mined by their capacity to reconcile the elements of profitability with the academic orientations required at the tertiary education level. Notwithstanding challenges, achieving this needed balance is not always impossible, as the success of some institutions on the continent shows. Successful family-owned PHEIs are generally more nimble than other HEIs. Little deterred by the bureaucracy and red tape that commonly afflicts public HEIs, successful family-owned institutions are characterized by their dynamism, innovativeness, efficiency, and flexibility, which are critical to institutional success. Due to their interest to ensure social and economic viability, successful family-owned institutions minimize institutional spending, promote strategic planning and marketing, maintain contact with employers, offer job-placement services, student counseling and support, and promote increased accountability of their staff. They can have a strong commitment to community outreach programs, which include providing free professional services, contributions to charity, participation in local projects, and social initiatives like environmental protection, feeding the homeless, and assisting the community through capacity building training and donations.

Most family-owned institutions in Africa exist as nonuniversity or professional schools with vocational orientations.

Although there are family-owned institutions set up by proprietors with altruistic motives, a significant percentage of them are driven by owners whose prime goals are financial. Such institutions can have family members that assume key positions with little training and experience in running institutions. Institutional activities can be seriously jeopardized when the preparation, vision, and behavior of proprietors are not in tune with institutional needs and goals. Similar influences may be found in all forms of PHEIs as compared to their public counterparts, but they are magnified in poorly run family-owned PHEIs. One of the major reasons for the closure of many such institutions in various parts of Africa has been their owners' excessive profit drive, compromising the provision of quality higher education.

Where there is little self-control, the power that proprietors wield on the daily operation and future direction of the institutions is also a serious drawback to their social and academic legitimacy—which is critical to their wider acceptance. Proprietors who perceive their institutions primarily as business entities can use their key positions to dictate institutional directions and operations. Such examples abound in many countries in Africa. The overbearing influence of proprietors is usually exhibited in such areas as unbridled expansion, little attention to long-term commitment, diverting earned profit to nonacademic purposes, arbitrary appointment of staff and managers, interference in academic affairs, and imposing authoritarian governance systems. Major decisions on important institutional issues may not be openly shared and discussed. Proprietors who act without due process of law and procedures infringe on the participation, authority, and decision-making powers of their chancellors and/or staff, in addition to eroding employee confidence and disrespecting individual rights and/or academic freedom. In Ethiopia, the influence of such proprietors is so pervasive that it usually determines the success or failure of their institutions. Similar observations abound across the continent and sometimes cast doubt on the wisdom of allowing such institutions to operate without legal restrictions in matters that are critical to institutional operations.

In conclusion, while the increasing involvement of family-owned PHEIs in the African higher education context requires better understanding of their nature, operations, and potential, their rise and the corresponding growth of the for-profit PHE sector appears likely to continue. Their wider acceptance, however, hinges on the manner in which these institutions operate and/or to what extent the institutions are able to resist the whims and shortsightedness of profit-mongering proprietors. ■

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2018.95.10691

The Thorny Excellence Initiative in India

Philip G. Altbach and Rahul Choudaha

Philip G. Altbach is research professor and founding director, Center for International Higher Education, Boston College, US. E-mail: altbach@bc.edu. Rahul Choudaha is executive vice-president of Global Engagement and Research at Studyportals, US. E-mail: rahul@DrEducation.com.

An earlier version of this article appeared in The Hindu *(Chennai, India).*

India is home to one of the most complex higher education systems in the world. With more than 860 universities and over 40,000 colleges enrolling 35 million students, it is also the second largest system in the world. Its unique structure of public universities affiliating with, and largely controlling teaching colleges (public or private), creates a web of institutions with varying quality. The size, scale, and organization of the system make it virtually unmanageable—and incoherent policy-making and bureaucratic hurdles add to the challenges. The existing quality assurance arrangements are inadequate. To cap the problems, India has underinvested in higher education for the past half-century.

Yet the pressure on the government of India to crack the global rankings has been increasing. There has finally been a recognition that India needs to join the world of twenty-first century higher education as it seeks to compete in the global knowledge economy. One of the first attempts proposed by the previous government in 2009 involved promoting 14 "Innovation Universities." The plan did not go anywhere due to lack of funding and a change of government in New Delhi. Its new avatar, the "Institutions of Eminence" (IoE) initiative by the current government, has the goal of building 10 public and 10 private globally competitive universities.

The winners of the "excellence contest" of the IoE have now been announced. Only six were chosen—apparently because only six were affordable—a telling reality, especially since just three will receive any government funds. Further, none of the winners are actually multidisciplinary institutions, of the kind that is at the heart of any academic system. The three public institutions chosen, the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, and two Indian Institutes of Technology—Bombay and Delhi—are all technologically oriented institutions. The three private institutions are the Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) at Pilani, the Manipal Academy of Higher Education, and the "greenfield" Jio Institute.

The public institutions will receive the equivalent of approximately US$150 million over five years—the private ones get no government funding at all, but are provided institutional autonomy and significant freedom from government regulations. While the US$150 million is "serious money," it is by no means transformative. Indeed, compared to excellence programs in other countries, such as China, Russia, Germany, and France, this level of funding is paltry. The increased funding will help selected institutions with innovations or perhaps the ability to raise academic salaries to better compete internationally—but will not permit fundamental changes. If the IoE institutions focus mainly on making changes that will help them improve in the global rankings, they will be missing a huge opportunity for key reforms, and they are unlikely to achieve the result of a high ranking anyway.

Jio and the Greenfield Context

In a recent book, *Accelerated Universities: Ideas and Money Combine to Build Academic Excellence*, Altbach, Reisberg, Salmi, and Froumin assert that creating a new university with world-class ambitions is more desirable than attempting to reform an existing one that is resistant to change. While creating a new university is a risky and demanding endeavor, it can achieve excellence faster with the right mix of leadership and resources. In the context of the IoE initiative, "greenfield" experiments are also risky, but in fact, almost all of India's top academic institutions are the result of such initiatives. The first Indian Institutes of Technology were established in 1951 with the help of foreign partners to build top schools without having to deal with the entrenched bureaucracy of the traditional universities. Both BITS Pilani (1964) and Manipal (1953), private start-ups, were greenfield efforts at the time.

While creating a new university is a risky and demanding endeavor, it can achieve excellence faster with the right mix of leadership and resources.

The Jio initiative is funded by India's richest and the world's 14th richest man, Mukesh Ambani, who is a household name in India with his Reliance Industries company and cellphone service. Jio is not unusual in the Indian context. But it faces significant challenges, such as providing clarity concerning its basic organizing principle. How does it plan to differentiate from other universities, in India and abroad, and at the same time match the best academic practices elsewhere? While the Reliance Industries empire is the largest private business in India, the cost of creating a competitive world-class university is daunting, especially when starting from scratch. For example, the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) in Saudi Arabia, established in 2009, spent $1.5 billion on its facilities and has an endowment of $10 billion—for a current enrollment of 900 master's and doctoral students.

Jio and the World-Class Concept

While each world-class university is unique, there are common requirements that are essential. In *The Road to Academic Excellence: The Making of World-Class Research Uni-*

versities, Altbach et al. point to three essential ingredients: talent, resources, and favorable governance. These three elements will, of course, be necessary for all the IoE chosen by the government of India. But let us focus on the specific needs of Jio Institute since, in our view, it faces unique opportunities and challenges and seems to be a highly ambitious endeavor. We have mentioned resources already, a daunting challenge, especially since no public funds will be made available to Jio or the other private institutions. Let us focus on talent (faculty and students) and governance.

Faculty are at the heart of any university, affecting every aspect of realizing and implementing the university mission. In the case of rankings ambition, research output is a key metric. So, attracting top research-oriented academic talent will not only require financial resources to pay faculty at global compensation rates, but also providing an attractive quality of life for their families on and off campus. Would Karjat—a city two hours away by car from Mumbai airport—be able to provide an ecosystem of soft and hard infrastructure critical for attracting the best international talent?

Student demand for quality education in India remains strong, and the Reliance brand and an innovative curriculum would make it relatively easy to attract top domestic students. However, the real challenge would be in attracting international students. The international student decision-making process is complex, with many global choices available to the best students. For example, an "institute" does not command as strong a recognition among international students and faculty as a "university." Can the Reliance, Ambani, or Jio brand impress the global market and influence student choice toward India and the Jio Institute?

A positive element of the IoE program is the high degree of autonomy and freedom from government policy and regulatory constraints. However, Jio (and the others chosen for IoE) need to have creative ideas in terms of organization and governance. For example, to what degree do decision-making processes need to be collaborative, with faculty involvement as compared to top-down mandate? Top universities, after all, are not business enterprises but rather innovative communities of academics. Traditional corporate management styles do not align with the governance expectations of a creative university.

Building world-class universities is a resource-intensive and highly creative endeavor, which truly tests patience and persistence. Indian higher education is in dire need of exemplars of excellence. Realizing the ambition to build world-class universities in India through IoEs will require alignment of resources, talent (faculty and students), and governance. ■

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2018.95.10685

What about Provincial Institutions in Higher Education Policy in India?

Anamika Srivastava and Nandita Koshal

Anamika Srivastava is assistant professor and fellow, and Nandita Koshal is research associate at the International Institute for Higher Education Research and Capacity Building (IIHEd) at O. P. Jindal Global University (JGU), Sonepat, India. E-mails: anamika@jgu.edu.in and nkoshal@jgu.edu.in.

Focusing on a few "top" national research universities is now a conscious higher education policy choice of governments in many countries. By doing this, governments aim for a spot in the global university rankings, sometimes at the cost of ignoring the larger higher educational landscape. In the context of India, the latest move of the federal government to develop a few "Institutions of Eminence" (IoEs) is commendable. But in its grand vision to develop IoEs, the government should not lose sight of reforming its provincial educational system.

All Indian universities or university-level institutions (higher educational institutions that have the right to confer or grant degrees), either public or private, are established by the Act of the Indian Parliament/Federal Government Act or by a provincial government act. Most renowned higher education institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology, the Indian Institutes of Management, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and the University of Delhi are established and funded by the federal government. However, institutions established by provincial governments are predominant in the Indian higher education landscape. Provincial institutions comprise public universities, their affiliated colleges, and private universities. Almost 96 percent of the total number of higher education institutions in India are "provincial institutions." Nearly 84 percent of the total enrollment and 92 percent of the total teaching staff in India are in provincial institutions. However, when it comes to performance in the framework of rankings, very few provincial institutions are "well performing." According to the National Institutional Ranking Framework, meant to rank higher education institutions in India, only 20 provincial institutions featured in the top 100 in 2017. In the recently released QS BRICS ranking 2018, out of 65 Indian higher education institutions featured in the top 300, there are only 29 provincial institutions.

While often ignored or overlooked within the country's higher education policy discourse, provincial institutions are in dire need of financial resources and governance re-