

## **1. Executive Summary**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University (BAOU) was established by the Act No.14 of 1994 passed by the Gujarat State Legislature on 13th April, 1994, and assented to by the Governor of Gujarat on 27th July, 1994.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University Act, 1994: “An Act to establish and incorporate an Open University in the State of Gujarat for the introduction and promotion of the Open University and distance education system in the educational pattern of the State”

The objects of the University is to advance and disseminate learning and knowledge by a diversity of means including the use of any communication technology, to provide opportunities for higher education to a larger segment of the population and to promote the educational wellbeing of the community generally, to encourage the Open University and distance education system in the education pattern of the State.

The BAOU is the seventh Open University in the country in terms of their establishment. It is recognized by University Grants Commission (UGC), Distance Education Council, and now Distance Education Bureau (DEB). The headquarters of the university is located at Ahmedabad. The University as per, in exercise of its power, has jurisdiction over the whole state of Gujarat.

The University has established Regional Centres at following cities:

1. Regional Centre - Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad
2. Regional Centre - Saurashtra University, Rajkot
3. Regional Centre - Veer Narmad South Gujarat University, Surat
4. Regional Centre - Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University, Patan
5. Regional Centre - Krantiguru Shyamji Krishna Verma Kachchh University, Bhuj
6. Regional Centre - Shri Sarvajanik Commerce College Campus, Godhra
7. Regional Centre - Swami Sahajanand Group of College Campus, Bhavnagar

The University has 254 Learner Support Centres across Gujarat

The University has been established to provide the opportunities for higher education to a larger segment of the population irrespective of classes, castes, creed, religion or sex. With the objective of advancement and dissemination of learning and knowledge by a diversity of means including use of any communication technology it has reached to the number of more than 8,00,000 learners as a cumulative enrolment.

### **Vision**

To elevate the access of education, to improve the quality of education; to reach the unreached by creating learner-centric environment; to provide life-long learning opportunities and skill up-gradation to all learners using innovative technologies and methodologies.

## **Mission**

Educating and empowering the last mile learners, enabling them to compete with the global world by equipping them with the upright combination of knowledge, skills, employability and values for serving society. The mission of the university is "Education for all". The university strives for excellence by developing an innovative, flexible and open system of education using the latest methods and technologies.

## **1.2 Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Challenges (SWOC)**

### **Institutional Strength**

- University Schools enjoy full academic autonomy thereby constantly matching up with the expectations of the industry and society
- Meticulous process for design and development of courses, development of study material in four quadrant mode.
- The university has a diversified range of programs like integrated, super specialized and job oriented professional programs under a self-supporting scheme.
- Technology Enabled Teaching – Learning process with widespread use of ICT Infrastructure and Digital resources.
- Implementation of OER Policy and Developing OER Repository containing both e-SLM and Audio Video lectures.
- Digitization of all the student centric services like Online Admission, re-registration, online payment of all kinds of fees, transparent examination system and automated library facilities, indigenously designed and developed LMS for all learners with 24X7 Learner Support Services.
- Centralized online admission cell to ensure transparency in admission and attract good quality students.
- Computerized and transparent examination and evaluation process with emphasis on practically oriented and outcome based learning – declaration of results within 30 days.
- Impressive student progression in terms of pass percentage, placement, higher studies and participation in extracurricular activities.
- All the policies of the university are framed as per the provisions of Act, Statutes, Ordinance, Regulations and by taking the consensus of the authorities having representations of UGC, DEB, NCTE, RCI and other parastatals of Central, State Government and Core team of the university.
- Reach network of LSCs with compliance of UGC Regulations at every corner of the state covering Urban, Semi Urban, Rural, Tribal and Coastal areas.
- Availability of all the types of programmes at a very affordable fee attracting the large number of learners..
- Separate department for offering various vocational programs short term certificate courses aimed at skill development.
- Creating vocational training opportunities for special learners.
- Strong and vibrant industry – institute interface with a number of functional MoUs with industry partners and impressive placement of students.
- State-of-the-art auditorium to promotes cultural activities for holistic development of students.

- Green campus with good waste management and conservation of resources and 50 KVA Solar power plant is in operation, installation of another 50 KVA Solar power plant is in process.

### **Institutional Weakness**

- Because of the lack of availability of Permanent Human Resource, Physical and Infrastructure facilities,
- University had to wait to get the 12B recognition of UGC.
- Non availability of RUSA grants has resulted in no or less motivation for research work.
- No support from the government agencies to start programmes under National Skills Qualification
- Framework (NSQF) simply a reason for an OPEN University.
- University is not able to offer National Service Scheme (NSS) and National Cadet Corps (NCC) to the
- Learners because of an OPEN University.
- No autonomy in introduction of new degree programmes in ODL as well as Online mode even after following the designated regulations of UGC-DEB.
- Many young faculty members need to be trained in the use of modern teaching learning tools.
- Difficulty in engaging students in a manner those who are conducive to learning

### **Institutional Opportunity**

- Ample opportunity for introducing multidisciplinary courses in emerging areas.
- Offering ICT enabled world-class learning at an affordable cost.
- With ICT based innovations, opportunity to reach more and wider student base reaching students who are not currently able to attend college.
- Strategic alliances and collaborations with International and National Educational Institutes will provide students global leverage.
- Large numbers of big companies present in the surrounding areas provide good opportunity for industry- institute interface.
- Collaborating with Industries, Government Bodies and NGOs for research, faculty-student exchange, joint programs, training and consultancy.
- Leveraging the available facilities of MOOCs for enhancing Open Learning Community.

### **Institutional Challenge**

- Catering to rural as well as urban areas, blending of curriculum is a challenging task as it requires integrating the needs of the industrially developed urban economy along with the needs of underdeveloped rural and tribal economies.
- Disparity in the student background from rural and urban areas, which makes learning group heterogeneous rather than homogeneous.
- Improving pedagogy with extensive use of ICT enabled pedagogical to match international standards;
- Developing a brand image through global positioning and ranking.

- Though University can start two new Schools of Study but because of non-sanction of permanent faculties it has not been operational till date.

### 1.3 Criteria Wise Summary

#### Learner Support and Progression

Learner support services are the most vital component of any open and distance learning (ODL) system. It includes a wide range of academic and other related activities. The support services should not only be responsive to the needs of the distance learners but should also be accessible. In the ODL system, multimedia, print, audio, video, radio, TV, teleconferencing and videoconferencing – instructional package, face-to-face counselling, continuous assessment and hands-on-experience constitute learner support.

The University follows a multi-pronged, multi-layered strategy to reach out to all segments of the society, particularly those unreached through conventional mode. Pre-admission counselling is provided to the prospective learners to help them choose the right programme and provide guidance and support in submission of their application form online. The University has made special efforts to extend its outreach by establishing Special LSCs in Jails, rural/remote areas, PwD and Transgender. SC/ST learners are provided fee exemption/reimbursement.

The University provides necessary support to its learners throughout the learning cycle, as follows:

- The learners are provided study material in print, digital study material, through OMKAR, OMKARe and also through e-SLM made available on University Website.
- The University has developed "Eklavya - Student Support Portal" through which learners can access information and services on their laptops, desktops and mobile phones.
- Induction Programmes are organized at LSC where learners are familiarized with the ODL system and the facilities available to them.
- Induction programmes are also broadcast and telecast through Vande Gujarat educational channel.
- Academic counselling sessions are conducted in face to face mode by the academic counsellors at LSCs.
- Interactive Counselling sessions are conducted by the faculty and invited experts through Vande Gujarat Educational TV Channel. Learners can ask questions right from their homes over the telephone during these sessions.
- Counselling is provided through web enabled Swadhyay TV and Swadhyay Radio platforms.
- Webinars/ web conferencing services are provided to learners in select programmes.
- Formative/Continuous evaluation is done through self-check exercises built into the SLMs and through tutor marked assignments.

Placement activity, both at the HQs and at RCs is organized by the Campus Placement Cell.

## **Curricular Aspects**

The University offers an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode of education thereby reaching out to a wide spectrum of Learners across the state. The curriculum is designed and implemented taking cognizance of the educational policies of the State and Central Government. The culture of academic freedom and flexibility provides immense scope for introducing innovations in the curriculum to achieve the institutional vision and mission.

BAOU has a systematic process for design, development and validation of curricula. Before starting a new programme, a preliminary meeting is held to assess the feasibility of the programme which is followed by formation of the Program Advisory Committee. PAC consists of External and internal members from academia and industry who contribute in updating curricula within the ambit of regulatory guidelines. This ensures that the programmes offered take care of industry requirements thereby ensuring employability. The content developed and reviewed are further reviewed by School Quality Assurance Cell (SQAC). The proposed designed programme will be further scrutinized and endorsed by the Academic Council of the School and approved by the Academic Planning Board.

There are two types of programmes offered by the university

- A) Courses with core and elective options
- B) Courses with all subjects as core subjects

Under CBCS, learners of all UG and PG programmes have to accumulate a prescribed number of credits to be eligible for the award of the degree. Credit transfer facilities are to partner universities under collaboration. University also offers a Credit Transfer facility for the learner who earns the credit from the courses available on SWAYAM Portal.

Curriculum design is a process of developing a need-based curriculum in consultation with experts, based on the feedback from stakeholders, to suit the professional and personal needs of the learner and realisation of core values. Academic flexibility is the key feature of the Open and Distance Learning mode of education and refers to freedom in the use of the time-frame of courses, vertical mobility, and inter-disciplinary options facilitated by curricular transactions. Therefore, we at BAOU adopted well defined strategies for imparting academic flexibility.

## **Teaching-learning and Evaluation**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University through its various School of Studies offers around 85 programmes ranging from Certificate, Diploma, Graduate, PG-Diploma, Postgraduate and Ph.D. University has its offerings of programmes in four major languages Gujarati, Hindi, English and Sanskrit.

The teaching-learning BAOU is a judicious mix of Self-learning Material, face-to-face counselling, and counselling through ICT Tools. The academic counsellors, who provide face-to-face academic support at the LSCs, are identified and empanelled.

The learning outcomes of all the programmes are integrated into the assessment process. University has well qualified 65 teachers and other academics, involved in curriculum design

and development and delivery of the academic programmes. The Teaching-Learning-Evaluation process is given the meticulous attention.

Course Schedules: Prepared by the Learner Support Section of the university, these are made available to the students on the University website and Student-Connect Portal.

Academic Calendar, detailed Syllabus and regulations published annually, these contain the curriculum, the method of teaching and evaluation, and the plans for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, seminars, workshops, conferences, training programs, etc.

Teaching-Learning Process:

ICT based blended learning,

Providing teaching materials in the form of e-repository

University Information Management System and e-resources used for ensuring meeting of course objectives

The system of learner evaluation followed by the University has two major components, namely, formative assessment through various mechanisms like Assignments, project work, field work, lab work, seminars, internships etc.; and summative assessment Term-end Examinations for which the SOPs are in place.

Learner Performance and Learning Outcomes: Learner's performance and learning outcomes measured through the measurement of attainment of POs and COs. Overall attainment of about 79-83%. 75-80% learners complete their degree within normal duration

Evaluation Process and Reforms:

- Evaluation process absolutely transparent and objective
- Examination system is fully automated through in-house developed ERP solution
- Results declared within 15-20 days of the conduct of examination.

Learner Satisfaction Survey

- All learners' grievances regarding examination and evaluation redressed within 48 hours from the receipt of grievance.

Learners are familiarized with the learning outcomes for the various programmes and courses and the importance of measuring the attainment of the learning outcomes

### **Research, Innovations and Extension**

University is committed to the pursuit of excellence in research and aims to achieve international recognition through interdepartmental and inter-institutional collaborative research programmes across the spectrum of various offered domain of studies.

The university has developed its own ecosystem of research as per its Research Promotion Policy. The faculty members are further encouraged to represent the University and present their papers in the discipline specific as well as the ODL-related seminar/conference/workshop at the international/national/state levels at regular intervals for their professional development. Schools and departments organize National/International

Seminars/Conferences/Workshops and publish the research articles/papers presented by the researchers in the form of proceedings.

University offers M.Phil./Ph.D. programmes at regular/part-time basis in accordance with U.G.C. rules and regulations 2016.

To promote Research and publications by the faculty members of the University, the guidelines for research promotion are categorized as:

- Incentives for Research projects, publications and research related activities.
- Financial assistance for pursuing Ph.D
- Financial assistance for attending National and International Conferences and Faculty Development programmes.

The University has;

- Centre for Research and Development (CRD)
- State-of-the-art research facilities in various Schools of Study.
- Enough budget provision of fund annually for research and innovation

Resource Mobilization for Research:

- Well defined and transparent Research Promotion Policy
- The University has been able to procure funding worth Rs. 7.37 crores from State Government for research and development of Research Centre
- The University has been given funding for Centre of Innovation, Start-up & Entrepreneurship (CISE) to the tune of Rs. 2 Cr. for Technology Business Incubator (TBI)

Innovation Ecosystem:

- Established Centre of Innovation, Start-up & Entrepreneurship (CISE) in 2020
- Centre of Innovation, Start-up & Entrepreneurship (CISE) provide free of charge space & ICT facilities and funding to incubators
- Rs. 1 lakh for six months extending to 18 months.

Extension Activities

- Various extension activities conducted, around 12 awards won
- Six nearby villages adopted and 2000+ learners participated in extension activities every year
- 18+ health check-up and Blood donation camps were organized

Collaboration

- 30 National/International MoUs
- Employment provided to people from surrounding villages by collaborating with Industries

### **Infrastructure and Learning Resources**

University operates through three tier structure. Headquarters, Regional-Centres and Learner-Support-Centres.

Headquarters is spread over 20 acres of land with built-up area 53,033 square-meters. Over the last decade, extra-ordinary instructional and infrastructural facilities have been developed at the HQs and RCs.

### **Available infrastructures facilities:**

**Vice Chancellor's Office Block:** It has the offices of the Vice Chancellor, separate conference room and a board room; visitors' lounge; pantries and common washrooms on each floor.

**Schools** equipped with office of Director, Faculty Rooms, Meeting/Seminar rooms. Rooms.

University has **07 Classrooms with ICT Facilities and 02 Smart Classrooms** with all the modern ICT enabled equipment.

University has **04 Computer Laboratories** to facilitate various services to the Learners. it consists of HP/Dell Computers with latest configuration.

**Language laboratory** consists of computers, software for the language lab and all the latest hardware equipment for the same.

**Data Centres** with the latest 10 Server for hosting various web applications. University is using Unified Threat Management to secure Application and Data.

**Computing Facility:** Dedicated Laptop/workstation for teaching and non-teaching staff, equipped with uninterrupted internet connectivity of 1300 Mbps through both wired and wireless (Wi-Fi) Medium.

State-of-the-art **Studio** is equipped with high-end equipment for production and transmission of audio/video programmes for Vande Gujarat Educational TV Channel, Web Radio, Swadhyay TV, Swadhyay Radio, MOOCs for various programmes and courses, multimedia e-content, SWAYAM/SWAYAMPBHA content.

**Library:** The University has a fully automated Central Library, well-equipped with books, journals, reports, theses, indigenous archives, and other study material.

Other amenities includes Auditorium, Boardrooms, Guesthouse, Warehouses are fully functional.

The entire physical infrastructure and buildings at headquarters are fully Wifi and equipped with modern ICT facilities.

The regional centres are located at Ahmedabad, Patan, Rajkot, Bhuj, Surat, Gohra, Bhavnagar. All RCs are also equipped with all the required amenities defined by UGC-DEB etc. RCs are well-equipped with ICT infrastructure and uninterrupted internet connectivity ranging from 16 MBPS to 1 GBPS.

LSCs are equipped with all the physical infrastructures viz. classrooms, smart classrooms, seminar rooms, library, computer laboratory etc. which are of the host institutes and are to be shared by the LSCs.

### **Governance, Leadership and Management**

University has its well defined mechanism of governance as per the provisions of Act, Statutes, Ordinance and Regulation to achieve the vision, mission and objectives of the



university. There is an explicit organization structure to evolve a participative and decentralized decision making process thereby creating a harmonious and inclusive organization culture.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University functions under the authority of different Regulatory and Statutory Committees in accordance with the provisions of its Act, Statutes, Ordinance and Regulations. Regulatory body namely the Board of Management (BoM), Statutory Body namely Academic Planning Board (APB), Finance Committee (FC). The administration section organizes meetings of BoM and its standing committees, such as the Building and Works Committee, Purchase Committee, etc. The composition of the statutory bodies comprises members from government departments, external and internal members to ensure participatory decision making.

#### **Institutional Vision and leadership:**

- **Vision:** To improve learning outcome, quality of education and to reach the unreached by creating learner-centric environment to provide life-long learning opportunity and skill up-gradation to all learners using innovative technologies and methodologies.
- **Mission:** Educating and empowering the last mile learners, enhancing their capabilities to compete with the global world, providing them the upright combination of knowledge, skills, employability and values for serving society. The motto of the university is "Education for All".

#### **Strategy Development and Deployment**

- Strategic plans are prepared and their implementation monitored during the meetings of all statutory bodies as per schedule and requirement Continuous critical self-assessment for all departments
- Regular reviews and audits for quality assurance

#### **Faculty Development/Empowerment Strategies**

- Sponsorship for attending national/international conferences
- Awards for research paper publication
- Transparent career advancement policy
- Welfare measures
- Medical Cover for employees as per the government rules

#### **Financial Management and Resource Mobilization**

- Centralized Purchase through GeM/E-tenders
- Central store and stock registers
- Projects of Government and other funding agencies.

#### **Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA)**

- School Quality Assurance Cell (SQAC)
- Suggesting improvements in Teaching Learning strategies
- Formulation of regulations and curriculum mapping for educational assessment
- Internal/external Academic Audit
- Helping design and update feedback documents Quality enhancement through Ranking and Rating processes

#### **Institutional Values and Best Practices**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University is strive to achieve the dream of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkarji that of creating an inclusive society based on equality. University transparently work with all stakeholders and respond effectively to the needs of the learners;

Further, following are the Institutional Values and Best Practices-

- Enabling the learners belonging to different vulnerable, weaker and disadvantaged sections of the society to access quality education at their door steps.
- Free education to jail inmates and the differently abled persons.
- Socio-economic support and rehabilitation of the poor, backward, vulnerable, weaker and disadvantaged sections of the society through extension activities including adoption of villages.
- Special gender sensitive physical facilities.
- Safety and security of the women employees are ensured through extensive surveillance and other provisions.
- As gender sensitive entitlements, the University provides for Maternity Leave including UGC provisions for women PhD scholars.
- The University Act and Statute provide adequate representation of women in various Statutory bodies.
- Code of ethics for Teachers, academics, non-academic staff, LSC functionaries and learners are well defined.
- Celebration of all important National/International Days that promote universal values and express the university's solidarity with the cause of the Nation.

**Distinctiveness** of the University-

- Modern Infrastructural Facilities and use of latest technologies.
- Penetration into Remote and Tribal Areas: more than 75% of the Learner Support centres cater to the rural areas, tribal areas, hills areas, border areas .
- More than 70% of the total enrolment belongs to various disadvantaged groups like ST/SC/OBC/Tea Tribe.
- Around 45% of the total enrolment is women.
- More than 30 percent University employees are women.
- E-Governance in Administration, Examinations and Finance.
- Technology enabled Learner Support entails the University's Website, online admission, Learning
- Management System, Omkar, Omkar-E, SwadhyayTV, Swadhyay Radio, Vande Gujarat Educational
- Channel, Android APP, Digital Library, Eklavya Learner Support Portal, YouTube Channel and Social
- Media which are well in place and functionally effective e-Mentoring System of learners to provide academic and non-academic support.
- Learners' Charter is prepared to create and support a progressive and inclusive academic environment.

Extension activities in the adopted villages, Social Welfare, Staff and Student Welfare Mission