

BEST PRACTICES

BEST PRACTICE - 1

Title of the practice: Science Education – Central lab facilities at University Campus

To instill scientific temper in learners under ODL the University established Science and Multimedia Laboratory (STML) a central laboratory facility, to develop scientific temper, understanding concepts, principles, laws and aptitude for higher learning and Research in Science.

The objectives of the practice

1. To develop experimentation and investigation skills in science students at Degree and PG Level.
2. To disseminate scientific knowledge to learners through hands-on-experience in desired laboratory settings.
3. To develop 'Purposeful enquiry learning' in learners of all disciplines of science.
4. To effectively address the curricular aspects of science teaching and to address the learning requirements of science students in distance education by providing them with professional education with the needed infrastructure and technical facilities.
5. To make laboratory training as an integral part of Teaching – Learning, instruction and assessment.
6. To instill scientific culture and develop aptitude for higher learning and Research and Science.
7. To help students acclimatize to Research Design, analysis and interpretation of data
8. To inculcate self-learning among learners like planning and designing of experiments, performing experiments with associated skills like observation, investigation, reporting findings, analysis and interpretation of data and application.
9. To make science education in distance education a viable proposition, where quality issues and curricular issues are given importance by making laboratory experience mandatory in the curriculum.

The Context

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University established in 1982, heralded an era of affirmation action to provide opportunities in higher education with flexible entry, low cost and upward mobility to all sections of the society in pursuit of higher education and science education was no exception.

It was an established premise, right from the establishment of science departments, that science teaching and learning would require laboratory – based practical training. This training is qualitatively equivalent to similar practical training sessions in conventional universities, so that the student would feel assured of the training he/she would receive and would also be eligible to pursue higher education in science disciplines in conventional universities.

All the students enrolled in science programmes have to select a minimum of two science subjects or a maximum of three science subjects for becoming eligible to a degree in science and have to undergo 192 hours of lab training, in each discipline in six semesters. The laboratory training essentially consists of demonstration experiments, viewing of video experiments and conduct of some simple home experiments.

The Practice

All the departments in science faculty have established central laboratories in the university campus in 1995 and from then on the science departments have been conducting practical classes and examinations for science students of twin cities and surrounding areas. In 2007 the science faculty has been equipped with a Science and Technology Multi-Functional Laboratory (STML) with lab equipment for conducting practical for all science subjects. All labs are equipped with instruments according to the syllabus and with the required specimens, apparatus, charts etc.

With the adoption of choice-based-credit-systems (CBCS) in 2017, by the University, credits were assigned for practical training in science disciplines. B.Sc. programmes are offered in both English and Telugu Media and the Lab Manuals are also provided in both English and Telugu media and are well designed and illustrated, along with compulsory exercises which involve theories and principles involved in experiments and form crucial aspects in experimental design and sequential steps involved, Besides this, the multimedia approach

like videos, archived film material, slides, charts, overhead projector usage etc. helps the students have a fulfilled laboratory experience

The laboratory experience in Dr. B.R.A.O.U. is of fixed duration but mandatory, so that the employees working in scientific labs, in the science and technology orientated institutions and software companies can benefit along with general students.

The CBCS course curriculum has been enriched with two (02) discipline specific elective courses per year and two skill enhancement courses in each science subject making it a total of 10 courses offered per science subject. Expect for skill enhancement all the remaining courses (08) required practical training in each science subject. With the advent of CBCS, students of Mathematics and Statistics are also provided with compulsory practical training. The students of Computer Science also undergo practical training for 192 hours in the 3 years of degree course.

At P.G. Level the practical training is of 144 hours spread over 16 days for all science subjects (Botany, Zoology, Physics, Environmental Science) except for Chemistry which has 160 practical training. Every year, nearly 6000 students at U.G. Level, 1000 students at P.G. Level are trained in the Science Labs of the University. All the lab activities help the students understand the scientific concepts and help acquire skill and knowledge by 'doing'. Well-designed lab manuals which are given to the students early in the semester help the students to understand and participate in the laboratory sessions with interest and curiosity.

Evidence of Success

Many learners working as engineers, Ayurvedic and Homeopathic doctors, technicians, medical lab technicians, primary teachers, persons working in aviation, DRDO, Army and Pharmaceutical companies like Reddy Labs and other organizations like Infosys, TCS, HCL have benefited by the Science programmes of the university. They were able to use experimentation and investigation skills that they have learned in the labs, in their selected occupations. The increase in the enrollment in post – graduate programmes of science in the university in the last 5 years bears testimony to the fact, that the quality of lab-based instruction and science curriculum have met the requirements of science learners and society at large. Individual attention and hands-on-training in handling equipment and conducting experiments has made the lab experience a satisfying exercise to science learners.

The success of the science teaching is evident from the following recognitions attained by the University:

- B.Sc. programmes Ranked No.1 among India's best distance learning institutions 2011 by Careers 360 of OUT Look magazine.
- Indus Foundation Award for Education Excellence-2012 under distance education category.
- CSR top distance learning of India award 2013 and 2014.

Problems encountered and Resources required

Science Teachers find it a challenge to teach diverse students with different back grounds, knowledge and abilities, but with the help of lab facilities, manuals and adequate planning they could overcome the challenges of teaching heterogenous student communities and time constraints. 10 practical manuals are developed per subject in Telugu, English & Urdu media.

During Covid-19 Pandemic, practical training sessions were delivered through Zoom online demonstrations and video classes.

Discipline wise amenities need to be improved further in Science labs. Full-fledged research labs need to be developed with sophisticated equipment. Funding of Research and collaborations with other R&D organizations and financial sponsorships need to be actively pursued by the university for gaining a stronghold in research community. One additional challenge that needs to be address urgently is training of staff in ICT.

The Pedagogy in ODL is different from conventional universities. Planning and designing science courses without impeding professional standards and gain in recognition for the science programmes by ingraining the principles of scientific endeavor through lab experiences and co-opting the students in pursuance of both scientific and distance education goals and to succeed in such an attempt is no mean feat by itself.

Dr. B.R.A.O.U. has succeeded in attaining the goals of science education. The efforts that have gone into strengthening of science education by having good science labs at headquarters has helped the university to achieve the goals of science education and also helped to affectively contribute to science education of the nation.

BEST PRACTICE - 2

Title of the practice: Flexible Learning

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University practices integrated flexible learning in its teaching and learners process– in the choice of courses, duration of courses (subject to UGC guidelines), choice of electives, entry and exist options, choice of selection of mode of instruction, choice of examination dates etc.,

Flexibility allows students to plan and schedule their learning and to allocate time for their learning, instead of being constrained by external demands and requirements. Flexibility helps learners to balance job and family commitments with their education. This helps learners have to prioritize learning and make the learners more comfortable and they find the pursuit of higher education satisfactory and in tune with their expectations.

The Objectives of the Practices

1. To help in the manifestation of inner development of individuals by overcoming constraints posed by circumstances or by the educational settings.
2. To evaluate individuals on knowledge or skills obtained by them in open distance learning, based on the concept of innate development and flexibility.
3. Flexibility in learning as a key element, around which the university's teaching – learning activities, instruction, evaluation and instructional technology are to be focused

The Context:

The University from the time of its inception, was clear in its objectives, that is to have free and flexible learning made available to students. The ethos of university is to make education accessible to marginalized sections at low cost, so that they have an opportunity to pursue their dreams. This led to adoption of the concept of flexibility, as the founders and academicians right from the university were empathetic towards the needs of the university's clientele, from the time of inception of the university. Rather than the new normal, seen in different higher educational institutions now, Dr. BRAOU has imbibed flexibility in each aspect of its curricular transactions. This flexibility includes flexibility in a various aspects

like teaching, learning strategies, modes of teaching, media, technology interaction modes etc.,

The Practice:

1. Flexibility with regard to entry qualifications

For admission into UG programmes, +2 level qualifications from any recognized State is mandatory. Students from science background only are eligible for admission to B.Sc. Degree, but learners with +2 qualifications with non-science subjects or diploma course holders who have 1 year experience in science labs or R & D Institutions are provided with a chance to enroll in B.Sc. Degree. Similarly, at P.G. level for many programmes like Political Science, Economics, Public Administration, Sociology, History, Journalism and Mass Communication, Psychology require pass in any degree from any recognized university. M.A. in Arts and M.Sc. in Science subjects require a degree in the concerned subject only, keeping in view the course requirements.

The university has been providing lateral entry options to learners from other colleges or universities from the last four decades so that the dropouts from the regular universities can enroll and complete their education in distance mode.

2. Flexibility with regard to selection of study centers

Nearly 180 learner support centers are available for learners and the learners can enroll any center of their choice. They can attend counseling classes in centers other than in which they are enrolled as per their convenience.

3. Flexibility in selection of courses

The university has offered flexibility in choice of courses - across the disciplines right from 1980's. The learners at degree level can choose any options under the four faculties (Arts, Social Sciences, Commerce & Sciences) Learners are provided with an opportunity to choose all three optionals from one of the faculties or at least two subjects from one Faculty and the third subject from other Faculty. The faculty under which the majority two subjects fall, determine the degree that the students eligible for. The approach which is being followed in the last four decades is indicative of the flexible approach adopted by Dr. BRAOU and it's foresight in anticipating the needs of the distance learners. In a way this measure pre-empts the latest vision of UGC regarding adoption of flexibility in teaching-

learning and its guidelines for transforming higher educational institutions into multi-disciplinary institutions.

With adoption of CBCS in ODL system in 2017, Dr.BRAOU included Core courses, Ability enhancement courses, Language specific courses to provided flexible learning opportunities to learners. The students can now choose a combination of courses in (A) Discipline specific core courses or optionals (B) Discipline Specific Elective Courses (C) Language Specific Courses or Modern Indian Language or MIL (English, Telugu, Hindi, Urdu). (D) Skill Enhancement Courses (SEC). 42 subject wise Skill Enhancement courses are offered by the University, out of which four (04) have to be studied compulsorily by the learners, providing them flexibility to choose subjects that are interesting to them In 5th and 6th semesters, flexibility is provided in selecting Discipline Specific Electives (DSE).

P.G. Programmes also offer considerable flexibility. A student of Mathematics can opt for Applied Mathematics in P.G. second year instead of P.G. Maths, after learning the basics in first year. Similarly, M.B.A. Programme offers the students to choose between electives like Finance, Marketing, Human Resources and Operation Research. B.Ed., (Special Education) provides aspirants to choose from specializations like Visual Impairment (VI), Hearing Impairment (HI), and Intellectual Disability (ID), based on their aptitude but with limited flexibility, as it is subject to their rank in the Entrance Test. The ‘Electronic Resources’ subject is taught in B.Li.Sc. to both learners from Social Sciences background and Science background separately. Similarly, M.Li.Sc students can choose Elective on the Type of Libraries in which they would work in future (Public Libraries, Academic Libraries, Special Libraries, School Libraries, Private Libraries) and P.G. Diploma in Marketing Management (P.G.D.M.M) and P.G. Diploma in Environment Sciences (P.G.D.E.S) also have optional courses from which learners can choose those, which match their interests and career goals. This flexibility inbuilt in the curricular structure enables the learners to choose courses and pathways that are best suited to them and in which they feel this excel. This is also indicative of the deliberations at academic level right from the programme inception itself, for provision of flexibility, cross the curriculum.

4. Flexibility in Teaching – Learning

The university relied from early on dispatching self-learning material and physical counseling classes on Sundays, and Second Saturdays, the schedule of which was sent to the study centers. Online counseling classes for U.G. and P.G. programmes for all subjects was

started during Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 blended mode of counseling classes became the norm and till date more than 10,500 lessons were delivered online and simultaneously posted in YouTube Channel, for subsequent viewing by learners. 50% of the counseling classes for U.G. & P.G. programmes are delivered in online mode and 50% of the counseling classes are delivered in offline mode at the study centers, to facilitate face-to-face interaction of learners with the counselors.

5. Flexibility in use of additional content

The learners can make use of audio and video recordings that are broadcast or telecast at regular timings. Audio broadcasts are from 6.25 p.m. to 6.40 p.m. on all weekdays. The video recordings are telecast from 2.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m. on Nipuna Channel and 1.00p.m to 2.00 p.m. and 8.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. on Vidya Channel (TSAT Channels) from Monday to Saturday. The video recordings are also available on the University Website and on YouTube channel for viewing by learners and General Public (<https://www.youtube.com/channel//UCw6f911/giOBXbLACQHDWW.JA/featured>) the learners can make use of these video recording for understanding subject the matter at their convenience, in their free time. Teleconferences are also made available to learners in video format in the website.

6. Flexibility regarding learning material

In addition to the Self Learning Material (SLM), the students can get a free download of the SLM in Pdf format for easy viewing on their mobile or Laptop, on submission of their mail i.d. This has in recent years made the learners comfortable in accessing learning material at their convenience.

7. Flexibility regarding exam schedules

The University conducts exams for U.G. & P.G. programmes in 2 spells, that is, in the months of May/June and October / November to facilitate learners in completion of their programmes. Flexibility in choosing exam date for optional subjects was made possible by the University, by having 3 sets of question papers (A,B,C) which are delivered on different days. The students can select exam dates for optional, on days with which they feel comfortable. This flexible approach has gained the university commendations from learners

and academia. For the university this facilitated completion of exams for nearly 23 option subjects in 3 days, saving time, manpower and money.

8. Flexibility with regard to time-line for completion of programmes

Learners who have not completed their course of study in the minimum required time are allowed to complete the same in the maximum period prescribed by U.G.C. The University also gives adequate flexibility to its learners to seek re-admission, subject to the rules and norms of the university, so that the learners do not get de-motivated, but try to complete their programme of study.

Evidence of Success

Flexible learning provides learners with opportunities that are not otherwise possible with singular learning style and this has a bearing on student motivation, achievements and learning outcomes. There are nearly 6 lakh learners who have graduated in different programmes of the university in the last 4 decades, which is indicative of the university's efforts for flexible learning. Flexibility is the hall mark of the educational programmes of the university.

Problems encountered and Resources required

Too much flexibility would leave students without support needed for reaching the intended learning outcomes. Increased flexibility may make the students postpone learning. The institution may provide the flexibility to great extent in order to help the distance learners get the required support and structure, but, self-directed, motivated learning on the part of the learners is required for attaining learning outcomes. The learners should be encouraged to use the learning mode most suitable to their learning style, from among the various modes provided by the university. Having interactive website, guiding students from rural and poor backgrounds in making use of technological resources and making learners aware of the university's flexible learning aspects on a wide scale, are some of the aspects that have to be addressed with adequate planning.

The University is presently spending huge amounts from its resources to reach out to its learners, but more funding is required from funding agencies for effective implementation of technological initiatives. Investing in technology as an equalizer and providing quality

education with adoption of new technologies has become a major challenge to Dr.B.R.A.O.U. This, however, can have a bearing on the flexibility offered by the university.

BEST PRACTICE – 3

Title of the Practice: Establishment of Electronic Media Resources and Research Centre

The Audio-Visual Production and Research Centre (AVPRC) was established initially in 1985 as a part of the Material Production Directorate. This has emerged as a separate full-fledged directorate in 1993 to look after the production of audio, video and radio lessons and to organize Tele-lessons for the benefit of the learners of the University. The AVPRC is renamed as Electronic Media Resources and Research Centre (EMR&RC) during 2022. Organizing Tele-conferences is the first of its kind in India, never attempted by any Open University in the country even till date. EMR&RC is the major e-resource centre of the University which produces and transmits the Audio-visual content through All India Radio, Doordarshan and other satellite channels, including Mana TV, SAP Net. Apart from this the centre also initiates steps to document all the University programmes like Seminars, Conferences, Memorial lectures etc., as a data bank for future use.

The Objectives of the practice

- To reach the unreached via technology mediated educational programmes,
- To organize transmission of educational programmers,
- To upgrade, update and enrich the quality of education through electronic media, and
- To undertake research in application of educational technology in distance education.

The Context

The inherent concept of Open Distance Learning (ODL) is that it is a system of education where in the teachers and learners need not necessarily be present either at the same place or at the same time. This separation of students from their teacher and peers opened up many alternatives before BRAOU to fill up that gap in instruction. Face to face learning

environment is an opportunity for students to learn from their peers, listen to the voice of their teachers and find answers and clarify their doubts on the spot. Such an environment is not expected in ODL system of education. Recognizing the importance of two-way communication between the teacher and students and peer group interaction in a learning environment, the University in its initial years, made efforts in a systematic way to establish some kind of connectivity in its educational planning and designing of courses. The University has adopted the concept of multi-media approach in the delivery of educational instruction, reflecting the vision, mission goals and accordingly initiated specific action plans. The series of academic interactions, coupled with experiences with students experiences in teaching – learning, contributed in designing learner-friendly instructional study material, prepared with the help of subject experts along with organizing face to face counseling classes @ 24 sessions for UG programmes and @ 16 sessions for post graduate programmes on Sundays to suit the convenience of learners. Provision is also made for tutor marked assignments to enable the learners to prepare themselves for final examinations. Use of electronic, media, comprising of Radio, Audio and Video lessons and organizing teleconferences with the help of All India Radio, Doordarshan, Mana TV, Sap net etc., helped in providing technology - mediated education which helped the learners and reduced the gap between the teachers and students and connected the students with the institution.

The Practices:

In its educational planning, the University has initiated steps to use new media into its teaching practices. The series of consultations between educationists and professional media personnel that took place in the initial years resulted in careful planning of the production of educational software which consisted of anchoring, dubbing, script writing, editing and presenting. The electronic media was considered as a technological tool for supplementing the traditional mode of educational system. Technology mediated education provided an opportunity and the occasion for the induction of educational reform. Production of radio, audio and video cassettes and making them available to the students enhanced their learning, reduced their feeling of isolation from their teachers, helped the students to feel connected, allowed students to access the learning materials as often as required, allowed students to

learn at their own pace, with instant playback, rewind and pause options and reduced the number of frequently asked questions from students.

In the early phase of distance or correspondence education supply of notes or printed material was the only medium of instruction. Against this background, Dr. B.R.A.O.U has made a radical change from the norm and adopted multi-media approach for imparting higher education through distance mode. Its efforts in use of electronic media culminated in production of radio and audio lessons to supplement the print material. The lessons broadcast and telecast through electronic media i.e., radio, audio and Tele lessons/Conferences were appreciated by the students as well as the general public for their usefulness in their academic life. Thus, the University has utilized the opportunities of technology for the advantage of the learners. The Teleconferences were interactive in nature, which served as two-way communication between the learner and the teacher/resource person. This creates greater opportunity for learning and teaching, and facilitates more effective learning than studying in isolation.

The Teleconference programs encouraged social interaction among the participants. Audio tapes were distributed to students who could not participate in the teleconferences or listen to radio broadcasts, to enable them to review the content at their own pace. Broadcasting of lessons was considered essential to break down the isolation of the students. Thus, broadcasting and telecasting of lessons helped the students to understand and quickly assimilate the material, and, at the same time gave the students the much-needed psychological boost and the feeling that they belong to an organization. Audio-visual aids are considered as supplementary devices by which the teacher clarifies, establishes and correlates concepts, interpretations and appreciation.

Evidence of Success:

A number of studies were conducted and some of the few reviews of on Dr.BRAOU teleconference programmes are presented hereunder:

1. Prof.V.Venkaiah (2006) published a paper on *Role of Teleconference and Telelessons in instructional strategy of Dr.BRAOU – A study of Access and utility*. The study revealed that 70% of the students found the teleconferences helpful.

2. Dr. P. Madhusudhan Reddy (2006) published a paper on *Interactive video teleconferencing programme in Dr. BRAOU: Retrospect and Prospect*. The study revealed that IVTC programmes were satisfactory to the learners.
3. A study was conducted on teleconferences and tele-lessons by Prof. V.S. Prasad and Prof. Venkaiah in 2005, where it was found that the interaction from the students is more in DD-8 programmes than in Mana TV. This is due to coverage of D.D. Network in terms of coverage of geographical area. These teleconferences of D.D.8 were found to be highly satisfactory by the learners.
4. Dr. D. Udayani submitted a thesis on use of Audio & Video Technologies - A Case Study of Dr. BRAOU. The study was conducted on 2005. 58% of students viewed the teleconference and felt satisfied with the course content.

It is evident from the above analysis that the Dr. BRAOU has been widely using technologies since its inception and they are integral to teaching learning process. Interactive technology initiatives were undertaken from time to time to meet instructional needs of the students.

Problems encountered

1. Most of the teleconference programmes are confirmed one or two days before the live telecast. Hence the quality of the programme may be compromised.
2. Some experts come good formats like graphics and this affects the programme, as EMR&RC does not have enough budget for these. The rates of remuneration are low to be paid for the professionals as well as incorporate graphics. The cost of production needs to enhance if EMR&RC has to incorporate graphics in teaching.
3. Teleconference programme schedules are not available in advance to the students. The schedules have to be sent in advance to students and this requires financial and human resources.
4. The clash in timings of the teleconference programmes with the counseling sessions needs to be addressed. EMR&RC requires more budget allocation to take prime time to telecast/broadcast Dr. BRAOU programmes.

5. Most of the teleconferences are simple, lecture and in lecture and discussion mode; due to lack of visuals. They are not very appealing to the target group.
6. Lack of proper coordination between academic faculty and EMR&RC team in preparing the Action plan of EMR&RC in advance.

BEST PRACTICE - 4

Title of the Practice: “GRCR&D- SYSTEM BASED RESEARCH CENTRE”

I. Objectives of the Practice:

G. Ram Reddy Centre for Research and Development (GRCR&D) is established to cater the needs of distance learning institutions, distance educators, researchers, policymakers, organizations and institutions with research interests for promoting distance education. Its specific functions are geared up to match the requirements of the target groups.

The main objectives of GRCR&D are to:

1. Creation of organizational structure, role based to formulate research policy of the University, identify thrust areas of research and form discipline-wise or related cluster groups.
2. To create adequate autonomy for principal investigators with regard to financial autonomy and to disseminate research outcomes to stakeholders and public.
3. To identify collaboration with other industry, research and academic organizations that can cooperate and form synergetic relationships in research.
4. To liaise between researchers and relevant research funding agencies, extend guidance in preparation of project proposals and to see that the selected project adhere to timelines.
5. To coordinate the University – Industry inter-linkage, for incubation, innovation and entrepreneurship development of intellectual property rights.
6. To develop a good research informational system for preparing the database of in-house research activity.
7. To act as a nodal center for ideation and conceptualization of research topics by organizing workshops and training programmes.

8. To utilize the services of superannuated faculty, if required, for research capacity building.

IV. The Context:

Research is of paramount significance and an effective management tool of open and distance learning for professional development. The research outcomes help in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning and also for designing suitable and effective delivery systems. It examines the strategies and policies being implemented by various distance education institutions within in the country as well as outside and suggests appropriate academic and institutional measures to meet the needs of the distance learners and sets quality parameters.

Dr BRAOU is the first Open University in the country to establish an exclusive unit to carry out research and promote system-based research in the field of distance education. Thus, the University stands first among all the Open Universities/Distance Education Institutes in the country to undertake systemic evaluation and research studies in the areas of courseware both print and non-print, student support services, students' evaluation, student feedback on contact-cum-counseling classes, delivery of study material, programmes offered etc. The evaluation studies carried out by the University are considered as first - hand information on focal areas of distance education by the sister open universities in the country. The Academy also invited scholars and eminent experts from the Asian countries in the field of open distance learning to conduct research studies for enhancement of quality in ODL systems.

In accordance with the new guidelines of UGC for establishment of Research and Development in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 2022, and in order to play a pivotal role in catalyzing multi-disciplinary/transdisciplinary and translational research culture mandated in NEP 2020, Dr. BRAOU has renamed its earlier established institute of GRADE to G. Ram Reddy Centre for Research & Development (GRCR&D).

V. The Practice

GRCR&D organizes periodic interactive workshops on various activities of distance education and preparation of manuals on best practices. Specific attention is given to impact

studies, longitudinal studies and action research projects. It helps in creating an exhaustive database on distance education in the regions/countries and provides access to this data to researchers. GRCR&D undertakes collaborative research projects with other Distance Education Institutions in the world.

VI. Evidence of Success

Since its establishment, GRCR&D has grown into a premier institution of research and training. It is one of the finest centers of its kind in India to provide /facilitate:

1. A culture of continuous learning, a high level of expertise and to encourage innovation and tools for higher academic performance in line with its mission;
2. Innovative research outcomes in ODL;
3. Identify best practices and appropriate strategies for the improvement of quality course- wear (print and non-print), improved student learning services and to contribute for technology enabled learning;
4. Integration of research and education to promote leadership in the creation of research environment;
5. A culture of continuous process improvement in ODL system for the advancement of socially relevant ODL Programmes;
6. Research in Distance Education in other regions/countries so as to partner in the advancement and dispersal of knowledge in ODL institutions for mutual tangible benefits; and
7. Act as the voice of research community and partner in the development and advancement of local, national and international research and educational technology initiatives.

VII. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

The financial sources for the activities are mainly from the university funds and grants received from Distance Education Bureau (DEB-UGC) only. Due to the non-availability of funds visiting fellowships are being shelved temporarily.

The establishment of GRCD is to undertake system-based research and evolution studies is the institutional uniqueness of Dr. BRAOU, exclusive to our own institution, which is not in practice elsewhere. The University has identified GRCD-system based research center as one of the best practices of Dr. BRAOU. The efforts and activities of GRCD help to formalize and collate all research studies, would greatly enhance the quality of distance education. The added benefit is in building a research environment conducive to professional development of teachers which would certainly yield rich dividends to the open learning system. GRCD is committed to develop effective strategies for highest level of quality services in ODL system. The success of GRCD positions Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University needs to be emulated by other ODL institutions.

In abeyance to the new UGC guidelines, Dr. BRAOU is streamlining the already established organizational structure, so as to provide a vibrant research eco-system with an adequate Research Information System. Research guidance will be provided in due course of time in thrust areas as well as areas that are pertinent to Distance Education System. Identifying specific areas of interest for research faculty as well as the areas that have relevance and significance to the modern-day world and helping as a facilitator for networking with other national and international organizations would be the priority of GRCD in the near future. Capacity building, collaboration, searching for Funding authorities, Research monitoring with an eye on integrity and ethics would be the functions of GRCD. This would also help to bring together human resources, intellectual capital governance and financial resources on one platform and help strengthen the research activities of the University.
