

# 'Malpractices' in NIRF ranking: Edu ministry, NBA told to reply

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THE Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Thursday sought reply from the Union Education Ministry and the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) petition alleging malpractices by educational institutions in getting National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings in India.

The litigant C Chellamuthu of Dindigul stated in his petition that NIRF was launched by the NBA to evaluate the excellence of higher education institutions across the country every year. But the NIRF rankings are calculated merely based on the data provided by the educational institutions on their website without any verification or auditing, he alleged.

As a result, many institutions submit false data to boost their ranking to attract

students and multinational companies, he claimed.

Chellamuthu also attached the comparative data of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council - Annual Quality Assurance Report (NAAC-AQAR) and the NIRF report, individually posted



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Petitioner

by some of the educational institutions on their website. While the number of PhD students, faculty, R&D funds and consultancy project funds received, among other variables, are lower in their NAAC-AQAR report, a higher number is mentioned in the

NIRF report for the same parameters, he pointed out.

Since the NAAC-AQAR documents are checked by expert committees sent by NAAC to the institutions, the difference in NIRF data shows the latter is manipulated by the institutions to get a better score, Chellamuthu alleged. As a result, institutions with poor academic quality and infrastructure get top rankings while many state universities and reputed institutions are left out. This could negatively impact the quality of education in India, he added, and sought a direction to the ministry and NBA to publish NIRF rankings after due verification and by disclosing the method adopted for calculation.

A bench of justices J Nisha Banu and S Srimathy directed the government counsels to obtain instructions from the authorities concerned and adjourned the case to March 20.