



**General Studies-2; Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.**

## Higher Education System

### Introduction

- The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) recently released the India Rankings for 2023.
- There are criticisms on the methodology adopted and the parameters chosen by the Ministry of Education.

### NIRF methodology

- Rankings of higher education institutions in five categories — overall, universities, colleges, research institutions, and innovation.
- Eight subject domains — engineering, management, pharmacy, medical, dental, law, architecture and planning, and agriculture and allied sectors.
- The NIRF evaluates institutions on five parameters: teaching, learning and resources; graduation outcome; research and professional practices; outreach and inclusivity; and perception.
- Ranks are assigned based on the sum of marks secured by institutions on each of these parameters.

### Some issues

- The first is the issue of **participation of institutions.**
  - In the 2023 edition only 12.3% of higher educational institutions participated in the ranking process.
  - The list of top 100 colleges shows scant presence of colleges from rural areas.

- The lack of participation of institutions from rural areas raises questions on the urban bias of the ranking framework.
- The second issue is the **incongruence between quantity and quality**.
  - 81% of high-quality colleges are in three States.
  - This highlights the need for a mission to improve quality across the country.
  - There is a tremendous scope for more State universities to figure in this list.
  - If the quality of State universities is enhanced, it would serve the purpose of serving students in rural locations.
- The third issue stems from the close **correlation between faculty strength and rankings**.
  - A comparison between the top 100 and remaining institutions shows vast differences in this regard.
- Social aspects and social justice aspect are completely missing.
- Despite increasing education costs, the NIRF does not make any mention of individual fees as a metric for evaluating institutes.

### Concerns / Challenges

- **Quality differences** are evident between private and government institutions.
- **Budget constraints** of Indian universities.
- India's share in the overall world scientific publications is about 4.81%, whereas for china it was 26% in 2018.
- **Lack of synergy between industry and tech training institutes.**
- A number of surveys have highlighted that only one in five engineering graduates in the country has the state-of-the-art skills required in today's job market.
- There is a dominant ideology of **commercialisation of knowledge and teaching**.

### Way Forward

- The rankings underscore the urgent **need for quality enhancement in the higher education system**.
- Budgetary outlays for higher education need a quantum jump in India.
- **Resolving India's skill crisis** requires private and public agents to show willingness to engage with the faculty in small cities and towns.
- Broaden the scope of Massive Open Online Course (MOOCs) and Open and Distance Learning (ODL) to **provide access to quality education beyond geographical boundaries**.
- Safeguard the interests of thousands of temporary faculty members by expediting the permanent appointments in a time-bound framework and transparent manner.
- Each state must establish an **integrated higher education master plan** to provide an excellent education for all its residents.