



Prof. M. Anandakrishnan  
Chairman, IIT-K & IIT-R

## 'It is a daunting task' Prof.M. Anandakrishnan observes on NTS !

Prof. M. Anandakrishnan, Former VC, Anna University, (Presently Chairman, IITs of Kanpur & Rajasthan) visited NTS for an interaction with its academic staff in the month of December 2008. After his visit he has sent his observations about NTS. The same is reproduced below for the benefit of the readers of NTS Monthly Newsletter.

*Considering the complexities and unknowns associated with any kind of testing, the establishment of the National Testing Service- India (NTS-I) is a highly commendable initiative of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India. My observations about NTS-I are based on a visit to their campus in Mysore on 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> December 2008.*

### Accolades for NTS from Academic Luminaries



Prof.H.A Ranganath  
Director, NAAC  
Report on P.2

*There seems to be universal agreement that the huge expansion of the Indian education system and the multifarious criteria for entry to the different educational programmes as well as the need to judge the suitability of the products of our educational institutions for various economic and social functions require reliable approaches to testing and evaluation. Presently this is treated in a casual manner.*

*The testing and evaluation methods should be related to the purpose. It may be for judging the aptitude, achievement, proficiency, knowledge, skill or competence. These attributes are again influenced by a variety of factors such as the learning environment, socio-economic background, nature of academic contents, quality of the institutions, etc. of the person being tested, The emerging trends in acquisition of knowledge and skills for the twenty first century include the pursuit of lifelong learning, interdisciplinary exposure, ability to work in teams, aptitude to commercial disciplines, creativity and innovation, integrative skills, international outlook, ability to employ information technology, ability to work at the interfaces between traditional disciplines, commitment to sustainable development and so on.*

*The evolution of a Testing Service in the Indian context has many challenges which need to be addressed. These are largely ignored, or largely unaddressed by Indian technical institutions. We cannot imitate or rely upon testing system developed in other countries with severely differing contexts.*



Prof. Jacob Tharu,  
Professor of Evaluation (Retd.),  
CIEFL.  
Report on P.3

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*During my visit to NTS-I, I was truly impressed by the presentations about the current thrust of activities. The professionals of the institution, under the dynamic guidance of Prof. Pon Subbiah, are fully conscious of the challenges in designing test methodologies. They have attempted to articulate many of the challenges through the publication of books and manuals dealing with terminologies, bibliographies and methodologies. Presently these are mainly related to the issues concerning assessing mastery and proficiency of several Indian languages. I am confident that these could be further extended to several other disciplines of sciences, engineering and humanities, once the framework is constructed.*

*It is a daunting task and requires stable and sustained support and encouragement not only by the Government of India but also by the academic institutions, assessment and rating agencies, accrediting organizations and major employers.*

**M. Anandakrishnan**

## **Prof. H. A. Ranganath, Director, NAAC, Bangalore**

4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009

NTS is conducting a series of interactive meetings with a few selected luminaries of academic field. They are invited from various parts of the country to seek their views and suggestions on the intricacies involved in this process of developing methods and materials for evaluation in the Indian context.

Prof. Amrik Singh, (Former Secretary General, AIU, New Delhi), Prof. E. Annamalai (Former Director, CIIL & Visiting Professor, Yale University, USA), Prof. Md. Akhtar Siddiqui (Chairperson, NCTE, New Delhi), Dr. P.A. Ramiah (Chairman, TRB, Chennai), Prof. S.Ramachandran(VC, University of Madras), Prof. M. Anandakrishnan (Chairman, IITs of Kanpur & Rajasthan), Prof. Abdul Azis (VC, Aligarh Muslim University) and Prof. Ved Prakash (VC, NUEPA, New Delhi) were the dignitaries already visited NTS Hqtrs, Mysore. During their visit, they have interacted with the staff of NTS on various issues involved in determining the benchmark of quality at various levels of education.

Prof. H.A. Ranganath (Director, NAAC, Bangalore) visited the NTS-India on 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009. The first day of the programme was started with welcome address by Prof. M. Suseela. This was followed by introduction of NTS staff. Then Prof. Pon Subbiah, Head, NTS gave a brief introduction about the formulation and functions of NTS. The objectives, applications, and activities of NTS were explained during the forenoon session on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009. In the afternoon Prof. H.A. Ranganath addressed the NTS staff.

Excerpts from the transcribed version his address are as follows:

- *I must thank the NTS for inviting me for this interactive session and I must compliment the entire system for having this ambitious plan and also conceiving it. One has to have ambitious plan, the next step is conceiving it and I could see most of the things are already there.*
- *As a student, as a teacher, as a research scholar and as an administrator, I know how difficult is to start with and to conceive one idea and then to implement it. Both the things have been placed now. The only thing is to take time to operationalise it and make it palatable and acceptable to the people all over the country. Whatever you are trying to do is not limited to this building itself because whatever you have achieved, whatever you have developed is a model only. It has to be honoured and accepted by people across the country.*



Prof. H.A. Ranganath

A view of the participants in the interactive session

- *Teaching, learning and evaluation are the three components which you have in your model, are extremely variable and extremely dynamic. Whatever you are doing you do it fast; otherwise at the time you are going to complete the first project, you will have to replace it completely.*
- *I appreciate two things here one is the establishment of Research and Development wing; and the next is the awareness programme. They are very important. You conceive the ideas, develop models but unless you sensitise, unless you educate people, it is of no consequence. Whatever you are trying to achieve has to be placed before the stakeholders and have to be appreciated but it is not possible. Even in industry, people think of having the patent; only people use those patents; here both things are there. You are involving the system and also publishing it and get wider acceptance from the stakeholders.*
- *If newspapers appreciate it, it has no consequence but real stakeholders in the field have to appreciate it and as I could see now, a lot of work has to be done. Prof. Pon Subbiah has given excellent Power Point Presentation about the things done in MILES and NTS. This is an excellent programme and this is a silent way of doing work. Academically this is the best way to publicise your work. If Prof. Pon. Subbiah agrees I will send our advisors (of NAAC) to have an interaction with the NTS and to value the measurement aspects and learn some more things from NTS.*

## Prof. Jacob Tharu, Professor & Head(Retd.), Dept.of Evaluation CIEFL, Hyderabad.

6<sup>th</sup> January 2009

Prof. Jacob Tharu, former Head of the Dept. of Evaluation, Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad, visited NTS on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2009. While addressing the staff of NTS after interacting with them, he appreciated NTS-India for working towards a comprehensive system of evaluation. Excerpts from the transcribed version of his address are as follows:

- *I got an overview of work done by you through MILES website and NTS newsletters. For about 20 years myself is familiar with MILES. I am happy to see its development as a comprehensive scheme.*
- *It is very important to aim very high and develop an overall vision, especially in the field of testing and evaluation and equally in the field of syllabus construction. There is a lot of eloquence running right through our system. Some committees revise syllabus for +2. Different paper setters have different ideas. IIT entrance exam is an example for some years, it was so tough. I remember that faculty members would say that they would teach Pragmatics and Physics and Chemistry irrespective of whether people pass the test or not. It is made very difficult just for competition purpose. Therefore it is necessary to move towards a comprehensive mode of testing.*
- *What MILES started doing NTS is carrying it forward in a comprehensive way. It is consensus based; it is at the bottom of process. It has not received authority by experts. But this validation has to be an ongoing process that has different components. Paper setters or syllabus framers also do not set on consensus basis across the country.*
- *This effort is a mammoth effort but very ambitious and certainly needs to work and make it work. It is a move towards putting initially language education and language development with skills in some sort of frame work. If you concentrate on a few points, universities will concentrate on the rest of the things. I congratulate you and that is one way of carrying out this. Other than that, it is very comprehensive to do; evaluation of institutions and evaluation of curriculum in the larger frame work. You say that you can't evaluate teachers, but evaluating teachers without actually having the awareness about the parameters will have no meaning.*



Prof. Jacob Tharu

A section of the NTS team in the interactive session

- *NTS-India is working towards a comprehensive system of evaluation. Nowhere this kind of system has been created. Though conducting entrance tests for decades, no system has been developed by the IITs whereas now the NTS has evolved a system which is unique.*
- *Lot of my work, my back ground and what I spent in most of my carrier, I was involved with in-service teacher work, teacher development work, and the objective was language test. There is no curriculum, methodology whatsoever. I worked for those teachers over 30 years. I had a certain credibility that I had been with teachers in workshops. Equipping teachers with understanding of education and purposes of evaluation and to be able to monitor students' growth through a set of parameters for evaluation is a very powerful contribution we can make.*
- *The teacher must have certain degree of freedom in teaching and testing within the classroom. So equipping teachers with different purposes of evaluation and enable them to monitor student's growth is necessary. A teacher asking small questions to students in classroom is also a part of evaluation. In this context, our country needs mammoth effort of academicians to improve evaluation system at all levels of education.*
- *The distinction between Proficiency and Achievement tests is not very strong. Achievement test is also varying from board to board and state to state whereas proficiency tests are more or less common. Therefore NTS has to bring out clear cut objectives of different test frames.*

## Research and Development (R&D)

- 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

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Phase of the Workshop on Aptitude, Achievement, and Proficiency Tests

27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> January 2009

This phase of the Workshop was initiated to give a special focus on the test of achievement as differentiated from other two categories of tests. Since the concept of achievement is perceived under the 3 broad divisions viz., content matter, individual traits (ability continuum) and societal needs, the scholars invited to deliberate these aspects have divided themselves into three groups on the above lines. Each group made an attempt to formulate a few illustrative examples to match with every sub component listed under achievement. Most of the time was spent on deliberating the problem of conceptual clarity in order to avoid content overlapping while formulating item models. Though the models developed were only a few in numbers, this phase of the programme paved a way for providing additional clarity on these concepts which are interrelated to each other.

The scholars who participated and formed themselves into groups were : Prof. Rajashekar Nair (Director retd., CAS in Linguistics, Annamalai University), and Dr.A.Kamatchi (Reader, CAS in Linguistics, Annamalai University) were in a group which worked on *subject matter*. Prof. N.Athiyaman (Head, Dept. of Epigraphy and Archeology, Tamil University) and Prof. Lakshminarayana Aurora (retd. head of the Dept. of Translation, University of Mysore) were in a group which worked on the *cognitive* part of *individual traits*. Prof.K.Anban (retd. from the Dept. of Linguistics, Karnatak University, Dharwad) and Prof.P.T.Abraham (retd. from Rajeev Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh) were in a group which worked on the *affective* part of *individual traits*. Prof.T. Sethu



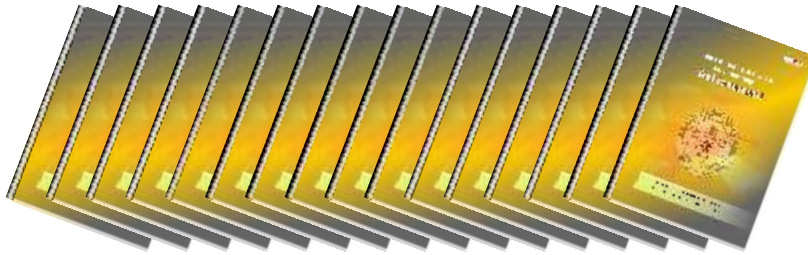
Prof. Pon Subbiah with Prof. Anban



A view of the participants of the workshop

Pandian (Academic Coordinator, Directorate of Distance Education, Madurai Kamaraj University) and Prof. M. Suseela (retd. from the Dept. of Linguistics, Tamil University) were in a group which worked on the *psychomotor* part of *individual traits*. Dr.K.Pasumpon (Assistant Director, Tamil Development, Govt of TN, Madurai) and Dr. V. Sethuramalingam (a senior faculty in the Dept. of Social Work, Bharathidasan University) were in a group which worked on the *societal needs*.

The details such as methodology adopted for developing illustrative models and the intricacies involved in developing them were explained by Prof. Pon Subbiah (Head, NTS). The programme was coordinated by Dr.M.Balakumar (RRO in the CT & E) and Mr. M. Saravana (SRP). Dr. Biresh Kumar (RP), Dr. T. Janaki, Dr.T.Amudhan, Dr. G.Sandhya Nayak, Dr. G.M. Ansari, Dr. Anand Ravi, Dr. Md. Rizwan and Dr. G. Suseela (all JRPs) were extending necessary assistance to the participating scholars.



## Survey and Documentation (S&D)

Collecting, consolidating, and creating a grid of resources pertaining to : Contents, methods, and purposes of evaluation • Contact particulars of individuals and institutions involved in preparing and using different types of tests • Syllabi of various courses and corresponding question papers at different levels of education.

### Current Activities

The process of enriching the database by adding additional addresses of individual scholars, academic institutions, etc., is being continued by Mr. K.S. Raghavan and Ms. R. Kavitha - JRPs (Tech). They are also involved in developing user-friendly retrievals facility for NTS Library. Addresses of members of Central Advisory Board of Education have been updated for display in coding. All Professional institutions have been categorized as Medical, Engineering, Management, etc., and their addresses are being updated. Mr. Md. Ibrahim, DEO is assisting the technical team for inputting the information. The database is enriched with about 7000 additional entries.



A view of the NTS Technical Team on their job

### What does a question item contain ?

In order to have transparency over the content coverage, a format of item file card (IFC) reflecting the parameters to be incorporated under each question has been devised. The IFC is used for eliciting all the relevant information associated with a question item, from the item writer himself. This would help to have certain amount of clarity about the content, method, and purpose of a questing item. The comprehensiveness of the factors built-in as well as their relevance to the given context could also be established through these parameters, at the preparation level. The following are the details contained in the IFC.

- Administering Details.
- Instruction to the Examinee
- Question / Item Stem (with answer key or cue)
- Scoring Procedure (Analytical, G.Q., etc.)
- Subject Matter (input) /Sub Component
- Objective (Instructional, Educational, Societal)
- Item Type / Format used
- Medium & Mode of presentation
- Educational Level (If  $L_1$  - Primary to Research; If  $L_2$  - Basic to Adv.)
- Rationale

Source : MILES / NTS Series of Materials, CIIL

## Consultancy and Training (C&T)

- Evolving a mechanism for periodical training
- Preparing teaching cum training modules
- Producing documentary films
- Creating trained manpower in various branches of evaluation
- Extending consultancy on matters related to testing and evaluation.

### Current Activities

#### Short term project cum training programme

NTS invited Junior scholars from Hindi, Tamil, and Urdu speaking areas of the country for a short term project cum training programme. There were 52 scholars representing the disciplines of language, literature, linguistics, education, psychology, statistics, journalism, microbiology, and management. They were engaged in this programme from 15<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2008. During their stay at the NTS Head Quarters, they were given on-the-job training in the areas of question / item writing and data collection followed by practical assignments. For the benefit of these scholars, series of lectures were arranged on different topics. The Head and other academic staff of NTS gave them training on the



*Mr. M.Saravana, SRP, NTS, giving a lecture to the participants*

parameters to be used for item preparation. The scholars were sent to the field with assignments on item preparation in consultation with the scholars available in the field and also the libraries located in their colleges /universities. They were also asked to submit a report on their returning from the fieldwork.

## Regional Field Units (RFUs)

- 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.

#### Inauguration of RFU at Reshmi Welfare and Educational Society, Hubli, Karnataka.

17<sup>th</sup> January 2009

NTS Regional Field Unit (No.10A) of Urdu speaking areas meant for school education has been established in the School run by Reshmi Welfare and Educational Society, Hubli. It was inaugurated and preliminary orientation provided on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2009 by Prof. Pon Subbiah, Head, NTS-India. In his power point presentation, Prof. Pon Subbiah explained the objectives and activities of NTS. He lamented on the existing scenario of educational evaluation while emphasizing the need for creating a people's movement on quality assurance in education. About 50 members including teachers, educationists and members of the school governing body attended the function. Dr. Shamshuddin Reshmi welcomed the gathering. Shri. Hasham Saheb Patel, Retd. Principal of Govt. College, Ms. G.A. Jamadar, Local Coordinator of RFU and Mr. Tammanna Gowda, member of the teaching faculty of the school were also present on this occasion. NTS was represented by Ms. R. Shakunthala, Mr. V.K.Dheerajj, Mr. K.S. Raghavan (JRPs-T) and Ms. G. Usha Nandini of NTS Secretariate. This unit has the jurisdiction of the Urdu schools located in the northern districts of Karnataka including Hubli & Dharwad.



*Prof. Pon Subbiah and his team with the staff of Hubli RFU*

## Grant-in-Aid

### Doctoral and Post -Doctoral Fellowship

NTS - India has a provision of providing 45 fellowships per year (30 for Doctoral Research and 15 for Post Doctoral Research) in order to promote research related to the field of Testing and Evaluation. 132 applications have been received in response to the advertisement for Tamil, Hindi, & Urdu. 59 names have been short listed by a committee of experts to call them for a two day workshop at the NTS H.Qrs during the month of February 2009. The purpose was to find out their suitability for the award of fellowships for the year 2008-2009.

### NTS - GIA : Release of Funds

Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009 : Representatives of the following RFUs had approached the NTS for grants under GIA to conduct training programmes : 1. Dr. M. Massey, (Principal Ewing Christian College, Allahabad) 2. Dr.K.S.M.Yunus, (Manager-Eram Intermediate College, Lucknow) 3. Dr. Bashir Ahamad Dar (Chairman Al-Huda Public School, Srinagar) 4. Dr. Sheela Ramachandran (Principal PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore) 5. Dr. G. Govindasamy (Principal Jaya College of Education, Thiruninravur, Chennai). Their proposals have been approved by a committee and Rs.50,000/- each released as 1<sup>st</sup> installment).

## News & Events

### ← Inspection of applicant institutions for RFUs

14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2009 : A committee led by Dr. Jograj, Principal, UTRC, Solan and Dr. M. Balakumar, RRO & Coordinator of NTS programmes visited the applicant Institutions / Depts. of Hindi and Urdu speaking regions viz., Education Dept. of Himachal Pradesh University Shimla; Dronacharya College of Education, Kangra; Shanthi Devi Memorial School, Chandigarh and Urdu department, University of Delhi, Delhi for establishing Regional Field Units. They interacted with the Head of department / management of these Institutions regarding viability and suitability for housing the RFUs.

### ← Pre-convention meeting (Hindi)

15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2009 : A pre-convention meeting on testing & evaluation (Hindi) was held on 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 at NTS, CIIL, Mysore. Prof. S.C. Jaiswal, Regional Director, CHI, Delhi Centre, Prof. Gnanam, Regional Director, CHI, Mysore Centre, and Prof. Pon Subbiah, Head, NTS-India, were present in the meeting. Details regarding the date of convention, venue, time schedule for academic sessions, list of invitees, etc., were discussed and finalized.

### ← Documentary Film on Testing

19th Jan. 2009 : Mr. Virendra Valsangar, documentary producer from Pune visited NTS with the completed version of the Documentary Film on 'Achievement Test' and screened it in the Preview Theater of the CIIL for further comments. The film was watched by the Head, NTS, Programmes coordinator, and Academic & Technical staff of NTS. Suggestions were provided to Mr. Virendra Valsangkar for improving the quality of the documentary film.

### ← Recruitment Workshop

19th Jan. 2009 : A Workshop to select suitable candidates for the positions of Data Entry Operators in Hindi and Urdu was held. Activity based assignments like English/Hindi/Urdu data entry, dictation, note preparations, etc., were given to them followed by a group discussion. Based on their performance, credits were awarded by the Experts. Based on the overall credits obtained by the individuals, ranks were provided for maintaining a panel for future engagement.

### ← Visit of Senior Academics

23<sup>rd</sup> Jan. 2009 : Mr. A.P. Somasundaran, son of late A.K. Paranthamanar (a renowned Tamil Scholar), Chennai with Mr. S.M. Saleem, Director, Zonal Institute of Education & Training, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Mysore visited NTS. They met the Head, NTS. Mr.A.P. Somasundaran handed over a few books published by him about his father Mr. A.K. Parandamanar's literary work in Tamil.

### ← Recruitment Workshop

23<sup>rd</sup> Jan. 2009 : A Workshop to select suitable candidates for the positions of Assistant in the NTS, was held at the NTS Head Quarters, Mysore.

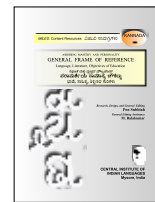
## Inspection of applicant institutions for establishing Regional Field Unit

24<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2009 : A four member team of NTS led by Mr. M. Saravana, SRP, NTS visited St. Joseph's College of Education, Ooty to find out its suitability for establishing RFU of NTS in the Region-5, Language-Tamil. College correspondent Rev. Fr. Edward and Principal, Mr. Paul Dhanasekaran received the team and briefed about the activities of their college. The members of the NTS team were introduced to the staff of the college. They were also taken around the college premises. The team visited different sections of the college such as office, classrooms, language laboratory, meeting hall, library, computer centre, guest house, etc. After returning back to the headquarters-Mysore, the team submitted a report on the observations made by them along with a duly filled in information checklist. The other members included in the team are Dr. G. Suseela, JRP academic, Mr. K.S.Raghavan, JRP technical, and Mr. Chandraiah from CIIL.

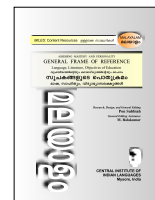
## What do they contain?

### General Frame of Reference (Language, Literature, & Personality)

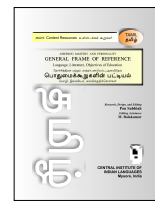
Provides Indian language *parallels* of the English terms that highlight the concepts of *language*, *literature*, and the 'all -round growth' perceived in terms of personality as highlighted in the Taxonomies of Educational Objectives. The terms, each of which represents a content concept, are the constituents of the GFR meant for developing tools & scales towards making an objective assessment of mastery of language & literature and personality developed there on. The terms are presented in the form of 3 (or 4) level matrix to highlight major, minor and sub components of the above areas duly projecting their structural hierarchy of pragmatic classification. This would ensure sampling error free content coverage for the construction of tests. The underlying theoretical premises are explained in the introductory part. Each of the term included is marked with a unique number code to facilitate reference across the MILES volumes in different Indian languages. The glossary part consists of two sections of which the first one is from English to an Indian language, and the second one vice versa. The GFR will serve as a help line to those who want to develop not only the test of varying lengths and levels of education but also the syllabi for language and literature courses.



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## Reader's View

### NTS Newsletter, a Hallmark Publication !

Vested with the interest in keeping readers well informed about the rational and empirical, theoretical and practical information pertaining to the on-going activities of testing and evaluation in India, the NTS Newsletter has excelled and does justification in terms of standard both in text and texture. Giving abstracts of earlier international publications and upcoming concepts in testing & evaluation in the form of abstracts can enhance the content. On-Line presentation of the newsletter will attract more readers worldwide. The effort of the editorial team is apparent in every page and the amount of labour involved in designing and editing is highly appreciable. No doubt, NTS Newsletter is a national hall mark publication on par with international standard, dedicated exclusively for testing and evaluation.

- Prof. C. Shunmugom, Professor & Head (Retd.)  
Dept. of Linguistics, Bharathiyar University, Coimbatore, TN.

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