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

For the first time in the country, National Level Language Tests (NLLTs) have been developed on a common framework and the pilot testing has been taken up in the field, on a *small* sample of 0.25% of the target group, before administering the same on the *actual* sample. In the present context the tests have been prepared in *three Indian languages* (Hindi, Tamil, & Urdu) at the *two crucial levels* of education (higher secondary and graduate).

Purpose of the Study: The *main* study is intended to *standardize* the tests on the one hand, and on the other to evolve a set of *common reference points* (*regional & national norms)* based on the performance of students. However, the purpose of this *pilot study* is basically meant to find out the *feasibility* of field administration and *practical difficulties* before taking up the main study. These common reference points would facilitate *inter* and *intra* level *comparison* among the students across the country irrespective of the *system* of education. It would also help to *equate* the certificates issued by *various universities* and *school boards* located in different regions. The completion of this study will help to address many of the ailments which come in the way of maintaining quality in education with comparability.

Representative Sample: The ideal sample advocated for the purpose of test standardization and norm fixing is usually 5% of the *target population*. In this case, the target population is about 80 lakhs (comprising the students learning the 3 languages at the 2 levels) and the required sample size (5%) is about 4 lakhs (the figures provided by RFUs projected for the year 2010-11). Since the field administration of the NLLTs on such a *huge* number of students who are spread across the country requires a lot of planning & execution strategies, it was decided to take up a pilot study with a small sample of 0.25%. Accordingly, the pilot testing was conducted on *20,888* students and the details are as follows : Higher Secondary : 11,115 (H-4,327, T-3,361, U-3,427) and Graduate: 9,773 (H-3,467, T-4,363, U-1,943).

Role of RFUs: Regional Field Units of NTS, which were entrusted with the responsibility of administering the NLLTs, were requested to identify the students for these tests by adopting *stratified random sampling procedure* in order to make the sample really *representative*. This was possible since each RFU has a tie up with 50 to 100 institutions located in their jurisdiction.

States & Regions covered: The pilot study was conducted in 14 states viz., Bihar, HP, MP, UP, and Uttarakhand - for *Hindi*; Puducherry and Tamil Nadu - for *Tamil*; AP, Chattisgarh, J&K, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and UP - for *Urdu* through 221 examination centres located across the length and breadth of the country under the jurisdiction of 36 Regional Field Units of NTS. This includes Srinagar in the *North*, Dehradun in the *North-East*, Jamshedpur in the *East*, Chennai in *South-East*, Tirunelveli in *South*, Hubli in the *South-West*, Nasik in *West*, and Kota in *North-West*. More than 1000 teachers were involved in the field administration of the NLLTs.

CONTENTS

Eligibility for NLLT: *Higher Secondary Level*: Those who have appeared for the board examinations held in March / April 2010 with H / T / U as one of the subjects of study. *Graduate Level*: Those who have appeared for the university / college II year exam held in April / May 2010 with one of these languages as a subject of study (under part I/II). In both the cases, production of a photocopy of the 'hall ticket' issued by the respective school board / university was made mandatory.

Incentives for Students: Since NLLT is not a compulsory requirement as per the course curriculum, getting adequate number of students (as appropriate samples under different categories) would be a difficult task, even for this pilot study. Therefore, *advertisements* were released announcing a *cash incentive* for every test taker [@ Rs.100/- and 120/- for higher secondary and graduate level respectively] along with a *participation certificate* from the NTS-I. In this way, the required number of students from various *categories* and also from various *geographical areas* were mobilised.

The Framework & Q-A Books: The Framework* of NLLT has been designed to accommodate the questions pertaining to all the components that are outlined in the *Concept based Continuum of Graded Syllabi* (*CCGS*) viz., *subject matter, human traits* (personality factors) and the *societal needs.* However, for the pilot study, the NLLT has been *limited to only the first two categories* of components and does not include the *third* for want of the required *manpower* and *material resources*. The third category will be taken care of when the large scale administration is initiated in the subsequent months.

For the purpose of convenience and practical considerations, the question paper and answer sheets have been blended together and named as *question-cum-answer book* (Q-A book). The Q-A book for higher secondary level consists of 24 *pages* and that of graduate level 28 *pages with a consolidation table at the top,* uniformly in all the *three* languages. Every NLLT paper consists of *three major parts,* one each devoted for *language, literature,* and *application of lg. & lit.* Parts I and II deal with the *structural elements* (about 700) as well as their *dimensional factors* (about 5600 @ 8 each per structural element). Part III which is divided into two sections deals with the *personality traits* (about 100) revealed through usage (application) of lg. & lit., in the given context. This has been worked out to ensure *sampling error free content coverage* of what is being intended to be tested and also to match with the objectives of education as outlined in the NPE, in a quantifiable form.

Content Inputs: In the Indian context, *language teaching* is not generally differentiated from *literature teaching*. Keeping this ground reality in mind, content inputs for these tests have been drawn from both these areas, by following the *ratios* worked out in the NLLT framework. The *content free* and *context free* factors that are outlined in the General Frame of Reference (for lg., lit., & pers.) and CCGS (and are found common in the syllabi of various courses across the languages) were drawn and incorporated as *content inputs*. Thus, the NLLTs are *independent* of any specific syllabus or text book prescribed by any School Board or University. This is intended to facilitate *inter* and *intra* language comparability. Since they are *content free* and *context free* instruments of evaluation, these tests could be adopted by any *individual* or *institution* and in any *language*.

Preparation & Distribution: More than 200 scholars including the *fellowship awardees* (of doctoral & post doctoral research) as well as the *participants* of the *short term projects* of MILES & NTS were involved in the preparation of the Q-A books and the *answer cum scoring keys*. In order to ensure the timely delivery of the Q-A books, they were *airlifted* to the examination centres located in faraway places like Jammu & Kashmir, Shimla, Ambikapur, Kangra, Lucknow, Aligarh, Jamshedpur, Kota, etc. For the centres located in southern part of the country, they were *transported by road* through hired vehicles, under the supervision of the NTS personnel.

Examination Cell: The physical arrangements being made for the conduct of the NLLTs have been monitored by the NTS personnel either by visiting the examination centres or by inviting the RFU personnel to a nearby place. For the purpose of ensuring quick disposal of the queries/issues related to the field administration of NLLT, an Examination Cell headed by a senior academician and assisted by a group of Jr. Resource Persons (technical), has been constituted. This Cell which is located at the NTS H.Qrs., operated in coordination with all the RFUs by using a variety of communication facilities such as fax / phone / e-mail, etc. Though the NTS works for 6 days a week, the Examination Cell along with the concerned language faculty was working for *all the 7 days of a week* during this period, in order to ensure the simultaneous conduct of the NLLT across the country for each language. For higher secondary level, the tests were held on 11/04/10 (in Hindi & Tamil) and on 18/04/10 (in Urdu); and for graduate level on 09/05/10 (in all the three languages).

- Editor

* given under R&D (in page 3)   *- to be continued...*

R&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.

NLLT Framework - Graduate Level

Object (area) being assessed	Details of Major Components	No. of Minor Components	No. of Sub Components (dimensions)	No. of Micro Components (dimensions)	No. of Items	Itemwise Distribution of Marks
I. Subject Matter						
a. *Language*	Phonology	4	14	6	3	1 + 1 + 2 = 4
(8.4 % of components covered in the test)	Morphology	8	40	33	4	1 + 1 + 2 + 3 = 7
	Syntax	8	26	27	3	1 + 2 + 3 = 6
	Semantics	2	20	0	4	1 + 1 + 2 + 3 = 7
	Total	**22**	**100**	**66**	**14**	**24**
b. *Literature*	Genesis	2	14	28	3	2 + 2 + 2 = 6
(3.2 % of components covered in the test)	Generics	3	40	189	5	1 + 2 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 12
	Aesthetics	2	17	73	3	2 + 2 + 5 = 9
	Affectives	3	27	54	3	2 + 2 + 5 = 9
	Total	**10**	**98**	**344**	**14**	**36**
II. Individual Traits						
a. (thro' Appln. / usage of *lang.*)	Cognitive (Thinking)	8	11	7	3	1 + 2 + 2 = 5
(23.8 % of components covered in the test)	Affective (Feeling)	7	13	-	3	1 + 2 + 2 = 5
	Psychomotor (Action)	7	11	-	4	1 + 1 + 2 + 2 = 6
	Total	**22**	**35**	**7**	**10**	**16**
b. (thro' Appln. / usage of *lit.*)	Cognitive (Thinking)	8	11	7	4	1 + 1 + 2 + 3 = 7
(28.6 % of components covered in the test)	Affective (Feeling)	7	13	-	4	1 + 1 + 2 + 3 = 7
	Psychomotor (Action)	7	11	-	4	1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10
	Total	**22**	**35**	**7**	**12**	**24**
III. Societal Values	(Not covered at present)					
	Grand Total	**76**	**268**	**424**	**50**	**100**

Current Activities

Workshop on Evaluation Concepts

24th May to 5th June 2010

This workshop was initiated and conducted in different phases. The present one is meant to scrutinize the explanations of the evaluation concepts prepared in Tamil. The objective was to cross check the text in terms of the usage of certain vocabulary items having multiple meanings, depending on the contexts of their usage. It was felt necessary for maintaining internal consistency of the material developed in Tamil, by a group of scholars in different phases of the workshop. Dr. Sethumani Manian of Madurai took up current phase of the work along with a group of research scholars (comprising the fellowship awardees and short term workshop invitees) from Tamil region. The fellowship awardees included Mr. L.R.Premkumar, Ms. N.Saranyadevi, Mr. K.Rajkumar, and Ms. S.Elavarasi. The short term workshop invitees were Mr. K. Sundaram, Ms. S.Sasikala, and Mr. S.Srinivasan. The programme was coordinated by Dr. M.Balakumar under the guidance and supervision of Prof. Pon Subbiah, Head NTS-India.

Workshop on Review of MILES materials

17th to 22nd May 2010

A five day workshop was arranged to scrutinize one of the re-composed MILES materials (already published under content series) viz., 'Assessing Mastery of Language'. It is meant to be used as a basic reference material for item setting for NLLTs. The objective of this workshop was to update the material for its comprehensiveness before republishing it as a 2nd edition. Dr. A.Kamatchi (Annamalai University, Chidambaram) and Dr. T.Parasuraman (PILC, Puducherry) participated in this programme.

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

• **NTS-I Specialised Library :** NTS has created a small specialised library. It has got a good collection of theoretical and practical works on testing, measurement, assessment, accreditation, examination and evaluation. It is also enriched with a number of general and specialised encyclopedias, dictionaries, and books on terminological explanations. Various works related to this multi-disciplinary area (that encompasses the disciplines of education, psychology, statistics, linguistics, etc.) have been procured apart from the grammatical & literary works in Hindi, Tamil, Urdu, and English. Basically, this library is meant to cater to the requirements of the NTS academics, visiting scholars, doctoral and post doctoral fellowship

A view of NTS Library

awardees. However, many staff of the other departments are also making use of this library. The month of May 2010 witnessed a number of new arrivals. Suggestions for further procurement of valuable materials if any in this area may be communicated to Mr. R.Balakrishnan, Librarian, NTS, on E-mail *srbalalib@rediffmail.com*

• **Updation of NTS Mail List:** Action has been initiated to update the NTS Mail list by incorporating the changes in the addresses of individuals as a result of their retirements, transfers, promotions, etc.

• **Application Software :** For analysing the NLLT pilot study results, a special software is under development. In this connection, preliminary discussion is going on with the Head, NTS and the members of Examination Cell.

C&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

MILES Workshop on Indian Language Parallels for Evaluation Terminology

9th May 2010

A view of the MILES workshop

This ongoing programme was initiated to prepare terminology parallels and explanations in Indian languages for the technical terms in English that represent various concepts of testing and evaluation. The resource persons who are currently working for this purpose are : Dr. Rishi Bhushan Choubey (JNU-Delhi) and Dr. Shyama Singh (SNS University, Varanasi) for Hindi, Dr. B.Nehruji (Gandhigram Rural University) for Tamil, Dr. Asma Javeria (UOM, Mysore) for Urdu, and Dr. S.Puttaraju and Mr. M.Manjunatha (UOM, Mysore) for Kannada. Senior Professors Dr. G.H.Parvathathamma and Prof. C.G.Venkataramana Setty (retd. from the Dept. of Education, UOM, Mysore) have been extending guidance & consultancy for this work in respect of Kannada. The programme is being coordinated by Dr. M.Balakumar under the guidance and supervision of Prof. Pon Subbiah, Head NTS-India.

Short Term Project for NLLT Item writing
May 2010

Young scholars invited from the states of Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Jharkhand, Manipur, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal were getting their on the job training in item setting & test preparation. In this process, a set of draft materials for NLLT in Hindi, Tamil, and Urdu was also developed. The programme which commenced during October 2009 came to an end on 15th May 2010. During the valedictory session of this programme, Prof. Pon Subbiah (Head, NTS) stressed upon the need for developing human resources in this specialised area of testing & evaluation, and opined that NTS was

A view of participants in the workshop

fulfilling this requirement by undertaking various other programmes, apart from creating sub-schemes to extend academic and financial support. He added that the question items which were intended to assess the mastery of language & literature should be qualitatively different from those meant for assessing the personality aspects of learner growth.

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

Field Administration of Graduate Level NLLT
9th May 2010

Graduate Level NLLT 2009-10 was conducted across the country in three languages viz. Hindi, Tamil, and Urdu. The details such as states participated, number of test centres, number of students attended the NLLT, etc., are given below (language-wise) :

Hindi Speaking Area

Sl. No.	States / Regions involved	No. of Centres		No. of Students	
		main	addnl.	allotted	attended
1.	HP : Shimla	04	09	1000	504
2.	UKD: Dehradun	08	10	2000	264
3.	UP : Allahabad	03	03	750	709
4.	MP : Jabalpur	09	11	2250	1990
	Total	**24**	**33**	**6000**	**3467**

Hindi region

Tamil Speaking Area

Tamil region

Sl.No.	Regions involved	No. of Centres		No. of Students	
		main	addnl.	allotted	attended
1.	TN : Chennai	02	02	500	300
2.	” Kalavai	02	02	500	396
3.	” Salem	02	02	500	500
4.	” Villupuram	02	02	500	526
5.	” Coimbatore	02	02	500	416
6.	” Thiruchengode	02	02	500	500
7.	” Trichy	02	02	500	500
8.	” Madurai	02	02	500	500
9.	” Karaikudi	02	02	500	285
10.	” Tirunelveli	02	02	500	440
	Total	**20**	**20**	**5000**	**4363**

Urdu Speaking Area

Sl. No.	States / Regions involved	No. of Centres		No. of Students	
		main	addnl.	allotted	attended
1.	J&K : Jammu	03	03	750	715
2.	Rajasthan : Kota	01	01	250	222
3.	UP : Aligarh	02	02	500	500
4.	JHD : Jamshedpur	02	01	250	267
5.	AP : Hyderabad	02	01	250	239
	Total	**10**	**08**	**2000**	**1943**

Urdu region

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

Academic Activities of NTS under GIA:

NTS-I has been encouraging various institutions and individuals across the country to undertake research, develop materials, and to impart training in the area of testing and evaluation by extending financial assistance through NTS-GIA. The academic activities that have been taken up under this sub-scheme during 2009-10 are listed below:

Sl.No.	Name of the Topic

General:

1. Workshop on generation of question items in accordance with instructional objectives of teaching didactic literature.

2. Workshop on Assessment of geology (degree level) question papers carrying Tamil translations.

3. Workshop on Preparation of test items for measuring affective aspects of adolescent students.

4. Training programme for doctoral students on testing and evaluation.

5. Workshop on developing question (item) bank in astronomic sciences.

6. Evaluation of curriculam-syllabi and source materials with reference to elementary teacher education.

7. Short term research study on testing of word formation techniques for Tamil verbal reasoning tests.

8. Short term research study on evaluation of the effectiveness of internal tests in English - a case study.

9. Short term research study on standardizing the tool to evaluate the soft-skill of college students.

10. Short term research study on evaluation of health status and its influence on the school children (6-10 years)

North-East Region:

1. Short term research study on "activity based teaching methods: testing and evaluation with the middle school teachers"

2. Short term research study on "a study on the effects of washback of English language testing on teaching and learning English at UG level, in colleges under Assam University"

3. Short term research study on "study on the effectiveness of using computerized testing automatic evaluation system".

4. Workshop on "question item preparation for Hindi subject teachers of the secondary and higher secondary level".

5. Workshop on "question item preparation for Hindi literature at secondary level".

What does it mean ?

Skill is defined as the ability to do something well, arising from talent, thinking, or practice. It also indicates the performance involving muscular action. In the area of language education, it refers to the language related performance. The elements of language are integrated into the total skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing and also of their manifestations. These skills are required to be tested in three operating contexts viz., identification, production, and usage with suitability.

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

D&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 meet the shortage of trained manpower ● To evolve a system of eclectic intelligentsia by pooling together the potentials available across the disciplines

Institutions housing the NTS fellowship awardees

NTS-I has instituted a sub scheme for the award of 30 doctoral and 15 post doctoral research fellowships per year, to the young researchers of various disciplines representing Hindi, Tamil, and Urdu speaking areas.The following are the Institutions / Universities from where scholars are availing the NTS *research fellowships,* as on May 2010 :

Sl. No.	Name of the Insitution / University	Sl. No.	Name of the Insitution / University	Sl. No.	Name of the Insitution / University
1.	Alagappa University, Karaikudi	10.	Jiwaji University, Gwalior	19.	Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad
2.	Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh	11.	Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi	20.	Patna University, Patna
3.	Banasthali University, Banasthali, Tonk	12.	Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai	21.	Periyar University, Salem
4.	Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi	13.	Magadh Mahila College, Patna University, Patna	22.	Presidency College, Chennai
5.	Bharathiar University, Coimbatore	14.	Maharaja's College, University of Mysore	23.	Pondicherry Institute of Linguistics and Culture, Pondicherry
6.	Bharathidasan University, Trichy	15.	Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati University, Ajmer	24.	Queen Mary's College (Autonomous), Chennai
7.	CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar	16.	Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi	25.	Ranchi University, Ranchi
8.	Dravidian University, Kuppam	17.	Mangalore University, Mangalore	26.	Ravenshaw University, Cuttack
9.	Gandhigram Rural University, Dindigul	18.	Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli	27.	Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupathi
				28.	Tamil University, Thanjavur
				29	University of Madras, Chennai
				30.	University of Mysore, Mysore

News Capsule

☞ *Review on Documentary Scripts*

The NTS academic groups scrutinized the production scripts sent by documentary film producers (who were assigned this responsibility of producing NTS documentaries). Later, the suggestions on each script were consolidated and made available to the producers concerned, for necessary improvement.

☞ *Distribution of NLLT related items*

To ensure the arrangements made for the conduct of NLLTs in Hindi & Urdu Regions, five teams were formed. They visited the respective RFUs and also handed over the funds in the form of DDs to meet the expenditure in this connection. Similarly, three teams were formed for Tamil Regions. Apart from verifying the preparedness of the RFUs for the administration of the NLLTs, the materials needed for the tests were also delivered by these teams.

What does it mean ?

Ability is not a scientific term, it usually refers to the 'innate ability' / 'inherent potential' to perform. It is perceived to be the mental or thinking process and sometimes known as competence. In a way, intelligence may also be related to this. In the area of language education, this term is used to indicate one's capability to listen, speak, read, and write.

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

What do they contain?

Bilingual Glossary of Evaluation Terms developed in Hindi and Urdu are ready for printing. Each one of them 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; consists of 2 sections of which the first is the alphabetically arranged entries of Indian language parallels (along with corresponding English terms), and the next one is alphabetically arranged English terms (along with the corresponding Indian language parallels).
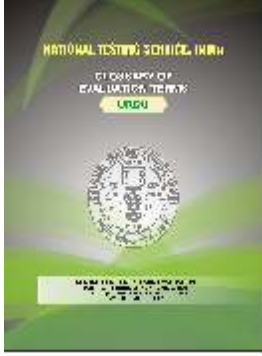
Many of the terms are highly technical such as *homoscedasticity*, *hetrotrait-monomethod validity, three parameter model* (logistics), and so on. Some of them are in phrasal forms like *role of evaluation*, *purposes of evaluation, tools of evaluation, types of scales,* etc., and some in compound forms like *behavioural objectives, educational objectives, instructional objectives,* etc. Concepts which are often referred to by more than one synonymous forms such as *objective type question, close ended question, fixed response item,* have also been indicated (under each of the entries). These two volumes have been finalized and are being sent for printing and publication.
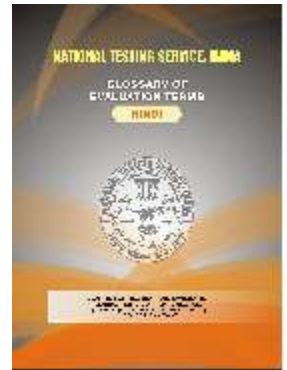
Programmes for June

☛ A fifteen day workshop for making press ready copies of conceptual explanation of evaluation terminology in Kannada is scheduled to be held from 3rd June 2010.

☛ A six day workshop on MILES Data Base development (phase II) is scheduled to be held from 7th June 2010.

☛ A four day workshop on CCGS (for outlining the dimensional factors of Human Traits) is scheduled to be held from 10th June 2010.

☛ A five day workshop for verifying the press ready copies of GFR and Glossary of Evaluation Terms (in Hindi, Tamil, and Urdu) is scheduled to be held from 22nd June 2010.

☛ A two day workshop on NLLTs (Higher Secondary & Graduate levels) in Tamil for obtaining feedback (before commencing Item Analysis & Test Analysis), is scheduled to be held on 22nd & 23rd June 2010.

☛ A two week workshop on Graded Tests for Language & Literature in Tamil for Seven Levels is scheduled to be held from 29th June 2010.

Reader's View

The monthly Newsletter of NTS-India is becoming more and more attractive and worth reading. The first page editorial of January 2010 issue "NTS-India Reaffirms...", is useful for all the groups and cadres. It is an appetizer to me for the next one. I am sure, the newsletter is getting applause from various parts of the country. My wishes to the NTS for doing this excellent job.

- Mr. B. Mukherjee, Ex- officer, NIC, Kolkata