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Flaws in the NIRF's Ranking

What is the issue?

The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)'s ranking of higher education institutions (HEIs) has received considerable criticism.

What is NIRF ranking?

- The NIRF was approved by the MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource Development) and launched in 2015.
- The framework outlines a methodology to rank institutions across the country.
- The ranking framework evaluates institutions on five parameters:

1. Teaching, Learning & Resources
2. Research & Professional Practice (RP)
3. Graduation Outcomes
4. Outreach & Inclusivity (OI)
5. Perception (PR)

• 2022 Ranking

- IIT-Madras topped the overall category for the fourth consecutive year, and in engineering for the seventh straight year.
- The top-ranked private institutions are Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (16), Manipal Academy of Higher Education (17), Vellore Institute of Technology (18).
- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) stood first in the research institutions category.
- AIIMs occupied the top slot in the medical education category for the fifth straight year.
- IIM-Ahmedabad remained the best institute in the management segment.
- The National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, retained the first position in law.

What were the criticisms against the ranking?

- **Data fudging-** The NIRF ranking shows that a private law university scored 100% in perception.
- But the Common Law Admission Test admission choice shows that this institution figures below 10 NLUs as a preferred place to study.
- **Lack of rigorous verification-** There seems to be a lack of a rigorous system of verification by the NIRF of the data submitted by HEIs.

- Regarding the faculty-student ratio (FSR), some private multi-discipline universities have claimed the same faculty in more than one discipline.
- **Funds**- Enormous funds have been claimed as expenditure on equipment for laboratories by some private multi-discipline institutions which offer law as a subject.
- But labs are not required for law.
- **No transparency**- The NIRF requires the data submitted to it be published by all the participating HEIs on their website so that such data can be scrutinised.
- Some private multi-discipline universities have not granted free access to such data on their website.
- There is also discrepancy in the data submitted to the NIRF and the data on the websites of these institutions.
- **Methodology**- The NIRF applies almost the same parameters to all the institutions across varied disciplines in research and professional practice.
- There is a gap between the methodology employed for accreditation purposes and for ranking purposes.
- While the National Assessment and Accreditation Council gives due weightage to publications in UGC-Care listed journals, the NIRF uses publication data only from Scopus and Web of Science.

References

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