6th April 2017

The National Institutional Ranking Framework, 2017 came as a brutal shock to the Panjab University. It had been ranked at overall number 12 in 2016. In 2017 it ranked at 54. In the ranking of institutions that NIRF considered to be 'universities', PU was ranked at 33 in 2017 while it was at # 10 in 2016.

What accounts for such a drastic reduction in rank for PU? Mainly, new entrants, a reduction in value being given to Research and more value being given to Graduate Outcomes.

Summary of Ranking Parameters and Weightages and changes between 2016 and 2017

Sr. No.	Parameter	Marks	Weightage 2017	Weightage 2016
1	Teaching, Learning & Resources	100	0.30	0.30
2	Research and Professional Practice	100	0.30	0.40
3	Graduation Outcomes	100	0.20	0.05
4	Outreach and Inclusivity	100	0.10	0.15
5	Perception	100	0.10	0.10

New Entrants:
1. Irrespective of their nature and discipline, all participating institutions were given a common overall rank so long as they were an institution funded by the Central Government. Thus, all the IITs, IIMs and IISERs along with institutions like IISC and all the central universities were included in the rankings. This immediately pushed the rank of the PU down considerably. Once these institutions were removed from the overall list, we were left with 22 institutions of which JNU, New Delhi, scored the most in overall marks. JNU got 61.53 overall marks while PU got 43.13.
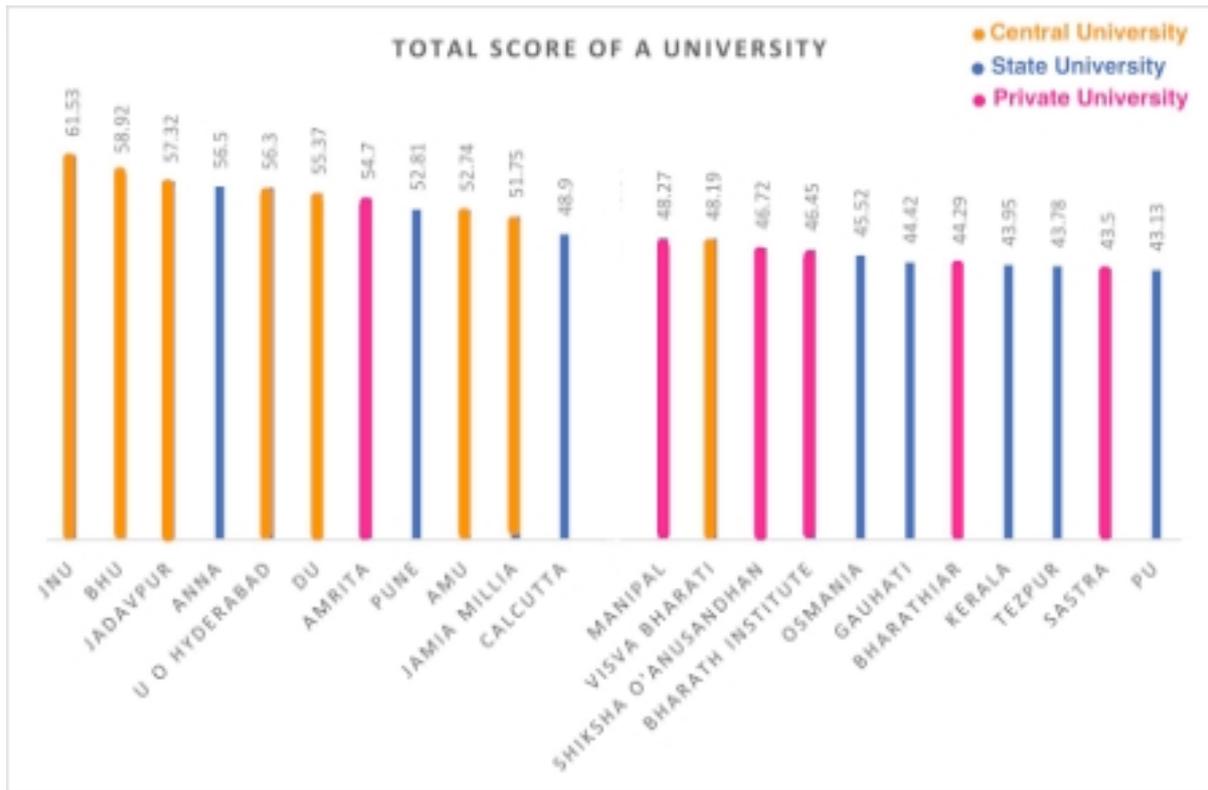
Chart 1

2. In the Chart 1 shows the universities rank-wise, with their respective scores. JNU at #1 has a score of 61.53; PU scores 43.13 and is ranked at 33. However, the list of 'universities' being used by NIRF include agricultural universities as also science and technology institutions like IISC. When we exclude those, and count only what normally are perceived as universities in India, then the rank of PU comes to be 22.

Looking at ranking and scores more closely
The rankings done by NIRF are based on a number of parameters. These are detailed below:

Parameter: Teaching and Learning Resources:
Teaching and Learning Resources were given 30% weightage.
These were based on the student-faculty ratio, the seniority of the faculty and their qualifications, and the financial resources available to the university,

The strong clustering of Centrally funded universities at the top end is mostly because of their having more funds at their disposal, a larger number of faculty. This becomes clear in the Chart 2 which shows scores for Teaching and Learning Resources.

JNU scored 62.11 on this count while PU scored 36.70, just a little bit better than Calcutta University whose score was 36.34. The worst score among the Central Universities was of DU at 43.48.
In terms of total annual expenditure, JNU claimed to have spent ₹ 4.8 lakhs per student while the figure for PU was ₹ 2.65 lakhs per student.
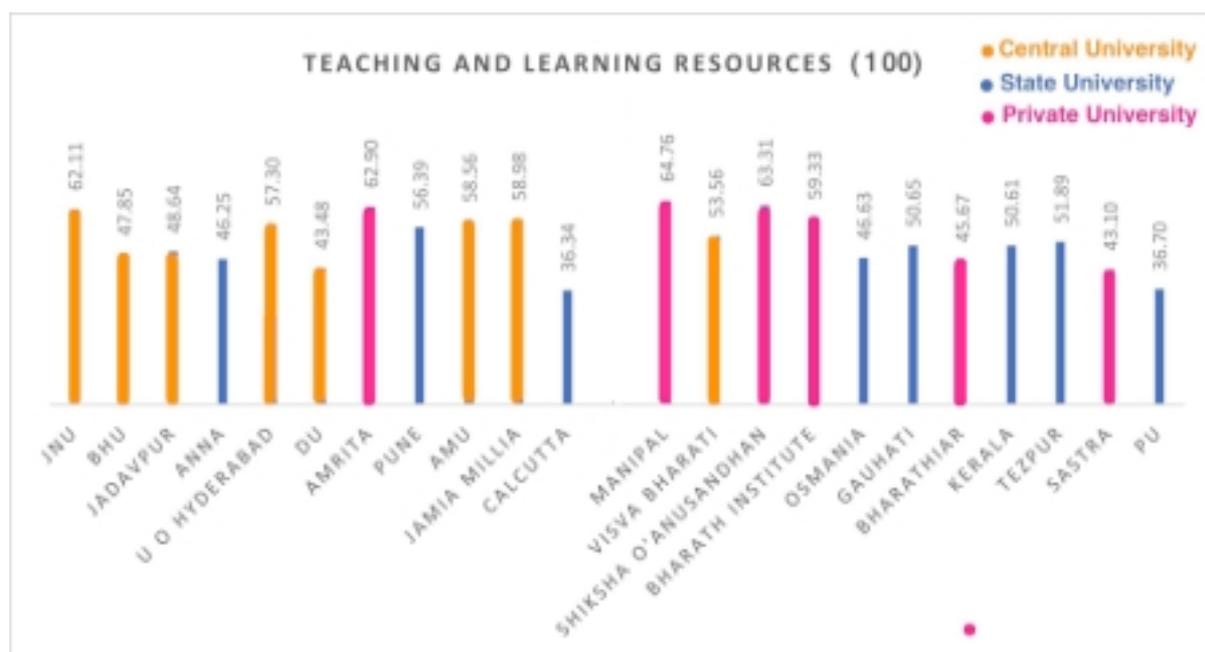

Chart 2

Parameter: Research and Professional Practice have been given a 30% weightage.

On this parameter, PU continues to score well especially considering that:

1. The weightage of scores on research has been reduced by 10% this year. In 2016, the weightage given to research was 40%.
2. The researches that NIRF counts ignores much of the research done in disciplines other than the sciences.
3. The scores are weighted at a nominal Faculty-Student ratio of 1:10; that might mean (nowhere does NIRF clear this) that a university like PU with a large student body and a higher Faculty-Student ratio will inevitably lose while those with a smaller student body and a smaller Faculty-Student ratio will gain.

For Research and Professional Practice scores, NIRF takes four parameters:

a. the per faculty member number of publications reported in Scopus, Web of Science and Indian Citation Index. This means that publications of the social sciences, humanities, laws and other disciplines that are meagerly represented in these web-services automatically get discounted. Moreover, the number of faculty is not the actual number of faculty but a nominal number which is calculated at a faculty-student ratio of 1:10. This would put universities like PU that have a large student body at a disadvantage.
b. The footprint of research is calculated on the basis of total citations in the preceding three years and income from consultancy. PU would score high on citations. But, with a Chandigarh location, non-industrial and with little access to government departments like labour, planning, etc., consultancies would be few and less earning.
c. The per faculty member number of patents filed/granted in the preceding three years and the per faculty member earnings from these patents in that period.
d. Income from full time Executive Development Programmes

Chart 3, above. Chart 4, below

	Publications		Citations		Top 25% highly cited papers	
	PU	JNU	PU	JNU	PU	JNU
Web of Science	2611	1646	19976	5883	699	264
Scopus	2638	2093	18634	8538	856	499

Parameter: Graduate Outcome:

GRADUATE OUTCOME (100)
● Central University
● State University
● Private University
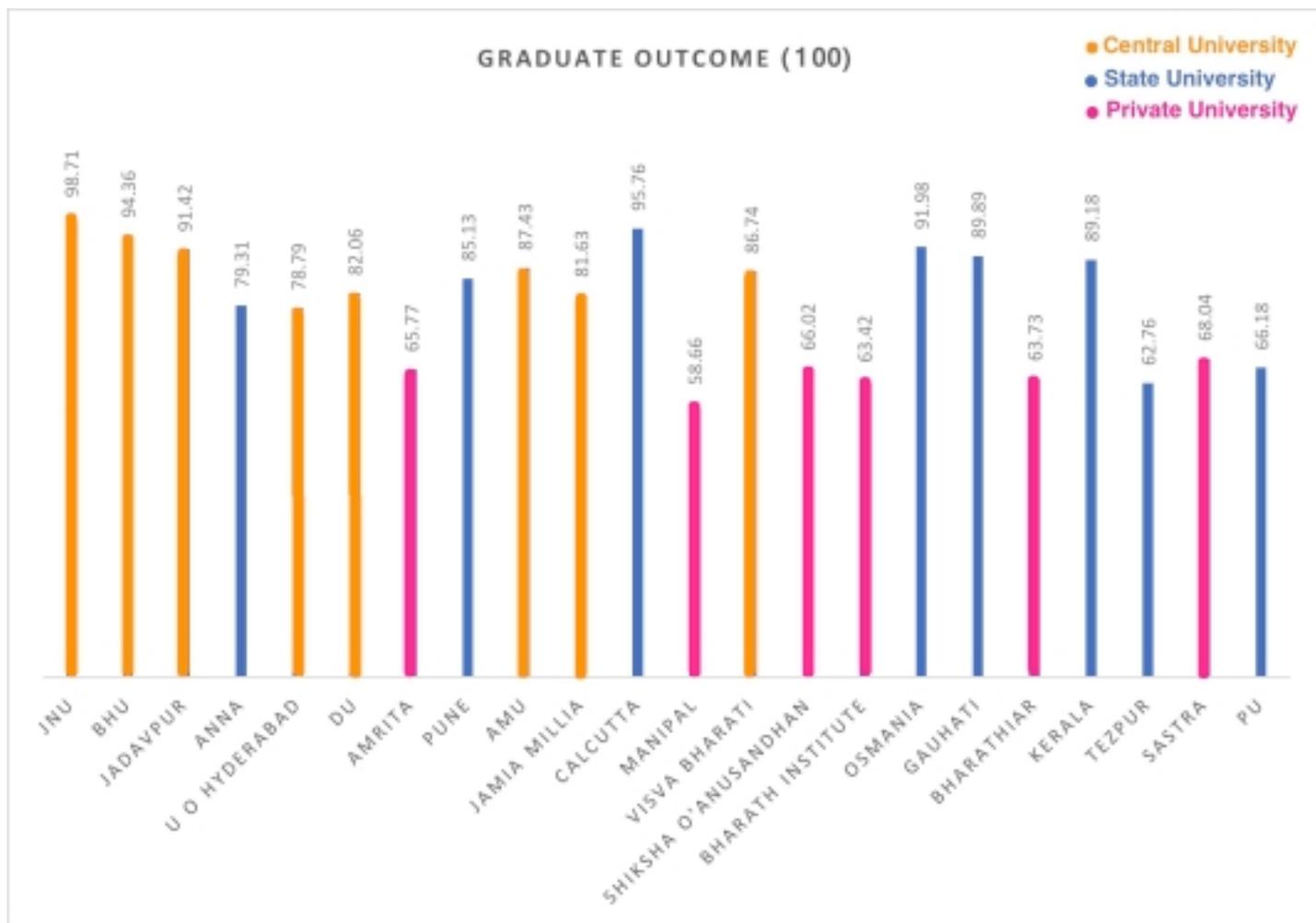
Graduate Outcome scores given 20% weightage. These are based on a combination of information on:
   a. Graduate placement, going into higher education and entrepreneurship (40% weightage)
   b. The pass percentage in every course (15% weightage)
   c. Median salary earned by placed graduates (20% weightage)
   d. Graduates admitted to top universities (20% weightage)
   e. Number of PhDs awarded in the given time period (10% weightage)

The reported number of PhDs each year from PU is quite small as compared to say, JNU. JNU, for example, claims to induct 5219 students in the PhD programme for 2015-16 in contrast to 909 for PU.

On placements, we have, illustrative, JNU, mostly its School of Languages, places students with businesses with a claimed median salary of 713,000. The parallel figure for PU is with a

median salary of a little over 450,000. On balance, JNU places just about a dozen and odd students while PU places over a thousand students. BHU, the central university that ranked second, had placed about 150 students with a median salary ranging from 400000 to 800000.

The number of students going for 'Higher Studies' as claimed by JNU, over 700, is far far higher than that of PU, about 120. This can only indicate that PU needs to keep greater track of its students who go in for 'Higher studies'. Even a PU MA/MSc who goes to join a second MA/MSc programme would need to be counted as 'Higher Studies'. Or at least a query could be sent to NIRF to clarify matters.

The number of students graduating in minimum time too shows a drastic difference. In JNU almost 100% students are claimed to be finishing their course in minimum time. The comparative figure for PU is about 66%.

A more robust effort at placement might get PU higher scores here.

Parameter: Outreach and Inclusivity:
This parameter is weighted at 10%. It depends on diversity of the student body in terms of their place of origin (more outsiders is better), gender (more women is better), economic and social status (poorer is the better), and facilities for physically challenged (the more facilities the better). As can be seen from the chart below, PU, along with Calcutta, scores very low on this parameter.
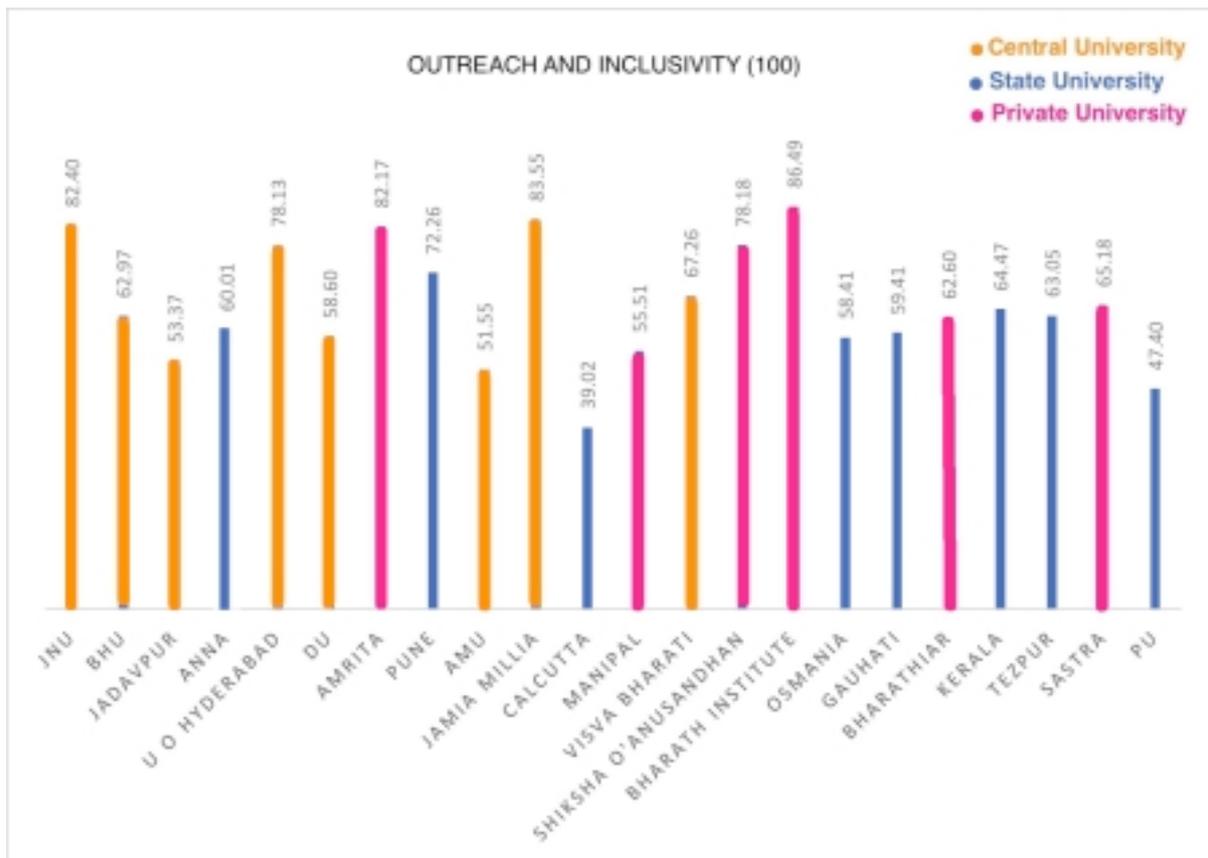
Parameter: Perception

The weightage given to perception scores is 10%. Perception is measured through feedback surveys involving employers, investors, academic peers, public perception and 'competitiveness'. JNU scores the highest on this parameter while BHU and Anna University are close to it. PU scores very low along with Calcutta and AMU.

It is noteworthy that in 2016, the perception score for these top universities was between 100 and 80.