BRAOU 2.0

Reimagining Open and Distance Learning for the Digital Age

Strategic Transformation Framework





ACCESSIBLE
Learning for All

FLEXIBLE
Anytime, Anywhere

INCLUSIVE
Equity and Diversity

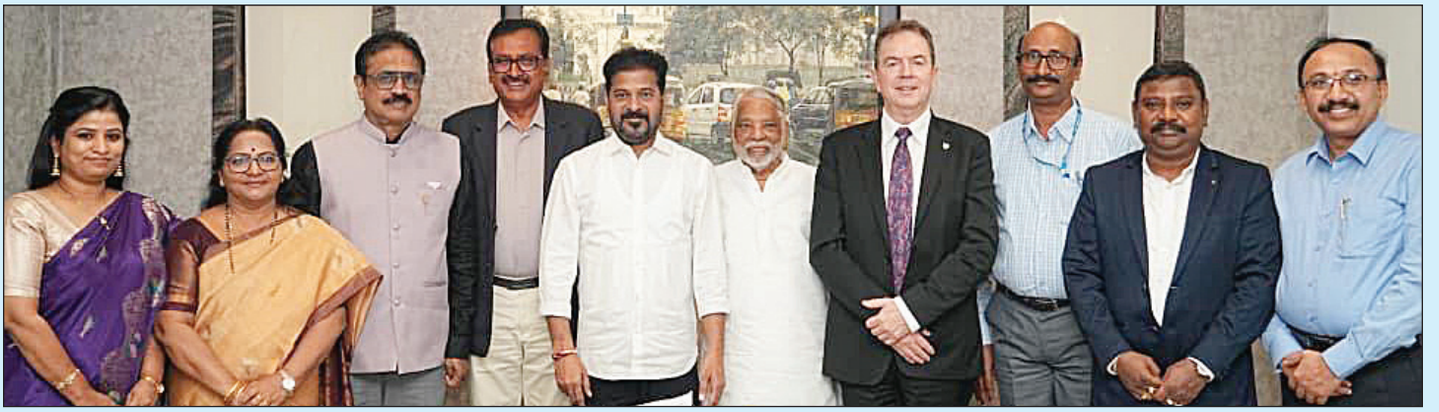
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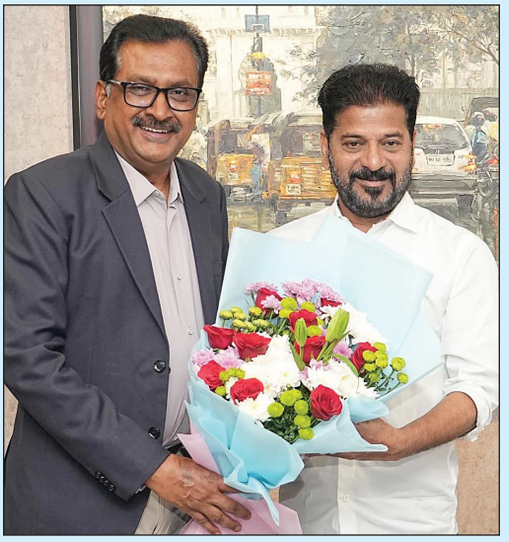
Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY

Hyderabad, Telangana


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Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University
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Vice Chancellor's Note

From Open and Distance Learning to Online Digital Learning



Dr B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU), established in 1982 as India's first open university, was founded on the conviction that higher education must be accessible to all, especially those historically excluded from conventional systems of education. For more than four decades, the University has carried forward this commitment through its Open and Distance Learning (ODL) model. Today, as education undergoes a profound transformation driven by digital technologies, artificial intelligence and changing learner expectations, BRAOU is embarking on a new phase of its institutional journey – from Open and Distance Learning to Online Digital Learning.

Our vision is not merely to digitise existing systems. It is to reimagine the University as an inclusive, flexible, technology-enabled Digital University, while preserving the foundational values of access, equity, affordability and quality. BRAOU 2.0 represents this transformation: using digital technology to remove geographical, economic, linguistic and technological barriers and to provide learners with meaningful opportunities to learn anytime, anywhere. The objective is to build an integrated digital ecosystem in which online learning, ODL, multimedia education, skill development, artificial intelligence and learner support work together.

This transformation has involved a systematic process of institutional preparation and capacity building. The University has worked on digital infrastructure, Learning Management Systems, digital content, the UGC Four Quadrant approach, faculty development, Open Educational Resources, learner-support systems and emerging AI-enabled educational technologies. Platforms and initiatives such as BODHI, BRAOUTV, Hi-BRAOU Digital Radio, iBooks, DigiLibrary, the OER Portal and iDEA Labs are being developed as interconnected components of this ecosystem. The five-year digital transformation programme, supported substantially through PM-USHA, provides the institutional foundation to scale these initiatives and build a sustainable digital architecture and infrastructure for our Digital Resource Centre.

A significant milestone in this journey has been the University's transition towards UGC-recognised online education. The University has undertaken the necessary institutional processes, academic preparations, and quality mechanisms to secure UGC approvals for offering programmes in the online mode. This marks an important evolution in BRAOU's history – from an institution that pioneered open education in India to one that now embraces the possibilities of technology-enabled higher education. The online programmes, designed in accordance with the UGC-prescribed Four Quadrant approach, seek not merely to replicate the classroom digitally but to create a richer, more interactive and learner-centred educational experience.

I place on record my sincere gratitude to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Telangana, Sri A. Revanth Reddy, and the Government of Telangana for their continued support, encouragement and confidence in the transformative initiatives being undertaken by BRAOU. I particularly acknowledge the encouragement and guidance of Dr. Yogita Rana, whose support has been valuable in advancing the University's digital transformation and its broader institutional vision. The State Government's support has provided important impetus to BRAOU's efforts to build a future-ready institution serving the educational aspirations of Telangana and beyond.

The University's engagement with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has also strengthened this transformation. Our collaboration with COL, including the development of the Integrated AI-based Digital Education Academy, capacity building in digital pedagogy and course design, micro-credentials, Open Educational Resources and AI-enabled learner support, has provided valuable international perspectives and technical guidance. We gratefully acknowledge COL for its continued partnership and encouragement in advancing BRAOU's digital ambitions.

We also gratefully acknowledge the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Government of India through PM-USHA for the policy, regulatory and financial support that has enabled the University to undertake this important transformation. Their support has strengthened the institutional foundations needed to expand online education and develop a modern digital learning ecosystem.

Above all, this journey is the result of the collective commitment of the BRAOU academic, administrative, technical and support teams. Their willingness to learn, experiment, redesign processes and embrace new technologies has made this transformation possible. The transition from ODL to digital learning is not a technology project alone; it is an institutional transformation, and our colleagues' dedication is its greatest strength.

I would also like to place on record my appreciation for Sushumna, who has played an important role in preparing this document and in articulating the larger vision and framework of BRAOU 2.0. This document is intended not merely as a record of initiatives already undertaken, but as a statement of our collective ambition for the future.

As BRAOU approaches the next phase of its journey, our aspiration is clear: to evolve into a Digital University rooted in the philosophy of Dr B.R. Ambedkar – where technology becomes an instrument of social justice, education becomes truly borderless, and every learner is given an opportunity to learn, grow and succeed. BRAOU 2.0 is therefore not a departure from our past; it is the next expression of our enduring commitment to Education for All in the digital age.

- Prof. Ghanta Chakrapani
Vice-Chancellor
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Brief Overview of BRAOU 2.0

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University was established on 26 August 1982, making it India's first open university. Formerly known as Andhra Pradesh Open University, it works on the principle of "Education for All," with a mission to reach the untouched sections of society through distance education. Prof. Ghanta Chakrapani has served as Vice Chancellor since December 2024, and under his leadership BRAOU is undergoing a paradigm shift, evolving from a conventional degree-granting institution into a dynamic hub for skill development, vocational training, and direct employment generation, aligning with national imperatives and global educational trends.

Digital Transformation Agenda

The university is investing significantly in a five-year plan for total digitisation, including an advanced ERP system and a dynamic LMS, supported by PM USHA funding. The ambition is clear: BRAOU aspires to reach every household in Telangana within the next decade, making skill-based, employment-oriented education a reality for all, while aiming for an A++ NAAC grade and becoming the top State Open University within five years.

Flexible Pathways and Academic Reform

A new Lateral Entry Policy embraces UGC's flexible regulations, allowing simultaneous degrees, credit integration for skill-based courses, and accelerated learning paths. The university is also actively seeking collaborations with technical universities to ensure B.Sc./B.Tech. degrees are available to engineering students, with pathways also provided for engineering dropouts, polytechnic diploma holders, and ITI graduates.

Strategic Partnerships

BRAOU has signed an MoU with the Commonwealth of Learning to set up the Integrated AI-based Digital Education Academy (iDEA), and also signed an MoU with Tata Consultancy Services (TCSiON) in October 2025.

Inclusion and Social Equity Initiatives

BRAOU has announced free education for tribal, transgender, and specially-abled students under the Samatha Support Scheme. The university also runs the Nipuna Fellowship Scheme and the We Enable Programme for women learners.

Employability – The STEP Programme

The flagship Stipend-based Education Programme (STEP) allows undergraduate students to gain hands-on experience through apprenticeships, earning stipends ranging from Rs. 7,000 to Rs. 24,000 per month.

1.2 Purpose of the Document

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, established in 1982, was the first open university in India and has been a symbol of democratic access to higher education. For over four decades it has catered to learners otherwise excluded from conventional education pathways, working adults, rural communities, women, first-generation learners, and the socially and economically marginalised. As the educational landscape is rapidly and irreversibly transformed by digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and changing learner expectations, BRAOU stands at

a defining crossroads. The question is not whether the university must change, but how boldly and how meticulously it chooses to do so.

This document, the BRAOU 2.0 Strategic Framework, sets out a comprehensive and forward-looking vision for the university's next phase of growth and reinvention. It lays down the strategic priorities, design principles, technology interventions, and implementation pathways that will drive BRAOU's transformation over the coming years. It is both a statement of intent and a working blueprint ,intended to align institutional stakeholders around a common direction, inform planning and resource allocation, and provide a basis for accountability and monitoring of progress.

The document is addressed to university leadership, academic and administrative teams, technology and infrastructure partners, government agencies, and other stakeholders with a role in shaping or supporting BRAOU's future. It is also intended to serve as a reference for accreditation bodies, funding agencies, and collaborating institutions, demonstrating the coherence and ambition of the university's transformation agenda.

At its heart, BRAOU 2.0 is not simply a technological upgrade or an administrative reorganisation. It is a step toward making the university as an instrument of equity, access, and meaningful learning, so that that no learner in Telangana, regardless of origin, language, economic status, age, or ability, is denied the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed.

1.3 Key Digital Initiatives at a Glance

BRAOU 2.0 is built around ten flagship digital initiatives that together form an integrated learning ecosystem, spanning course delivery, skilling, broadcast media, open resources, and AI-enabled support. Each is introduced briefly here and described in full detail in Section 4.

- BODHI – the university's Learning Management System (LMS core)
- Online Programmes – UG/PG courses delivered via the UGC Four Quadrant Approach
- Micro-Credentials – short, industry-relevant skilling programmes
- BRAOUTV – a Web TV platform for visual and live learning
- Hi-BRAOU Digital Radio – audio-based learning and broadcasts
- iBooks – interactive digital self-learning materials
- DigiLibrary – a digital repository of books and journals
- OER Portal – openly licensed learning resources
- iDEA Labs – AI innovation and experimentation for teaching and learning
- Centre for English & Foreign Languages – language learning for global readiness

Together, these ten initiatives reflect BRAOU's vision of accessible, inclusive, and technology-driven education. They are not just platforms – they are pathways to knowledge, to skills, and to opportunity. As BRAOU moves forward, the goal is clear: to ensure that every learner, regardless of location or background, has access to quality education empowered by technology.

Why this matters – impact on access, equity, and quality

Together, these ten initiatives are BRAOU's practical answer to a question that has defined its mission since 1982: how does an open university keep education genuinely open as the tools of learning become digital? Each initiative is designed to remove a barrier like cost (free micro-credentials and OER), geography

(BRAOUTV and Hi-BRAOU reaching learners without needing a classroom), language (multilingual content in Telugu, Hindi, and English), and connectivity (low-bandwidth and offline access options). The cumulative effect is not simply digitisation for its own sake, but a deliberate widening of who can participate in higher education – tribal and transgender learners under the Samatha Support Scheme, women under the We Enable Programme, working adults balancing employment with study, and first-generation learners with no prior exposure to formal digital learning tools. At the same time, these initiatives are built to raise academic quality: structured Four Quadrant course design, continuous learner analytics, and AI-assisted feedback loops are built to raise academic quality alongside access, demonstrating that the two can be pursued together rather than traded off.

Relevance to the Indian ODL ecosystem

As India's first open university, BRAOU occupies a distinct position in the country's Open and Distance Learning landscape. BRAOU 2.0 brings the university's digital initiatives together into a connected institutional ecosystem, designed around the needs of BRAOU's diverse learners and capable of evolving as technologies, academic practices, and learner expectations change. In this context, BRAOU's transformation reflects the broader evolution of Open and Distance Learning in India, where institutions must respond to changing learner needs while continuing to uphold the principles of access, flexibility, quality, and inclusion. For BRAOU, this journey is rooted in Ambedkar's vision of education as empowerment, using the possibilities of the digital age to strengthen, rather than depart from, the inclusive purpose on which the university was founded.

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2 Background and Context

2.1 **BRAOU** Learner Demographics

BRAOU's learner base reflects the very population it was created to serve a wide cross-section of Telangana's society rather than a narrow, conventional student demographic. Its learners span a broad age range, from young adults pursuing their first degree to working professionals and mid-career learners, homemakers returning to education decades after leaving formal schooling. A significant share are first-generation learners, the first in their families to pursue higher education, along with large numbers of women balancing study with domestic and caregiving responsibilities, rural and semi-urban residents with limited access to conventional campus-based universities, and learners from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and economically weaker sections who benefit from BRAOU's low-cost, flexible delivery model. Increasingly, the university also serves specially-abled and transgender learners, supported by targeted schemes such as the Samatha Support Scheme, alongside working learners drawn to programmes like STEP that combine study with paid apprenticeship. This diversity of age, geography, gender, language, and prior educational exposure is not incidental it is the defining characteristic of BRAOU's student body, and it shapes every design decision in BRAOU 2.0, from mobile-first delivery to multilingual content to low-bandwidth access.

Role in Telangana and Beyond

Within Telangana, BRAOU occupies a unique position as the state's primary vehicle for democratising access to higher education by reaching learners in districts and communities that conventional universities do not serve, and doing so at a cost point that keeps a degree within reach for unreached (economically disadvantaged families). As BRAOU 2.0 matures, the university's ambition is to deepen this role: to become the default pathway to skill-based, employment-oriented education for every household in Telangana within the next decade, anchored by its Digital Nodal Centres and strengthened study-centre network. Beyond Telangana, BRAOU's growing digital infrastructure creates opportunities to extend access to learners across India. Looking further ahead, its digital platforms and AI-enabled support systems can also enable BRAOU to reach the Telugu diaspora and international learners, extending the university's founding commitment to accessible education beyond geographical boundaries.

2.2 ODL in India

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has become an important component of India's higher education system, extending educational opportunities to learners who may be unable to participate in conventional campus-based education because of geographical, economic, employment, or other constraints. Its significance is reflected in the scale of participation: the Government of India reported **45.7 lakh learners enrolled in distance education in 2020–21**, representing an increase of approximately **20% since 2014–15** (Ministry of Finance, 2023). Yet the expansion and increasing digitalisation of ODL have not benefited all learners uniformly. A recent study of distance learners at Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) found that, although learners generally had basic access to digital devices and internet connectivity, substantial differences remained in the **quality of access**, particularly between learners with only basic resources and those with multiple devices and reliable connectivity (Ashuni, 2024). The study therefore raises an important question for contemporary ODL: **"is going digital reinforcing the existing social inequalities?"** The challenge extends

beyond access to technology to include connectivity, affordability, appropriate devices, and the digital competencies required for effective participation in online learning.

India's digital divide runs along multiple, overlapping lines from geography, income, gender, to age factors and it bears directly on who can meaningfully participate in a digitally delivered education. Rural and semi-urban learners often face inconsistent internet connectivity and limited access to smartphones or computers capable of running data-heavy platforms; women and lower-income households frequently have lower rates of personal device ownership, relying instead on shared family devices with limited availability; and older or first-generation learners often lack the baseline digital literacy needed to navigate an LMS, submit assignments online, or join a live session with confidence. For a university whose founding mission is reaching learners that conventional institutions do not, a purely digital-first strategy risks recreating the very exclusion it was built to solve. This is precisely why BRAOU 2.0 treats multi-modal delivery combining LMS-based learning with radio, television, low-bandwidth options, and offline access not as a legacy compromise but as a deliberate design principle for equity.

Alongside digital equity, academic quality remains a central concern in the expansion of ODL. Distance and open education in India has historically had to work against a perception, not always fair but persistent, that it delivers a lesser academic experience than campus based education: less faculty interaction, less rigorous assessment, and weaker learning outcomes. Addressing this perception is central to BRAOU 2.0's approach to quality. The university's response rests on structured course design through the UGC Four Quadrant Approach, continuous formative assessment and real time learner analytics through BODHI, faculty capacity building in learner centred pedagogy, and quality assured content development. Together, these show that flexibility and accessibility do not have to come at the cost of academic rigour.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) consequently requires ODL institutions to establish internal quality-assurance mechanisms and to ensure that programmes delivered through ODL are maintained **"at par with standards obtaining in the conventional mode of class-room teaching"** (UGC, 2017). Within this broader national context, BRAOU's digital transformation can therefore be understood not simply as the adoption of new technologies, but as an institutional effort to negotiate two interconnected imperatives facing Indian ODL: **expanding equitable digital access while maintaining the quality, credibility, and learner support expected of university education**.

2.3 Rationale for BRAOU 2.0

Dr BR Ambedkar's Philosophy: Education as Empowerment

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar believed that education was the most powerful tool for building an equal society. He said, "We may forgo material benefits of civilization, but we cannot forgo our right and opportunity to reap the benefits of the highest education to the fullest extent as the education is the greatest material benefit." This belief is the vision of the university that carries his name. The university's own vision statement puts it clearly: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's social philosophy of education as a means of creating an egalitarian society is the vision of this university. Access to relevant, quality education and training for all sections of society, with special focus on those who have been left out so far, at low cost and using modern technology, is the goal of the university. BRAOU 2.0 is simply this same vision applied to the digital age. It uses technology not as an end in itself, but as a tool to reach learners who have historically been denied access to good education, and to give them the same opportunity to learn and grow as anyone else.

Inclusivity, Affordability, Accessibility

These three principles have guided BRAOU since it was founded, and they guide BRAOU 2.0 as well. The university's mission includes building competency through education and training, and creating administrative systems that are result oriented, accountable, and transparent. In practice, this means every new digital initiative must be judged by a simple test: does it make education more inclusive, more affordable, and easier to access for the learners BRAOU exists to serve? A working adult, a rural student, a woman managing home and study together, a first generation learner. If a new tool or platform does not help these learners, it does not belong in BRAOU 2.0, however advanced the technology behind it may be.

Open Knowledge and OER Principles

BRAOU believes that once knowledge is created, it should be shared as widely as possible, not kept behind cost or institutional walls. This is part of why the university has committed to its OER Policy and Open Educational Resources through platforms like the OER Portal and iBooks. Sharing openly licensed academic content reduces the cost burden on learners who would otherwise pay for printed study material every year, and it lets other institutions and educators reuse and build on BRAOU's work. This reflects the same spirit as the university's mission to enrich its academic programmes through research, innovation, and networking with the wider education system.

Need for Digital Transformation: Reimagining the "D" in ODL

For most of its history, the "D" in ODL stood for distance in a very literal sense: printed material sent by post, occasional visits to a study centre, and limited contact with faculty. Digital technology allows BRAOU to rethink what that "D" means. A learner in a remote village can now access the same recorded lecture, the same academic support, and the same real time feedback as a learner living close to a regional study centre. Distance stops being the defining barrier it once was. In its place, "digital" becomes the real foundation of the model: BODHI, BRAOUTV, Hi-BRAOU, iBooks, and AI enabled support are not add-ons to a distance learning system, they are what open and distance learning now runs on. BRAOU 2.0 is this shift made concrete, moving ODL from being defined by the distance it has to overcome to being defined by the digital infrastructure that makes distance no longer matter.

Post Pandemic Shifts: AI and Hybrid Learning

The COVID-19 pandemic changed how learners and institutions think about education. Students across India, including at BRAOU, became used to online classes, live sessions, and digital assessments, and this comfort with digital learning has stayed even after the pandemic ended. Learners now expect to move easily between online, offline, and blended formats depending on their situation. At the same time, artificial intelligence is advancing quickly, opening up new possibilities that were not available the last time BRAOU redesigned its teaching model, including AI assisted content creation, personalised learning paths, translation across languages, and conversational academic support. BRAOU 2.0 responds to both of these shifts together. It builds the hybrid learning infrastructure that today's learners expect, and it using AI responsibly, always with a human involved, to extend the reach and quality of that infrastructure.

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3 Conceptual Framework for BRAOU 2.0

Digital Ecosystem Approach

BRAOU 2.0 is not built as a single platform or a single piece of software. It is built as an ecosystem, a set of connected digital tools that each do one job well, while working together to support a learner from the moment they enrol to the moment they complete a course. This approach reflects a simple idea: no single system, however advanced, can serve every kind of learner in every situation. A learner with a strong internet connection and a smartphone may prefer the interactivity of BODHI. A learner in an area with weak connectivity may rely more on Hi BRAOU radio or downloadable content. A learner who prefers visual explanation may turn to BRAOUTV. The ecosystem approach means BRAOU does not force every learner through the same channel. Instead, it builds several channels that all connect back to the same academic core, so learners can choose the mix that works for them.

Integration of Content, Delivery, and Support

A digital ecosystem only works if its parts are designed to fit together, rather than built separately and connected later. BRAOU 2.0 organises its digital initiatives into three layers that work as one system.

Content: This is the actual academic material learners engage with, built through the OER Portal and iBooks. Content is created once and designed to be reused, adapted, and shared, following open licensing principles so that faculty across BRAOU, and the wider educational community can build upon each other's work instead of duplicating it.

Delivery: This is how content reaches the learner, mainly through BODHI and BRAOUTV. For video content specifically, BRAOU follows a simple set of principles to keep learners engaged: videos are kept short, and are designed to be interactive rather than a straight recorded lecture, using visuals, pacing, and structure that hold attention on a small screen. Similarly Hi BRAOU for audio based learning and engagement.

Support: This is what surrounds the learner while they study, the university's skill development programmes for practical, employment linked learning, and tools that provide round the clock help, from answering questions to guiding a learner to the right person when a query needs human attention.

These three layers are designed to talk to each other. A learner's progress in one system should be visible in another. Content delivered through BRAOUTV should be easy to find again through BODHI. Support tools should know what a learner is currently studying. This is what turns three separate initiatives into one connected experience for the learner.

Hybrid and AI Enabled Learning Model

BRAOU 2.0 does not treat online and offline learning as opposites. It treats them as two modes within a single hybrid model, and lets the learner move between them depending on their circumstances, their location, and their access to technology. A learner might watch a lecture online, complete an assignment offline, and get support through a phone based tool, all as part of the same course. Artificial intelligence sits inside this hybrid model as a support layer, not a replacement for teaching. AI is used to summarise content, help with translation, answer common questions, and personalise the pace and pathway of learning for each student, while always keeping a human, whether a teacher or an academic support staff member, available when the

learner needs one. This combination, hybrid delivery supported by responsible AI, is the working definition of what a digital ODL university looks like at BRAOU.

Skill Development Programmes

TAG Programme (Tata Ambedkar Graduation)

The TAG Programme, a partnership between BRAOU and Tata, brings industry directly into the university's degree structure rather than keeping skilling and academics as two separate tracks. The name itself reflects the idea behind it, joining Tata's industry expertise with Ambedkar's vision of education as a path to real opportunity, so that a BRAOU graduate leaves not only with a degree but with skills that are already recognised and valued by employers.

Linking Skill Development with Higher Education

For a long time, skill training and university education in India have run on separate tracks: one focused on employability, the other on academic credentials, with little overlap between them. BRAOU is working to close this gap by building skill development directly into its degree and diploma programmes, rather than treating it as an optional add on. This means a student pursuing a UG or PG degree at BRAOU can also earn industry relevant micro credentials as part of the same academic journey, so that a degree and job readiness are no longer two separate goals requiring two separate efforts.

Employability Focus

Every skill development programme at BRAOU is designed with one clear question in mind: will this help a learner get a job or grow in the one they already have. This is reflected in the STEP programme, where undergraduate students earn a stipend while gaining hands on experience through apprenticeships, and in the university's growing list of micro credentials, aimed at closing specific, identified skill gaps for both students and working professionals. The goal is not simply to teach a skill, but to teach a skill that has a clear and current demand in the job market.

Industry Partnerships

None of this is possible without active partnerships with organisations outside the university. BRAOU has already signed MoUs with the Commonwealth of Learning to set up the Integrated AI-based Digital Education Academy, and with Tata Consultancy Services under TCSiON, alongside the TAG Programme with Tata. These partnerships give BRAOU access to industry expertise, updated curriculum input, and in some cases direct pathways to apprenticeships and employment, ensuring that what the university teaches stays connected to what employers actually need.

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4 BRAOU Key Digital Initiatives

This section describes each of BRAOU 2.0's ten flagship digital initiatives in full – what it does, who it serves, and how it fits into the wider digital ecosystem.

4.1 BODHI – The Digital Learning Core (LMS | Phase I)

BODHI (BRAOU Online Digital Hub for Instruction) is the university's centralised Learning Management System planned and designed to deliver structured, accessible, and engaging learning experiences. This enables seamless content delivery, learner tracking, and interaction, ensuring that students remain connected, supported, and guided throughout their academic journey.

BODHI is designed not only to provide quality resources online – overcoming the flexibility limitations of traditional methods for distance and non-traditional learners – but also to close the skill gap between academic learning and industry requirements, which is essential for continuous, lifelong learning. The platform delivers technology-enabled learning for skill-oriented, competency-based education.

BODHI is a structured LMS built on Moodle (open-source LMS) to expand access to higher education through a wide range of BRAOU's regular distance and online programmes – UG, PG, and diploma courses – alongside micro-credentials. This integrated approach equips learners with essential skills, enhancing employability and preparing a future-ready workforce. The interactive, AI-enabled teaching and learning experience of BODHI equips BRAOU faculty to develop user-friendly, accessible content using active-learning and learner-centric strategies.

BRAOU, in collaboration with COL-CEMCA, has developed MOOCs and micro-credentials that are open to everyone, free to access, and available for certification and the university is working towards a target of 100 micro-credentials to address skill gaps for students and support upskilling for working professionals by December 2026.

All BRAOU online programmes (UG/PG) are designed using the UGC-prescribed Four Quadrant Approach, giving students the opportunity not just to learn but to actively engage with content, facilitators, and peers. These courses are currently offered in blended mode: students enrol, attend live or recorded lectures, submit formative assessments through BODHI, and participate in learning activities, while final assessments are conducted on BRAOU premises. Micro-credentials, which are offered free of charge, are fully online from enrolment to certification.

BODHI's cloud-based infrastructure is designed to scale to support large-scale enrolments, with a current capacity target of 10,000+ learners. It integrates with the university's other initiatives from content design, development, and delivery (iBooks, BRAOU TV, Hi-BRAOU) to admission-to-completion dashboards (planned for Phase 2) and remains cost-effective through BRAOU's use of free and open-source software (FOSS).

Two challenges have shaped this journey: limited digital infrastructure on campus, addressed by moving to cloud-based systems with mobile-friendly access; and faculty readiness, addressed through in-house workshops and COL-CEMCA capacity-building sessions on quality content creation and learner-centric course design.

Faculty were familiarised with the BODHI platform through a blended course experienced from a learner's perspective, helping them understand and explore the possibilities of LMS activities and resources. They were provided a course shell with pre-defined sections, sample data, and a style sheet for each course, and asked to design their own course within each quadrant, making the journey to a UGC Four Quadrant course design considerably easier. As BRAOU has an OER Policy, faculty were also trained on Open Educational Resources and open licences, building awareness and helping them become OER practitioners.

The focus going forward is a mobile-first learning architecture that recognises smartphones as the primary access device, with multilingual content (Telugu, Hindi, English) to ensure inclusivity.

With BODHI, BRAOU aims to extend reach to remote and underserved learners through flexible, anytime-anywhere learning. Alongside online counselling, mentoring, and academic support, the university is building an ecosystem of interactive discussion forums and peer-learning networks among faculty and workshop participants, all in service of a single motto: improve engagement and retention through multimedia learning, continuous assessment, and timely feedback, and promote a lifelong learning culture across Telangana, India, and eventually the world.

4.2 Online Programmes – Expanding Access

BRAOU's online programmes are designed using a Four Quadrant Approach, ensuring a comprehensive and student-friendly learning experience. This includes:

- Video-based learning for conceptual clarity, and digital study materials for in-depth understanding
- Web resources for extended exploration
- Discussion forums for interaction, reflection, and collaborative learning
- Self-assessment tools for continuous evaluation

The goal is not to replicate the traditional classroom experience, but to enhance it in an online format, making learning flexible, inclusive, interactive, and effective.

4.3 Micro-Credentials – Skills for the Future

In today's rapidly evolving world, skill-based learning is essential. BRAOU's micro-credentials are short, focused programmes designed to equip learners with industry-relevant skills, enabling them to stay competitive and adaptable in the future workforce.

BRAOU faculty have already developed micro-credentials in four languages across a range of disciplines, and a first batch of 25 faculty members has completed a dedicated Faculty Development Programme in micro-credential design, with a second batch of 25 planned. This is part of BRAOU's broader ambition, set out through iDEA and its COL-CEMCA collaboration, to design and develop 100 micro-credentials addressing identified skill gaps by December 2026.

Following discussions with the Commonwealth of Learning during the July 2026 Vancouver visit, BRAOU is building its micro-credential ecosystem around six design questions that COL has identified as essential to any credible institutional framework: the University's policy on micro-credentials and digital badges; how industry will be involved in designing and validating programmes; how quality assurance will be maintained; how Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will be integrated; how credentials will be issued, verified, and recognised; and how individual micro-credentials will stack into certificates, diplomas, or degree credit. A formal BRAOU Micro-Credentials and Digital Badges Policy, covering each of these areas, is under development with technical guidance from COL.

Rather than developing micro-credentials purely on a supply-led basis, BRAOU is moving toward evidence-based development grounded in structured needs assessment: mapping disciplinary domains and target groups, and using a standard needs-assessment questionnaire to ensure new offerings respond to the felt needs of specific communities and sectors, from firefighting to agriculture. Where relevant, content available through COL's open OASIS repository is being reviewed and adapted to Telangana's regional context, reducing development time and cost while drawing on internationally validated material. On successful completion, learners will receive digital badges or equivalent verifiable recognition, ensuring credentials are portable and trusted by employers.Taken together, this needs-based, quality-assured approach positions BRAOU's micro-credential programme as more than a volume target, it is a structured pathway that complements the university's degree programmes and directly serves its employability mission.

4.4 BRAOUTV – Visual Learning Platform

BRAOUTV is a Web TV initiative delivering learning through visual content. It delivers lecture videos, demonstrations, and a wide range of academic resources, making learning more engaging, accessible, and inclusive for diverse learners. Content is available freely, anytime and from anywhere, and is structured and channelised with the university curriculum and in-house activities, so learners can browse by subject the way they would browse a broadcast schedule.

BRAOUTV organises content through a searchable Course Library, filterable by Faculty, Course Type, Academic Year, and Semester, alongside dedicated navigation for Live sessions, Programmes, Events, Schedules, and an Archive of past content. Each course entry is tagged with its academic level (e.g., Undergraduate), faculty (e.g., Faculty of Arts), year, and semester, allowing learners to narrow the catalogue to material relevant to their specific programme of study.

BRAOUTV also hosts live sessions, expert lectures, interactive discussions, academic and university events, and special real-time broadcasts on contemporary and relevant topics. These live engagements give learners real-time interaction, fostering connection, immediacy, and active participation.

Beyond learners, this initiative builds institutional capacity by upskilling staff and advancing infrastructure in line with emerging technological trends.

4.5 Hi-BRAOU Digital Radio

Radio is a proven and powerful medium for education, valued for its wide reach and accessibility without geographical or technological barriers. It has long played a significant role in distance education, delivering knowledge through audio in a simple, inclusive, and cost-effective manner. With the emergence of digital technologies, traditional radio has evolved into web radio, offering greater flexibility, on-demand access, and interactive possibilities – right at one's fingertips.

BRAOU's Digital Radio initiative, Hi-BRAOU, is a modern web radio platform that brings the strengths of audio learning into a digital environment. It provides educational broadcasts, expert talks, discussions, live broadcasts, and academic content accessible anytime, anywhere – combining the reach of traditional radio with the flexibility of digital platforms to ensure continuous learning beyond screens.

The platform has a user-friendly, responsive interface with seamless access across mobile phones, tablets, and desktops. During live broadcasts, a "Play Live" feature automatically activates, clearly signalling to learners that a session is in progress and inviting participation where permitted – supporting accessibility, engagement, and real-time connectivity.

Hi-BRAOU also functions as a skill-development platform, giving students – particularly from Mass Communication – practical exposure to digital mobile content creation, show hosting, and audio production, helping them become industry-ready.

4.6 iBooks – Digital Knowledge Resources

iBooks is a digital, interactive open-book platform for open and distance learners, designed to provide interactive, accessible, multimedia-rich, device-friendly learning resources in an ODL environment. It transforms conventional printed self-learning material (SLM) into dynamic, interactive, and downloadable digital resources that support anytime, anywhere learning.

Alongside developing interactive SLM, the platform encourages faculty to identify, adapt, localise, and contextualise openly licensed books and Open Educational Resources (OER) aligned with the BRAOU syllabus. It also promotes collaborative textbook development, enabling faculty, subject experts, instructional designers, and academic institutions to co-create, review, revise, and continuously improve learning resources – an institutional-partnership approach that supports affordability, academic quality, and localisation, while increasing knowledge-sharing across institutions.

iBooks is envisioned as an affordable alternative to printed material – an inclusive, reusable, shareable OER repository for learners who increasingly depend on mobile devices and digital access. Conventional SLM is largely text-based and linear, whereas contemporary learners need interactive elements, visual explanations, video, and immediate feedback in a self-paced environment. To reduce the recurring cost of printed SLM, BRAOU has chosen to move its SLM distribution to the iBooks platform.

4.7 DigiLibrary – Knowledge at Your Fingertips

DigiLibrary is BRAOU's digital repository, providing instant access to books, journals, and academic resources. It empowers learners and researchers to explore knowledge anytime, from anywhere.

4.8 OER Portal – Open Knowledge for All

The OER Portal hosts openly licensed educational resources, freely accessible to learners and other institutions. These include four generations of Syllabi, Question Papers, Lessons in text, audio and video of all the courses offered since its inception in 1982.

4.9 iDEA Labs – Intelligence in Education

iDEA Labs is BRAOU's initiative for AI research and experimentation in teaching and learning, giving students and faculty a space to test AI-driven tools and approaches before they are adopted more broadly. Currently iDEA labs are testing human-supervised agentic AI pilots.

4.10 Centre for English & Foreign Languages – Global Learning Gateway

BRAOU is launching online and offline language courses and entering into an MoU with the IGNITUS edutech private limited, Mumbai, for access to online courses including Functional English, Hindi to various foreign languages like German, Korean, Japanese, French, Persian, Arabic and Chinese (Mandarin) etc. which will open doors to global opportunities. The Centre focuses on enhancing communication skills and language proficiency, enabling learners to engage confidently in global academic and professional environments.

Alongside this, BRAOU is establishing 10 Digital Nodal Centres across the state, in all Regional Study Centres, to provide digital learning facilities.

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5 BRAOU and Emerging Technologies – AI

In ODL environments, learners come from highly diverse educational backgrounds and skill levels, where adaptive learning technology can play a vital role in providing customised learning pathways based on each learner's progress, pace, and preferences. AI can help not only in creating personalised learning pathways, but also in designing customised content recommendations, practice activities, and revision suggestions. An AI-enabled learning management system can help faculty draft learning material, translate content, and generate captions and transcripts for videos. Learners, too, benefit from options such as summarisation and explanation of course content.

BRAOU believes that AI-driven educational ecosystems can support diverse learners and play a key role in strengthening teaching practices, easing content development, and providing teaching-and-learning analytics. The university aims to integrate AI responsibly and meaningfully, with a teacher / human-in-the-loop approach across academic, administrative, and learner-support systems. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University views AI as a technological advancement that supports scalable, accessible solutions to improve learner engagement, administrative efficiency, personalisation, and academic support.

AI's rapid advancement is also creating a new digital-literacy skill requirement for teachers.

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6 Digital Student Support System

Technology as a Bridge for Inclusion

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University sees digital technology as a social equaliser that can bridge rural–urban and socio-economic divides. AI-powered learner-support systems provide 24+7 continuous academic assistance – a digital helpdesk – through chatbots, virtual academic assistants, automated FAQs, and multilingual learner guidance. These facilities guide learners not only on technical support but also on assignment clarification and recommendations based on learner progress and preferences. Where a chatbot's guidance reaches its limit, it advises the learner to contact the relevant team, providing the necessary details and communication channels, and alerts the appropriate admin team – enabling a human-in-the-loop system whenever it is needed.

This vision was demonstrated in practice during BRAOU's July 2026 visit to the Commonwealth of Learning, where COL's Knowledge Services team built a working prototype of an AI-enabled, low-bandwidth information system using BRAOU's own admissions, examination, and academic data – showing that such a system can answer real student queries on admissions, programmes, examinations, assignments, and support services, and can function even in areas with minimal or intermittent internet connectivity.

Technological advancements have led BRAOU to adopt a multi-modal delivery ecosystem – online (synchronous and asynchronous), offline (ODL), and, at times, blended – while also drawing on established mechanisms like radio and television for learner support on mobile platforms, and ensuring low-bandwidth and offline-access solutions for remote learners.

BRAOU is planning to strengthen study centres as community-based digital access hubs, and to deploy assisted-learning models through local facilitators to serve diverse learner groups (SC/ST, OBC, women, and working learners). Integrating voice and AI technologies into digital learning environments is a transformative step towards inclusive education. The university is aiming to deploy text-to-speech or voice-enabled options across all digital platforms, giving learners the choice to listen to written text. Where AI-powered systems are enabled, this experience can become richer still through a conversational mode, in which learners engage with intelligent voice interfaces that respond to questions, explain concepts, and guide them through course material in a dialogue-based format.

BRAOU is also focused on multilingual audio learning content, since its learner population is linguistically diverse and instruction delivered in a learner's native or preferred language dramatically improves comprehension and retention. This also addresses accessibility: visually impaired learners, semi-literate learners, and those who struggle with conventional text-based learning stand to benefit significantly from voice- and audio-based content.

Recognising the direct relevance of this approach for BRAOU's own learner base, BRAOU and COL have agreed to run joint technical workshops to customise the platform for BRAOU's requirements, with continued technical guidance from COL through implementation. Before full deployment, BRAOU intends to validate the system's underlying source corpus, define clear governance and escalation protocols for queries that require human attention, assess multilingual requirements across Telugu, Hindi, and English, and run a controlled pilot, beginning at the University Help Desk and at selected Regional Coordination Centres (RCCs) to establish speed, consistency, and accessibility benchmarks before scaling university-wide.

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7 Building an Integrated BRAOU Digital Ecosystem

Key Design Principle: Modularity and Interoperability

BRAOU's digital ecosystem is built on a modular architecture, where each component, BODHI LMS, Hi-BRAOU Radio, BRAOUTV, and others functions as a self-contained unit while contributing to the wider digital ecosystem. This approach ensures each system can be independently managed, upgraded, and scaled without disturbing the broader system, giving BRAOU the flexibility to evolve its technology stack as pedagogical needs and digital innovations change over time. BODHI LMS serves as the operational core, delivering course content, assessments, and academic support, while Hi-BRAOU and BRAOUTV extend the university's reach into contexts where screen-based interactive learning is not always feasible. Each module is purposefully designed to complement the others ,a learner may engage with a lecture through BRAOUTV, revisit key concepts through an audio summary on Hi-BRAOU, complete an assignment through the LMS, and seek support through the chatbot, all within a single, seamlessly integrated experience. This modular approach allows BRAOU to deploy solutions progressively ,piloting individual components, refining them based on stakeholder feedback, and scaling successful models across the system without requiring a wholesale transformation.

A modular learning ecosystem functions effectively only when its constituent systems can communicate, share data, and work together without friction. Interoperability is therefore a non-negotiable design requirement, ensuring that the LMS, iBooks, Hi-BRAOU, BRAOUTV, and learner-support tools are built on open standards and compatible protocols that enable seamless data exchange. A learner's progress recorded in the LMS should be visible to the academic advising system; content broadcast through Hi-BRAOU or BRAOUTV should be catalogued and accessible through the LMS for on-demand replay; and engagement data captured across all platforms should flow into a unified analytics dashboard, giving faculty and administrators a complete picture of each learner's journey. This interoperability eliminates the disconnected-platform experience that learners commonly encounter. By prioritising interoperability, BRAOU ensures its technology investments reinforce one another, that data generated across the ecosystem is used intelligently to personalise and improve the learning experience, and that new tools and platforms introduced in future can be integrated without redesigning existing systems.

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8 Implementation Roadmap

BRAOU 2.0 is being delivered as a five-year digital transformation programme, sequenced so that foundational systems are stabilised before interoperability is layered on top, and full ecosystem integration is attempted only once individual components have been proven at scale. This phased approach reflects the modularity principle set out in Section 7: each phase builds on a working, independently-functioning system rather than requiring a single, high-risk simultaneous rollout.

Phase 1 – Foundation (Year 1)

Establish basic infrastructure readiness across BODHI LMS, BRAOUTV, Hi-BRAOU, iBooks, learner-support systems, initial AI functionalities, and BRAOU community platforms. This phase is supported by PM USHA funding and runs in parallel with faculty capacity-building programmes in Four Quadrant course design, OER practice, and digital pedagogy.

- Stabilise BODHI as the LMS core, scaling to reliably support 10,000+ concurrent learners
- Launch the first cohort of micro-credentials, working toward the target of 100 micro-credentials by December 2026
- Establish the first tranche of Digital Nodal Centres across Regional Study Centres
- Complete baseline faculty training in digital content creation and learner-centric pedagogy

Phase 2 – Interoperability, Stage 1 (Year 2)

Connect BODHI, iBooks, Hi-BRAOU, and BRAOUTV so learner activity and content move across platforms rather than remaining siloed within each one.

- Enable cross-platform content cataloguing, so material broadcast via Hi-BRAOU or BRAOUTV is discoverable and replayable through BODHI
- Begin unified learner-progress tracking across at least two platforms
- Pilot AI-assisted doubt-clearance and summarisation tools within the BODHI interface
- Expand the Digital Nodal Centre network toward full state coverage

Phase 3 – Interoperability, Stage 2 (Year 3)

Extend integration to the remaining digital ecosystem components and learner-support tools, moving toward a single unified analytics view of each learner's journey.

- Bring DigiLibrary, the OER Portal, and iDEA Labs into the interoperable ecosystem
- Deploy a unified learner-analytics dashboard for faculty and administrators
- Roll out multilingual, voice-enabled learner support (text-to-speech and conversational AI) across platforms
- Conduct an interim review against NAAC and NIRF readiness benchmarks

Phase 4 – Full Ecosystem Scale-Up (Years 4–5)

Complete the transition to an end-to-end digital ecosystem, from admission through certification, including proctored examination services.

- Implement the admission-to-completion dashboard (originally scoped as a BODHI Phase 2 capability)
- Deploy secure, scalable proctored examination infrastructure

- Achieve full statewide reach of Digital Nodal Centres, positioning BRAOU as the default pathway to skill-based education in every household in Telangana
- Consolidate outcomes toward BRAOU's stated targets of an A++ NAAC grade and a top-ranked NIRF position among State Open Universities
- Establish a fully integrated learner journey, from admission and learning to support, assessment, skilling, and certification across BRAOU's digital ecosystem.

Governance and Review

Progress against each phase will be reviewed by university leadership at defined milestones, with course corrections made where infrastructure, funding, or faculty-readiness constraints require re-sequencing. Given the interdependence between phases ,particularly the reliance of Phases 2–4 on Phase 1 foundations, slippage in early milestones will be treated as a signal to revisit downstream timelines rather than proceeding on a fixed calendar regardless of readiness.

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9 Conclusion

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar founded the philosophy behind this university on a simple but demanding conviction: that education is not a privilege to be rationed, but the greatest material benefit a society can extend to all its members. BRAOU has carried that conviction for over four decades, reaching learners that conventional higher education was never built to serve ,working adults, rural communities, women balancing study with domestic responsibility, first-generation learners, and those historically excluded on the basis of caste, gender, or ability. BRAOU 2.0 does not depart from that mission; it is that mission, restated for a digital age.

What this document has set out is not a technology upgrade for its own sake. Every initiative described here from BODHI, BRAOUTV, Hi-BRAOU, iBooks, the OER Portal, to iDEA Labs exists to answer the same question Ambedkar's founding vision posed: how does a university widen, rather than narrow, who gets to participate in higher education. The evidence throughout this framework suggests BRAOU 2.0 is answering that question deliberately rather than incidentally. Multi-modal delivery exists because digital-first alone would exclude exactly the learners BRAOU exists to serve. Multilingual and voice-enabled content exists because language and literacy are barriers as real as bandwidth. Free micro-credentials and OER exist because cost has always been the first wall between a learner and a degree.

At the same time, this is a framework that refuses to treat access and quality as competing goals. Structured course design, continuous learner analytics, and responsibly deployed AI are among the mechanisms through which BRAOU seeks to ensure that greater openness and flexibility are accompanied by academic rigour and quality. BRAOU began in 1982 by overcoming physical distance. BRAOU 2.0 represents the next stage of that journey: overcoming digital, linguistic, economic, accessibility, and skills barriers while preserving the university's original commitment to inclusion.

The task ahead is substantial, and this document does not understate it. But the direction is clear, and it is not a new direction, it is the oldest one this university has. Education, technology, and equity were never three separate goals for BRAOU. They are, and have always been, one goal pursued through whatever tools each era makes available.

BRAOU 2.0 is this era's expression of that enduring purpose: using digital technology to make education more accessible, inclusive, flexible, and meaningful for every learner BRAOU exists to serve.

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10 Annexures

10.1 List of Initiatives (Detailed)

Initiative	Purpose	Target Users	Mode	Key Outcomes
BODHI – The Digital Learning Core (LMS I Phase I)	To enhance access to quality education through flexible, technology-enabled learning environments that support diverse learner needs and promote continuous, lifelong learning.	Students, working professionals, and lifelong learners seeking flexible, accessible, and skill-oriented education.	Blended and online learning (LMS-supported, self-paced, and interactive digital platform).	Seamless and structured learning experiences through centralised content delivery, real-time learner tracking, and continuous academic support, leading to improved learner engagement and retention.
Online Programmes – Expanding Access	—	—	—	To enhance learning effectiveness and inclusivity by delivering comprehensive, interactive, and flexible education through the Four Quadrant Approach, supporting diverse learning styles and improved academic outcomes.
Micro-Credentials – Skills for the Future	—	—	—	To strengthen employability and future readiness by equipping learners with industry-relevant, skill-based competencies through short, focused, and flexible learning programs.
BRAOUTV – Visual Learning Platform	To enhance teaching-learning experiences by delivering engaging, visual-based educational content that improves understanding and accessibility for diverse learners.	Students, distance learners, and lifelong learners seeking flexible, visually enriched learning experiences accessible anytime, anywhere with an internet connection.	Online	Improved learner engagement and conceptual understanding through high-quality visual content, enabling better retention and inclusive access to education.

Initiative	Purpose	Target Users	Mode	Key Outcomes
Hi-BRAOU Digital Radio	To provide educational broadcasts, discussions, and expert talks, ensuring learning continues beyond screens – anytime, anywhere.	BRAOU students and lifelong learners	Online	A dynamic radio-based ecosystem that supports lifelong learning beyond geographical and technological barriers.
iBooks – Digital Knowledge Resources	To provide structured, interactive digital learning resources that enhance comprehension, retention, and self-paced learning.	BRAOU students and lifelong learners	Online, with downlo adable options	A sustainable digital knowledge ecosystem blending OER-aligned resources with copyrighted SLM, ensuring accessibility, quality, and learner engagement.
DigiLibrary – Knowledge at Your Fingertips	To empower learners and researchers with instant access to curated digital resources, fostering continuous learning and academic excellence.	BRAOU students and lifelong learners	Online	A culture of lifelong learning and research excellence through equitable, uninterrupted access to curated digital knowledge resources.
OER Portal – Open Knowledge for All	To promote equitable access to quality education by creating and sharing openly licensed resources that can be freely accessed, reused, and adapted.	BRAOU students and lifelong learners	Online	Strengthened open education practices through OER creation and dissemination aligned with institutional policy, ensuring accessibility, adaptability, and wider knowledge dissemination.
iDEA Labs – Intelligence in Education	To advance educational transformation by integrating AI technologies into pedagogy, fostering a culture of innovation, and building future-ready competencies.	Academic community and BRAOU students	Online and in-campus access (blended)	Stronger integration of AI in education through experimentation, interdisciplinary learning, and solution-oriented thinking aligned with future workforce needs.
Centre for English & Foreign Languages – Global Learning Gateway	To create a gateway for global engagement by offering accessible, high-quality language learning opportunities that empower learners to communicate effectively in diverse academic and professional contexts.	Language learners, graduates, and professionals seeking English and foreign languages (German, Japanese, Arabic, Persian, French etc).	Online and blended	Enhanced communication skills and language proficiency; expanded access to certified language learning through institutional partnerships, supporting employability, global mobility, and cross-cultural competence.



BRAOU with COL 01-08-2026



BRAOU MoU CRPF Jyothi Reddy Foundation



Launching of AI Labs & Jyothi Foundation Freeships on 14th April, 2026



ICT Lab Inauguration



MoU with IGNITUS



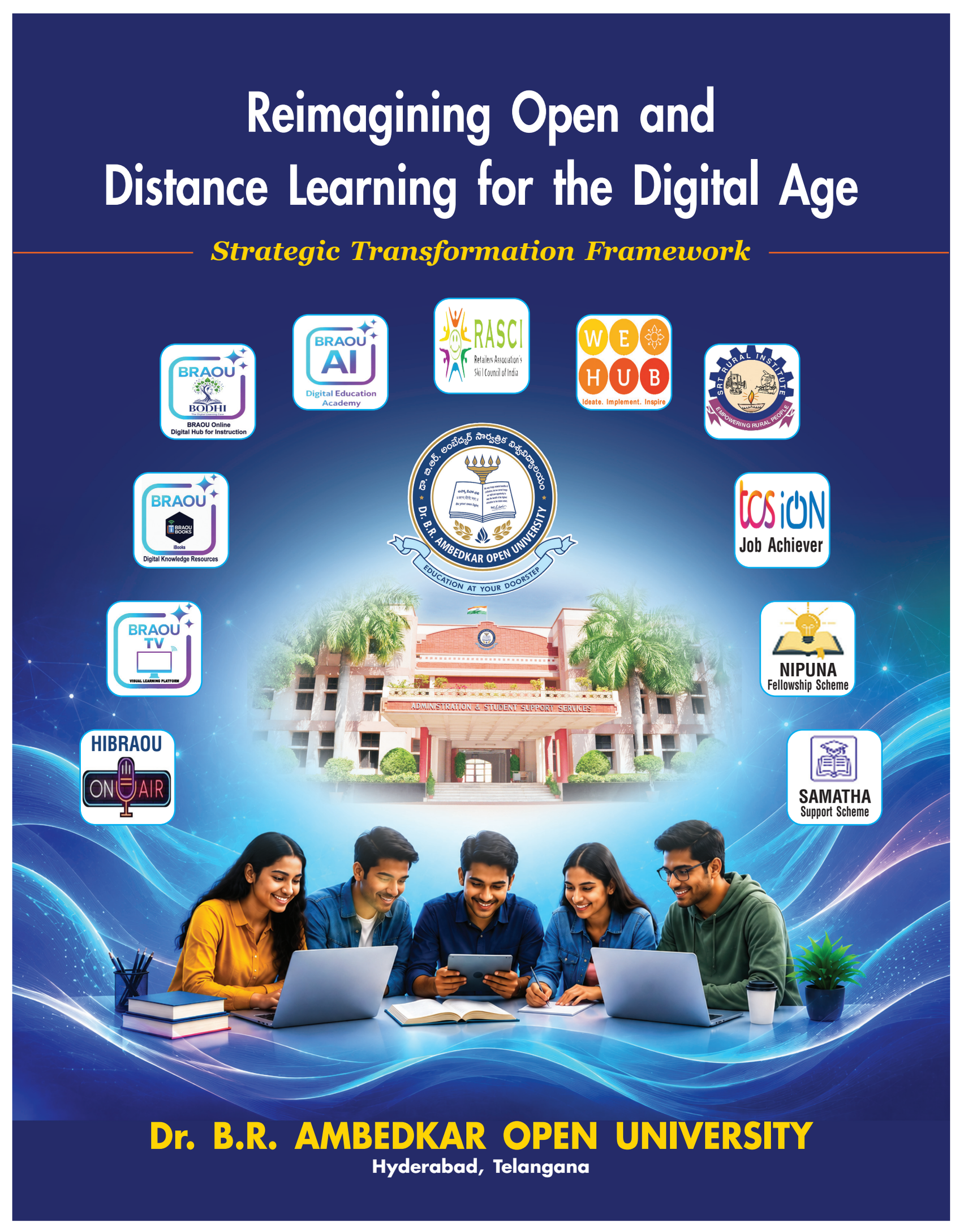
MoU with Renova & RVM



MoU with Renova & RVM

Reimagining Open and Distance Learning for the Digital Age

Strategic Transformation Framework



Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY

Hyderabad, Telangana