

**ODL - Academic Support through E-Media
(An Empirical Investigation on Dr. BRAOU)**

PROJECT REPORT

BY

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Introduction

The Government of Andhra Pradesh, after recognizing the importance of the alternative system of education, established the Andhra Pradesh Open University first of its kind in India. It was established in 1982 with the motto of “Education to all” and it was renamed in 1991 as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University. The University adopts a multimedia approach for instruction, i.e., printed material, radio lessons, Television lessons, audio and video lessons, contact - cum - counseling classes, winter and summer schools for intensive coaching by subject experts. It provides educational opportunities to those who could not take advantage of conventional institutions of higher education with the slogan of ‘Education at Your Doorstep’. As per Prof. V.S. Prasad (Best Practices in Open and Distance Education- 2003) says that the establishment of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University is an historical event in India itself. The University has been utilizing electronic media such as Radio and Television to reach out to the Students spread throughout the State of Andhra Pradesh.

The University is broadcasting lessons through All India Radio since 1983, besides preparing few lessons in the form of Audio/Video tapes and make them available at all the Study Centres from the convenient of the students. In order to reach the students more effectively by using the technology, the University has started telecasting its lessons through Doordarshan-8 (Saptagiri) in 1999, in addition to organizing live teleconferencing on every Sunday. Again through the same channel the University is also telecasting its lessons through Mana TV. In this backdrop, a study was taken up to know to what extent the lessons of BRAOU are being used by the learners.

Objectives

Specific objectives of the study are:

1. To find out how far the services of Radio and Television are reaching to the learners.
2. To obtain the feedback from the learners about E-Media and its usefulness to the students in terms of pursuing their studies.

What is E-Media learning?

Utilizing radio, television, audio video cassettes/CDs and other electronic devices like pen drives, hard discs in academic support can be called E-Media Learning. E-Media learning is more effective than others modes. Distance education provides all the possible devices for the base of e-learning development. E-learning can be "on demand" by the learners. It overcomes time, attendance, cost effectiveness and travel difficulties.

E-Media plays vital role in Distance Education. Most of the Students enrolled in Distance Education are from non-formal system. They may not be able to understand in the beginning the system and concept of open distance learning. Because, in this system, instead of teaching, counselling method is adopted. In addition to self-instructional printed course material, the students are complimented by the Radio and T.V. lessons. The audio and video lessons are more attentive and impact on the learners.

About AVPRC

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University is having its own Audio Visual Production & Research Centre (AVPRC) for Radio, Television lessons as well as Teleconferencing. These products are complimentary to the students in preparing themselves for the examinations at their own pace. It is planning to telecast the E-media lessons to the students simultaneously when the same topics are being taken up in the contact-cum-counselling classes at the Study Centres. It will be more useful to the learners. The department is printing one lakh booklets about the schedules of the Radio, Television lessons. Those booklets are being sent to all study centres so as to distribute to the students. The same schedules are giving in the OPVARSITY NEWS. Further, AVPRC is also sending SMSs to the students one day before the teleconferencing to enable the students to participate in it.

The University is very keen about the quality of E-Media lessons. It appointed a High level committee to review the Audio, Video lessons producing by Audio Visual Production & Research Centre of the University. The committee submitted its report with suggestions to improve the quality of the lessons and how to reach the output to the students and tending enhancement to improve new equipment.

T.V and Radio lesson Broadcast and Telecast timings

Programme	Channel	Day	Time
Radio Lessons	All India Radio Hyderabad – ‘A’	Monday to Sunday	6.25 to 6.40 P.M
Video Lessons	D.D-Saptagiri	Monday to Saturday	5.30 to 6.00 A.M
	Mana TV	Monday to Saturday	9.30 to 10.30 A.M 4.00 to 5.00 P.M
	Gyan Darshan	Monday to Sunday	10.30 to 11.00 P.M
Teleconference	DD-Saptagiri	Sunday	2.00 to 3.00 P.M

Review of Literature

Satyanarayana and Sesharatnam (2000) while envisaging about Technologies for Distance Education in their book “Distance Education – What? Why? How?” the selection of valid media mix would depend upon two kinds of contexts i.e. environmental and learning. As far as environmental is concerned, media must be chosen in the light of four criteria such as availability, accessibility, acceptability and economics. It enlightens that these four factors enrich the quality of the output.

In the book “Distance Education in Andhra Pradesh – Policies: Practices: Perspectives” edited by Satyanarayana (2002) says that Centre of Distance Education are not making use of technologies now abundantly available. It was also stated that the media output has not been well monitored well for continuity and regularity. More audio and video programmes should have been produced in successive years. Since it was stated long back, by now necessary steps should have been taken to improve the quality.

Ramaiah (2006) in his research article “Enhancing Distance Teaching and Learning Through Technology: A Study of India’s First Open University” suggested that all the radio broadcasts of the University should be made available on cassettes at study centres and more visuals should be used in telecasts, particularly in science programmes. If this valuable suggestion is taken into consideration and implemented accordingly, the students would have been benefited to a maximum extent.

Mohammad Sheik (2006) in his M.Phil dissertation, he suggested that as far as the quality of Audio Video programmes is concerned, most of the students have rated the quality as 'good'. Since these programmes are not fully available to the students, some of the counsellors indicated only their guarded satisfaction. It is significant that the quality of Audio Video programmes is rated as 'high'. But, most of the students as well as counsellors have expressed their dissatisfaction about the accessibility of these programmes. Thus, it is suggested that steps should be taken to see that all the Audio, Video programmes are made available to the students at affordable prices to facilitate their use by a large number of students. Here one thing is clear that the quality is good but it is not accessible to the target group.

Sreedher Rama Murthy (2009) article 'Role of Radio in ODL' published by Booklinks Corporation, Hyderabad in Information and Communication Technologies in Open Distance Learning says that Radio is the best traditional medium for ODL. It allows creativity. It can be updated easily. The cost of production of radio programmes is 90 per cent lower than that of video programmes. The cost of setting up and running are very low. It takes into account the needs of the captive target audience. Radio can be used even if there is no power at the house or at the work spot with batteries. It blends with traditional Indian Educational culture. Further it was stated that the digital FM transmitters can be used to carry both the audio and text messages.

Methodology

Only under graduate students are taken for the survey. Total students are 1,62,416. Among this 68,120 were of first year; 53,157 were second year and remaining 41,139 were of third year students. Sample has been selected according to the year-wise enrolment ratio of the students. Total 400 samples were collected from nine study centres covering both from rural and urban areas. Among this 400 I year students are 172, II year students are 128 and III year students are 100. Out of 219 Study Centres including Regional Coordination Centres, total nine Centres are selected covering both urban and rural areas for the survey. Four are from urban areas and five are from rural areas.

Analysis

A survey is conducted to know the student understanding towards student services on Electronic Media support and its use. A questionnaire consisting of 16 questions has been

developed in this aspect and administered to the U.G. students at nine Study Centres. All the 400 students have responded.

Table - 1
Awareness of Learners on Radio Lessons of BRAOU

Aware of Radio Lessons	Not Aware of Radio Lessons	Total
276	124	400
(69%)	(31%)	100%

Question No.1 is posed to the students whether they know that BRAOU is broadcasting Radio lessons. Out of 400 students, 276 students (i.e. 69%) said that they know about the broadcasting of Radio lessons. The rest 124 students (i.e. 31%) said that they did not know about it. Though most of the students know the BRAOU is broadcasting Radio lessons, still the University has to take steps to let all the students know that Radio lessons are meant for the students only.

Table – 2
Awareness of Learners on Radio Lessons Schedule of BRAOU

Knowing of Schedule	Not knowing of Schedule	Total
153	247	400
(38.25%)	(61.75%)	100%

Question No. 2 has been administered to know how many students are aware that there is a schedule for Radio lessons. For this, 247 students (i.e. 61.75%) expressed that they did not know about the schedule for Radio lessons. Only 153 students (i.e. 38.25%) have answered that they know it. It indicates that the Radio lessons schedule is not reaching to all the students of BRAOU. The University has to take steps to see that all the students are received the Radio lessons schedule.

Table – 3
Listening of Radio Lessons of BRAOU

Listening Radio Lessons	Not Listening Radio Lessons	Total
155	245	400
(38.75%)	(61.25%)	100%

Question No.3 was prepared to know from the students whether they have ever heard the Radio lessons that are being broadcast by the University. Out of the total 400 students, only 155 of them (i.e. 38.75%) agreed that they heard the University Radio lessons. Above 61% of the

students (i.e. 245) agreed that they never heard the Radio lessons. The University has to motivate the students to cultivate the habit of hearing Radio lessons. Then only the purpose of preparing the Radio lesson by subject experts is useful.

Table – 4

Aware of Telecasting Video Lessons

Aware of Video Lessons	Not Aware of Video Lessons	Total
250	150	400
(62.5%)	(37.5%)	100%

Again through question no.4, the students were asked whether they know that the University is telecasting Video lessons through T.V. In this aspect, 62.5% of the students (i.e. 250) responded that they know that University is telecasting Video lessons through T.V. and 37.5% of the students (i.e. 150) agreed that they did not know about telecasting of Video lessons.

Table – 5

Receiving of Schedule of TV Lessons

Received Schedule	Schedule not received	Total
164	236	400
(41%)	(59%)	100%

As far as the schedule for T.V. lessons is concerned, only 41% (i.e. 164) of the students mentioned that there is separate schedule for T.V. lessons. The rest 236 students (i.e. 59%) said that they did not know about the schedule. It indicates that the T.V. lessons schedule is not reaching to all the students. Generally, the University publishes the schedule of Audio and Video lessons in ‘Opvarsity News’ quarterly news bulletin, which is meant for the student-information. If this bulletin is sent to all the students, the schedules will be known to all the students.

Table – 6

Watching TV Lessons

Watching TV Lessons	Not Watching TV Lessons	Total
150	250	400
(37.5%)	(62.5%)	100%

Question No.6 is administered to know whether the students have ever watched the T.V. lessons or not. For this, only 37.5% (i.e. 150) of the students said that they are watching the T.V. lessons. Most of the students i.e. 150 (62.5%) agreed that they are not watching T.V. lessons. University has a separate directorate called Audio Video Production & Research Centre

(AVPRC) to prepare the Audio and Video lessons for the students. This table enlightens that only a few students are making use of the services of AVPRC.

Table – 7

Response of Learners on Providing Audio and Video Lessons in the form of CDs/DVDs

Knowing Univ. provides AV Lessons	Not knowing Univ. provides AV Lessons	Total
181	219	400
(45.25%)	(54.75%)	100%

The University is providing Audio and Video lessons to the students through T.V. and CDs and DVDs. In a separate question, the students were asked whether they know this or not. 45.25% of the students (i.e. 181) said that they know it whereas 54.75% of the students (i.e. 219) responded that they did not know it. Here one thing is to be taken into consideration that the students should know about the Audio and Video lessons. It is, of course, the students should have some convenient time to hear and watch the lessons.

Table – 8

Idea about Tele-Conferencing

Idea about Tele-Conferencing	No Idea about Tele-Conferencing	Total
103	297	400
(25.75%)	(74.25%)	100%

The University arranges teleconferencing through *Doordarshan* on every Sunday. In this teleconferencing students will interact with the University teachers and subject experts. They get their doubts clarified then and there, which may be useful to the other student fraternity. A separate question no.8 was framed to know whether the students have an idea about the University's Video conferencing. It is surprising to know that about 75% of the students (i.e. 297) said that they did not have an idea about tele-conferencing. Only around 25% of the students expressed that they have an idea about Video conferencing. Majority of the students are not making use of this facility. The AVPRC is sending SMS to the students about the Teleconferencing. In spite of that majority students said that they donot know about that.

Table – 9

Learners Interaction during Live Tele-conference

Interacted in Tele-conferencing	Not Interacted	Doubts Clarified	Doubts Not Clarified	Total
65	298	16	21	400
(16.25%)	(74.5%)	(4%)	(5.25%)	100%

In regard to participating in the teleconferencing and getting the doubts of students clarified, question no.9 was administered to the students. Here also a very less percentage of the students i.e. 16.25% said that they have participated in the teleconferencing and 74.5% of the students mentioned that they have not participated in the teleconferencing. Further, only 4% of the students told that they have clarified their doubts and 5.25% of the students did not clarify their doubts.

Table – 10

Having Personal Computer

Having PC	Don't having PC	Total
89	311	400
(22.25%)	(77.75%)	100%

Through question no.10, the students are asked whether they have personal computer (PC). About 78% of the students (i.e. 311) mentioned that they did not have PC and only around 22% of the students stated that they are having PC. It is, of course depending on the economic condition of the students.

Table – 11

Having Internet Facility

Having Internet	Don't having Internet	Total
51	349	400
(12.75%)	(87.25%)	100%

Nowadays 'internet' is accessible to all the public either at their homes or at internet centres and it is available at cheaper price. To know whether the students are having internet facility at their home, question no.11 is asked to the students. A few students i.e. around 13% said that they have internet facility at their homes and above 87% of the students said that they did not have internet facility.

Table – 12

Owning Mobile Telephone

Having Mobile Phone	Don't having Mobile Phone	Total
361	39	400
(90.25%)	(9.75%)	100%

Mobile telephoning is a part and parcel of electronic learning. Nowadays, mobile telephones are being used for SMSing, internet, radio and video. There is no exaggeration to say that nobody can be found without a mobile phone. Thus, question no.12 was meant to know how many students have owned mobile telephone. Above 90% of the students (i.e. 361) stated that they have owned mobile telephones and only about 10% of the students said that they are not having mobile telephones.

Table – 13
Mobile Number in Application Form

Mentioned Mobile No. in Application	Not mentioned	Total
364	36	400
(91%)	(9%)	100%

The University is providing a separate column for the mobile telephone number to write in the student application form. It helps the University to send the student information through group SMSs, which are available at free of cost. The student information are like date of examinations, dates of contact-cum-counselling classes, broadcasting of radio lessons and telecasting of video lessons, postponement of various schedules, etc. It can be very useful in case of certain unforeseen situations. The same was asked to the students whether they have mentioned their mobile numbers in the University’s student application form. Most of the students i.e. 91% have stated that they have mentioned their mobile numbers in the application form whereas only 9% of the students stated that they did not mention. There is a correlation between the previous question and the present one. More or the less 91% of the students have mentioned in both the cases that those who have mobile phones have mentioned the numbers in the application form.

Table – 14
Having E-mail ID

Having E-mail ID	Not having E-mail ID	Total
126	274	400
(31.5%)	(68.5%)	100%

Through internet any information can be sent to anybody and to anywhere within no time. The University can send the student information to its students such as hall tickets for examinations, marks memos, information about postponement of the examinations, exam fee

details, etc. through internet, if the students have internet IDs. To know whether the students have internet IDs, question no.14 was administered to the students. Unfortunately, above 68% of the students stated that they did not have email ID and only about 32% of the students have email ID. In this regard, students are to be educated to open an email ID at free of cost and it takes no much time.

Table – 15
Having Face Book Account

Having face book A/c	Not having face book A/c	Total
68	332	400
(17%)	(83%)	100%

Having an account in the Face Book is an advisable thing in the contemporary changing trend. Nowadays it is a social net work. One can exchange his/her views as well as comment on others' views in the Face Book. Last but one question no.15 was prepared to know whether the students have their Face Book account. Since it is an advanced and latest activity in internet, very less number of students i.e. 17% of them have mentioned that they are having Face Book account and 83% of the students stated that they did not have Face Book account.

Table – 16
Satisfaction with Electronic Learning Programmes

100 per cent	75 per cent	50 per cent	25 per cent	Total
23	54	165	158	400
(5.75%)	(13.5%)	(41.25%)	(39.5%)	100%

Last of all, to know to what extent the students are satisfied with the services of Electronic Media Learning programmes provided by the University, five answers have been provided to the students. Out of total 400 students, only 5.75% (i.e. 23) of the students have mentioned that they are 100% satisfied. 13.5% of them stated that they have satisfied upto 75% with the Electronic Media Learning. 41.25% of the students satisfied with 50% and only 25% satisfied students are nearly 40%. On an average about 60% students have satisfied with above 50%. Though it is somewhat encouraging figure, still the students are to be motivated and educated towards using of University services on Electronic Media Learning.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The researcher interacted with the learners in regard to E-media lessons. Most of the students expressed that the timings of broadcast of radio and television lessons are not

convenient to them. For instance, the timings of video lessons of Mana TV are scheduled from 9.30 AM to 10.30 A.M. and 4.00 PM to 5.00 PM. As a majority of students registering for Open University Study Centres are working category and thus they may be engaged from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm at their respective work places. The teleconferencing is scheduled on Sundays from 2.00 PM to 3.00 PM. But, at the same time the students are fully engaged in contact-cum-counselling classes. Thus the response of the students is very much not in favour of continuation of present timings. Students wanted the timings of teleconferencing to be changed conveniently. The video/tele-lessons are not attractive to watch, as most of them in the form of monologues. The video coverage should be more lively and outdoor based. The content is taken from the course material as it is. In some instances, the students are suggested that additional components such as visuals, graphics and support material may be provided to the learners in advance. Further, the University is not adhered the schedule drawn from time to time. The schedule for audio/radio and video/tele-lessons is getting changed unpredictably without informing the students in advance.

Suggestions

- a) Schedules of Radio and Tele-lessons should be sent to the students well in advance. The schedule may be given to them at the time of admission along with Identity Card.
- b) University has to take steps to get more awareness about the Radio, Tele-lessons among students. The services of FM radio may be utilized to bring awareness to the learners.
- c) Audio Visual equipment supplied by the University is not working properly in many study centers. University has to take steps to keep the equipment in good condition.
- d) Study Centres are not using the Audio, Visual equipment, that should be rectified.
- e) There must be proper coordination among AVPRC, academicians and Student Service Branch in preparing and broadcasting/telecasting the Radio and Tele-lessons.
- f) Audio, Video lessons in the form of C.Ds and DVDs should be made available for the students in more numbers. The CDs and DVDs may also be made available at Study Centres.
- g) More attention is needed in producing the lessons on time with creativity.
- h) Quality of video programmes produced by the University is a major concern. Majority of the respondents have expressed that the radio and tele-lessons are not interesting. As the quality of video programmes generate interest in the student community to watch the

programmes. In this context, a collective effort may be initiated by the departments concerned such as the media centre personnel, academics and other functionaries to make them qualitative.

- i) Most of the students (90%) are having mobile phones. University may send information about the change in the schedules of the Radio, Tele-lessons from time to time.
- j) Most of the students are not having personal computers (77%) and internet connections (87%) webcasting the course material. Thus, introducing of webcasting will be useful when the above mentioned gadgets are available with the students.

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EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

S.No	Name of the Course	University	Year
1	Ph.D (Telugu)	S.V.University, Tirupati	1994
2	M.A. (Telugu)	S.V.University, Tirupati	1987
3	M.C.J	Potti Sriramulu Telugu University	2009
4	B.Ed	Annamalai University,	1990
5	PG Diploma in Epigraphy	S.V.University, Tirupati	1989

- Awarded Ph.D., for the work done on "CREATION OF NEW WORDS IN TELUGU DAILIES" from S.V.University, Tirupati (1994)

Books published : 08

Research Articles / Chapters Published in Books : 26

Seminars & Workshops Organized :

International : 01

National Seminar : 04

Workshops & Orientation Programmes : 37

Seminars attended & Presented papers

International : 18

National : 35

Resource Person in Workshops : 11

Workshops attended : 11

Teleconferences (live programmes- Dr. BRAOU) : 26

Administrative Position held :

1. Officer on Special Duty (Trainings) : one year (I&PR Dept)

2. Member Board of Studies : 2 Universities.