"An Exploratory Study of Ph.D. Thesis of Political Science Submitted by NIRF Ranked Top 10 Indian University"

Anupma Kumari

(Junior Research Fellow),
Department of Political Studies,
Central University of South Bihar
Email: anupmacusb@gmail.com

Abstract:

This research aims to conduct a comprehensive examination of the Ph.D. thesis submitted to a distinguished social science university, which is ranked among the top ten institutions according to the 'National Institutional Ranking Framework' (NIRF). In this university, the Department of Political Science offers the Ph.D. program. The essential data required for this study has been collected from the digital thesis repository known as Shodhganga, which is managed by Inflibnet. Based on the data obtained from Shodhganga, the results of this investigation are presented in a chronological manner, specifically focusing on a selected university. The rationale behind this study is to ascertain the academic perspective of the university, as evidenced by the yearly production of theses and critical variables. This insight is valuable in understanding the unique research trends and contributions of these universities to the national knowledge production outlook, setting them apart from other institutions.

Keywords: *Sodhganga, Social Science, Political Science, Ph.D. Thesis, NIRF Ranking, India*

Introduction

Political science, as a discipline, assumes a pivotal role in unravelling the intricate dynamics of governance, political structures, and societal systems. Within this academic landscape, Ph.D. theses emerge as crucial contributors to advancing political science knowledge. This paper embarks on an exploratory journey, delving into the

realm of Ph.D. theses in Political Science from the top 10 Indian public universities ranked by the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF). The significance of political science research cannot be overstated, as it forms the bedrock for informed decision-making, policy formulation, and a deeper understanding of global affairs. In a world marked by continuously evolving political landscapes, insights derived from political science research play a pivotal role in comprehending the challenges and opportunities that shape our societies. The interdisciplinary nature of political science research enables scholars to explore diverse facets, including international relations, governance structures, political ideologies, and societal developments. Beyond contributing to academic knowledge, these investigations hold practical implications for policymakers, diplomats, and citizens alike.

Within the academic realm, Ph.D. theses represent the pinnacle of scholarly inquiry, offering exhaustive explorations of specific research questions. Beyond academic exercises, these theses are intellectual endeavours that contribute novel insights, challenge existing paradigms, and expanding the boundaries of political science knowledge. Through rigorous methodologies and critical analysis, Ph.D. candidates in Political Science engage in a scholarly dialogue that shapes the trajectory of the discipline. Ph.D. theses, as comprehensive research documents, not only showcase individual scholarly prowess but collectively contribute to the intellectual richness of the entire field. These works become foundational resources for future researchers, educators, and policymakers seeking to build upon the insights and findings generated by their predecessors. In the pursuit of excellence in political science research, the role of academic institutions is paramount. The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) meticulously evaluates and ranks universities based on various parameters, encompassing teaching, research, and overall institutional excellence. The top 10 Indian public universities identified by NIRF stand as beacons of academic prowess, serving as hubs for advanced research, knowledge dissemination, and the cultivation of future thought leaders in political science. As we delve into this exploratory study, it is essential to recognise the role of these distinguished institutions in shaping the discourse of political science research in India. The collective scholarly output of these universities, as reflected in the Ph.D. theses produced, constitutes a significant contribution to the academic landscape, informing the broader understanding of political phenomena within the Indian context. In the subsequent sections, this paper will unravel the trends, themes, and language preferences evident in the Ph.D. theses from these top-ranked institutions, providing insights into the multifaceted dimensions of political science research within the Indian academic milieu.

Review of Literature

Politics, in a general sense, encompasses the manner in which individuals establish, uphold, and modify the overarching framework within which they live. This framework may assume a formal or informal nature. When we refer to "Politics," it is commonly denoted with a capital 'P,' signifying the academic inquiry into this particular endeavour. In simpler terms, politics deals with the notion of conflict and cooperation (Heywood, 2013: 2; Monroe, 2018). The study of politics is undertaken for three primary reasons. First and foremost, it allows for an understanding of the political phenomena that invariably impact the daily lives of individuals, shaping their political culture, attitudes, and beliefs, and influencing their cognitive, affective, and evaluative domains. Second, its study serves to safeguard society from experiencing political crises. Aristotle, often hailed as the father of political science, posited that 'man is a political animal' and that the state stands as the sole authority responsible for moulding and nurturing its citizens. This nurturing aims to facilitate a good life, justifying the consideration of 'man as a political animal.' Aristotle argued that 'all forms of life happen to exist in groups, and it is exclusively the quality of human beings to aspire towards a good and qualitative existence.' In the pursuit of a good life, individuals engage in various disciplines such as 'meteorology,' 'poetics,' 'logic,' 'biology,' 'ethics,' 'natural history,' 'aesthetics,' 'physics,' 'rhetoric,' and 'metaphysics' to enhance their individual capacities (Bodéüs, 1991; Salkever, 2005). In this process, the state plays an integral role. O.P Gauba aptly exemplifies this notion by stating, "A leg or hand is a part of the body, but a leg or hand without a body is useless; an individual without a state is incomplete, and it is the state that makes him whole" (Gauba, 2013; Bhargava, 2008). Since the establishment of political science as a discipline, Aristotle aptly noted that the "State is prior to the individual." Hence, it becomes necessary to study the state and its various organs to comprehend their functioning and prevent crises. Lastly, it is imperative to cultivate a new generation that can carry forward the accumulated knowledge. The younger generation is more energetic, and today's youth exhibit enthusiasm and a proclivity for fast learning. They possess the capabilities to lead the country and play a decisive role in its development. One of the universities ranked in the top ten by the 'National Institutional Ranking Framework' (NIRF) in India is playing a crucial role in promoting the advancement, dissemination, and transmission of knowledge across different generations. This highly regarded establishment acts as a guiding light of intellectual excellence, nurturing scholars who actively engage with a wide range of subjects, encompassing both national matters and international relations, foreign policy, and diplomacy (Van Evera, 1997).

The core mission of this university revolves around the commitment to advancing knowledge in various fields, acting as a catalyst for innovation, critical thinking, and societal progress. By means of cutting-edge research, rigorous academic programs, and vibrant intellectual discussions, the university empowers scholars to delve into urgent national and global challenges, thereby contributing valuable insights that shape policy-making, governance, and public discourse. Scholars affiliated with this university in India delve into diverse areas of study, reflecting the intricate and interconnected nature of contemporary issues. From analyzing domestic policy initiatives to examining geopolitical dynamics, from exploring socio-economic transformations to dissecting diplomatic strategies, scholars engage with multifaceted matters that have an impact on India and the wider world. In the domain of national issues, scholars tackle pressing challenges such as sustainable development, social inequality, environmental conservation, and technological innovation. Through interdisciplinary research and collaboration, they develop evidence-based solutions to address these intricate challenges, fostering inclusive growth and societal progress. Furthermore, Indian scholars at this university actively participate in the study of international relations, foreign policy, and diplomacy, acknowledging the significant role that India plays on the global stage. They analyze geopolitical trends, regional dynamics, and diplomatic efforts, offering valuable insights that inform India's strategic involvement with the international community. Moreover, the university serves as a hub for intellectual exchange and collaboration, nurturing partnerships with prestigious institutions and scholars worldwide. Through conferences, seminars, and academic exchanges, Indian scholars engage with their counterparts from diverse backgrounds, enriching their perspectives and deepening their understanding of global issues. Hence, this study explores the current trends of the research in the Indian university and try to find the further scope in the New Education Policy, 2020 implimented by the Government of India.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is to analyze the impact of the university on the generation of knowledge at the national level. This analysis encompasses an examination of the annual production of theses, both in terms of quantity and their importance to the academic community. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the top 10 NIRF-ranked universities are considered to be one of the oldest institutions of higher education in India. The rationale behind this temporal scope is rooted in the beginning of Sodhganga, an Indian Digital Thesis Reservoir, in 2015, coinciding with the inception of the digitization process on July 1, 2015, under the Digital India program.
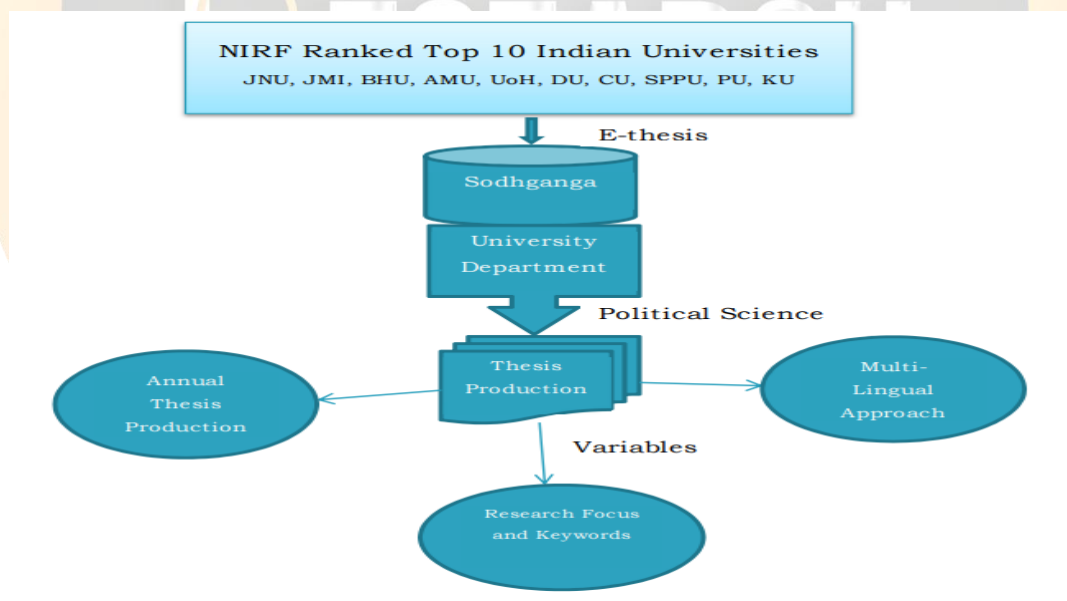
Objective of this Study

In order to accomplish the objective, the current study carefully seeks—

i. To understand the emerging research trends in political science within the oldest university amidst changing times.

ii. To comprehend the distinct variables such as the number of theses, language preferences, and geographical distribution that set this university apart from other universities in India.

Methodology

The present study endeavours to explore and examine the textual connections, information, and trends in order to underscore the significance of the university in India. Mixed method (Quant+qual) is being used to build the research framework. The proportion of quantitative data exceeds the qualitative one. The crucial data for this investigation is collected from the Sodhganga digital repository as primary data, while secondary data is obtained from existing literature that emphasizes the importance of the overall discipline of political science. Various information architectural techniques were employed to meticulously analyze and tabulate the collected data, aligning it with the NIRF Ranking 2023 to provide comprehensive insights.

Figure 1: Methodology of NIRF Ranked Top 10 Indian Universities

Source: Developed by the researcher itself.

Sampling

In the course of this study, a meticulous approach will be taken to identify and select the top ten universities. The criteria for this selection will hinge upon the performance rankings derived from the 'National Institutional Ranking Framework' (NIRF), a comprehensive assessment conducted by the 'Department of Higher Education' under the 'Ministry of Education, Government of India.' This strategic selection process aims

to ensure a focused and in-depth analysis of institutions that have demonstrated notable achievements and excellence in various domains, contributing to a nuanced understanding of their standing in the academic landscape.

Data Collection

This study will leverage two distinct types of data for its comprehensive analysis. Firstly, for textual and descriptive analysis, secondary data will be employed. This secondary data encompasses a broad spectrum of existing literature, research findings, and scholarly works relevant to the study's focus. Secondly, to enhance the depth and specificity of the analysisprimary data will be utilised from the wealth of submitted theses in the Shodhganga Digital Thesis Reservoir. This repository serves as a valuable source of first-hand information, providing insights derived directly from the scholarly contributions of researchers and academics. The combination of secondary and primary data will contribute to a more robust and nuanced exploration of the research questions at hand.

Data Analysis

This study will undertake textual, descriptive analyses based on data collected and compiled from the Shodhganga (Inflibnet) Digital Reservoir.

Limitation of the Study

This research delves into the Ph.D. submissions spanning the nine-year period from 2015 to 2023 within the Department of Political Science at the university, ranked in the Top 10 according to the 'National Institutional Ranking Framework' (NIRF) in 2023. Notably, this study focuses exclusively on the top 10 public universities only. The study excludes the Private Universities listed in the top 10 NIRF ranking. Although private university under top 10 list is also competent but the study is only concerned about the public institutions. Generalisation is made because of limited resources, lack of infrastructure, these university performed comperatively better than other universities in the public sector with higher ranking status.

Analysis and Finding

The analysis and findings have been derived through the process of identifying and examining crucial variables. which are discussed in detail below—

Annual Thesis Production

The study emphasizes that Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has emerged as one of the foremost universities in India when it comes to knowledge production. The university has consistently produced a significant number of high-quality theses, approximately 128 in the span of ten years. This suggests that JNU possesses an unparalleled academic and research culture, as well as a strong commitment to political

science scholarship. Similarly, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) is also following a similar trajectory in terms of knowledge production, having produced 112 theses within the given time frame. On the other hand, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) and the University of Delhi exhibit comparatively lower numbers, but their academic endeavours are still recognizable. However, there are certain areas in which they need to improve their research output.
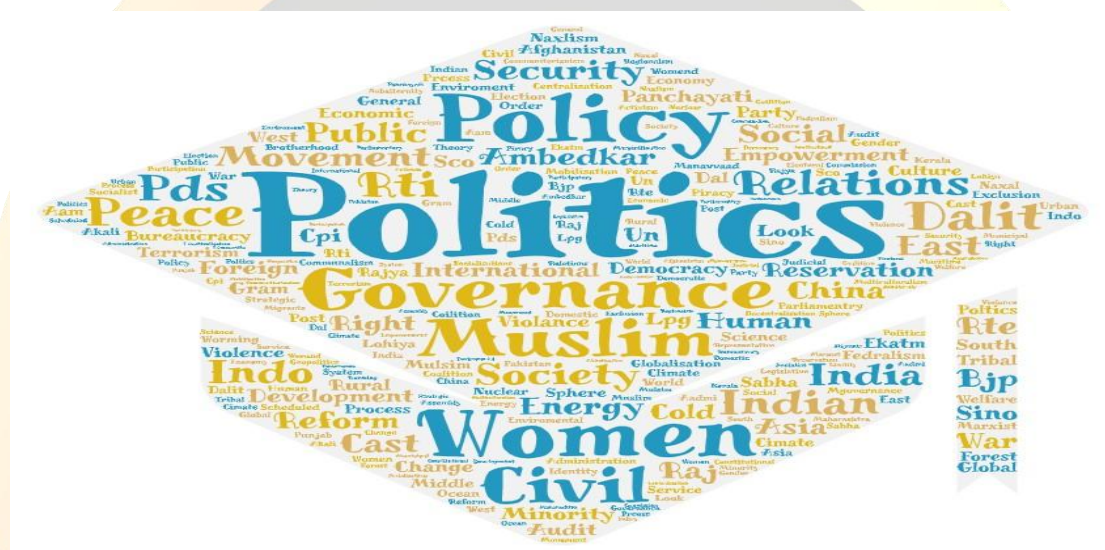
Table 1: Annual Thesis Production Between 2015-2023

Ranking	Years → University	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
1st	JNU	0	0	32	36	34	18	8	0	0	128
2nd	JMI	0	1	4	2	18	15	7	7	1	55
3rd	BHU	10	15	12	11	16	16	22	6	5	77
4th	AMU	8	9	5	10	19	24	15	20	2	112
5th	UoH	7	1	2	9	10	3	3	9	1	45
6th	DU	15	8	17	13	11	18	13	1	0	95
7th	CU	3	23	2	1	1	0	1	1	6	38
8th	SPPU	3	4	5	0	4	1	2	0	0	19
9th	PU	4	3	1	3	2	5	2	2	3	25
10th	KU	3	2	4	1	0	7	5	8	3	128

Sources: Compiled by the researcher from the Sodhganga (Inflibnet) Digital Thesis Reservoir.

Research Focus and Keywords

The focus of research encompasses a wide range of subjects, shedding light on subtle aspects across different fields. Within the domain of international relations and foreign policy, a diverse range of topics has been examined, spanning from the intricacies of India-China relations to the critical discussion on energy security. Moreover, the study investigates significant dynamics such as India's relations with the United States, China, and Afghanistan, endeavours for peace-building, strategies to combat terrorism, and the urgent issue of global warming and climate justice. Furthermore, the research expands its focus to the multifaceted role of the United Nations in global politics, the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean and Maritime Security, and the consequences of the Belt and Road Initiative on geopolitics. Each of these subjects represents crucial areas of investigation, reflecting the evolving landscape of international affairs and diplomatic discourse. In the field of political science, the study examines the intricacies of India's panchayati raj system, emphasizing its

influence on grassroots democracy and governance. It also explores the empowerment of Muslim women, analyzing the intersection of gender, religion, and political participation. Additionally, the research delves into the dynamics of judicial activism, state politics, federalism, and the lasting influence of leaders like Ambedkar in addressing issues of social justice and empowerment for marginalized communities. Overall, the prominence of certain key themes, indicated by the bolded keywords, underscores the prevailing trends and interests within the top ten universities in India. This comprehensive research endeavor elucidates the intricate interplay of domestic and international factors shaping India's trajectory in the realms of politics, governance, and global affairs. (See below)

Figure 2: Trending Keywords in Top 10 Indian University
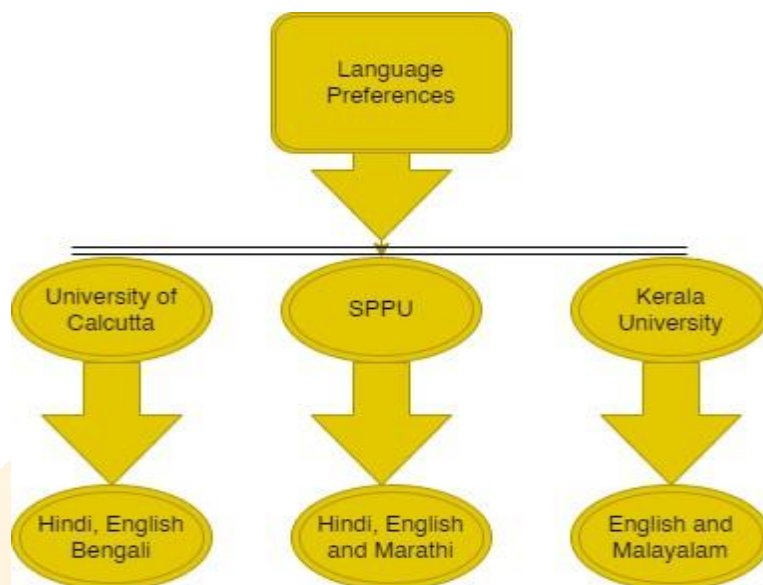

Sources: Wordcloud is developed and compiled by the researcher from the Sodhganga (Inflibnet) Digital Reservoir.

Multilingual Approaches

In the realm of language preference in these universities, AMU's scholars exclusively use English in their theses, emphasizing a global perspective and positioning themselves as international contributors to political science research. BHU strikes a balance between English and Hindi, catering to a broader audience and underscoring its commitment to linguistic inclusivity. The University of Delhi adopts a commendable equilibrium between Hindi and English, ensuring accessibility for a diverse readership. Apart from Hindi and English, other Universities like the University of Kolkata, University of Kerela and Savitri Bai Phule Pune University focus on Bengali, Malayalam and Marathi, respectively, to adhare regional diversity and linguistic plurality in India.

Figure 3: Multilingual Research Preference in NIRF Top 10 University in India

Source: Developed by the researcher itself.

Implications and Suggestions

The analysis reveals a vibrant tapestry of research in the field of political science within the top universities of India, uncovering a dedication to a wide range of research topics and regional focuses. In order to enhance the quality and influence of political science scholarship, universities with lower rates of producing theses could explore initiatives that aim to amplify the output of research. This may involve investments in research infrastructure and the provision of contemporary research resources, thereby empowering scholars to engage more deeply in research-related activities.

Furthermore, the establishment of job opportunities that prioritize research could act as a catalyst in inspiring young individuals to pursue research and innovation within the realm of political science. Encouraging the use of multiple languages not only enhances scholarly discourse but also attracts a more diverse group of scholars and readers, fostering a more inclusive academic environment. Moreover, collaborative research endeavours between universities possess the potential to cultivate a comprehensive understanding of political science, effectively addressing the complex challenges faced by both the nation and the global community. For instance, such collaborative efforts are crucial for policymakers, educators, and researchers to collpolitical science department's collaboration with public administration and public policy organisation can be beneficial for both scholars and academicians to understand policy formulations at the grass root, empirical experience could be an added advantage to them. Which will help to effectively navigate and shape the future landscape of political science scholarship in India.

Conclusion

This comprehensive exploration of Ph.D. theses in Political Science from the top 10 NIRF-ranked Indian public universities provides valuable insights into the research landscape within the discipline. The analysis reveals significant variations in the production, thematic focus, and language preferences across these esteemed institutions. This study sheds light on the rich tapestry of political science research in India, showcasing the diversity, depth, and linguistic preferences prevailing in these top-ranked universities. However, New Education Policy have been implemented in the Indian Universities but the finding of the study helps to understand the current realisy of the said institution. The findings provide a foundation for further exploration and collaboration within the field, contributing to the continued growth and excellence in political science research in India.

Appendix-I

Acronym	Full Name of the University
JNU	Jawaharlal University
JMI	Jamia Millia Islamia
BHU	Banaras Hindu University
AMU	Aligarh Muslim University
UoH	University of Hyderabad
DU	University of Delhi
CU	University of Kolkata
SPPU	Savitribai Phule Pune University
PU	Punjab University
KU	Kerala University

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