

JNUSU Note : Why Viva marks Must be Reduced

JNU prides itself on a progressive admissions policy and social justice. but on the ground it is being subverted in many ways. OBC reservations were scuttled for 3 years costing 400 students their futures! Now it has become increasingly evident how across centres and categories, viva-voce marks are being used to exclude and discriminate.

Open Violation of the Order Of A Constitutional Bench

Admission to JNU based in two components: a written exam and then a viva. JNU allots a weightage of 30% for viva-voce. But way back in November 1980, a 5- Judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court comprising legal luminaries like P.N. Bhagwati, Y.V. Chandrachud (CJI), V.R. Krishnaiyer, Syed Murtaza Fazal Ali, A.D. Koshal) had clearly said,

We are of the view that, under the existing circumstances, allocation of more than 15% of the total marks for the oral interview would be arbitrary and unreasonable and would be liable to be struck down as constitutionally invalid

Why then is the JNU Administration continuing with its blatant illegality?

When Written Is Reduced to a MERE "Qualifier", Viva Becomes the REAL 'Judge'!

The idea of having two components to the admission process is that BOTH SHOULD HAVE a complementary role in final selection. The problem comes when some people decide that the written is ONLY a qualifying mark and that admission will be determined SOLELY based on performance in the viva. Consequently, we see two kinds of situations in the admissions data, where students (cutting across categories):

- (A) Have an average and high performance in the written, but very low marks in the viva. (This pattern is particularly visible for reserved category students.)
- (B) Show average or less performance in the written, but very high marks in the viva.

Clearly, the interview is being used to **distribute subjective biases** and **select or reject** candidates based on viva-voce **alone**.

See for yourself how this works! :

	Centre	Marks in Written	Marks in Viva	Category
Student A	SAS/SIS	43	4	ST
Student B	SAS/SIS	48	2	ST
Student C	SAS/SIS	46	1	OBC
Student D	SAS/SIS	45	26	General
Student E	SAS/SIS	46	24	General
Student F	SEAS/SIS	35	2	OBC
Student G	RCA/SIS	37	3	ST
Student H	RCA/SIS	46	1	SC
Student I	CSR/D/SSS	30	3	OBC
Student J	CSSS/SSS	43	6	General
Student K	CPS/SSS	37	1	ST
Student L	CPS/SSS	34	25	General
Student M	CPS/SSS	34	22	General
Student N	MOD/CHS/SSS	54	8	ST
Student O	MOD/CHS/SSS	53 (+5 for women students)	8	OBC
Student P	CNS/SAA	44	6	General

Regardless of how well you perform in the written exam, the viva alone will decided your entry into the university and your academic fate!

The Strange Clustering of Marks in Viva

A careful study of viva marks shows a strange distribution with marks clustered either between 0-5 or in the 25-30 range. In the normal course, it is expected that the majority of the students would get average marks between 10-20 with a few very good as well as few very bad performers. Clearly something is very wrong in the way students are being judged in their viva, where they are either "very good" or "very bad". The obvious explanation is that the interview board is using this **bimodal** marks distribution to **select or reject** candidates based on viva-voce **alone**.

The marks obtained in written exam don't count given the huge disparity of marks in viva, thus completely subverting the dual Written+Viva weightage principle. Is it not evident that the present marking pattern has come to treat the written exam as a mere qualifier where the selection completely depends on performance of viva.

Of course there are few honorable examples for e.g. SCMM where the marks are clustered around the middle possibly because of averaging of marks.

SCHOOL	CATEGORY	0-12	13-20	21-30	SCHOOL	CATEGORY	0-12	13-20	21-30
CLG	GEN	8	12	4	EUP	GEN	9	6	4
	SC	11	1	2		SC	8	2	0
	ST	4	1	1		ST	2	1	0
	OBC	12	3	0		OBC	4	1	1
	TOTAL	35	17	7		TOTAL	23	10	5
Cinema Studies (CNS)	GEN	4	3	5	DAD	GEN	4	7	4
	SC	0	14	0		SC	1	0	0
	ST	10	0	0		ST	1	1	0
	OBC	3	2	0		OBC	3	1	0
	TOTAL	17	19	5		TOTAL	9	9	4
Visual Studies (VSA)	GEN	5	4	6	INP	GEN	3	8	1
	SC	0	0	0		SC	2	0	0
	ST	1	0	1		ST	2	0	0
	OBC	1	0	0		OBC	12	1	1
	TOTAL	7	4	7		TOTAL	19	9	2
GROUP FOUR SES	GEN	4	1	1	ITD	GEN	4	2	5
	SC	5	1	0		SC	0	0	0
	ST	2	0	0		ST	0	1	0
	OBC	10	0	1		OBC	0	0	0
	TOTAL	21	2	2		TOTAL	4	3	5
SAS	GEN	6	8	10	CPS	GEN	11	6	19
	SC	13	1	1		SC	11	0	0
	ST	7	2	1		ST	15	1	0
	OBC	21	3	3		OBC	13	2	1
	TOTAL	47	14	15		TOTAL	50	9	20
ECO	GEN	27	18	7	EDU	GEN	18	5	10
	SC	7	0	0		SC	12	1	1
	ST	3	1	0		ST	8	2	0
	OBC	3	3	0		OBC	9	1	1
	TOTAL	40	22	7		TOTAL	47	9	12
ANC	GEN	17	1	4	AFS	GEN	3	2	0
	SC	1	1	0		SC	4	1	0
	ST	2	0	0		ST	3	1	0
	OBC	4	1	2		OBC	12	0	0
	TOTAL	24	3	6		TOTAL	22	4	0
MOD	GEN	7	7	11	CAS	GEN	2	2	5
	SC	8	1	0		SC	2	0	0
	ST	5	2	0		ST	2	0	0
	OBC	12	2	0		OBC	1	1	1
	TOTAL	32	12	11		TOTAL	7	3	6

The facts above tell their own story: can the blatant bias be denied any more? How much longer will students from deprived backgrounds have to battle such discrimination? Isn't it high time we curb the potential of the viva marks to be used as a tool of exclusion?

Administration's Defense: 'Uniformly Low Viva Marks for Reserved Category Students DOES NOT imply Discrimination'!!!

The admission data shows that students from reserved categories are almost uniformly placed in the lowest bracket of marks (0-5, 5-10) in the viva, even if they have done well in the written exam. For example, in ORG out of 12 SC/ST students, one student has got 20 marks in the viva, one has 4 marks, one has 3 marks, one has 2 marks and the remaining eight has 1 mark).

We present below a **snapshot** of data from some centres, which clearly shows the pattern of discrimination:

Centre	Average % Difference between Gen/SC		Average % Difference between Gen/ST		Average % Difference between Gen/OBC		Written/ Viva ratio <u>Gen</u>	Written/ Viva ratio <u>SC</u>	Written/ Viva ratio <u>ST</u>	Written/ Viva ratio <u>OBC</u>
	Written	Viva	Written	Viva	Written	Viva				
CPS/SSS	18.8	46.8	7.6	37.4	9.7	34.3	2.2	7.6	5.3	4.4
SAS/SIS	8.4	37.9	5	31.9	10.5	33.8	2.7	7.8	6.1	6.0
SBT	13.2	29.5	19.6	27.9	6.4	3.8	2.9	6.9	5.1	2.8
MOD/SSS	22.5	59.2	5.7	28.7	20.9	32.5	2.7	4.9	4.9	4.3

Nobody is claiming that there should *always* be a strong correlation between viva and written exam marks for *each individual* student. However, when a **whole set** of students (reserved) get very poor viva marks in spite of good and average performance in written exams, there is a strong indication of bias.

The Administration's argument is 'that it does not matter if reserved category students are given poor marks, since even if they do relatively badly, the existence of reservation means that they are competing among themselves.'

- Firstly, this is an obviously SHAMEFUL, BRAHMANICAL ARGUMENT that implies that a reserved category student can only aspire for a reserved category seat!
- Secondly, such an argument, has a deeper and wider practical implication.

Visualize this:

A reserved category student, who based on his or her or performance, could get a general category seat is deliberately pushed down to occupy a reserved category seat. In this process, reserved category seats are exhausted and automatically other reserved category students are pushed out.

So, even if the quota is filled, the process of deliberate exclusion based on casteist 'merit' has not come to an end.

It's a question that concerns all of us. As a student, what guides your selection in JNU?

- Should admission be determined by objective and impartial criteria? **Or** should it be allowed to be determined by subjective and ideological biases?
- Is it not the duty of university to ensure transparency and fairness in admissions? **Or** should it be using a viva system which has the in-built possibility of arbitrary discretion and discrimination because of high weightage?

These are questions we need to answer conclusively for ourselves and for future students coming to JNU.

End the Arbitrary Elimination of Students! STOP Using Viva as an Instrument of Discrimination!

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