

# Novel HRD ranking harsh on private schools of higher learning

IIT-Madras, IIM-Bangalore top the charts, but methodology is called into question

## OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, April 4

The country's first attempt to rank higher educational institutions has yielded some unlikely results, which education experts attribute to flaws in the survey methodology.

In the final rankings released on Monday, in which some well-established institutions shockingly failed to figure in the top 50, IIT-Madras emerged as the top engineering institution, while IIM-Bangalore was ranked as the best B-school.

More than 3,600 higher educational institutions, classified under six categories, submitted data for the first

National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) for universities, engineering, management and pharmacy institutes.

In the engineering category, IIT-Madras topped the charts with a weighted score of 89.42, followed by IIT-Bombay, IIT-Kharagpur, IIT-Delhi and IIT-Kanpur with weighted scores of 87.67, 83.91, 82.03 and 81.07 respectively.

Among the management institutions, the IIMs occupied the top slots led by IIM-Bangalore with a weighted score of 93.04, followed by IIM-Ahmedabad, IIM-Calcutta and IIM-Lucknow. IIM-Udaipur and IIM-Kozhikode stood

## Educational hotspots



### Engineering

- 1 IIT-Madras
- 2 IIT-Bombay
- 3 IIT-Kharagpur
- 4 IIT-Delhi
- 5 IIT-Kanpur

### Management

- 1 IIM-Bangalore
- 2 IIM-Ahmedabad
- 3 IIM-Calcutta
- 4 IIM-Lucknow
- 5 IIM-Udaipur

fifth and sixth, respectively. Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru is ranked as the first among universities, with a weighted score of 91.81, closely followed by Institute of Chemical Technology, Mumbai. Jawaharlal Nehru University came in third followed by University of Hyderabad, Tezpur University, University of Delhi, Banaras Hindu University and Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology.

In the pharmacy category, Manipal College of Pharmaceutical Sciences grabbed the first place with a weighted score of 77.87, followed by University Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Chandigarh, Jamia Hamdard, Poona College of Pharmacy, Pune and Institute of Pharmacy, Nirma University.

"One of the biggest challenges in the higher education sector is that citizens feel there is no level playing field

in terms of transparency and the data they need from these institutions," said Smriti Irani, Minister for Human Resource Development.

These rankings would also help in attaining a benchmark of international excellence, besides helping students make informed choices about the institutions they want to join, the Minister said.

However, some education experts blamed a flawed methodology for the final rankings, in which government institutions appear disproportionately overrepresented at the top.

## The parameters

Institutions were assessed on parameters, including teaching-learning, research, collaborative practice and profes-

sional performance, graduate outcomes, placements outreach and inclusive action, and peer group perception.

Since the response from the architecture and general degree colleges fell short of being truly representative, it was decided not to rank institutions belonging to these two categories for this year.

The ranking, which will be an annual exercise, was done by an independent and autonomous body, a Ministry statement said, adding that the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) has been tasked with the ranking exercise.

To ensure third-party validation of the data that it received and analysed, an agency like Elsevier was engaged, the Ministry said.

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# Institution ranking: 'good idea, poor execution'

Experts feel B-schools inflate data on key issues like placements

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The National Institutional Ranking Framework is fundamentally a good idea, but has been poorly executed, feel management education experts.

Experts feel that the poor execution has led to misleading result to say the least, said a management education expert to *BusinessLine*. The key issue here is data; it's a known practice that many B-schools inflate their data on placements, resources and academic achievements, he added.

### Broad parameters

The NIRF rankings are based on five broad parameters - Teaching, Learning and Resources; Research, Consulting and Collaborative Performance; Graduation Outcome; Outreach and Inclusivity; and, Perception. Under these, around 22 factors were measured.

Some of the prominent sub-parameters include placement, higher studies and entrepreneurship, faculty student ratio, faculty qualifications and experience, library and laboratory facilities, peer-reviewed publi-

cations, citations, outreach and diversity.

Besides the Perception parameter, which took into account the views of academic institution heads, recruiters, members of funding agencies in government and NGOs, the data used by NIRF rankings were submitted by the participating institutes.

According to NIRF, one of the factors that can affect the reliability of the rankings is data submitted. Some of the institutions were definitely casual in supplying the data sought, said NIRF.

### Reflection of commitment

"The top rank is a reflection of the commitment of the faculty, staff and students of IIT Madras towards fulfilling the objectives of the Strategic Plan 2020 that we have set for ourselves," said Bhaskar Ramamurthi, Director, IIT Madras, which has been ranked top in the engineering category.

"Though we have participated in the rankings, the government carrying out any kind of ranking exercise is not appropriate," said Rajan Saxena, Vice-Chancellor, Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) deemed university. "Rankings should be carried out by independent agencies," he added.

"All the top ranks are secured by top government institutes in the NIRF rankings, which more looks like a pro-

motional activity for government-led institutions," he pointed out. Narsee Monjee, a top private deemed university, has been ranked 72 in the NIRF rankings.

### Long overdue

Bakul Dholakia, Director General of International Management Institute, New Delhi, says, the NIRF rankings are a long overdue step. "The stakeholders needed an unbiased, fair, and transparent rankings mechanism so that they could take an informed decision, while opting for an institution, and NIRF will provide the same," the previous IIM-A director, said.

"We are not surprised. This rank reflects the talent and efforts of our faculty, students and staff," said R Srinivasan, Director in-charge, IIM Bangalore.

### Innovative approach

The ranking, said Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Chairperson, IIMB, was a testimony to its innovative approach to management education and is a recognition of the global aspiration of its faculty, students and the management, to deliver excellence and eminence for IIMB.

Ashish Nanda, Director, IIMA, said external rankings were valuable as they gave a sense of how an institution was doing compared with others on various metrics.

Akshay Saxena, an IIT-Bombay graduate, Harvard fellow and co-founder of Avanti fellows, said "Indian students will have access to unbiased ranking which will be useful. IIT Madras has always enjoyed a great rapport with alumni, international universities and with industry.

This is reflected in its strong showing in the "Outreach" category in the current rankings, said R Nagarajan, Dean, International & Alumni Relations, IIT Madras.

Based on the feedback from this, IITM must chart a plan for further improvement, said Kris Gopalakrishnan, co-founder, Infosys Ltd, and a member of the Board of Governors of IIT Madras.

B Santhanam, President and MD of Saint-Gobain Glass and an alumnus of IITM, said, "This is a proud moment for all of us. The recognition is the result of excellent work done in education, research, and industry-institute interface in the last few years."

Suresh Kalpathi, Chairman & CEO, Kalpathi Investments, said the quality of the faculty, collaborative environment that encourages active alumni and industry interaction, and a progressive management have made this possible.

With inputs from Chennai, Bengaluru and Mumbai bureaus