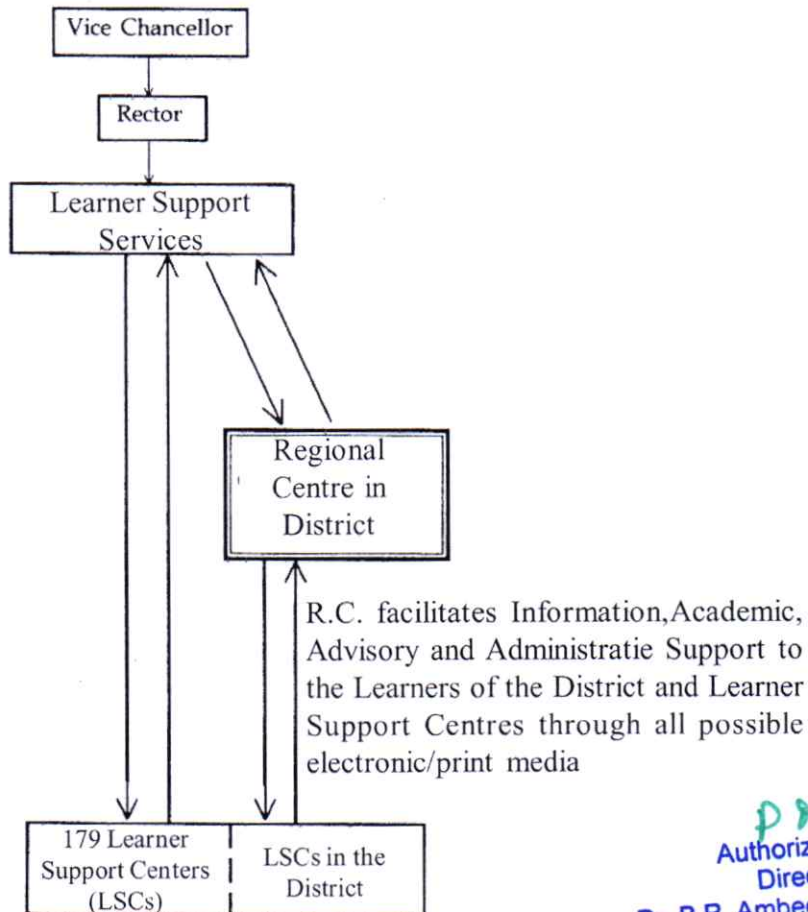


## Learner Support Services in Dr. BRAOU.

There is a three-tier functioning in Dr. BRAOU, which helps to render effective services to learners (Fig.1). The First tier is Learner Support Services Division at University, the second tier are the Regional Centres in each District Head Quarters and third tier are the Learner Support Centres, located at different places in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

**Fig. 1. Diagrammatic Representation of the Organisational structures of Regional Centres and Learner Support Centres of Dr. BRAOU.**



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### Functions of the Coordinator (Head of the Learner Support Centre of Dr. B.R.A.O.U.)

Subject to the general supervision and control of the Vice-Chancellor, the Coordinator of a study of a study centre shall have the following duties and powers and perform the functions as indicated :

1. The Coordinator shall function under the immediate control of the Director, Student Services.
2. He/ She shall be the Executive Head of the Study Centre and shall sign all papers pertaining to the Study Centre.
3. He/ She shall exercise general supervision and control over the academic and administrative staff of the Study Centre.
4. He/ She shall be responsible for the maintenance of discipline among the teaching and non-teaching staff and students at the study centre.
5. He / She shall verify, with the help of the originals submitted by each student admitted to the Study Centre, the age and academic qualifications required for admission into the program.

Cases of under aged or unqualified candidates noticed during such verification will be reported to the University immediately.

6. The panels of Counsellors, when received from the University should be kept by the Coordinator in his personal custody as a confidential document. Initially orders of appointment of the counsellors as per the serial orders in the panel will be issued to the individuals by the Director (SS) with copies to the Coordinator. The Coordinator will send a list of the counsellors who have reported for duty to the Director (Student Services).
7. If any counsellor who has been appointed does not report to duty or discontinues after reporting to duty or absents himself/herself for two consecutive contact-cum-counselling classes without prior notice, the Coordinator shall discontinue his / her services and under intimation to the Director, (Student Services) and entrust the work to the next lecturer in the subject panel pending issue of formal orders by the University, since conducting counselling classes regularly is more important as the learners attend on Sundays despite other commitments.
8. He / She shall be responsible for the safe maintenance of :
  - (a) Accounts and registers for cash, equipment, furniture, books, stores etc., as prescribed by the University.
  - (b) Attendance registers of office staff and teaching staff (counsellors).
9. He / She shall be responsible for the safety and maintenance of the Library. Audio-Visual and other equipment, stores and other properties of the University at the Study Centre.
10. He / She can grant (subject to the rules in force), casual leave to the non-teaching staff at the Study Centre.
11. He / She shall clarify the doubts and guide the students of the Study Centre and performing the duty of a liaison officer between the learner and the University.
12. He / She shall sign on identity card of the students for renewal for the subsequent years of the course.
13. Issue of Bonafide certificates to the students in the prescribed format supplied to the study centres after receiving the requisite fee towards bonafide certificate and sent the amount and the list of the students obtained bonafide certificates.
14. He / She shall be responsible to keep the Study Centre Open as per the timings on the days fixed by the University.
15. He / She is responsible for providing an opportunity for continuous interaction between the Counsellors and the students by arranging contact-cum-counselling classes regularly prescribed by the University for different programmes on Sundays.
16. He / She shall group the students into batches according to the norms specified by the University and prepare the time-table of the Study Centre and Coordinate the organization of Contact – cum – Counselling programmes at the study centres and keep the students informed of the same. He shall also organise summer schools and science practical classes at the Study Centre as instructed by the Director, Students Services.
17. He / She can advance or postpone the Contact-cum-Counselling programmes in case of any unavoidable circumstances of host colleges while duly intimating the Director, Students Services, about the same for ratification, besides informing the students.
18. He / She shall claim remuneration for counsellors as per the University norms and see that the remuneration is paid to them promptly.

19. He / She shall take care to maintain the academic standards at the Study Centre and also ensure discipline among the learners so as not to cause any inconvenience to the host college students & staff.
20. He / She shall ensure that the library, laboratory and audio-visual facilities are properly extended to the students with a service motive.
21. He / She shall impress upon the students the significance of regular attendance and submission of assignments.
22. He / She will arrange to collect the assignments from the students for assessment and valuation by the concerned Counsellors and arrange for the return of these assignments to the concerned students. The Coordinator shall maintain a record of the assignments and claims for the remuneration for counsellors for valuation of assignments and pay them promptly.
23. He / She shall see that the notifications issued by the University regarding various programmes like radio lessons, summer schools etc. are duly exhibited on the Study Centre Notice Board and circulated during contact classes for the benefit of the students.
24. He / She should keep the Director, Learner Support Services, informed through the monthly reports, about the functioning of the Study Centre.
25. Any complaints / suggestions regarding course material given in writing by the Counsellors / students shall be forwarded by the Coordinator to the Director (Academic) with a copy for information to the Director, Learner Support Services, which acts as feedback about the course material.
26. The Coordinator shall send confidential reports about the performance of all the Counsellors working at the Study Centre directly to the Director (SS) within a month of the completion of each academic year, for such action as may be deemed necessary.
27. He / She shall inform the Director, Learner Support Services of any complaint against the Counsellors received in writing from the Students with the signatures and admission numbers of the Students and submit his confidential remarks regarding the concerned Counsellor.
28. He / She should carefully note the prescribed procedure regarding cases of change of address, change of medium, change of subject and change of Study Centre and guide the students and make necessary entries / alternations in the data entry cards and other records of study centres.
29. The Co-ordinator can incur expenditure as per norms from impress amount on items of Office contingencies as per the items identified in the list supplied by the University.
30. The Co-ordinator shall be the drawing Officer for the bills of honorarium of principal / remuneration / salaries of Co-ordinator, Counsellors and non-teaching staff of the Study Centre respectively. The Part-time Co-ordinator must get the remuneration bills and other bills countersigned by the Principal before they are sent to the Student Services Branch / Accounts Branch Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University.
31. The Part-time Coordinator shall immediately inform the Director, student Services regarding his / her transfer, if he is transferred from the college, and hand over charge to the Principal or any other person, preferably a senior counsellor as decided by the Principal, until the next Co-ordinator is appointed officially by the University.
32. He / She shall act as the Additional Chief Superintendent for the University Examinations / Eligibility Test at the Study Centre and ensure that all preparatory work is attended to, whenever he / she is called upon to do so.
33. In addition to above said duties, the head of the study centre shall be called upon to attend to any other items of work entrusted by the University from time to time.

34. He / She has to maintain the Study Centre timings,

'Study Centre timings on all other days except Sundays is 11.00 AM to 5.30 P.M.

All Sundays are working days from morning 8.00 A.M. to evening 5.00 PM depending on the number of batches. If the batches are limited and accommodation is sufficient the Study Centre works from 9.00 A.M. to 5.00 PM.

Monday is a weekly holiday for the Learner Support Services Centre.

As second Saturday is also a working day, because of the number of courses offered at the Centre or due to examinations, the Tuesday following 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in the respective month is a holiday for the staff of the Learner Support Services Centre.

35. The Coordinator should not spend any amount from the impress except for the items mentioned in the list. In case any amount is required for items not mentioned in the list or if the amount to be spent is more than Rs. 100/- he / she should obtain the prior permission for the sanction of the amount from the Director, LSS.

In addition to the above mentioned functions, the head of the study centre is expected to take up any other work assigned by the Director, LSS in the interest of the learners and the study centre.

#### **Role of the Principal of the College where the Study Centre is located**

1. The principal of the college is the 'Honorary Head' of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University Study Centre while the Coordinator is the Executive Head holding the responsibility of running the Study Centre.
2. The Principal is expected to extend full co-operation in providing accommodation for the office of the Study Centre, Classrooms staff room, etc.
3. The Principal is also expected to give necessary instructions to the non-teaching staff of the college (Superintendent, clerks, typists, watchman, sweeper, attenders etc.,) to extend their cooperation to the Coordinator, Counsellors and other Open University staff for the smooth functioning of the Study Centre.
4. The Principal is expected to offer guidance to the Coordinator while selecting watchman, sweeper, scavenger etc., on a part-time basis for the Open University work.
5. The Principal is expected to forward the bio-data and applications of the lecturers of the college who apply for Counsellorship in the Open University, along with specific recommendations, keeping in view their academic qualifications, experience and other abilities.
6. The Principal will act as the Chief Superintendent for the Open University examinations conducted at that college (study centre) and the Coordinator will be the additional chief superintendent. If because of some reasons if the principal is not in a position to accept the Chief Superintendent ship, he may nominate the Coordinator to act as the Chief Superintendent.
7. The Principal is expected to visit the study centre on Sundays, at least once in a month and satisfy himself/herself regarding the smooth conduct of the classes and ensure that all the necessary facilities are made available to the Study Centre.
8. The Principal of the Regional Centre where the science practical classes are conducted for the II & III year Science students is expected to arrange the science practical classes providing necessary facilities in the laboratories by coordinating with the heads of the science departments.
9. If the Coordinator of a study centre is transferred, the Principal of the college has to make alternate arrangements for the temporary charge of the office of the Co-ordinator to be taken up by a senior counsellor pending the appointment of a new Part-time Coordinator.

10. In case the part - time Co-ordinator of the Dr. BRAOU Study Centre is transferred, the Principal will request a senior Counsellor, to take temporary charge of the Study Centre till the appointment of a new part time Coordinator. The Principal is expected to send a panel of five names with his specific recommendations for the appointment of one of them as Part-time Coordinator.

### **Appointment of Academic Counsellor**

Dr. BRAOU provides face-to-face academic counselling to the learners through about 4500 academic counsellors for different programmes offered. The academic counsellors for different programmes are appointed to take contact-cum-counselling classes on Sundays. They are mostly lecturers teaching different subjects in conventional colleges with experience ranging between 5 to 30 years. About 60% of the counsellors of a study centre are drawn from the best college on the terms of mutual benefit and the rest of the 40% will be drawn from the surrounding colleges and some are research scholars or have a P.G. Degree. A minimum of 50% marks in P.G. programme is a must to act as an academic counsellor.

The bio-data of the lecturers proposed for appointment as part-time counsellors are sent by the coordinator duly forwarded by the Principal with the details like qualifications, age, years of experience as lecturer and additional qualifications if any. After scrutiny of the bio-data, eligible lecturers are taken as the academic counsellors as per the recommendation of the Faculty/ Departments of the University.

The counsellors are taken on part-time basis. They are paid on hourly basis or Period basis (consisting of 1 ½ to 2 hours) for handling the contact-cum-counselling classes. The head of the study centre and the counsellors are made aware of the methodology of academic counselling to organise counselling classes as per norms.

**Methodology of Academic Counselling:** The learners are expected to study the course material sent by the University and get their doubts their doubts cleared if any (on subjects they have chosen) during week-end conduct-cum-counselling classes on Sundays at Study Centres. Attendance to these academic counselling classes is not compulsory. The counsellors are expected to guide the students on all academic matters through discussions, illustrations, case studies and by motivating them for self-study by training them in reading / learning skills and time management skills. They are also expected to encourage the learners to listen and view the audio-video lessons. The counsellors also guide the learners in answering the assignments and are expected to assess the learners' level of comprehension based on their performance accordingly. The counsellors train and help the science students in hands on experiments. A handbook for Academic Counsellors is prepared by CST&D and distributed to the existing counsellors at all study centres explaining the concept of D.E. and the functions and responsibilities of academic counsellors.

### **Decentralisation of Learner Support Services**

#### **Role of Regional Centres**

In 1983, the University started functioning with a modest learner enrolment of 6,321 and 22 study centres. Since then, there has been a steady growth in enrolment of students and consequently there was an increase in the number of Study Centres. In 2002 – 2003, the enrolment was about 125 lakhs and the number of Study Centres increased to 144. Today the number of LSCs is 179.

Dr. B.R.A.O.U. in an effort to strengthen the learner support services and to reach the learners, established in each district a Regional Coordination Centre at the headquarters of that district from the academic year 2001-2002 ( a total of 23 Regional Coordination Centres). The main objective behind this is to strengthen the student support services and to avoid communication gap between the learners and the university. All the 23 Regional Coordination Centres are headed by the Regional Coordinators. He / She will act as Coordinator of that Study Centre and also act as Regional

Coordinator of that district and take the responsibility for facilitating effective services to the learners of that district study centre. The Regional Coordinator of R.C.C. is assisted by secretarial staff at each Regional Coordination Centre. Presently, these centres are named as Regional Centres in accordance with UGC guidelines.

### **The Functions of the Regional Centre:**

- i. To provide audio / visual support to all those learners who are studying in various Study Centres in that district through T.V. Teleconferencing.
- ii. They also provide facility of playing Audio/Video tapes that are available with Region Centre for the benefit of the students who approach Regional Centre from the Learner Support Service Centres of the district.
- iii. To arrange science practical training classes to the science students studying the various Learner Support Service centres and other regular support services to learners.
- iv. To identify Senior Lecturers/Counsellors and recommend to Controller of Examinations to appoint them as observers for examinations at various Centres of that district.
- v. To forward the physically disabled students' applications to head quarters for the purpose of applying on National Scholarship Portal.
- vi. To report immediately matters of urgency and to review the matters which require immediate attention of the headquarters with regard to practical classes, examinations ,payment of Counsellors' remuneration, imprest amount that is to be sanctioned by University and other management concerns.
- vii. To facilitate information dissemination by giving local publicity regarding the dates of examinations, dates of fee payments of tuition fee and schedule of Teleconferencing, Telecast of lessons etc. through local news papers and other mass media channels.
- viii. To identify Senior lecturers/Counsellors and recommend to Controller of Examinations to appoint them as observers for examinations at various Learner Support Service Centres of that district.
- ix. To provide information and library services to learners.
- x. To attend any other work assigned by the headquarters from time to time.

Regional Centre (RC) is a multi-functional unit who's role is liaison (coordination) between headquarters and respective study centres of that district

### **Facilities at Regional Centre;**

#### **RC is a resource centre with the following facilities :**

1. Downlink facility and viewing facility of tele-lessons and Video lessons is available at the RC.
2. All the learners of various centres located in that district can make use of the facilities at RCs.
3. Internet and E-mail facilities are made available to RC and therefore the communications from the University will reach the centres quickly

### **Role of Principal at RC:**

1. The Principal is the honorary head of the Regional Centre.
2. The Principal should ensure that all other facilitates that are necessary for the successful running of the RC.

3. The Principal should ensure that the non-teaching staff of the college, the Coordinator of the Study Centre and the staff of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University working at RC shall contribute for the smooth functioning of the RC.

#### **Regional Coordinators:**

Regional Coordinator is the head of the Regional Centre and is also the head of the Study Centre. He/ She occupies a key position and plays a vital role in implementing the policies and academic programmes of the University. He / She is the representative of the University in that District.

#### **Duties and Responsibilities of Regional Coordinator:**

1. To promote public awareness in the District regarding Dr. B.R.Ambekar Open University, it's role in Distance Education and programmes on offer. For this, he /she may use various modes of communication such as radio, local cable T.V. newspapers etc.
2. To negotiate with the local Universities or colleges, with a view to develop local facilities for the University programmes.
3. To survey and collect views regarding the academic / professional requirements of the district and feed the information to the Head Quarters.
4. To encourage the students to apply for various programmes of the University.
5. To facilitate learners in use of Technology, to promote the concept of Distance Education and Open Learning in that region, and provide support services and facilitates in teaching – learning processes for the learners.
6. To supervise and control the conduct of examinations at the RC in coordination with the Controller Examinations.

Link role of the Regional Co-ordinator:

The Regional Coordinator serves as vital and effective link

- Between various branches at the Head Quarters on the one hand and the study centres in the district on the other.
- Between Dr. BRAOU and the Govt. Organizations.
- Between the Study Centre and the students.
- Between the Counsellors and the Coordinator
- Between the Dr.BRAOU and Media and
- Between Dr. BRAOU and general public.

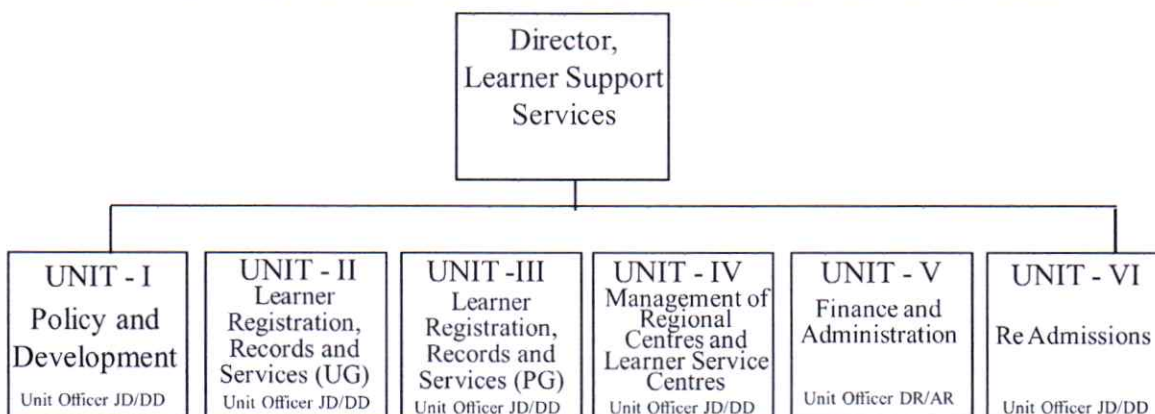
With skilful dealings and prompt action, the Regional Coordinator solves the problems of the learners in the region, creates better support facilities for them and generates proper public response for effective implementation of Dr. BRAOU's programmes in that district. The success of the University programmes and policies in that district largely depends on the pivotal role played by the Regional Coordinator.

#### **Organisational Structure of Learner Support Services Division:**

The Learner Support Services Division at University Campus is headed by a Director (Professor cadre) who is responsible for implementing the academic and advisory support services to the learners through the net work of 23 Regional Coordination Centres and 179 study centres spread over the length and breadth of the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The organisational

structure of Learner Support Services Division (Figure 2 ) at the campus consists of five functional units.

**Fig.2 Organisational Structure of Learner Support Services Division.**



As the strength of learners is increasing year after year, the number of learners that approach the centres and the University is also increasing considerably. To attend to these learners queries and to provide better services the following three centres are opened at University campus, Hyderabad, which continue to be operational .They are:

1. **The Information Centre (1999):** Provides general information pertaining to programmes offered, qualifications and registration / admission schedules, etc. and any other general information.
2. **The Learner Service Centre (2003) :** Deals with (a) Registration and Admissions / Tuition fee collection, (b) effecting changes like optional, medium, address, study centre change etc.
3. **The Examination Service Centre (2002) :** Deals with all queries and complaints related to examinations like Examination registration, result, issue of marks memos, provisional certificates, degree certificates and related issues.

The information centre was inaugurated in 1999 and the other two centres, the Examination service centre, the Learner Service Centre were opened in the academic year 2002-2003 for facilitating fast services to the learners who approach headquarters either through phone or in person.

The ‘information centre’ is under the control of Public Relations Officer, the Director, Student Services takes the responsibility of ‘Learner Service Centre’ and the ‘Examination Service Centre’ activities are monitored by Controller of Examinations.

**iii. Support Services through Electronic and Communication Media.**

Dr.B.R.A.O.U’s approach for course delivery is through ‘multiple media’ i.e. print as well as other electronic media. With this objective, University is utilising all possible media i.e., print, electronic media, and information and communication technology (ICTs) for providing academic and advisory support services to it’s learners scattered throughout Telangana and A.P.

Dr. B.R.A.O.U. inaugurated the sub-system Audio Video Production and Research Centre (AVP & RC) of Dr. B.R.A.O.U. in 1986 with the objectives.

- i. To produce and transmit audio and video programmes.
- ii. To conduct training and organise skill development academic programmes including research in audio- visual communication.



Presently , this centre is renamed as EMM&RC

**The functions of EMM&RC :**

- Broadcast of Radio programmes
- Radio/audio/video lessons production for different program
- Video- lesson telecast.
- Telecasts on all days through T-SAT Channels –Vidya and Nipuna in prescribed time schedules

As a part it's functions EMM&RC plans and prepare the year-long schedules for Radio, Video, Television programmes. These programmes are broadcast and telecast on scheduled dates and timings. These schedules are made available to all study centres, students and published in 'OPVERSITY NEWS'- the bimonthly news letter of the University

**Interactive Teleconference Programmes**

The electronic media facilitates not only academic guidance that includes subject / programme related counselling and system related advisory counselling and system related advisory counselling programmes but also facilitate interaction of student with Teacher

Among the programmes telecast by Dr. B.R.A.O.U, the live teleconferencing through 'Doordarshan' (DD8) on all Sundays were interactive teleconferences which were more useful and effective to provide subject related and system related interactive counselling services to the students. The rest of audio – video programmes prepared and produced are telecast on specified days and timings.

**Audio-Video Support at learner Support Service Centres(LSCs):**

LSCs are provided with a T.V. set, and VCP set and Audio Tape Recorders, for utility of the learners for play back of the audio –video lessons and programmes.

**Dr. B.R.A.O.U. website**

Dr. B.R.A.O.U. launched it's website [www.braou.ac.in](http://www.braou.ac.in) on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1999 to facilitate learners to get information about the programmes offered, fees, etc., The examinations results of various programmes are kept in the website for the sake of learners. The website is continuously upgraded from time to time to make it more easy, resourceful to learners and user –friendly.

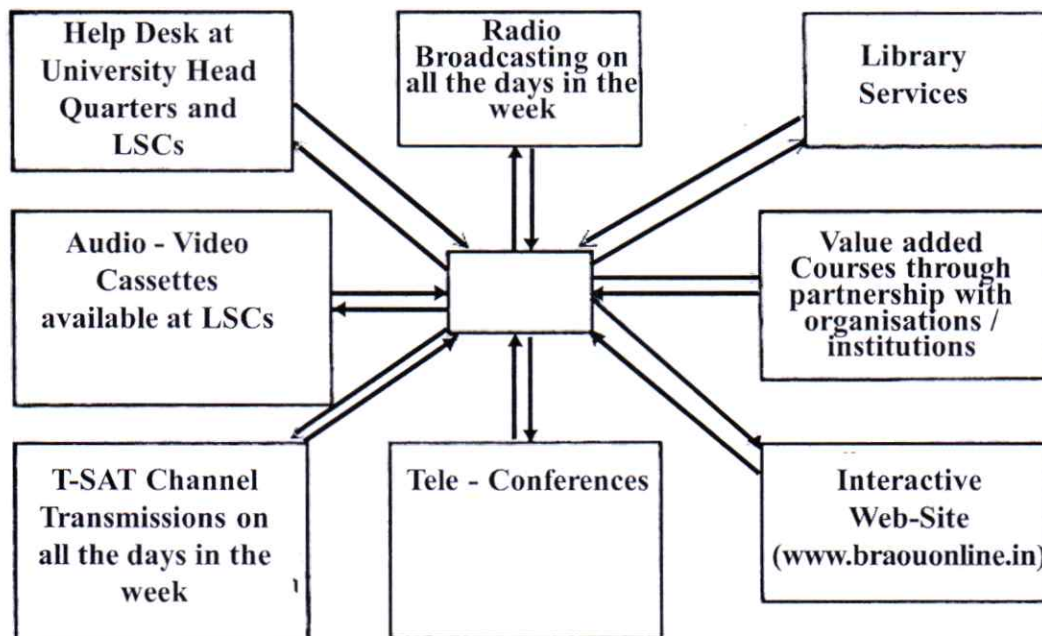
All the available media that are accessible to students are utilised for channelling he information to give academic guidance and general counselling for learners spread over the state of Telangana Andhra Pradesh and Figure No.3 gives the various electronic and communication media used to provide academic and advisory support to learners of Dr. BRAOU.


- iv. Support Services from University Library.
- v. Library Services to Learners
  - The University Library located at the University campus, Hyderabad has a Collection of about fifty thousand books including reference volumes, back volumes, non-book materials and special collections on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Open/Distance Education. The library subscribes to about 200 academic journals and periodicals.
  - The Library is fully computerised. Library services can be availed by the learners on all working days between 10.30 a.m. and 5.00 p.m.
  - At present the library services are limited to the study of books and journals in the library.
  - Question papers of previous examinations and project reports of earlier years are available for reference.
  - Xerox facility is available on the campus and learners are allowed to take books out of the library for xeroxing, by depositing their identify Cards at the issue counter.

- Electronic and Communication Media is used by Dr.B.R.A.O.U. for academic and advisory support to the learners.
  - The personal collections on Sri Narla Venkateswara Rao and Prof. G. Ram Reddy are available in the Narla Memorial Library located in the Academic Branch and are open to all, for reference on all working days between 10.30 and 1.30 p.m.
  - The study centres of Dr. B.R.A.O.U. are having library corner for reference purpose by the learners in the study centre itself. The P.G. Study centres are provided with more reference books for the reference by M.B.A. and other P.G & P.G diploma studies.
- vi. Learner Support through linked organisations / institutions for value added courses / programmes:

Dr. B.R.A.O.U. in an effect to offer to it's learners value added courses and programmes that are vocational and skill oriented has established partnership with reputed organisations / institutions like NAC, Reddy Labs.SRTRI etc.

**Fig. 3. Electronic and Communication Media used by Dr. B.R.A.O.U for academic and advisory support to the learners**



  
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