7%
Had sex with you against your will	226	1031	18.0%
Made you feel threatened with some sort of retaliation for not being sexually cooperative	235	1022	18.7%
Treated you badly for refusing to have sex	229	1028	18.2%
At least one type of harassment	251	1006	19.9%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

The table above presents that 19.9 % of university staff members in the university system are subjected to at least one type of physical sexual harassment. At the end of the analysis, it was found that this problem also is not common to the university system itself but is a problem that is more prevalent in only one university. Accordingly, almost all the incidents related to issues such as verbal sexual harassments (Table 53), embarrassments due to behavior of others (Table 54), sexual bribes (Table 55) and physical sexual harassments (Table 56) were reported from the same university.

#### 4.5.2 Gender and position of university staff members who have been sexually harassed at the university

Section 4.4.1 discussed the various forms of sexual harassment experienced by university staff. Although the socio and demographic background of victims are analyzed based on any type of harassment, there is consistency between all types of harassment discussed above. Therefore, the following analysis is carried out based on one type of harassment, which represents sexual bribes.

Table 57 indicates sexual harassments experienced by university staff members based on gender.

**Table 57: Sexual bribes based on the gender (N = 916)**

Gender		Implied faster promotions or better treatment if you were sexually cooperative	
		Not experienced	Experienced
Male	Count	327	125
	Percentage within male	72.3%	27.7%
Female	Count	377	86
	Percentage within female	81.4%	18.6%
Other	Count	0	1
	Percentage within other	0.0%	100.0%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

The results of Table 57 indicate that both male and female university staff members are subjected to sexual harassment. As a percentage, male employees are more likely to be sexually harassed than female. Similar to the incidents reported by students regarding SGBV, this is not an issue relevant to the entire university system because almost all the cases have been reported from one university.

Table 58 indicates sexual harassments experienced by university staff members based on the position at the university.

**Table 58: Physical sexual harassments based on job category (N = 901)**

Job category at the university		Implied faster promotions or better treatment if you were sexually cooperative	
		Not experienced	Experienced
Professor	Count	12	0
	Percentage within the row	100.0%	0.0%
Associate Professor	Count	2	1
	Percentage within the row	66.7%	33.3%
Senior lecturer	Count	122	22
	Percentage within the row	84.7%	15.3%
Lecturer	Count	94	17
	Percentage within the row	84.7%	15.3%
Other permanent academic staff ( <i>staff equivalent to academic staff such as Librarian</i> )	Count	7	2
	Percentage within the row	77.8%	22.2%
Temporary academic staff	Count	73	29
	Percentage within the row	71.6%	28.4%
Library staff	Count	38	1
	Percentage within the row	97.4%	2.6%
Academic supportive staff	Count	23	17
	Percentage within the row	57.5%	42.5%
Administrative staff	Count	32	5
	Percentage within the row	86.5%	13.5%
Other executive staff	Count	9	6
	Percentage within the row	60.0%	40.0%
Technical staff	Count	53	15
	Percentage within the row	77.9%	22.1%

Clerical and allies' staff	Count	137	58
	Percentage within the row	70.3%	29.7%
Primary staff	Count	36	13
	Percentage within the row	73.5%	26.5%
Other	Count	59	18
	Percentage within the row	76.6%	23.4%

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

Results of the Table 58 presents that the highest percentage of victims of sexual harassment are academic supportive staff members. Accordingly, sexual bribes have been solicited from 42.5% of academic supportive staff, in return for faster promotions or better treatment. Secondly, the highest percentage of victims of sexual harassment is other executive staff members and sexual bribes have been solicited from 40 % of them. Similar to the incidents reported by students regarding SGBV, this is not an issue relevant to the entire university system because almost all the cases have been reported from one university.

#### **4.5.3 University staff members' views on the availability of supportive mechanisms to protect themselves from harassments**

This section investigates university staff's views on legal and social support available in the university to protect them from harassments. Table 59 depicts university staff members' views on the previously mentioned issue. Row percentages are presented in parenthesis.

**Table 59: University staff's views the availability of legal and social protection**

In my workplace,	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Actions are being taken to prevent harassment	87 (7.1%)	123 (10.0%)	364 (29.5%)	464 (37.6%)	195 (15.8%)	1223 (100%)
I have people to give me support if I am harassed	43 (3.5%)	111 (9.0%)	287 (23.2%)	543 (43.9%)	252 (20.4%)	1236 (100%)
A formal harassment complaint would be thoroughly investigated.	59 (4.8%)	151 (12.2%)	347 (28.1%)	478 (38.7%)	199 (16.1%)	1234 (100%)
I would feel comfortable reporting a harassment complaint at my job	90 (7.4%)	217 (17.9%)	339 (27.9%)	401 (33.1%)	166 (13.7%)	1213 (100%)
I would be afraid to file a harassment complaint	274 (22.4%)	431 (35.3%)	287 (23.5%)	178 (14.6%)	52 (4.3%)	1222 (100%)
A formal complaint on harassment would not be taken seriously.	185 (15.1%)	432 (35.3%)	362 (29.6%)	191 (15.6%)	55 (4.5%)	1225 (100%)
Individuals who harass others get away with it.	95 (8.1%)	313 (26.5%)	430 (36.5%)	274 (23.2%)	67 (5.7%)	1179 (100%)
Generally, the institution will support the harasser more than the one who is harassed	192 (15.6%)	428 (34.8%)	354 (28.8%)	161 (13.1%)	95 (7.7%)	1230 (100%)

Source: Sample survey 2018

About 25.3 % of university staff members indicated that they are not comfortable in reporting a complaint on harassment. About 20.1 % of staff members think that a formal complaint on harassment would not be taken seriously. According to 17 % of the university staff, a formal complaint on harassment is not thoroughly investigated. In contrast, according to 54.8% of the university staff, a formal complaint on harassment is thoroughly investigated. Furthermore, a significant number of university staff seems to be neutral on these issues.

#### 4.6 Handling Students' Complaints on Ragging and SGBV

The main objective of this section is to analyse the students' views on how the university administration addresses ragging and SGBV related complaints.

##### 4.6.1 Students' inclination to complain about ragging and SGBV

Table 60 indicates an analysis on students' inclination to complain about ragging and SGBV measured by Five-Point Likert scale data. In this analysis, students' responses given by both questionnaires on ragging and SGBV have been amalgamated. Row percentages are presented in parenthesis.

**Table 60: Students' inclination to complain about ragging and SGBV**

At the university:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Formally complain about harassment is risky	2473 (20.8%)	2667 (22.4%)	3796 (31.9%)	2121 (17.8%)	823 (6.9%)	11880 (100%)
I will feel comfortable reporting harassment	1054 (9.2%)	2388 (20.8%)	4411 (38.4%)	2752 (23.9%)	874 (7.6%)	11479 (100%)
I would be scared complain about harassment	2440 (21.6%)	3080 (27.3%)	3261 (28.9%)	1879 (16.6%)	634 (5.6%)	11294 (100%)

Source: Sample survey 2018



About 24.7 % of students (Responses of “Agree + strongly agree”) think that making formal complaints about ragging and SGBV is risky. About 30 % of students (Responses of “Strongly disagree + Disagree”) think that they feel uncomfortable in reporting harassments and about 22.2% of students (Responses of “Agree + Strongly agree”) are scared to complain about ragging and SGBV.

#### 4.6.2 Students' views and perception on how university administration deals with complaints on ragging and SGBV

Table 61 depicts the students' views and perception on how university administration deals with complaints on ragging and SGBV, measured by a Five-Point Likert scale data. In this analysis, students' responses given by both questionnaires on ragging and SGBV have been amalgamated. Row percentages are presented in parenthesis.

**Table 61: Students' views and perception on how university administration deals with ragging and SGBV complaints**

At the university:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
A formal complaint on harassment would be taken seriously	905 (7.7%)	1248 (10.7%)	3947 (33.7%)	4170 (35.6%)	1432 (12.2%)	11702 (100%)
A formal harassment complaint would be carefully investigated	623 (5.1%)	1776 (14.4%)	4491 (36.4%)	3957 (32.1%)	1483 (12.0%)	12330 (100%)
People who harass others get away with it	1416 (12.8%)	2215 (20.0%)	3953 (35.7%)	2580 (23.3%)	905 (8.3%)	11069 (100%)
Actions are being taken to prevent harassment.	653 (5.8%)	1199 (10.7%)	4110 (36.7%)	4044 (36.1%)	1182 (10.6%)	11188 (100%)

Source: Sample survey 2018

About 18.4 % of students (Responses of “Strongly disagree + Disagree”) think that a formal complaint on harassment would not be taken seriously by university administration. About 19.5% of students (Responses of “Strongly disagree + Disagree”) think that a formal harassment complaint would not be carefully investigated by university administration. About 31.6 % of students (Responses of “Agree + Strongly agree”) think that people who harass others get away with it. According to 16.5 % of students (Responses of “Strongly disagree + Disagree”), the university does not take proper action to prevent ragging and SGBV. Accordingly, on average 21.5 % of students do not trust the university administration's mechanism for preventing ragging and SGBV.

#### **4.6.3 Students' views and perception on the ragging and SGBV environment at the university**

Table 62 indicates students' views and perception on the ragging and SGBV environment at the university, measured by a Five-Point Likert scale data. In this analysis, students' responses given by both ragging questionnaire and SGBV questionnaire have been amalgamated.

**Table 62: Students' views and perception on the ragging and SGBV environment at the university**

At the university:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
I have people to give me support if I am harassed	735 (6.7%)	1006 (9.1%)	3006 (27.3%)	4228 (38.4%)	2031 (18.4%)	11006 (100%)
Generally, university staff will support the harasser more than the harassed person	2386 (21.4%)	4213 (37.9%)	3305 (29.7%)	839 (7.5%)	381 (3.4%)	11124 (100%)
Generally, students will support the harasser more than the person who is harassed	2590 (23.2%)	3680 (33.0%)	3237 (29.0%)	1138 (10.2%)	511 (4.6%)	11156 (100%)

*Source: Sample survey 2018*

About 15.8 % of students (“strongly disagree + disagree” response) think that if they are harassed, there is no one to support them. About 10.9 % of students (Responses of “Agree + Strongly agree”) think that university staff will support the harasser more than the harassed person. Approximately 14.8 % of students (Responses of “Agree + Strongly agree”) think that students will support the harasser more than the person who is harassed.

Adding to the quantitative findings on addressing ragging and SGBV issues by the university administration, following are the qualitative evidence on the same. Accordingly, non-implementation of rules and regulations and lack of interest by the authorities are also discussed as important reasons for the prevalence of ragging. Furthermore, institutional systems such as "disciplinary committees" are ineffective, and students believe that filing complaints about ragging acts is a futile effort.

I remember when we first came they show us about the Acts in orientation but it is no use as no actions are taken with that (Probationary Lecturer/ Male/ FGD/University A).

Punishments should be given right after a wrongdoing. In the science faculty if a problem cannot be solved and a punishment cannot be provided they release the students. Then the next time they are not scared because they know that they can easily walk out from the situation (Academic staff member/ Male/Sub Warden of a hostel/FGD/University A).

I think they can do something about it. Some solutions could be brought. But we see no actions taken by them (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Female/ FGD/University H).

We know that there are rules and regulations but we have not seen it in practice. When we enter the university, we see the ragging Act. We are being made aware about ragging act and asks not rag but we have not seen these happening practically (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Female/ FGD/ University E).

There is less intervention from the administration. There should be direct rules and regulations. (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Male/ FGD/ University C).

There are many methods to expose the ones who are involved in ragging such as *Hiru CIA*, *Ukussa* and other types of such programs. So, can't we use a proper method and expose these raggars? The only thing is we don't try to do so (Probationary lecturer/ Male/ FGD/University F).

Though there are proctors, they are actively not doing anything. And there are people in higher authorities that are not interested in stopping and making the system better (4<sup>th</sup> year student/ Male/ KI/University F).

First thing is that the Disciplinary Committee should stop violations from happening rather than taking decisions after something happens. They should prevent such violations from happening. If a student has been physically harassed and if they get involved to take the side of the one who has to be punished, then what is the use of having such a disciplinary Committee? (Male/Senior Lecturer/FGD/ University B)

Another cause for ragging's persistence has been identified as a lack of involvement of academic staff members in ragging control. Furthermore, it was stated that students respect instructors, and that lecturers' engagement in the control of perpetrators will be a useful attempt to reduce ragging. The following are their points of view.

If every staff member is concerned about it, it can be brought to zero without a doubt. It is a simple thing to identify these students. If the lecturers go and speak to these students, they would never come there again for ragging (Academic staff member/ Male/ Sub Warden of a hostel/KI/University A)

No lecturer would go to the hostel to check up on the students. So, what actual contribution have they made to stop these? (Academic staff member/ Male/ FGD/University B).

It would have been better if lecturers got more involved. But when lecturers see seniors ragging us they never question them. (3<sup>rd</sup> year student/ Male/ FGD/University A).

This chapter presented the quantitative and qualitative analyses on students' experience of ragging and their backgrounds, background of the perpetrators, students' experience on SGBV, staff's perspective on SGBV and handling students' complaints on ragging and SGBV. Based on the findings given above, the next chapter will consist of the conclusions of this study.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions**

Following the previous chapter on analysis and findings, the final chapter is a summary of the main findings. The research questions and objectives are used to highlight the important findings, which are then followed by the study's limitations.

### **5.1 Research Questions and Main Findings**

This study was approached to address the questions:

- (1) What is the nature of ragging and SGBV within the university system?
- (2) What elements of the universities allow ragging and SGBVs to persist, and
- (3) Within the university system, what mechanisms exist to address these problems and how effectively are they able to address these problems?

These questions were followed by the objectives given below:

1. To describe the nature of ragging and SGBV within the Sri Lankan University System,
2. To identify the conditions that supports the persistence of ragging and SGBV.
3. To identify the strategies used to address ragging and SGBV and the effectiveness of the methods used.

To answer the above questions, the methodology adopted comprised of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The two types of questionnaires, namely social climate and the prevalence of SGBV were administered to gather the responses of students and the staff climate questionnaire was focused on the responses of academic and non-academic staff members. Accordingly, questionnaires were distributed among a sample of students and staff of eight selected universities. Apart from the questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used as qualitative tools. Accordingly, 68 in-depth interviews and 26 FGD's

with students and key informants were held. The analysis was based on empirical data from questionnaires, in-depth interviews and FGD's.

Conclusions are based on the following primary topics, which correspond to the principal areas in which the findings were developed:

- i. Students' (Victims') Experience on Ragging and their Backgrounds
- ii. Background of the Perpetrators
- iii. Students' and staff members experience on SGBV
- iv. Handling Students' Complaints on Ragging and SGBV

Accordingly, the following section constitutes the conclusions on students' (victims') experience of ragging and their backgrounds.

## **5.2. Students' (Victims) Experience on Ragging and their Backgrounds**

The findings highlight that ragging is a major problem in state universities. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that the respondents have experienced verbal hostility, shouting and scolding. Some have indicated that they were subjected to physical force which has resulted in pain, discomfort or sometimes injury. They also have mentioned being forced to engage in student activities. The analysis has shown that about 51.2 % of students were subjected to verbal harassments, about 34.3 % of students were subjected to psychological violence, about 23.8% to physical abuse and about 16.6 % of students were subjected to sexual harassments as a result of ragging. It is also apparent that harassment, including SGBV, occurs during ragging, which is consistent with Garg (2009) and Gamage (2009) findings (2017).

Many students had also reported multiple forms of harassment, suggesting that students' experiences are wide-ranging and clustered. These testimonies suggested "soft" ragging such as eating together, reciting sexually explicit poems, and watching pornographic material for extended periods of time, as well as being sleep deprived and being forced to remain in uncomfortable physical positions for extended periods of time. Hard ragging can include physical assault, vigorous exercise, and sexually explicit acts.

Unwelcome sexual comments or jokes while looking at the body, being glared or leered at, and being forced to write or recite obscene words are all examples of sexual violence. According to the qualitative analysis participants also mentioned being assaulted, which resulted in injuries, being exposed to terrible weather conditions, being scolded in public, and being asked to remain standing. Some participants expressed their views regarding severe mental stress they experienced during ragging.

The dress code was another form of harassment during ragging. Female students found it difficult to wear long skirts and travel in buses and both male and female students from low economic backgrounds found it difficult to buy new clothes to adhere to the expected dress code. Apart from these one of the participants discussed how social media was used to harass the students. Thus, it could be concluded that ragging is prevailing in universities and it takes different forms such as verbal harassments, physical harassments including assaults and at times sexual harassment.

Based on the findings, it can also be determined that ragging occurred in a variety of locations throughout each university. These locations were highlighted in both qualitative and quantitative evaluations. Harassment took place on university grounds, specifically in canteens, common halls, and hostels, which were particularly hostile to men. Harassment over the phone and on social media, on the other hand, was very low, but qualitative assessments show that such virtual forms of ragging do exist, and they do so with remarkable efficacy. The power that seniors wield over juniors, even when they are physically absent, reflects the dread and control that surrounds the first-year ragging experience which is in agreement with Gamage's findings (2017).

Another conclusion that Garg (2009) and Wajahat (2009) agree on is that ragging has negative consequences (2014). Newcomers' studies are disrupted to a greater extent by severe mental stress they experience as a result of various forms of harassment, such as getting involved in risky activities like protests, being exposed to tear gas and being baton charged by the police, being unable to meet attendance requirements, and developing negative images of lecturers.

Although ragging is often perceived as occurring only in the first year, both interview data and quantitative data indicates that the harassment does not end when students complete their first year "induction". In reality, the rag is simply laying the groundwork for a system of

conformity and influence in which seniors have authority over their juniors throughout their academic careers. This suggests that attempts to combat ragging needs to take a broader perspective to include harassment by peers and harassment occurring in subsequent years.

The research examined areas of study and academic potential and performance that might be linked to unpleasant experiences and harassment. Reports from all academic areas indicate some level of ragging and those who arrive with higher academic standing or those with higher GPA report higher rates of ragging and harassment. Whether these differences are because better performing students are subjected to more harassment or whether such students are more likely to report harassment and ragging because they are less involved in such acts is not clear.

Student's place of residence seems to have an impact whether they are ragged, harassed or not. Thus, according to qualitative analysis, the most extreme forms of harassment and ragging seem to occur in hostels. However, according to quantitative analysis students who come from home are the ones who are ragged most.

Almost half of the respondents at each of the eight campuses polled said they had been ragged and harassed. Ragging, according to students, mostly consists of verbal abuse, but also includes physical and sexual harassment. While some students enjoy ragging and both students and some staff members think it has benefits, it is miserable and traumatic for others, leading to the abandonment of educational objectives and even aspirations.

Finally, students do not appear to be able to recognize what ragging is or whether particular forms of harassment constitute ragging, which is consistent with the literature. This issue of differing interpretations of ragging appears to affect both staff members and students. However, some effort must be carried out to create a common understanding of the problem in order to deal with ragging. If not, persons involved in discussions about ragging or harassment are likely to be speaking at cross purposes. Our findings also indicate that some activities that would not technically be defined as ragging are very much associated with ragging. For instance, the harassment that continues beyond the 'induction' period and harassment by peers. Both of these sets of behaviours are clearly linked to ragging and should be treated as part of the same phenomenon.

Following the conclusions on the victims' experiences, the following section contains the conclusions on the perpetrators' backgrounds.



### **5.3 Background of the Perpetrators**

Another key conclusion is that students who participate in severe ragging have specific features. According to Gamage (2017), these students hail from rural backgrounds, come from low-income households, live primarily in university dorms, and have had a troubled childhood. They can also be recognized by their looks, as the majority of them have grown their hair and have a beard.

It is also crucial to recognize that there is a link between student politics and university ragging. Gamage (2017) came to the same conclusion. As a result, senior students interested in party politics try to train successors to carry out their responsibilities, such as pasting posters, attending pickets and demonstrations, and leading various protests.

Male students are more likely to be involved in ragging than female students, according to an analysis of the perpetrators' characteristics. Ragging is also more common among students who are studying in their mother tongue and in arts faculties. It can also be deduced that students involved in ragging have the following traits. They have previously been subjected to ragging, do not have a thorough knowledge of the Ragging Act and its sanctions, have a low academic score at the Advanced Level Examination, and suffer from a variety of mental problems.

Following the examination of the characteristics of the perpetrators, the next section contains conclusions based on student and staff members' perspectives on the incidence of SGBV within universities.

### **5.4. Students' and Staff Members' Experiences on SGBV**

Going beyond the legal punishments as a means of mitigating ragging, participants pointed out that a strong student- teacher relationship can be used to minimise ragging. A well-planned induction program led by academic personnel is also viewed as an efficient strategy to prevent ragging.

It is important to note that academic and non-academic staff members have indicated the presence of SGBV although; almost all incidents were reported only from one university. Accordingly, it is evident that 44.% of university staff members were subjected to verbal sexual

violence, 22.3 % of university staff members were requested for sexual bribes and 19.9 % of university staff members had experienced physical sexual violence.

Further, quantitative analysis has shown that about 21 % of students studying in public sector universities were subjected to verbal sexual violence and 27.9 % of university students were embarrassed by other people's behavior. In addition, about 2.4 % of state university students have been asked for sexual bribes by various parties. Another serious issue is that about 1.5% of students had sex without their consent. However, it is not indicated whether these incidents occurred only within the university.

Going beyond ragging, in the qualitative analysis, evidence is present on sexual harassments on students by academics. Though these occurrences may be low, the participants highlighted the difficulties the students, especially female students faced due to such happenings.

The study attempted to comprehend the severity of ragging and SGBV, as well as the procedures in place in universities to combat ragging and control SGBV. The following conclusions on handling of complaints on ragging and SGBV concerns are presented based on the findings.

### **5.5. Handling Students' Complaints on Ragging and SGBV**

It can be concluded that both male and female university staff members are subjected to sexual harassment. Analysis of the position of the victims at the university shows that most of the academic support staff members and other executive staff members were harassed. It would be more appropriate to present all these harassments not as a problem common to the university system itself but probably as a specific problem pertaining to one university.

It is clear that the students are not in a disposition to complain about ragging and SGBV. This is because they do not trust the mechanisms implemented by the university administration for preventing ragging and moreover, believe that the university environment supports ragging and SGBV.

When considering the procedures and mechanisms to address the issue of ragging, it can be concluded that the means to control ragging, such as the Ragging Act and other controlling mechanisms, are in place, but that noncompliance with these rules and regulations has resulted in the prevalence of ragging at universities.

It can be inferred that one of the causes for the frequency of ragging at universities is the university administration's lack of involvement. As a result, both quantitative and qualitative analyses reveal that there are rules and regulations in place, but that their enforcement in terms of punishing wrongdoers are extremely limited. The participants believe that even the administrators' roles, such as proctors and marshals, are ineffective. Moreover, the prevalence of ragging is aided by the lack of supervision (Chopra, 2009, Wajahat, 2014). Therefore, due to the lack of monitoring, senior students have a great deal of freedom, which contributes to ragging.

Ragging also promotes equality, which contributes to the development of unity among pupils, according to the findings. It also aids students in the development of their personalities, ability to speak up, learning to respect teachers and seniors, and socialization. Premadasa et al. (2011), Nallapu, (2013), and Gamage, (2013) all reached similar conclusions (2017).

Furthermore, as stated earlier, the low level of involvement of academic staff members in regulating ragging is a factor contributing to the frequency of ragging at universities. According to the views of the students, the intervention of academic staff members could mitigate ragging because in the Sri Lankan culture, teachers are much respected and are rarely questioned.

While the study's conclusions are highlighted above, the limitations of the study are outlined next.

## **5.6. Limitations**

- The main limitation of the study is that it had only a limited number of in-depth interviews and FGDs from each university. Total number of interviews and FGDs were 94. Thus, it indicates that each university had only about five interviews and 5 FGDs.
- There were certain limitations, such as low response rates to the survey-based questionnaire in some universities and conducting the study only in faculties that were conducting lectures at the time the survey was undertaken.
- Even the time frame became a limitation because questionnaires were administered and collected within three days.
- Research coordinators of universities being volunteers, they had to concentrate on this study while working as senior academic staff members of their respective universities.

- Perhaps the challenges that clergy experience are not effectively captured because the surveys were designed with a lay student in mind. Future ragging study should focus on the issues that clergy face, as they are more likely to find campus a foreign experience, to have morality and religion-related concerns during their first year, and to have trouble finding others with whom to express their worries and fears.

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5. Years of education of Mother: \_\_\_\_\_ Father: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Profession of Mother: \_\_\_\_\_ Father: \_\_\_\_\_

### Tell us about your school

1. Medium of instruction for A/L s:  Sinhala  Tamil  English/Bilingual

2. Your z-score? \_\_\_\_\_

3. From which district did you enter the university: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Type of school you attended in advanced level:

National School  Central School  Provincial School

Private School  Pirivana

Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Is it a Mix School?  Yes  No

### PART B

Definition of Harassment is “unwanted conduct that is intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive to you”

Please indicate if you have experienced any of the following while at the University:

- 1  Treated you differently because of your gender
- 2  Forcefully exposed to unwanted sexist or suggestive materials
- 3  Repeatedly told sexual stories/jokes that were unpleasant to you
- 4  Whistled, called, or hooted at in a sexual way
- 5  Experienced unwelcome attempts to draw you into a discussion of sexual matters
- 6  Crude and offensive sexual remarks made to you either publicly or privately
- 7  Offensive remarks made about the appearance of your body.
- 8  Gestures or body language of a sexual nature made that embarrassed or offended you
- 9  Stared at you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable

- 10  Exposed themselves physically in a way that embarrassed you or made you uncomfortable
- 11  Made to feel afraid that you would be treated badly if you didn't cooperate sexually
- 12  Tried to establish a romantic sexual relationship even after you discouraged it
- 13  Made unwanted attempts to have physical contact with you
- 14  Tried to have sex without your consent
- 15  Had sex with you without your consent
- 16  Treated you badly for refusing to have sex
- 17  Implied promotions or better treatment if you were sexually cooperative
- 18  Made you afraid you would be treated poorly if you didn't cooperate sexually
- 19  Asked to meet at a time or place that feels unsafe
- 20  Asked to perform sexual acts in return for university services (eg. hostel facilities or grades etc.)
- 21  Asked to meet teachers at late hours.
- 22  Having to attend field visits which did not feel safe.
- 23  Forced to start or continue an affair or prevented from ending it.
- 24  Asked to perform sexual acts in return for university services.
- 25  Asked to perform sexual acts in return for grades.

**PART C**

**A. Is your current husband/wife/boyfriend/girlfriend/partner:**

- I don't have an intimate partner
- A student at the University
- An academic staff member
- A non-academic staff member
- Someone outside the university system
- Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Have you experienced harassment from your husband, wife, boyfriend, girl friend or sexual partner during the period you are enrolled as a student? (2014-18) Please rate the following.**

2.  Insulted you or made you feel bad about yourself?
3.  Humiliated you in front of other people?
4.  Done things to scare or intimidate you on purpose?
5.  Threatened to hurt you?
6.  Hurt people you care about as a way of hurting you, or damaged things of importance to you?
7.  Prohibited you from getting a job, going to work, trading, earning money or participating in income generation projects?
8.  Taken your earnings from you?
9.  Slapped you or thrown something at you which could hurt you?
10.  Pushed or shoved you?
11.  Hit you with a fist or with something else which could hurt you?
12.  Made you feel threatened with some sort of retaliation for not being sexually cooperative?
13.  Treated you badly for refusing to have sex?
14.  Made you afraid you would be treated poorly if you didn't cooperate sexually?
15.  Refused to let you break up with them?
16.  Forced you to start an affair?
17.  Harassed you in person?
18.  Harassed you through social media?
19.  Harassed you over the telephone?
20.  Forced you to do their laundry or food preparation?
21.  Forced you to do their academic work for them?
22.  Forced you to have sex or engage in sexual acts?
23.  Forcibly touched you in a way that made you uncomfortable?

**PART D**

Definition of Harassment is "unwanted conduct that is intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive to you"



Check  all that applies regarding your experience in **the University**. Tell us *your* opinion. There are no correct answers. It is common for students to have different experiences with the university.

At the University:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. It would be risky for me to formally complain about harassment.					
2. A formal complaint on harassment would not be taken seriously.					
3. A formal harassment complaint would be thoroughly investigated.					
At the University:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
4. I would feel comfortable reporting a harassment complaint.					
5. Individuals who harass others get away with it.					
6. I would be afraid to file a harassment complaint.					
7. Actions are being taken to prevent harassment.					
8. I have people to give me support if I am harassed.					
9. Generally, the administration of the University will support the harasser more than the one who is harassed.					
10. Generally, the students will support the harasser more than the one who is harassed.					
11. While at the university, I am forced to behave the way others want me to.					
12. To look confident and knowledgeable is not accepted at the university.					
13. I worry that I am too different from other students					

14. I worry about what others will think if I speak out in class.					
15. I feel the university environment has reduced my confidence in myself.					
16. I worry that other students will exclude/ignore me because of my behavior					

1. Did you feel uncomfortable responding to this survey?

Yes     No     Maybe

2. Were you concerned that others were watching you while you completed the survey

Yes     No     Maybe

3. Were you concerned about the consequences of completing this survey

Yes     No     Maybe

Thank you

If you need any help, follow the guidelines given in the information sheet.

## 2. SURVEY ON SOCIAL CLIMATE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

### Important information:

- The purpose of this study is to enhance the university environment and the student experience.
- We hope this survey will be an opportunity for you to raise concerns and opinions for the policy makers in the country. Hence, genuine responses for the following are very much appreciated as the results may be considered for future policy development.

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### Part A

#### Tell us about your degree programme and your university life:

1. University: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Degree programme: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Year of study:  1<sup>st</sup> year  2<sup>nd</sup> year  3<sup>rd</sup> Year  4<sup>th</sup> year  5<sup>th</sup> year  
 Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Medium of instruction:  English  Sinhala  Tamil
6. Where do you stay while at university?  Campus Hostel  Outside hostel  
 Boarding  Home  Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you receive any scholarships?  No  Yes
8. Do you receive Bursary?  No  Yes
9. Do you have close relatives enrolled at your university?  No  Yes
10. Your GPA? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Tell us about you:

1. What ethnic group you primarily identify with:  
\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender: Male  Female  Other
3. Are you clergy/a priest?  No  Yes

#### Tell us about your school:

4. Medium of instruction for A/Ls:  Sinhala  Tamil  English/Bilingual
5. Your z-score was \_\_\_\_\_

6. District you entered the university

from: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of school:  National School  Central School  
 Other Provincial School  Private School  Pirivana  
 Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

## PART B

Check  if you have experienced any of the following during the time you have been enrolled at the university. It **does not matter** who caused the experience or where you experienced them.

### **Verbal acts:**

1.  Name calling, humiliated or made fun of
2.  Threatened with harm to your family if you do not comply
3.  Threats of violence
4.  Verbal aggression/shouting/scolding

### **Psychological:**

1.  Not allowed to access a telephone, family and friends, another person
2.  Made to feel alone/social isolation
3.  Other persons controlling what you do
4.  Being treated as a child or a servant
5.  Having rumours spread about you
6.  Harassment through social media
7.  Harassment through the phone
8.  Stalking, following in and maintaining them in in humiliating way.

### **Physical acts:**

1.  Subjected to physical force which has resulted in pain, discomfort or injury
2.  Forced exposure to severe weather (e.g. rain, hot sun), physical exercises/forced to stay in uncomfortable/painful position for long time periods
3.  Forced to engage in student group activities

### **Sexual acts:**

1.  Touching you in a sexual manner without consent
2.  Forced to engage in sexual relations
3.  Forced to write or say obscene words
4.  Forced to perform sexual acts that are degrading or painful
5.  Forced to watch pornographic material

- 6.  Forced to expose private/sexual parts of your body
- 7.  Unwelcome sexual comments or jokes
- 8.  Stared or leered at

Check  all that applies regarding your experience

<b>I. when did you have these experiences?</b>	Not at all	A few times	Most of the time
1. 1 <sup>st</sup> year			
2. 2 <sup>nd</sup> year			
3. 3 <sup>rd</sup> year			
4. 4 <sup>th</sup> year			
5. 5 <sup>th</sup> year			
<b>II. Where did you have these experiences?</b>			
1. University canteen/common hall			
2. University hostels			
3. University lecture halls/labs			
4. University grounds			
5. Home			
6. Bus			
7. Other location (explain): _____			
<b>III. Who subjected you to these experiences?</b>			
1. A peer			
2. A group of peers			
3. A senior student			
4. A group of senior students			
5. Boyfriend/girlfriend			
6. Teacher/academic staff			
7. Other university employee			
8. University administration			
9. Student union			
10. Student association/Societies			
11. Family member/relative			
12. Other group (explain)_____ - _____			
13. Someone else (explain)_____			

**PART C**

Check  all that applies regarding your experience in **the University**. Tell us *your* opinion. There are no correct answers. It is common for students to have different experiences with the university.

At the university:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Formally complain about harassment is risky.					
2. A formal complaint on harassment would be taken seriously.					
3. A formal harassment complaint would be carefully investigated.					
4. I will feel comfortable reporting harassment.					
5. People who harass others get away with it.					
6. I would be scared complain about harassment.					
7. Actions are being taken to prevent harassment.					
8. I have people to give me support if I am harassed.					
9. Generally, university staff will support the harasser more than the harassed person.					
10. Generally, students will support the harasser more than the person who is harassed.					
11. I feel pressured to conform and be like everyone else.					
12. Looking confident and knowledgeable is <b>not</b> accepted at the university.					
13 I feel I am too different from other students					
14 I worry about what others will think if I speak in class.					
15. I feel the university environment has reduced my confidence in myself.					
16. I worry that other students will exclude/ignore me because of my behaviour					

**PART D**

(Tick  all if applicable)

1. Have you engaged in ragging?  No  Yes to juniors  Yes to other batch mate
2. Have you ever been ragged as a university student?  No  Yes
3. Did you know about the Ragging act?  
 No  Yes  Maybe
4. On average how frequently have you sought medical care while at the University?  
 Once a semester or less  Once a month  More than once a month
5. As a student have you had frequent nightmares/bad dreams/sleepless nights?  
 No  Yes
6. As a university student, on average, the percentage of attendance you maintained is \_\_\_\_\_%
7. Which aspect of the university services are you least satisfied with?  
 Hostel  Welfare  Sports  Academic  Library
8. Did you feel uncomfortable responding to this survey?  
 No  Yes  Maybe
9. Were you concerned that others were watching you while you completed the survey?  
 No  Yes  Maybe
10. Were you concerned about the consequences of completing this survey?  
 No  Yes  Maybe

Thank you

If you need any help, follow the guidelines given in the information sheet.

## Staff Climate Questionnaire

### Important information:

- The purpose of this study is to enhance the university environment and the staff experience.
- We hope this survey will be an opportunity for you to raise concerns and opinions for the policy makers in the country. Hence, genuine responses for the following are very much appreciated as the results may be considered for future policy development.

### PART A

1. University:
  
2. Faculty/section (report only if comfortable) :
  
3. Years of University experience:
  
4. Position:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Lecturer <input type="checkbox"/> Lecturer <input type="checkbox"/> Other permanent academic staff (Ex: Librarian...) <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary academic staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Library Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Academic support staff <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative staff <input type="checkbox"/> Other Executive staff <input type="checkbox"/> Technical staff <input type="checkbox"/> Clerical and Allied staff <input type="checkbox"/> Primary staff <input type="checkbox"/> Other .....
---	--
  
5. Sex:     Male                       Female                       Other (explain)\_\_\_\_\_

### PART B: Experiences of harassment

**Harassment is “interpersonal behavior aimed at intentionally harming another employee in the workplace”**

In my workplace,	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Actions are being taken to prevent harassment					
2. I have people to give me support if I am harassed.					
3. A formal harassment complaint would be thoroughly investigated.					



4. I would feel comfortable reporting a harassment complaint at my job.					
5. I would be afraid to file a harassment complaint					
6. A formal complaint on harassment would not be taken seriously.					
7. Individuals who harass others get away with it.					
8. Generally, the institution will support the harasser more than the one who is harassed					

During 2014-18 while at University,

Have you experienced <u>any form of harassment</u> in the workplace?	Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently

If yes,

Was the perpetrator  Male  Female

(Check  all that applies):  One person  Many Persons

Other superior Colleague  Boss

---

Harassment occurred

(Check  all that applies):  Office  Other workspace  Private place

Public space  Online  On the phone

Other .....

Could your past actions at university (2014-18) have been interpreted as harassment by another?	Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently

If yes,

Was the victim at that time

(Check  all that applies) :

<input type="checkbox"/> One person	<input type="checkbox"/> Many Persons	<input type="checkbox"/> Colleague
<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Junior
<input type="checkbox"/> Boss	<input type="checkbox"/> Other superior	<input type="checkbox"/> Non academic
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Academic staff	

Harassment occurred

(Check  all that applies):

<input type="checkbox"/> Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Other workspace	<input type="checkbox"/> Private place
<input type="checkbox"/> Public space	<input type="checkbox"/> Online	<input type="checkbox"/> On the phone

### **PART C: Experiences of sexual harassment**

Have you experienced the following at the University?

1.  Been treated badly because of your gender.
2.  Displayed, used, or distributed sexist or suggestive materials.
3.  Made offensive sexist remarks at you.
4.  Put you down or was condescending to you because of your gender.
5.  Repeatedly told sexual stories or jokes that were offensive to you.
6.  Whistled, called, or hooted at you in a sexual way.
7.  Made unwelcome attempts to draw you into a discussion of sexual matters.
8.  Made crude and offensive sexual remarks, either publicly or to you privately.
9.  Made offensive remarks about your appearance, body, or sexual activities.
10.  Made gestures or used body language of a sexual nature which embarrassed or

offended you.

- 11.  Stared in a way that made you feel uncomfortable.
- 12.  Exposed themselves physically in a way that embarrassed you or made you feel uncomfortable.
- 13.  Made attempts to establish a romantic sexual relationship with you despite your efforts to discourage it.
- 14.  Touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable.
- 15.  Made unwanted attempts to have physical contacts with you against your will
- 16.  Made you feel like you were being bribed with some sort of reward or special treatment to engage in sexual behavior.
- 17.  Sexual contact against your will
- 18.  Had sex with you against your will
- 19.  Made you feel threatened with some sort of retaliation for not being sexually cooperative.
- 20.  Treated you badly for refusing to have sex.
- 21.  Implied faster promotions or better treatment if you were sexually cooperative.
- 22.  Made you afraid you would be treated poorly if you didn't cooperate sexually.

During 2014-18 while at University,

Did you unintentionally make another person experience the above acts at the University?	Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently

If yes,

Was the victim at that time

(Check  all that applies) :

<input type="checkbox"/> One person	<input type="checkbox"/> Many Persons	<input type="checkbox"/> Colleague
<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Junior
<input type="checkbox"/> Boss	<input type="checkbox"/> Other superior	<input type="checkbox"/> Non academic
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Academic staff	

Harassment occurred

(Check  all that applies):  Office  Other workspace  Private place  
 Public space  Online  On the phone

Have you experienced <u>sexual harassment</u> in the workplace?	Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently

If yes,

Was the perpetrator  Male  Female  
(Check  all that applies):  One person  Many Persons  
 Boss  Other superior Colleague

Harassment occurred

(Check  all that applies):  Office  Other workspace  Private place  
 Public space  Online  On the phone  
 Other .....

**PART D**

1. Describe what ragging means to you

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2.

	Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
2.1 Have you ragged others?				
2.2 Have you been ragged by others?				

3. In what specific ways have you intervened to address ragging?

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4. Whose responsibility is it to stop ragging at universities?

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*Thank you*

*If you need any help, follow the guidelines given in the information sheets.*

## Appendix 2- Interview schedule

### Interview Schedule

1. Issues of marginalization & prevalence of Ragging & SGBV
    - a. What are the issues & problems affecting the lives of students (or staff)?
    - b. What are the feelings & experiences that make the student feel isolated & powerless?
    - c. What are the violent conflicts?
  2. Socialization, subculture & structure
    - a. Factors contributing to the development of subcultures - categorization of students.
    - b. What are the positives & negatives of ragging (In the student /Staff view?)
    - c. Mechanisms of socialization of adjustment in the University
    - d. Staff - student relations
  3. Identity - Politics
    - a. Gender Policies
    - b. Processes of othering
    - c. Control of and demarcation of space and spaces.
  4. Mechanisms for the future
    - a. Measures that can be taken to improve the situation.
- 
1. Can you describe your experiences regarding ragging as a student (if an academic staff member apart from experiences as a student how s/he get involved in ragging – active/passive/other)
  2. Have you ever faced any incidents relating to sexual and gender based violence? (as a student or a staff member)
  3. Have you ever experienced violent conflicts? (as a student or a staff member)
  4. Based on your experience are there different categories of students who are involved in ragging such as those who prefer it, do not like it or neutral?
  5. Do you think that there are any particular factors that contribute to the development and prevalence of ragging?
  6. Do you think that ragging has any positive effects and/or negative effects?
  7. Do you think that the relationship between staff and students has an impact on the prevalence and/or severity of ragging?
  8. According to your knowledge are there any policies within your university relating to managing ragging and other policies such as gender/equality policy?

9. Have you identified any specific spaces within your university that are popularly known as spaces for ragging?
10. What are your suggestions to minimize the prevalence of ragging and sexual and gender based violence within your university?

THANK YOU!

### Appendix 3- Information Sheet

ස්ත්‍රී පුරුෂ සමාජභාවයේ සමානතාව/සාධාරණත්වය පිළිබඳ කේන්ද්‍රය, විශ්වවිද්‍යාල ප්‍රතිපාදන කොමිෂන් සභාව

#### තොරතුරු පත්‍රිකාව

විශ්වවිද්‍යාල ප්‍රතිපාදන කොමිෂන් සභාවේ ස්ත්‍රී පුරුෂ සමාජභාවයේ සමානතාව/සාධාරණත්වය පිළිබඳ කේන්ද්‍රය විසින් විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ සමාජ වාතාවරණය අවබෝධ කර ගැනීම සඳහා අධ්‍යයනයක් සිදු කරමින් සිටී. අපි මෙමගින් විශේෂයෙන්ම සරසවිවල සිටින සිසුන් හා කාර්ය මණ්ඩලය අත්විඳින හිංසනයන් සම්බන්ධ අත්දැකීම් අවබෝධ කර ගැනීමට බලාපොරොත්තු වෙමු. අපගේ අධ්‍යයනයට සහභාගී වීමට කාරුණිකව ඔබට ආරාධනා කරන්නෙමු. විශ්තර පහත දක්වා ඇත.

#### **පර්යේෂණයේ අරමුණු**

විශ්වවිද්‍යාලවල සමාජ වාතාවරණය හඳුනා ගැනීම සහ සිසුන්ට හා කාර්ය මණ්ඩලයට ලැබිය හැකි හිංසනයන් සම්බන්ධ අත්දැකීම් හඳුනා ගැනීම.

#### **පර්යේෂණ පැවැත්වීමේ ක්‍රමවේදය**

විමර්ශකයන් විසින් ස්වයං පාලිත ප්‍රශ්නාවලියක් භාවිතා කොට දත්ත එකතු කරනු ඇත. මෙම ක්‍රියාවලියට පෙර කැමැත්ත පලකිරීමේ ලිඛිත අවසරය ලබා ගනු ඇත. ප්‍රශ්නාවලිය සිංහල හා දෙමළ භාෂාවෙන් ලබා ගත හැකිය. ආසන්න වශයෙන් ප්‍රශ්නාවලිය නිම කිරීම සඳහා විනාඩි 20 ක් පමණ ප්‍රමාණවත් වනු ඇත.

#### **පර්යේෂණය සඳහා සහභාගී වීමේ ප්‍රතිලාභ**

විශ්වවිද්‍යාල පරිසරය පිළිබඳ ශිෂ්‍ය හා කාර්ය මණ්ඩල අත්දැකීම් වැඩිදියුණු කිරීම සඳහා මෙම අධ්‍යයනයේ ප්‍රතිඵල භාවිතා කරනු ඇත. ඒ නිසා විශ්ව විද්‍යාල අධ්‍යාපනික පරිසරය වැඩි දියුණු කිරීමට අපට හැකි වනු ඇත. මෙයට සහභාගී වීම මගින් ඔබ මෙම ප්‍රයත්නය සඳහා දායක වීමක් සිදු කරනු ලබයි.

#### **පර්යේෂණය සඳහා සහභාගී වීමෙන් ඇතිවන අහිතකර බලපෑම්**

මෙම ප්‍රශ්න මගින් සංවේදී ගැටලු ආමන්ත්‍රණය කරනු ලැබේ. මෙම ප්‍රශ්නාවලිය සම්පූර්ණ කිරීමේ ක්‍රියාවලිය තුළ ඔබ කම්පිත සිදුවීම් සිහිපත් විය හැකිය. එවන් මතකයන් හේතුවෙන් ඔබට වැඩිදුර සහාය අවශ්‍ය වන්නේ නම්, කරුණාකර පහත සඳහන් සම්බන්ධතා/තොරතුරු භාවිතා කර විශ්ව විද්‍යාල ප්‍රතිපාදන කොමිෂන් සභාවේ ස්ත්‍රී පුරුෂ සමාජභාවයේ සමානතාව/සාධාරණත්වය පිළිබඳ කේන්ද්‍රය අමතන්න.

ඔබ විසින් සපයනු ලබන සියලු තොරතුරු රහසිගතව තබා ඇති අතර පර්යේෂණය සඳහා පමණක් ලබා ගන්නා බව අපි සහතික කරමු. දත්ත විශ්ලේෂණය කොට වාර්තාගත කරනු ලැබේ. දත්තයන් විශ්ලේෂණය කිරීම සහ වාර්තා කිරීම සමූහයක් ලෙස පමණක් සිදු කරයි. එමනිසා, ඔබගේ ප්‍රතිචාර දැක්වීම වෙන්ව හඳුනා ගැනීමට නොහැකි වනු ඇත.

#### **ඔබ පර්යේෂණය සඳහා සහභාගී විය යුතුද?**

පර්යේෂණය කිරීමට සහභාගී වීම හෝ ප්‍රතික්ෂේප කිරීම සඳහා කැමැත්ත ලබා දීමට ඇති අයිතිය සම්පූර්ණයෙන්ම ඔබගේය. සහභාගී වීම ප්‍රතික්ෂේප කිරීම මගින් ඔබට කිසිම හානියක් ඇති නොවෙතුවු ඇත. ඔබ මුලින් අනුමැතිය ලබා දී ඇති වුවද, ඔබ කැමති ඕනෑම අවස්ථාවකදී පර්යේෂණයෙන් ඉවත් වීමට ඔබට සම්පූර්ණ අයිතිය තිබේ. ඔබට විමර්ශන කණ්ඩායමෙන් ඕනෑම ප්‍රශ්නයක් ඇසීමට සහ පර්යේෂණය පිළිබඳව ඔබේ සැකයන් පැහැදිලි කරගැනීමට හැක.



**Appendix 4- Interview Consent Forms**

**Centre for Gender Equity/Equality, University Grants Commission**

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**  
*Study: University Students Climate*

1. Have you read the information sheet? (Please keep a copy for yourself)	YES/NO
2. Have you had an opportunity to discuss about this study and ask any questions?	YES/NO
3. Have you had satisfactory answers to all your questions?	YES/NO
4. Have you received enough information about the study?	YES/NO
5. Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason?	YES/NO
6. Have you had sufficient time to come to your decision?	YES/NO
7. Do you agree to take part in this study?	YES/NO

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Who explained what the study is about: .....

Signature of the participant: .....

Date: .....

Full name: .....

## **Appendix 5: Establishment of Higher Education Institutions in Sri Lanka**

Aim of this chapter is to discuss how the higher education system in SL is established and its evolution up to date. Thus it will look at the areas such as establishment of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in SL, free education scheme, establishing University of Ceylon, expansion of university education, youth up-rise and University education, changes in the university administration, university education after 1980, and private participation in Higher Education (HE).

In 1833 the Colebrook Commission recommended the establishment of a College in Colombo and discussion on the need for the establishment of a higher institute of learning ensued. In 1835, the ‘Colombo Academy’ was established by the British Government and it was the first institution (nucleus of higher learning) established for the purpose of imparting some kind of higher education (Peiris, 1964, 436). The Colombo Academy (renamed Royal College in 1881) prepared students for external examinations conducted by the University of London and it was the island’s premier government school for higher education courses (Malalasekara, 1969a, 867). Higher education was also provided through secondary schools (Colleges) established through the activities of the Missionary schools. These Colleges provided courses which led to University degrees and qualifications required for white collar employment. The Colleges were supported by the government because they provided personnel for government service. It was through these Colleges, that links with foreign universities were established, for instance the affiliation of Colombo Academy to the University of Calcutta in 1859.

The higher education institutions in both the areas of Medicine and Law, the ‘Ceylon Medical College’ (which was funded by the state) and the ‘Law College’ (a self-financed institution which did not receive a grant from the government and was managed by the Council of Legal Education), came into existence in the 1870s (Kalugalagedara, 2017, 15). These were the earliest institutions of professional education.

The ‘Ceylon Technical College’ was established in 1906 under the Department of Education (Kalugalagedara, 2017, 20) and formed the nucleus for engineering studies (Appendix 2- Picture 02). The original function of the institute was training skilled personnel for various

technical departments of the government. This later expanded to teaching higher-level engineering, telegraphy, surveying, chemistry and physics.

With arriving Governor Chalmers in the island in 1914, the 'Ceylon University College' was established in Colombo in 1921 (Malalasekara 1969a: 871). It was not an autonomous university and administered in the form of a Government Department. The Ceylon University College was ultimately converted into a university granting degrees, and be affiliated to an English university (preferably Oxford).

In 1931 the Donoughmore Constitution was inaugurated, giving the country a large measure of internal self-government and universal suffrage (de Silva, 2013, 144). Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara became the Minister of Education and was a member of the State Council and he led the Executive Committee. Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939 was resolved from the State Council and it was paved the way for the major reforms in education that were to follow. The Free Education Scheme in 1945 (which came to be known as the social demand model of education) was one of the main catalysts for change. The socio-economic context in which these reforms for the secondary and tertiary education system took place should be recognized to facilitate understanding of the thinking behind the reforms. C. W. W. Kannangara was one of the main leaders of these reforms (Sumathipala, 1968).

At this time, quality education was available only in the English medium urban schools and had become the preserve of relatively well-to-do-families. In 1931, prior to the introduction of Central Schools, 88% of the schools going children were enrolled in the Swabasha and Bilingual schools and the remaining 12% attended fee-levying English schools (Kalugalagedara, 2017, 27). Kannangara played a pivotal role in the establishment of Central Schools (Madya Maha Vidyalayas) with the aim of taking quality education to the less advantaged rural population (Appendix 2- Picture 03). The first Central School was established in Matugama in 1940 and there were 22 Central Schools by 1944 (Gunawardena, 1980, 10) and 54 by 1946 (Gunawardena, 1980, 12) (Appendix 2- Picture 04). They were the first schools to provide free education in the English medium. The schools also provided free board and lodging, free clothing, as well as books and stationery. The Central Schools added a third category of schools to the existing system which consisted of i) vernacular schools providing free education in Sinhala and Tamil and ii) fee-levying schools providing education in the English medium.

Central Schools began to produce students who were able to compete for university admissions with their counterparts from schools which had English as the medium of instruction from kindergarten upwards (Kalugalagedara, 2017, 31).

### **Establishing University of Ceylon**

In terms of higher education, in 1929 the Buchanan-Riddell Commission (Riddell Commission) released their report which had been entrusted with the task of examining the question of establishing a University in Ceylon. It outlined the steps necessary to establish a new unitary and residential university and also prepared a draft constitution for such a university, which greatly influenced the 1942 constitution of the University of Ceylon (Gunawardena, 1980, 22). The Riddell Commission drew from the experiences of certain Universities in India such as Lucknow, Allhabad, and Dacca. The need to establish a university with a unitary, independent and autonomous status was one of the recommendations of the report. As the result of that, finally, the University of Ceylon was establishing as the first autonomous university in Sri Lanka in 1942, by amalgamating the Ceylon Medical College and the Ceylon University College under the Ceylon University Ordinance No.20 of 1942 (Kalugalagedara, 2017, 38). The Ceylon University Ordinance No.20 of 1942 was passed on 1st July 1942 and was the foundation for the University of Ceylon which was initially located in Colombo. In the ordinance, the university had the power to demand and receive fees as determined by the Act. There was also a clause which dealt with the secular nature of the university which ensured that the university was open to all persons of sex and whatever race, creed or class, and it was not lawful for the University to impose conditions in relation to the religious beliefs of a person. The University of Ceylon was initially not envisioned for a large number of students. When the University of Ceylon opened in 1942 it was recorded as admitting 942 students (Kalugalagedara, 2017, 40). It had four faculties: Arts, Oriental Studies, Science and Medicine. The Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Science was added in 1947 and Engineering in 1949. By the late 1940s, as part of the Peradeniya Scheme the immediate objective was to provide residential university for 1,600 students (De Silva & Peiris 1995: 17). The University was initially based in Colombo and then in 1952 the University of Ceylon was shifted to Peradeniya with a campus in Colombo. Thus, the University of Ceylon

functioned with two campuses, Peradeniya and Colombo and the student intake increased, reaching 10,723 by 1965.

### **Expansion of University Education**

The expansion of university education began in 1959, with the two leading Buddhist centers of learning, Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara Pirivenas, being converted to Universities. Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara Pirivenas being the oldest and best known of the pirivenas were conferred with university status under the Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara University Act No.45 of 1958. When presenting the Bill to grant the Pirivenas university status, the Ministry of Education stated that the following objectives would be met by the legislation: giving the Sinhalese language its due place in higher education, ensuring a supply of teachers who could teach in the Sinhalese medium and opening the door to higher education to deserving pupils who were shut out of the University of Ceylon for lack of accommodation (Gunawardena, 1980, 16). The Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara University Act No.45 of 1958 came into operation on 1st January 1959. With the creation of these two Universities, the University of Ceylon lost its monopoly over university education. An impact of the formation of the two universities and the introduction of Sinhala and Tamil as mediums of instructions at universities can be seen in the increase in admissions to universities from 1960.

The number of university admissions rose with the switch-over to swabasha (local languages) - Sinhala and Tamil - as the medium of instruction. In 1960, the University of Ceylon commenced teaching classes in Sinhala and Tamil in the Arts Faculty and committed to teaching in the national languages in all other Faculties by October 1968. And also, University of Ceylon commenced awarding external degrees in 1965 under the Ceylon University (Amendments) Act No.12 of 1961.

The conversion of the two Buddhist learning centers into universities also had an impact on the curriculum at universities which became dominated by traditional disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences. A majority of students who sought university entrance came from rural areas and offered subjects related to established traditional disciplines such as Pali, Sinhalese, Buddhist Studies, and Philosophy. The Vidyodaya University started with Faculties in

Arts and Languages and the medium of instruction was predominantly Sinhala, while Tamil also came to be used in the 1960s.

With the two campuses of the University of Ceylon located in Peradeniya and Colombo having about 5,000 students each in 1966 and the administration of the Colombo campus from Peradeniya becoming increasingly difficult and unsatisfactory, there was a need to create a separate university in Colombo (Malalasekara, 1969a, 894). Thus, the University of Colombo was formed on 1st October 1967 with the University of Ceylon- Colombo campus as its nucleus, under Section 34 of the Higher Education Act No.20 of 1966 (Malalasekara, 1969a, 894).

### **Youth Up-Rise and University Education**

With the eruption of the youth insurrection in 1971 the government took a hostile attitude towards universities and a strong policy was introduced to control the universities (Kalugalagedara, 2017, 50). State control of the universities was consolidated through the University of Ceylon Act No.1 of 1972. Under this Act the University of Sri Lanka was established, with its headquarters in Colombo and the four universities which existed at that time (Peradeniya, Colombo, Gangodawila–Vidyodaya, and Kelaniya –Vidyalankara) turned into campuses. Thus, universities such as the University of Ceylon, Colombo became the Colombo Campus of the University of Sri Lanka until 1977. In 1972, the former College of Technology became the Katubedda Campus and the Jaffna Campus was established in 1974. Thus, the University of Sri Lanka had six campuses. This Act gave absolute control of all university affairs to the Minister of Education acting through a Vice Chancellor while campuses had their presidents also appointed by the Minister.

### **Changes in the University Administration**

In 1977 the new government abolished the unitary university structure through the Universities Act No.16 of 1978. This Act returned autonomy to the universities, where all campuses of the then single university, the University of Sri Lanka, became independent universities. Thus the Colombo Campus became the University of Colombo, the Peradeniya campus the University of Peradeniya, the Vidyodaya (Gangodawila) campus the University of

Sri Jayewardenepura and the Vidyalankara campus became the University of Kelaniya. The newly formed Katubedda Campus became the University of Moratuwa and in 1979 the Jaffna Campus became the University of Jaffna.

### **Establishing University Grants Commission**

With the growth in the higher education sector, came a federal system of university education (Kalugalagedara, 2017, 53), and the establishment of the UGC (UGC) under Part I of the University Act No.16 of 1978. The functions of the UGC are; planning and coordination of university education, allocation of funds to higher educational institutions and the regulation of the administration of these institutions, maintenance of academic standards, and regulation of admission of students to higher education institutions.

### **University Education After 1980**

Despite the growth in the number of universities in the 1970s (to six universities) there was large number of students who, though obtaining the minimum marks, could not enter university. Thus, the government embarked on a new policy to provide more access to higher education. The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), established in 1980, was in response to the expanding need within the country for professional education. Being an Open and Distance Learning institute, the nature of its teaching methodology and infrastructure enabled it to serve a large student population spread throughout the country. The OUSL has the same legal and academic status as any other national university in Sri Lanka. It has a Central Campus in Colombo, as well as Regional Centers and Study Centers around the country.

In addition to the seven universities mentioned above, The General Sir John Kotelawala Defence Academy was opened in 1980 and came under the Ministry of Defence and The Buddhist and Pail University of Sri Lanka was established in April 1982 under the Act of Parliament No.74 of 1981 coming under the purview of the Ministry of Higher Education. The Ruhuna University College was established in 1978 and it was given full university status in 1984 and the Eastern University, Sri Lanka was established in 1986. This increased the total number of universities in the country to eleven with nine falling under the purview of the UGC.

The Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka and Rajarata University of Sri Lanka were formed in 1995 (Kalugalagedara, 2017, 55). The establishment of the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka in 1995 as a university college and then as a full-fledged university in 1996 was partly in response to the increasing civil unrest in the North and East. The Wayamba University of Sri Lanka was subsequently established in 1999. In addition, the Buddhasravaka Bhiksu University in Anuradhapura was established in 1996, and came under the Ministry of Higher Education. This increased the number of universities in the country to 16 with 13 universities falling under the purview of the UGC.

The universities that were opened after the year 2000 appear to have been formed along a more focused line of education and in some cases were formed from institutes. The Uva Wellassa University established in 2005 was the first all entrepreneurial university in Sri Lanka, where students received training via market oriented programmes aimed at facilitating national growth and private sector employment. The University of Visual and Performing Arts was also established in 2005 and replaced the Institute of Aesthetic Studies affiliated to the University of Kelaniya.

Two other universities which did not come under the purview of the UGC, the University of Vocational Technology and the Oceans University of Sri Lanka were established in 2008 and 2014 respectively. The University of Vocational Technology comes under the purview of the Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training. The most recent addition to the universities in the country is the Oceans University of Sri Lanka established in 2014 which was previously known as the National Institute of Fisheries and Nautical Engineering. It offers degree programmes in the fields of Marine Science and Nautical Engineering. This university comes under the Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training.

### **Private Participation in Higher Education**

One of the important proposed solutions in the higher education sector is the existing system should be diversified to allow private providers. Private participation in the sphere of what is currently a free education system is highly controversial and is viewed as going back to egalitarian political ideology. Some argue against the Private University Bill that the state's



ability to effectively regulate these institutions, fears that education will be turned into a ‘commodity’ and that the benefits of the free education system will be lost, lack of a proper financial assistance mechanism may not ensure equity in access, and public universities may find it difficult to compete for resources (for instance good lecturers may go to the private universities due to the higher salaries offered). But, the Ministry of Education has since allowed private universities to offer degrees, including medical qualifications, without seeking the approval of professional bodies – a move which has sparked contention with major professional groups (De Alwis, 2014). This was done through an amendment to the University Act No.16 of 1978 through an administrative ‘Extraordinary Gazette’ in January 2014.