



## Flaws In NIRF Ranking

**For Prelims:** Bibliometrics, [NIRF Ranking](#) Criteria

**For Mains:** NIRF Ranking – Methodology, Flaws, Repercussions and Way Forward

### Why in News?

The [National Institution Ranking Framework \(NIRF\)](#), established by the Ministry of Education, recently announced its national rankings for universities which have been found flawed by various experts.

### How does the NIRF Rank Institute and What are Issues with the Ranking?

- The NIRF releases rankings across various categories: **‘Overall’, ‘Research Institutions’, ‘Universities’, and ‘Colleges’,** and **specific disciplines** like engineering, management, pharmacy, law, etc.
- NIRF ranks institutes by their total score; it uses five indicators to determine this score:
  - Teaching, Learning & Resources (30% weightage)
  - Research and Professional Practice (30%)
  - Graduation Outcomes (20%)
  - Outreach and Inclusivity (10%)
  - Perception (10%)
- **Issues with NIRF Ranking:**
  - Academic communities are worried about how the indicators are made and the methods used. The evaluation **focuses on research and professional practices, with attention to bibliometric measures** sidelining other forms of intellectual contributions, such as books, book chapters, monographs, non-traditional outputs like popular articles, workshop reports, and other forms of grey literature.
    - They have argued that bibliometric indicators don't fully capture the intricacies of scientific performance, and that a more comprehensive evaluation methodology is needed.
  - The allure of bibliometrics as a tool for assessing research output lies in its efficiency and convenience compared to qualitative assessments performed by subject experts, which are more resource-intensive and time consuming.

### Note:

- Bibliometrics refers to the measurable aspects of research, such as the number of papers published, the number of times they're cited, the impact factors of journals, etc.

### What are the Repercussions of Flawed rankings?

- **Misleading prospective students and parents** about the quality and reputation of institutions.
- Creating **unfair competition** and incentives among institutions to game the system.
- **Undermining the credibility** and usefulness of the ranking framework.
- **Neglecting other aspects of institutional excellence**, such as innovation, diversity, social impact, etc.
- May **negatively affect the perception**, reputation, and competitiveness of **foreign educational institutions** if they set up their campuses in India.

## How can NIRF Ranking be Improved?

- **Nurturing faculty research output** by providing adequate resources, incentives, and recognition.
- **Bibliometrics should not be used as the sole criteria** for any evaluative purpose. They should always be combined with other forms of evaluation, such as peer review, to make informed decisions.
- Creating an **institutional repository** to showcase and disseminate the research publications and impact.
- Improving the teaching-learning process by **creating an outcome-based curriculum**, using innovative pedagogies, and ensuring student feedback and satisfaction.
- Enhancing the graduation outcomes by improving the placement, entrepreneurship, and higher education opportunities for students.
- **Promoting outreach and inclusivity** by increasing the diversity of students, faculty, and staff, and engaging with the local and global communities.
- **NIRF Rankings ought to be transparent** about what data they collect, how they collect it, and how that data becomes the basis for the total score.

[Source: TH](#)

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