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Ministry of Education
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SESSION 11- National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)

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Introduction

The NEP 2020 recognises India's aim to have an education system by 2040 that is second to none with access to the highest quality education for all learners regardless of social or economic background. India will be promoted as a global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs.

On the occasion of the 3rd Anniversary of the announcement of NEP, 2020, during the two day Akhil Bhartiya Shiksha Samagam 2023, thematic session No. 11 was organized on the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF). This session has been co-chaired by Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, NETF & Prof. K. Radhakrishnan, Chairman, Standing committee of IIT Council. The Panellist's of the session were Dr. Ram Sharma, VC, UPES; Dr. Bhimaraya Metri, Director, IIM, Nagpur and Prof. K. Umamaheshwar Rao, Director, NIT Rourkela.

This session provided the forum for participants, academic administrators, students, faculty, policy makers, representing all categories of Higher Educational Institutions an opportunity to discuss and deliberate upon methodologies to foster successful National Ranking initiatives in higher education. The key takeaways for which are tabulated below.

Issues/Discussion

Co-Chair 1: Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, NETF

- ➤ Prof. Anil provided a detailed background of NIRF, and its different accreditation parameters. He elaborated the five major themes and different sub themes of accreditation of institutions by the NIRF.

- ➤ He highlighted that the no. of Ph.D. faculty members is increasing. Regional diversity is increasing and very importantly inter-state enrolment is increasing. We have few challenges in terms of NIRF ranking which includes regional imbalance, remote participation, fear of performance. There is a need for a robust data collection system of small institutions, and need to build confidence among them for participation.

- ➤ There are many agencies of higher education involved in rankings like NAAC, NBA, AICTE, NIRF, due to which they lack coordination. Moreover, there is low willingness among the higher educational institutions regarding participation. Since only 35% institutions are participating in ranking and only 20 percent institutions are participating in 2nd cycle accreditation.

- ➤ He further said that the major responsibilities of universities is to inform, inspire and engage students. Large number of institutions are still not not coming forward for

ranking. There is a fear or less awareness in rural and remote areas about ranking. Need for creating awareness, support for data collection, and monitoring. Best practices should be shared for building confidence. Peeping into the future he emphasised on Dr Radhakrishnan committee report on reform in approval accreditation and ranking system and their implementation. Data collection should only be through a single portal. Personalized ranking features based on stakeholders interest.

Co-Chair 2: Prof.K.Radhakrishnan, Chairman,Standing Committee of IIT Council

- ➢ He suggested a simple, trust based, credible objective, rationalised system. Emphasis was given on composit assessment, choice based ranking for users, and adopted binary accreditation. A composit table for each HEI. Trust enhancement measures, adequate access control and security feathers, Technology based modern system, robust outreach mechanism. There is a need to collect category based specific data from higher education institutions.

- ➢ He proposed reforms like amalgamate accreditation for programmes and institutions. Adapted binary accreditation (instead of 8 point grading), simplify- first cycle (esp.) reaccreditation (3 year cycle). Composite assessment (as table, star point), choice based ranking system for users.

- ➢ For composite assessment, drawing up a standardised list of programmatic domains is important. A composite table for every higher education institution or a sequence of equiangular spokes, and their length proportional to the rating of each programmatic domain, with a central core circle scaled to the institutional base.

- ➢ One HEI may get high scores for a few programmatic domains and relatively low for the rest of the domains. Accreditation scores are paramount than the ranking. All HEI should be covered but categorise them based on orientation and vision, heritage and legacy, Old and established, new and upcoming. Use parameters on inputs, processes, outcome, impact on eight aspects of HEIs. Technology driven modern system, Upgradation of one data one platform. Trust institutions along with significant penalty for wrong doings and robust outreach mechanism in tandem with hand holding of potential entrants (the majority now).

- ➢ Target for transition should be eliciting feedback from stakeholders, completion of developmental tasks, test and evaluation and trial runs, system readiness, statutory clearances and notification to stakeholders, transition campaigns and readiness review, transition to new accreditation system, later seamless transition to national accreditation council of HECI.

Panellist 1: Dr. Ram Sharma, VC, UPES

- ➢ Dr. Sharma reflected upon the evolving journey of UPES as a state-led private university which has been agile in adopting the proposed reforms to improve the national ranking framework. Following the guiding principles set forth by the world class university framework which are;

1. **High concentration of talents** (in terms of the students and faculty who are willing to learn and adopt dynamic conditions.

2. **Abundance of Resources** to ensure a smooth functioning of the deployed facilities.

3. **Favourable governance system** for ensuring institutional autonomy and accountability.

Therefore, by emphasizing on the aforementioned principles UPES has improved substantially over the time and proposed the same to the several institutions in the league of achieving the national standards.

He further suggested that a conducive environment must be ensured for faculty members which makes them empowered through the autonomy provided to them to work freely, instead of working under stringent norms and regulations.

The Panellist elucidated on the importance of ensuring quality of an institution in terms of student learning outcomes and moving beyond the race to attain top position in the league tables as he opined that eminence of an institution is not just recognised on the basis of brand and reputation but the quality of experience the stakeholders witness.

Panellist 2: Dr. Bhimaraya Metri, Director, IIM, Nagpur

➢ He said that NIRF ranking is more favourable for the universities, IITs and other large research institutions. Since IIM focuses more on high salary placement and focuses on the job market demand more importantly. The faculty focuses on teaching rather than research. So, IIMs are not getting better rankings in NIRF.

Panellist 3: Prof. K. Umamaheshwar Rao, Director, NIT, Rourkela

➢ According to him, the Ranking Framework is a reliable tool that shapes the 'identity' of every institution, the parameters for which includes, the teaching-learning experience, graduate outcome, perception etc.

➢ Upon drawing comparison among the IITs, NITs, IIITs, Govt. funded technical institutions and Pvt. institutions, he stated that the private institutions are working at par with NITs in terms of research and publication.

➢ Several of such institutions are supporting students by providing hundred percent fee waivers and a good amount of scholarships is being provided from the central government to ensure all the students embark on their journey of research from a common footline.

➢ Inspite of significant opportunities for 'disadvantaged' students, private institutions fails to offer an affordable fee structure for them. Less than 5% of children are able to attain scholarships in private institutions.

➢ Hence, it was suggested that digital technical education such as SWAYAM, ekalpa, NPTEL etc. could be an alternative to ensure the inclusivity which will be more equitable.

Question-Answers

Question 1. There have been specific issues of management, pharmacy and social science institutions, hence, how do we judge them along with other institutions when it comes to the ranking parameters?

Answer. Categorisation of institutions have been taken into consideration through community engagement services, institutions such as 'Kiss in Bhubaneswar' have specific parameters, similarly institutions in rural areas are developed specifically for improvement purpose, thus such institutions have to be judged differently.

Question 2. How to maintain quality and ranking at the same time for an institution?

Answer. This can be achieved by giving an equitable chance to the deserving students irrespective of the GATE scores by lowering the cutoff percentages.

Question 3. If we do calculations in NIT Rourkela there are 8,600 students enrolled. 65 percent of the salaries are covered by the students' fee without reservation, with the reservation it is only 18 percent. How to go with it?

Answer. Since we have to follow the reservation system in the institutions. Salaries has been taken care of by the government.

Question 4. Professor Prahalad Jhosi, Vice Chancellor, Sanskrit University, Assam said there are about 16 Sanskrit universities, more than 1000 Sanskrit colleges. How does NIRF do justification with the language universities and Institutions?

Answer. Criteria of including different language universities should be different from the others institutions, since we cannot compete with IITs and IIMs. In NIRF ranking separate disciplines should be included for the language institutions.

Way Forward

➢ Achieving global quality standards in HEIs by focussing not just on ranks in general but on student outcomes particularly.
➢ Roadmap to improve ranking of Indian HEIs state-wise and institution wise both nationally and globally.
➢ Need of a simple, trust based, credible, objective rationalised system of ranking.
➢ Choice based, enable more options for stakeholders, composit assessment ranking for the Institutions.
➢ GER is important and should be taken into account. Aim should be on to increase GER. Also, there is a need of carving out separate categories for the language and other similar institutions.
➢ There is a need to maintain the quality of the institution and the ranking of the institution.

- ➢ The GATE score is not representative of a high calibre. The attitude of students and learning attitude is more important than a high GATE score.
- ➢ Need a technology based modern system to replace with the existing manual system of accreditation.
- ➢ Need for an inclusive system and conducive categorisations to ensure an equitable participation of several diverse stakeholders and institutions.
- ➢ Successful Implementation, functioning and dissemination of the idea of One Nation, One Data (common platform for sharing information).

Conclusion

To summarise, in this session the emphasis was laid on encompassing a regular, comprehensive and inclusive framework to ensure ever-evolving improvements in the national institutional ranking system.

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