



## Evaluation in Education : A Proposition by NTS

[ *The issues which prompted the need for a common reference point: The number of migrants seeking admission into educational institutions located in other regions is on the increase due to the government policy on Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation • The decision of some states/ premier institutions declaring the degrees/diplomas (awarded by others) as not equivalent has caused a lot of problems to the public • Derecognition of open university degrees by some organizations has led to a series of litigations • Different systems of awarding marks by different institutions, has forced the students to face the ordeal of taking repeated examinations either for admission or for employment • The proliferation of autonomous institutions and deemed universities has further compounded this apathy • The National Commissions (such as UGC, UPSC, etc.) have evolved their own mechanism to determine the suitability of the individuals for offering fellowships/employment • The situations described above have given a scope for exploitation of the public by certain private institutions on the ground that their degrees are superior to those of others • All these are converging to indicate a single factor that the country does not have any common reference point with which comparison could be made or could be equated with. In this context, a detailed proposal with its main text under 9 headings (24 pages) followed by 5 annexures (77 pages) for elevating the CT & E (housing the NTS) into National Evaluation Organisation was submitted to the Government of India during January 2010 ].*

### Proposal for NEO-A Brief Summary

#### Recommendations of Commissions/Committees

• “... to determine the suitability of candidates for specified jobs, norms of comparable competence across the nation...” proposed the establishment of National Testing Service (NPE/POA, 1986) • “... to bring about an overall improvement in testing and measurement ...” recommended the setting up of National Evaluation Organisation [NPE RC 1990/NPE JC 1992] • “... to ensure uniformity of standards in examinations, to evolve national standards (against which the performance of the students from different states could be compared) and to evolve norms for comparability of performance...” recommended the creation of National Evaluation Organisation as a quality control mechanism [NCF SE 2000, 2005] • “... to certify competency and to produce efficient youth...” recommended the setting up of a National Testing Service [NKC, 2007] • “... to redesign the syllabus followed by appropriate changes in evaluation and examination...” recommended the creation of a higher education commission [Hr. Edn. Committee 2009].

#### Limitations of the Regulatory Bodies

• National Assessment and Accreditation Council (of the UGC), National Board of Accreditation (of the AICTE), National Board of Examination (of the MCI), National Council for Teacher Education, Evaluation Units/ Depts. of various Institutions, and Examination Directorates of the School Education Boards are some of the mechanisms created to sort out these issues in their respective organisations. • However, the operational jurisdictions of these bodies are found to have been *limited only to specific domains, purposes, and stages of education*. No systematic effort has

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been taken up for integrating various research findings with the actual requirements of the country on quality control and to tackle the issues, academically.

### Emergence of NTS

It was in this context that the 2½ decades old Centre for Testing and Evaluation (CT&E) of the CIIL, Mysore (Language division of the MHRD) based on its experience in the field, submitted a proposal for creating the National Testing Service (NTS) or National Evaluation Organisation (NEO), for India. Accordingly, the CT&E of CIIL was given administrative approval to formulate and implement the NTS with effect from 01.07.2006, as one of the new initiatives of the Government of India *with the approval from the Central Planning Commission*.

The stated objective of the NTS was to create a centralized mechanism for quality control/maintenance by evolving regional and national norms. To begin with, the discipline of language (Hindi, Tamil, & Urdu) at the two crucial levels (higher secondary and graduate), has been taken up for this purpose, before extending the same to other disciplines of study and levels of education. The idea is to have independently worked out *common reference points* against which the courses, institutions, and individuals across the country would be equated with, for maintaining inter and intra level comparability in view of the disparity, arising out of the diversified systems of education being followed by various universities and school boards.

### NTS : a Strong Foundation

During this short period of about 3½ years, the NTS has evolved a working mechanism of integrating the research & development (R&D), survey & documentation (S&D), and consultancy & training (C&T) to develop materials, methodologies, and manpower. It has also established more than 40 Regional Field Units (out of the 60 proposed in the above three language speaking areas) in order to take all sections of the stakeholders into confidence. By adopting this, a variety of basic reference materials like *graded syllabi, graded tests, terminology parallels in Indian languages*, conceptual explanations, training modules, documentary films, etc., has been produced in language disciplines. A band of around 50 to 100 trained personnel, has been created (in each of the 40 regions where the RFUs are located) to meet the shortage of trained manpower in this specialized area. Those *individuals and institutions* who are interested to work on evaluation are *encouraged* by offering academic and financial support in terms of *fellowships & grants in aid*. A specialized library with about 4000 volumes on evaluation (relating to contents, methods & purposes) has been created to cater to the R&D requirements. A number of strategy meetings, training programmes, material production workshops, national conventions, etc., has been conducted across the country. World class *websites, monthly newsletter, information brochures, etc.*, have been launched/brought out in order to disseminate information and to create awareness. For the effective functioning of NTS, the personnel comprising academic, technical, and supporting categories have been identified through a 4 stage selection process based on all India advertisements. Thus, the NTS has laid a *strong foundation* as a fully functional institution.

### Administrative Constraints of NTS

- As of now, NTS is functioning only as a project with about 50 contractual positions under 10 categories, on monthly consolidated payment
- Since it operates for the whole country (across 18 States/UTs at present), the workload has been very heavy (parallel to that of CIIL, the parent office). There are *no regular staff* for maintaining continuity and confidentiality
- The positions being contractual, *recruiting of personnel and retaining them* after training have become very difficult
- Every paper initiated by the NTS has to pass through 4 to 5 channels, which is cumbersome; whenever a change takes place among the main players (Director, AD(A), AAO), the *whole process* is to be started again from zero; so is the case when a change takes place in the ministry - thus seriously affecting the continuity of the work in the same spirit
- To conduct 100s of programmes involving scholars from all over the country, *drawal of funds* becomes a problem for want of regular staff (as the operation of NTS is managed by only one Professor cum Dy. Director and an RRO of the CT&E)
- Since the work of NTS is multidisciplinary one meant for all the 7 levels of general education, involving the participation of central, state, and private agencies on equal footing, every step initiated by the NTS has a *direct impact on the entire education system*. In the midst of all these complexities, NTS is functioning even without any *official forum* of academics to deliberate the intricacies.

Given the size of the country, number of teachers and learners involved, the divergent needs of the society, the array of courses available in every discipline, and the extent of issues encountered, the NTS with its present constraints would take *several decades to make even a small degree of progress*.

[In this context, it is worth mentioning that the Educational Testing Service (ETS) of USA (which prepares and conducts TOEFL & GRE) has got more than 2500 permanent employees in the US alone, apart from 100s of those working in their Franchise offices *although it is concerned with only one language and a limited number of test takers*, that too, mainly for *admission* purpose. Contrary to this, National Testing Service (NTS) of India which is concerned with *many languages* and a *vast population of stake holders* not only for *admission* but also for *certification and employment*, has not even got 2% of

the employees of the ETS; also it has neither *institutional status*, nor the requisite office space, to achieve the objectives within a time frame].

### NTS as NEO, an Independent Body

In view of the above, the CT & E, on whose strength the NTS has been created, needs to be granted functional autonomy and elevated to the status of an *independent entity* with *adequate regular staff*. This would help achieve the purpose for which NTS has been established.

This view has also been subscribed by a number of eminent scholars / academic luminaries like VCs of Universities, Chiefs of Central Regulatory Bodies, Members of Recruitment Bodies like UPSC, IBPS, TRB, etc., who have commented on the activities of NTS in different contexts (details in Annexure No. 3 of the main proposal).

- Editor

(to be continued)

S&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

An application software has been developed to facilitate a systematic way of storing and retrieving the records of the applicants who are applying for different positions in the NTS. The record consists of the following details of the applicants such as name, age, category, educational qualifications (general & professional), (percentage of) marks obtained, special training received (if any), experience, references, and any other information relevant to the position applied for. All these details are stored in an electronic database. This would help to obtain instant classified information about the applicants.

C&T

## Consultancy and Training

- To evolve a mechanism for providing periodical training and to create trained manpower
- 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 on Proficiency

4<sup>th</sup> January 2010

The pre-final version of the documentary film on Proficiency Test was viewed by the academic and technical staff of the NTS. They suggested some improvements both in the audio and video. Ms. Usha Rajeshwari, the producer of the documentary agreed to make necessary changes. She visited NTS H.Qrs. on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2010 for an interaction with the staff of NTS. She interviewed the Head, NTS, on the same day, which was to be incorporated in the documentary.

### From the Visitors' Diary:



*“My visit to CIIL was a rewarding experience. Prof. Pon Subbiah of NTS has been doing excellent work in the field of educational testing and evaluation. NTS is a timely initiative of the Government and a first step towards laying down standards for testing and evaluation in the entire country. This is an import piece in the jigsaw puzzle called quality education. Prof. Subbiah and his team is doing very good work.”*

- Shri L.K. Atheeq, Director, PMO



## 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

#### Preliminary Orientation Programme at Govt. Mahakoshal Arts & Commerce College, Jabalpur, MP

8<sup>th</sup> January 2010

The NTS team headed by Prof. Pon Subbiah visited the Regional Field Unit [No. H-9 B] of the Hindi speaking areas meant for Higher Education, established in the campus of Government Mahakoshal Arts & Commerce College, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.



*Prof. Pon Subbiah and Dr. M. Yesudass with the staff of Govt. Mahakoshal Arts & Commerce College, Jabalpur, MP*

The orientation programme commenced with the welcome address by Dr. Deepak Srivastava (Dy. Coordinator). Then the Head, NTS, in his orientation speech, briefed the objectives of NTS and the activities to be carried out by the RFUs. During the interactive session the queries raised by the scholars were clarified by the Head. About 60 scholars from the neighbouring institutions identified by the local RFU were present. Along with the teaching staff, a few senior academics / officials were also present. Notable among them were Prof. K.K.Tiwari (NCERT), Dr. M.K.Mishra (Dept. of Higher Education, Govt. of M.P), Dr. R.K.Chapra (Former Principal), Dr. A.K.Srivastav (Hamidia College, Bhopal), and Dr. Alok Shukla (Govt. Science College). Dr. Shobana Khare (Principal, Govt. Mahakoshal College) assured her support and cooperation in conducting academic programmes and other activities to be carried out by the RFU. Dr. Arun Shukla (Local Coordinator) proposed vote of thanks. On 9<sup>th</sup> January 2010 the Head, NTS addressed a press meet arranged by the college. 15 reporters representing print and electronic media were present.

The others represented NTS were Shri. M.Saravana (SRP), Dr. M.Yesudass (RP) and Shri Arvind Kumar Gautam (JRP). This RFU has the jurisdiction of the whole state of Madhya Pradesh.

#### Preliminary Orientation Programme at St. Joseph's College of Education, Ooty

16<sup>th</sup> January 2010



*Prof. Pon Subbiah and his team with the staff of St. Joseph's College of Education, Ooty, TN*

The NTS team headed by Prof. Pon Subbiah visited the Regional Field Unit [No. T-5 A] of the Tamil speaking areas meant for School Education located at St. Joseph's College of Education, St. Mary's Hill, Ooty.

Dr. Paul Dhanasekaran (Principal) welcomed the gathering and provided a brief sketch of the institution. The preliminary orientation was provided by the Head, NTS. He explained the fundamentals of education and evaluation, aims and objectives of the NTS, and the activities that are expected to be carried out by the RFUs through a powerpoint presentation. The queries raised by the participants were clarified during the interactive session. Dr. Rec.

Rev. A.Amal Raj (President), Rev. Fr. Noel Stephen Rosaria (Correspondent) and Mr. Barthalom (Local Coordinator) were also present in the programme. Around 25 members of the college participated in the

programme. The correspondent, who presided over the function, assured of all cooperation for NTS activities. The programme concluded with the vote of thanks.

After the lunch, a press meet was arranged by the institution wherein half a dozen reporters/journalists of different dailies participated and the queries raised by them were clarified by the Head, NTS. The others representing NTS were Ms. R.Shakunthala (JRP-Tech.), and Ms. G.Usha Nandini (Secretary). This RFU has the jurisdiction of the Nilgiris, and Coimbatore districts of TN including KL Border-1.

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

### Workshop for the applicants from NE Region

22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2010



*The Head, NTS, briefing the activities to the participants*

*Hindi* - Dr. Ganesh Pegu (Guwahati, Assam), 4. *Workshop for generation of question items in Hindi* - Dr. Harka Bahadur Chettri (Bongaigaon, Assam).

The members of the committee were Dr. N.Nadaraja Pillai (formerly of CIIL, Mysore) and Prof. P.T.Abraham (formerly of Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh). They suggested a few modifications to be incorporated in the proposals.

The programme was co-ordinated by Dr. Biresh Kumar (RP) and Dr. G.Sandhya Nayak (JRP) in consultation with Dr. M.Balakumar (Coordinator, NTS Programmes). They were assisted by Dr. Jamshed Ahmad (JRP) and Mr. P.Harsha (PRO). The overall guidance was provided by Prof. Pon Subbiah.

### Two-day Interactive Meeting for GIA proposals from RFUs

29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> January 2010

This two-day interactive meeting was organized at NTS, H.Qrs., CIIL, Mysore to discuss the GIA proposals submitted by the institutions housing Regional Field Units of NTS. Altogether 40 participants representing the RFUs located at Srinagar (J&K), Shimla & Kangra (HP), Jabalpur (MP), Lucknow (UP), Dehradun (Uttarakhand), Darbhanga (Bihar), Hubli (KA), Chennai & Salem (TN), and Puducherry participated in this programme. Majority of the topics proposed by them were on item writing in Hindi, Tamil and Urdu. Some of the topics were based on educational objectives, evaluation techniques, testing methods, etc.



*The Head, NTS interacting with the RFU representatives*

Since heads of the institutions and decision makers were present in this meeting, this opportunity was utilized for chalking out a plan of action for the proposed field administration of tests (NLLT) developed by NTS in three languages and for two levels of general education. The formats of test papers, admit cards, dates of tests, etc., were discussed in this meeting.

Dr. M.Balakumar (Co-ordinator, NTS Programmes), Dr. R.C.Maurya (SRP) were present on the occasion. The programme was co-ordinated by Dr. Biresh Kumar (RP) & Dr. G.Sandhya Nayak (JRP). The overall guidance was provided by Prof. Pon Subbiah.

D&amp;PDF

## Doctoral and Post Doctoral Fellowships

- To promote advanced studies in the multidisciplinary area of testing and evaluation
- To extend financial support and to create a band of specialized manpower in every discipline, and in every region of the country
- To evolve a system of eclectic intelligentsia by pooling together the potentials available across the disciplines

### Selection of Awardees for NTS Fellowships

January 2010

Offer letters were sent to the candidates who have been selected for NTS Fellowship 2009-10 in the month of January 2010. The names of the awardees and the University wherein they pursue their research are given below:

Sl.No. Name of the awardee & University	Sl.No. Name of the awardee & University	Sl.No. Name of the awardee & University	
<b>Doctoral Fellowships for Hindi</b>			
1. Mr. Rupendra Singh Chauhan Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi	3. Ms. Elavarasi S. Bharathidasan University, Trichy	4. Dr. Sankardoss A. Alagappa University, Karaikudi	
2. Mr. Anshu Bhardwaj M.D.S. University, Ajmer	4. Ms. Mayadevi T. Tamil University, Thanjavur	5. Dr. Ganesan N. Bharathidasan University, Trichy	
3. Mr. Syed Tufailur Rehman Ravenshaw University, Cuttack	5. Mr. Arumugam R. University of Madras, Chennai	<b>Doctoral Fellowships for Urdu</b>	
4. Ms. Shreelalitha Suwarna J. Mangalore University, Mangalore	6. Mr. Ranganathan K. University of Mysore, Mysore	1. Mr. Md. Shakil Ahmad Patna University, Patna	
5. Mr. Pramod Kumar Singh Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth, Banaras	7. Mr. Rajkumar K. Bharathiar University, Coimbatore	2. Ms. Musarrat Jahan Patna University, Patna	
6. Mr. Prabhu Sena D. University of Mysore, Mysore	8. Mr. Subramanian R. Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli	3. Ms. Paiker Fatima Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh	
7. Mr. Rajashekhar U. Jadhav MANUU, Hyderabad, AP	9. Ms. Rethineswari M. Alagappa University, Karaikudi	4. Mr. Md. Iqbal Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi	
<b>Post Doctoral Fellowships for Hindi</b>			
1. Dr. Ram Ratan Prasad Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi	10. Mr. Palanisamy P. Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli	5. Ms. Talat Perween Ranchi University, Ranchi	
<b>Doctoral Fellowships for Tamil</b>			
1. Ms. Lakshmi Priya K.K. Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai	<b>Post Doctoral Fellowships for Tamil</b>		
2. Mr. Jagadesh M. University of Madras, Chennai	1. Dr. Jainambu Parvin S.M. Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai	6. Ms. Shaheen Sultana Patna University, Patna	
	2. Dr. Paramasivan C. Periyar University, Salem	<b>Post Doctoral Fellowships for Urdu</b>	
	3. Dr. Chidambaram S. Alagappa University, Karaikudi	1. Dr. Naved Anjum Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh	
		2. Dr. Abdur Rasheed Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi	

## News Capsule

### Interactive meeting for Evaluation Strategies

7<sup>th</sup> January 2010: Hindi-Urdu Flagship, University of Texas organised a Workshop on Evaluation Strategies at the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS), New Delhi. Prof. Pon Subbiah, on invitation, delivered the key note address. He provided theoretical aspects of testing & evaluation to the participating resource persons representing the AIIS, and other premier organisations. Then the Head, NTS interacted with Prof. Rolph W.Nicholas (President, AIIS).

The Head, NTS briefed about the objectives and activities of the NTS during the interactive session. The participants include Prof. Herman .H Van Olphen (University of Texas), Prof. Ashok Chakradhar (Vice Chairman, CHI),





From L-R: Dr. Yesudass, Prof. Pon Subbiah, Prof. Jaswal, Prof. Herman .H Van Olphen, Prof. Ashok Chakradhar, and others

Prof. Jaswal (CHI), Prof. Ravi Prakash Gupta (CHI), Prof. Rajesh Kumar (AIIS), Dr. Jishnu Shankar (University of Texas), Dr. Rakesh Ranjan (Columbia University), Naveen K. Kamra (AO, AIIS), and Dr. Seema Chedla (Bal Bharathi Public School). The Head NTS was accompanied by Dr. M. Yesudass (RP).

#### Short-Term Project :

The young scholars participating in the ongoing Short-Term Project were given on-the-job training /orientation in the area of testing and evaluation by the Head, and other academic staff of the NTS. They were engaged in the process of item writing in their respective disciplines viz., linguistics, language, literature, education, psychology, statistics, etc.

## Programmes for February

- Intermediary visit to the RFU located at Thiagarajar College, Madurai, TN on 04.02.2010.
- Preliminary Orientation Programme of RFU is scheduled to be held at Adhiparasakthi College of Arts & Science, Kalavai, Vellore Dist. TN on 10.02.2010.
- A Four day workshop on Concept based Continuum of Graded Syllabi is scheduled to be held at the NTS H.Qrs., CIIL from 13.02.10.
- A Three day Workshop on Aptitude and Proficiency test is scheduled to be held at the NTS H.Qrs., CIIL from 16.02.10.
- A Two day Strategy Meeting for the decision makers of the RFUs is scheduled to be held at the NTS H.Qrs., CIIL (Hindi / Tamil / Urdu Regions) from 18.02.2010.
- NTS GIA Workshop is scheduled to be held at Department of Linguistics, Madurai Kamaraj University on 22.02.2010.
- Preliminary Orientation Programme is scheduled to be held at St. Mary's Higher Secondary School, Dindigul, TN on 23.02.2010.
- A Two day Workshop for the applicants from NER is scheduled to be held at NTS H.Qrs., CIIL from 18.02.2010.

### What do they mean?

**Quantification** refers to the process of quantifying something or assigning numerical values to unknown magnitudes of materials or properties or traits or progress. No measurement is possible, in the absence of any quantification of the collected data, or items or attributes to be measured. Tests/ instruments of evaluation, irrespective of their being aptitude or achievement or proficiency tests attempt to measure unknown magnitudes on the basis of their quantification.

**Accreditation** is the certification, authoritatively awarded to a school, college, or the like to the effect that it has met all the formal official requirements of academic excellence, curriculum, facilities, etc. In other words, it is the recognition accorded to an educational institution. Accreditation implies stimulation toward quality improvement beyond the minimum standards specified by the accrediting body. The essential purpose of the accreditation process is to provide a professional judgement as to the quality of the educational institution or programme offered and to encourage continual improvement thereof.

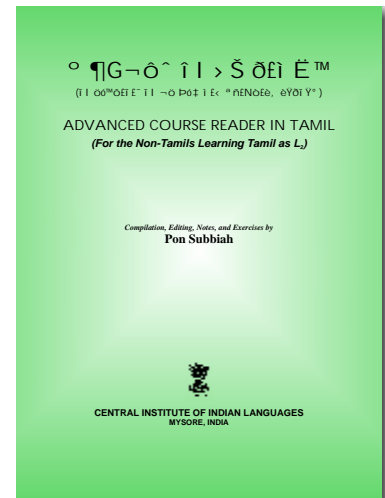
Source : *An Introduction to Evaluation Terminology, CIIL, Mysore, 2008.*

## What does it contain?

### Advanced Course Reader [for the Non-Tamils learning Tamil as L<sub>2</sub>]

This volume is being built up with a variety of exercises and approaches for L<sub>2</sub> assessment. It is used as a main text book at the Southern Regional Language Centre of CIIL for its 10 month course in Tamil for Non-Tamils. It consists of a variety of sample passages in different forms representing the original writings of the native speakers. Twelve prose texts, eighteen poetry pieces, and seven domain specific passages under sections I, II, and III respectively are included as the lessons of the text books. Each one of them is equipped with a number of *exercises* which are directly related to the literary pieces with reference to their form, structure, and meaning (of words, phrases, and sentences) in contexts. Apart from these, there are also exercises dealing mainly with styles and usages that have generally appeared in free writings of native speakers. Creativity based exercises have also been included to generate various forms of language units which are used at the discourse level. The exercises in this volume can be used as references for analysis and assessment of language in use, both in L<sub>1</sub> & L<sub>2</sub> contexts, at the advanced level.

This book is useful to the RFUs of NTS located in the border areas of Tamil Nadu as one of the source materials for writing syntactic level (sentence based) question items on all aspects of language and literature.



*Compilation, edg., & exercises*  
**Pon Subbiah**

ISBN : 81-7342-097-1  
6.5" X 9.5", xxv + 309  
2003, Rs.160/-

## A Visitor's View

### NTS: 'Dedicated for Testing & Evaluation'

The work being undertaken at NTS is very exciting. It is hard to believe that within such a short time NTS has become the leading agency in the area of testing and evaluation. During my visit to NTS, I realized that NTS at Mysore is a leading academic institution dedicated for testing and evaluation. It was fascinating to understand the process of language testing from 'drafting initial test specifications' to 'reporting test scores, test validation and washback'. Another aspect of the work that impressed me was the effort being made to improve the examination systems of various examining boards with the tools developed by NTS.

The research materials published by NTS is also elaborate and useful and could surely serve either as basic text for a course, or as independent reading material in a self-study mode.

The country is sure to profit from the initiative of NTS team. I hope NTS will come forward with standardized testing models which would be accepted by one and all. The National Agencies will have to make use of the testing models NTS has so far developed.

- Prof. P.K. Abdul Azis, Vice Chancellor, AMU, Aligarh

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