



## In the path of fulfilling the National Agenda on Quality Education NLLT, a Pilot Study : Preliminary Report

(continued from June 2010 issue)

**How the tests of NTS are different?:** The recently conducted National Level Language Tests (NLLTs) are basically the language competence tests meant for research and experimental purposes. Hence, they were prepared as content free and context free tests, by relating them only to the Concept based Continuum of Graded Syllabi (CCGS) developed by the NTS. They could therefore be used by any school board or university irrespective of the system of education being practiced by them. Each question included in the NLLT has a *rationale* behind it with an appropriate content coverage, time distribution, mark allotment, etc. Each question has been verified through a five-parameter cross checking mechanism in order to ensure its relevance to the objectives of NTS.

**Expenditure involved:** For undertaking this *pilot study* alone (on a small sample of 0.25% population), an expenditure of Rs.50 lakhs has been incurred which however does not include the expenditure on the *follow up work* such as item & test analysis, etc. At this rate, for taking up the *full-fledged* main study scheduled for Jan. 2011 (on the *actual sample* of 5% of the population), an estimated amount of Rs.7.5 to 8.0 crores is needed along with the requisite *manpower* and *office space* at the NTS H.Qrs. with flexible *administrative procedures*.

**Outcome of the Pilot Study:** Computation of the consolidated data (in the format designed for this purpose) has just been completed, and subsequently, the task of item & test analysis has also been initiated now. The *outcome* of the present study with reference to *academic issues* and *administrative feasibility* are being worked out separately. Meanwhile, the ticklish issues that were encountered have been identified for seeking solutions. They are as follows :

**Academic complexities:** a) Getting appropriate scholars who could understand the rationale behind the NLLT framework for giving coverage to the entire gamut of language and literature, has been a big problem. NTS had to manage the whole process with its own skeleton staff along with the young scholars who were invited for a training cum workshop. b) Working out the tentative details of local and regional norms (based on the data collected) has become a difficult task for want of specialised professionals / experts who could take up the job of item & test analysis as per the rates of payment stipulated by the Institute. Non availability of experienced academic staff for discussing the implications of the findings (language wise) due to the exit of trained personnel from NTS on getting regular / higher positions.

**Administrative hurdles:** a) *At the NTS H.Qrs.:* Every step initiated by the NTS is to pass through so many channels for clearance and this has caused a lot of problems in keeping the monthly pace of expenditure with corresponding academic progress. b) *Transfer of funds :* Obtaining 100s of DDs for huge amount of funds, dispatching and encashing them (at different centres) on time, etc., were full of complications in view of the restrictions imposed by the institute on the one hand and the bankers on the other. c) *In distributing Q-A books :* Dispatch of test materials by various modes (air cargo, speed post, and in-person) - resulted in facing a number of problems such as unpredictable time consumption, wrong delivery, etc. Distributing Q-A books from RFUs to the Local Test Centres & collecting them back (esp. in hilly areas and far away places) was a cumbersome process. d) *With reference to test takers :* Some of

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them refused to write their addresses & other particulars required, on the Q-A books. A few of them remained without answering any of the questions as their only intention was to receive the incentive offered. Some centres have reported that there were more candidates (than the required number) who were demanding permission to take the NLLT, even after the admission was closed. In a few places, lapses on the part of invigilators in adhering to the instructions of NTS were also reported. e) *At the valuation centres* : Many Evaluators failed to stick to the NTS guidelines meant for scoring answer scripts. f) *At the level of collecting back the answer scripts*: The answer books could not be received by the NTS from some of the centres even after two months of the date of examination (due to local disturbances & natural calamity). In some cases, only a part of the parcel containing answer books has been received. The whereabouts of the rest are still being traced.

**Concluding Remarks:** As stated above, the academic aspects to be taken care of and the administrative problems to be addressed during the main study, have been learnt from this pilot study. The preliminary findings of the trends in academic performance across the country would be discussed separately, once the data analysis of this pilot study is completed. If the NLLT is administered on *the actual sample* (during Jan. 2011, as per schedule), its *pre-final report* with the tentatively worked out norms for each *district* and region could be made available (in respect of 3 languages at 2 levels of education) by the *middle of 2011* and *final report* by *March 2012*. This however, is possible, only if the required amount of *funds to the extent of Rs.7.5 to 8 crores*, specific approval to hire *manpower, office space, etc.*, are *ensured* by the Ministry before November 2010, as the primary objective of NTS is to have this main study for evolving regional & national norms by conducting this main study. Similar studies in respect of the remaining *major Indian languages* would also be possible by *2015* if a firm decision is taken by the Ministry to this effect. In this context, it becomes necessary to elevate the NTS into National Evaluation Organisation (with functional autonomy) and that only would help to achieve the objectives without any deviation.

Concluded

-Editor



R&amp;D

## Research and Development

- To undertake in-depth analysis of the concepts of measurement & evaluation in the context of education
- To identify the content inputs & consequential effects of teaching, and learning
- To interrelate the outcome with the objectives of education and the actual needs of the country
- To develop appropriate methodology to meet all the evaluation needs.

### Current Activities

#### Workshop on Glossary and Conceptual Explanations

Several workshops were conducted to review and finalise the glossary of evaluation terms in English with Indian language parallels and also the explanations of the concepts represented by them. Senior scholars of education with knowledge in Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, and Urdu were engaged for this purpose. They went through the material already developed and made necessary improvements in consultation with Prof. Pon Subbiah (Head, NTS-India & CT&E). The materials in these 3 languages are getting ready for publication. The languagewise details pertaining to these workshops are as follows:

**Tamil:** 6<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> June 2010: Dr. Sethumani Manian (formerly of Lady Doak College, Madurai) involved in cross checking the conceptual explanations provided in Tamil. Many entries were reviewed and modified for more clarity. She was assisted by a group of doctoral fellowship awardees.



Kannada group in workshop

**Kannada:** 3<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> June 2010 :Prof. Parvathamma (formerly of University of Mysore), Prof. Venkataramana Setty (formerly of SKMK College of Edn., Mysore), Dr. Puttaraju, and Mr. M.Manjunatha (RPs under MILES) cross checked the conceptual explanations already prepared in Kannada in comparison with the English version



Hindi group in workshop

**Hindi:** 22<sup>nd</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010 :Prof. Thippeswamy (formerly of UOM, Mysore), Dr. Rishibhushan Chowbey (RP, MILES) cross checked the conceptual explanations provided in Hindi. Dr. Pallav Vishnu (of CHI regional office, Mysore) and Mrs. Shradha Chaturvedi (Kolkata) assisted them in this process.



Urdu Group in workshop

## Workshop on MILES Data Base Development

7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> June 2010

A six day workshop was organised for the scrutiny of the following recomposed materials before sending them for publication as 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. 1. *Assessing Mastery of Language in Tamil*, 2. *Assessing Mastery of Literature in Tamil*. All the question items included here are also stored in the MILES database.

Dr. A.Kamatchi (Annamalai University, Chidambaram), and Dr.T.Parasuraman (PILC, Puducherry) involved in the scrutiny of the language material. Dr. Sivaprakasam (Bharath College of Education, Thanjavur) scrutinised the material on literature. The workshop was coordinated by Dr. M.Balakumar under the overall guidance and supervision of Prof. Pon Subbiah.



The Head, NTS interacting with the experts

was devoted for a similar work relating to the affective domain. The practical aspects of the concepts were explained to them by the Head, NTS and on that basis illustrative examples were developed.

The following senior scholars participated the programme: Prof. C. Shunmugom (formerly of Bharathiyar University, Coimbatore), Prof. P.Ratnasabhpathy (formerly of IASE, Chennai), Prof. T. Sethupandian (formerly of MKU, Madurai), and Prof. R.Panneerselvam (formely of Karnatak University, Dharwad). The workshop was coordinated by Dr. M. Balakumar, under the guidance of Prof. Pon Subbiah.

## Workshop on Graded Tests

29<sup>th</sup> June to 14<sup>th</sup> July 2010

A two week workshop on graded tests in language and literature, commenced on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2010 at the NTS H.Qrs., CIIL, Mysore. The tests meant for the *first four levels* viz., primary, upper primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels were taken up for verification. Prof. R.Panneerselvam, Dr. R.Muralidharan (Tamil University, Thanjavur) participated in this programme. They were assisted by a group of young scholars (who were inducted in the short term project) viz., Dr. P.Manthiri, Dr. B.Vijaya Kumar, Dr. A.R.Muthukaruppan, Ms. R.Thanalakshmi, Ms. S.Premavathi, Ms. G.Sudha, Ms. K.Kanagalakshmi, and Mr. P.Jayasankar. The workshop was organised by Dr. G.Suseela (JRP, NTS), and Dr. B.Nehruji (RP, MILES). The programme was coordinated by Dr. M. Balakumar under the overall guidance and supervision of Prof. Pon Subbiah.

Urdu: 22<sup>nd</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010

Dr. Abdul Rahman (formerly of DIET, Mysore), participated in this programme. He was assisted by the academic staff of the NTS/MILES viz., Dr.G.M. Ansari, Dr.Md. Rizwan, Dr.Jamshed Ahmad, Dr.Saleem Ahmed (JRPs of NTS), Dr. Asthma Zaveria (RP, MILES) and Ms. Khuteja Tasneem (Mysore).

All these workshops were organised by the respective language groups with the help of Dr.M.Balakumar (RRO, CIIL & Programmes Co-ordinator, NTS) under the overall guidance and supervision of Prof. Pon Subbiah (Head, NTS)



The Head, NTS interacting with the experts

## Workshop on CCGS : Dimensions of Human Traits

10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> June 2010

This workshop on CCGS was held in several phases. This phase of the workshop was intended to prepare explanations and illustrative examples for dimensional factors of human traits. The factors identified were distributed across the seven levels of education. In the earlier workshop, the explanations and examples were prepared for the cognitive domain. This phase of workshop

## S&amp;D

## Survey and Documentation

- To collect, consolidate, and create an electronic grid of information pertaining to contents, methods, and purposes of evaluation
- To enlist the contact particulars of individuals and institutions involved in preparing and using different types of tests
- To develop a grid of material resources with syllabi of various courses and question papers there on, at different levels of education
- To build up a specialized library with rare reference on this area and documenting various related news items.

## Current Activities

## Application Software

'NLLT Data Entry Sheet' has been designed for documenting the students profile, institutional particulars, and the item wise performance of the test takers in Hindi, Tamil, and Urdu at higher secondary and graduate levels. The data entry sheet has a provision to accommodate a variety of details such as allotted score, obtained score, etc., in each of the major, minor, and sub- components of language, literature, and personality aspects covered by the NLLT. More than 50 columns are available to accommodate the details of each person.

In all, about 21,000 students appeared for the NLLT representing the three languages and both the levels. The documentation work commenced with the data collected from Tamil region first, followed by Hindi and Urdu regions. A dozen operators are involved in this data entry work. Prior to this, the data entry operators were given practice to make use of the data entry software.

## Expansion of NTS Library

A team of NTS staff comprising of Dr. V. Ilangovan (SRP), Dr. Biresh Kumar (RP), Dr. Jamshed Ahmad, Mr. V.K. Dheerajj, and R. Balakrishnan (JRPs) visited various stalls of the book fair at the Palace ground, Mysore on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2010. The members of the team went in search of relevant books and other reference materials in order to procure them for NTS library. Several books on testing and evaluation (worth of Rs. 5000/-) were identified and procured by them.

## C&amp;T

## Consultancy and Training

- To evolve a mechanism for providing periodical training and to create specialized expertise
- To develop teaching cum training modules in various branches of evaluation
- To produce supplementary materials such as documentary films, charts, tables, etc.
- To extend consultancy on various matters related to testing and evaluation

## Current Activities

## Documentary Film

The task of producing documentary films, one each on aptitude, achievement, proficiency and general evaluation has been assigned to Mr. Virendra Valsangkar (Pune), Mr. Goutham Sharma (Kolkata), Mr. Vishnu Nagarajan (Chennai) and Mrs. Aarthi (Mysore) respectively. The shooting scripts sent by these producers were taken up for corrections and modifications. The four teams comprising academic and technical staff (in charge of the documentaries) scrutinized these scripts in consultation with the Head, NTS and sent their feedback to the producers for necessary corrections & improvement.

## In-house Training

A series of talks on different aspects of testing and evaluation was organized at the NTS H.Qrs., as part of an inhouse training. During this programme, the RPs and JRPs of NTS discussed the topics chosen by them for the preparation of Training Modules on Testing and Evaluation in Education. Dr. N. Nataraja Pillai (formerly of CIIL) and Dr. M. Balakumar were present during this session. The list of topics which were taken up for discussion are as follows :

Contents (Informatory) Language : Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, and Semantics

Contents (Informatory) Literature : Genesis, Generics-1, 2, 3, Aesthetics-1, 2, and Affectives

Contents (Extrapolatory) Personality : Testing 'Mastery' and 'Personality'

Computer Aids (Administration and Analysis) : Computer Assisted Administration & Valuation of Tests, Computer Aided Test Analysis and Interpretation of Values, Computer Aided Item Analysis and Interpretation of Values, and Computer Aided (Question) Paper Setting

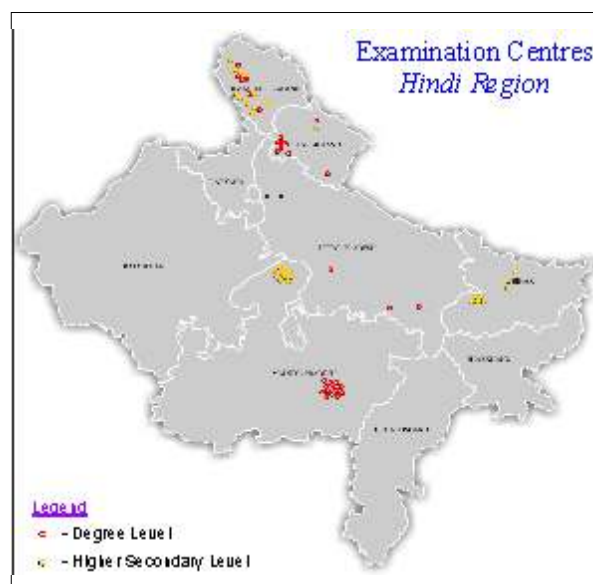
## RFUs Regional Field Units

- To disseminate the R & D outcome at the grass root levels
- To ensure wider participation for building up national consensus on materials and methodologies
- To identify scholars and undertake the process of item preparation, test construction, field administration, data collection, and standardisation (of tests) for establishing norms.

### Current Activities

#### Pilot Study : Details in a nutshell

The target population on whom the process of test standardisation and norm fixing is to be taken up is about 65 lakh students (who learn Hindi, Tamil, Urdu) at higher secondary and graduate levels as per the figures provided by the RFUs for the year 2010-11. The ideal sample advocated for this purpose is usually 5% of target population which works out to nearly 3.5 lakhs. Since the field administration of the NLLTs on such a *huge* number of students spread across the country requires a lot of planning and execution strategies, it was decided to take up a pilot study with a small sample of only 0.25% of the population. Accordingly, the study was conducted on 20,888 students and the details of which are as follows :



#### Level : Higher Secondary

Dates of NLLT Field Administration - 11.04.2010 (Hindi &

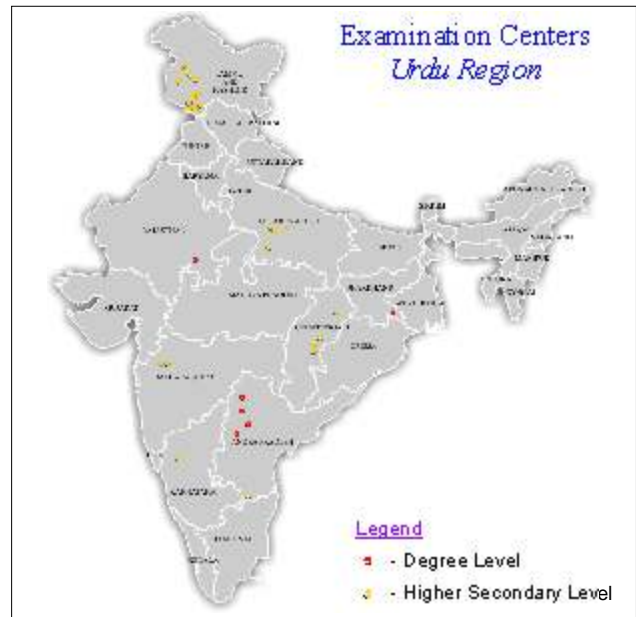
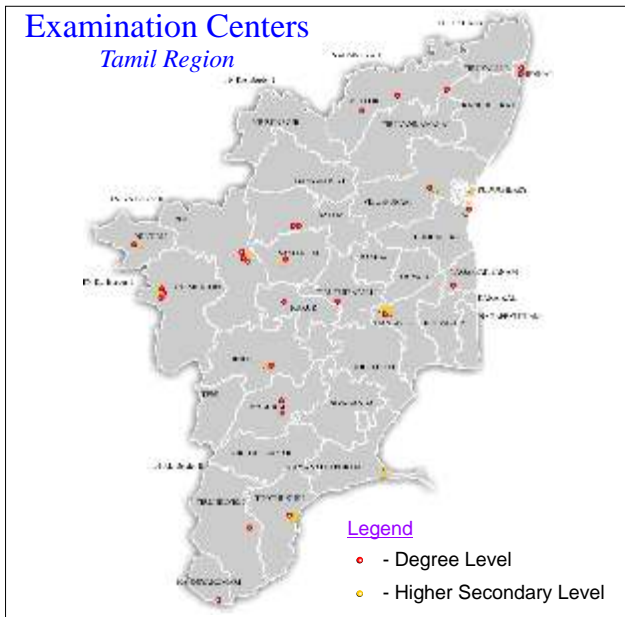
Sl. No.	Language of the NLLT	States participated	No. of Exam Centers*	No. of Students turned out*	Total no. of Students (population)	% of Students included in Pilot Study
1	Hindi	3 HP, Bihar, MP	56	4327	39,90,432	0.108%
2	Tamil	2 TN, Puducherry	23	3361	7,15,067	0.470%
3	Urdu	6 J&K, UP, CH, MH, AP, KA	32	3427	2,60,000	1.318%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>11115</b>	<b>49,65,499</b>	<b>0.224%</b>

#### Level : Graduate

Dates of NLLT Field Administration - 9.05.2010 (Hindi, Tamil, and Urdu)

Sl. No.	Language of the NLLT	States participated	No. of Exam Centers*	No. of Students turned out*	Total no. of Students (population)	% of Students included in Pilot Study
1	Hindi	4 HP, UK, UP, MP	54	3467	10,00,000	0.347%
2	Tamil	2 TN, Puducherry	40	4363	2,93,000	1.489%
3	Urdu	5 J&K, RJ, UP, JH, AP	16	1943	95,000	2.045%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>9773</b>	<b>13,88,000</b>	<b>0.704%</b>

Note : \* The above details are as per the figures provided by the RFUs. They may slightly vary from those given in the previous issues (which were only the projected figures).



### Feedback meeting on the NLLT :

22<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2010



The Head, NTS addressing the RFU representatives

A two day meeting was organized at the NTS H.Qrs., CIIL, Mysore to obtain the feedback from the representatives of Regional Field Units located in Tamil speaking region on the recently administered NLLTs.

18 persons representing 13 RFUs participated in the programme. On the first day, Prof. Pon Subbiah outlined the purpose of the programme. Following this, three sessions were held - one each on the problems related to the field administration of tests, academic issues related to question and answer books, and valuation of answer scripts.

Views of the representatives were collected, and consolidated by the JRPs (Tamil), and the same was submitted to the Head, NTS for information and follow up action.

The next day was devoted for discussion on the problems related to expenditure. The observations made by the accounts section of NTS were provided to the representatives by Mr. Narasimha Murthy (Officer, Accounts). This helped the RFU representatives to settle the NLLT accounts, as prescribed by the NTS. The Programme was coordinated by Dr. M.Balakumar under the overall guidance and supervision of Prof. Pon Subbiah.



### Testing: a lot of sensitization required in the Universities

“We have to evaluate our own testing system to ascertain whether it is going in a right way or not. I don’t think any University in India has ever made an attempt to do this. Perhaps that will be one of the major steps in the process of higher education in India and that is where I think there is a lot of sensitization required in the Universities. Many people including Vice-chancellors and educators are not aware of this. Therefore our own testing system has to be evaluated, periodically to see in which direction it is going. But in most of the Universities there is no sensitization on this issue. It is essential because in tomorrow’s world only the ‘FITTEST’ is going to ‘SURVIVE’ and nothing else.”



Source: Interview of Prof. J.A.K. Tareen (Vice-Chancellor, Pondicherry University) for NTS Documentary on Achievement

GIA

## Grant-in-Aid

- To create awareness among the members of the teaching community on this essential component of education : testing and evaluation
- To encourage the individuals and institutions (involved in this specialized work) by extending financial assistance
- To facilitate developing materials, methodologies, and trained manpower to meet various evaluation requirements

NTS-I has been granting financial assistance to various institutions and individuals across the country to take up research, develop materials, and to impart training in the area of testing and evaluation. Based on the recommendation of the committee constituted for assessing the merits of the proposals received, financial assistance for the year 2009-10 was extended to Regional Field Units. The topics of the activities undertaken by the RFUs under the NTS-GIA are as follows:

Sl.No.	Name of the Topic	Sl.No.	Name of the Topic
<i>Training programmes</i>		<i>Workshops</i>	
1.	Training programme for School Teachers on Preparation of Questions and Evaluation of Answers	1.	Workshop on Evaluation Techniques and Item Analysis for Quality Improvement in Tamil Language & Literature for Higher Education Teachers
2.	Training Programme on Methodologies and Techniques of Testing and Evaluation	2.	Workshop on Question / Item Writing in Tamil Language
3.	Training Programme for Teachers on Item Writing	3.	Workshop on Principles of Testing and Evaluation for Higher Secondary Tamil Teachers of Nilgiri District
4.	Training Programme on Testing and Evaluation in Higher Secondary Education	4.	Workshop on Item Writing to Test the English fluency of teachers who teach Tamil medium students
5.	Training Programme on Process and Techniques of Item Writing	5.	Workshop on Test Design and Construction
6.	Training Programme on Educational objectives and construction of Tools of Testing	6.	Workshop on Testing and Evaluation Techniques for the Teachers of Higher Education.
<i>Seminar</i>		7.	Workshop on Testing and Evaluation (General)
1.	Seminar on Testing Language Proficiency with particular reference to Urdu	8.	Workshop on Item Writing (in Languages)
		9.	Workshop on Item Writing (in subject areas)

## News Capsule

### ← NCTE meeting at New Delhi

Prof. Pon Subbiah (Head, NTS-I) has been appointed as a member of the committee constituted by the National commission for Teacher Education (NCTE) to develop State Teachers Eligibility Test (STET) which is to be implemented with effect from 1-1-2011. In this connection, he was invited to attend a meeting held on 25th June 2010 at New Delhi. The meeting was chaired by Prof. H. S. Srivastava (formerly of NCERT). The purpose of the meeting was to develop rationale, framework, design and guidelines for the proposed STET. Suggestions were provided by Prof. Pon Subbiah in the light of his experience in the field for more than 2 decades. Prof. Md. Akhtar Siddiqui (Chairperson, NCTE) requested the Head, NTS to extend all possible academic assistance to the NCTE and expressed his willingness to capitalize the experience of NTS for NCTE work.

### ← A Russian Tamil Scholar's visit to NTS

Dr. Alexander M. Dubyanski (a Tamil scholar and Professor of Indian Philology, Moscow State University) visited the NTS on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010 along with his research student. Prof. Pon Subbiah briefed the activities of the NTS and also presented him a few publications on testing & evaluation. Dr. M.Balakumar, Dr. L.Ramamurthy (LDC-IL), and Dr. V.Ilangovan (SRP, NTS) were also present.



The Head, NTS interacting with Dr. A.M.Dubyanski

## What does it contain?

A bilingual Glossary of Evaluation Terms has been developed in Tamil language. This consists of about one thousand terms representing various concepts of testing & evaluation, that are drawn from the disciplines of psychology, statistics, education, science, humanities, etc. This volume has two sections of which the first one is meant for Tamil to English and the next one is vice versa. In both the cases, the entries in first column, have been arranged in the alphabetic order (of the language concerned) for easy reference.

Many of the concepts which are in phrasal forms are found to have been with proper nouns like Fisher's Transformation, F.Max Test, Guttman Scaling, Kuder-Richardson Reliability, Spearman Brown Formula, etc. In such cases, the proper nouns are retained and the equivalents in Tamil have been provided only for the concepts given in the second parts (e.g., F - *miipperu teervu*, *fishers (vadiva) maarram*, etc.). A similar approach was adopted for the terms like Accordion Key, ITED Score, R-Technique, etc (e.g., *R-utti*, *ITED matippalavai*, etc.). Some of the terms like Kurtosis, Lepto-Kurtic, Platy Kurtic, etc., have been adopted without any change and no parallels have been provided for such items. This volume is being submitted for printing and publication.



## Programmes for July

- A one day meeting to scrutinize the application for the recruitment of CRPs / SRPs / RPs / JRPs / Officers for Accounts and RFUs sections is scheduled to be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2010.
- A two day NLLT Analysis feedback meeting for RFUs of Hindi and Urdu speaking areas is scheduled to be held from 8<sup>th</sup> July 2010.
- Workshop on Finalisation of Glossary of Evaluation Terms is scheduled to be held in two phases for Tamil from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> July 2010, and for Hindi & Urdu from 6<sup>th</sup> July to 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2010.
- Launching of NTS website by Dr. Anita Bhatnagar Jain, Joint Secretary(L), MHRD, GOI is scheduled to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2010.
- A two day review meeting meant for documentary producers (of aptitude, proficiency, achievement and general evaluation) is scheduled to be held from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2010.
- Workshop on Finalisation of Glossary of Evaluation Terms in Urdu is scheduled to be held from 27<sup>th</sup> July to 6<sup>th</sup> August 2010.

## Reader's View

### Clarity in the subject, simplicity in expression !

The presentation of the items in a systematic way has always been impressive. I enjoy two items in the Newsletter viz., *Evaluation in Education: A proposition by NTS* and *What does it mean?*. The first one explains the proposition of NTS in a simple language and style, but very clearly. It is an example of the fact that clarity in the subject brings simplicity in expression. The second one, (usually taken from the book *An Introduction to Evaluation Terminology*) is the tit-bits. It always attracts a reader like me. I congratulate the NTS for updating the teaching community on matters related to testing & evaluation, while taking up the himalayan task of evolving regional and national norms for maintaining comparability in education across the country.

- M. Gnanam, Regional Director, CHI Regional Office, Mysore



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