

ELTAI - Annual Report 2015 – 2016

*(Presented by Dr. K. Elango, National Secretary,
at the Annual conference held at Hyderabad held in July last)*

*In the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) those who learned to collaborate
and improvise most effectively have prevailed.*

-Charles Darwin

The report has a dual focus: looking backward and looking forward. Let me start with looking backward to recall and place before you some of the significant activities of the year. The last year's conference, i.e. 10th International cum 46th Annual Conference, was held in Raj Kumar Goel Institute of Technology for Women at Ghaziabad in UP from 9th to 11th July 2015 on the theme of *Learning and Teaching of English: Setting Standards*, which was ably led by our Joint Secretary, Dr. Shравan Kumar. We would like to place on record our appreciation to the management of the college and the department of English for organizing the conference par excellence.

The flagship of our association, *The Journal of English Language Teaching*, has reached the milestone of 50 years and we brought out the Golden Jubilee issue in August 2015 to celebrate the achievement. We are proud of the fact that ours is one of the oldest journals globally in the field of ELT and we are marching ahead with a renewed energy for the centenary celebration. With its print, we also have the e-version of the journal accessible only to the members of the association and three other open e-journals, viz. *The Journal of Teaching and Research in English Literature*, *The Journal of Technology for ELT* and *The English Practitioner*. We are now in the process of getting the impact factor for the *Journal English Language Teaching* with Cosmos for the greater acceptance of the journal by the academia.

As we all know 2016 being the 400th Death

Anniversary of Shakespeare we are also commemorating it holding various activities in six different cities in our country: Delhi, Jaipur, Bilaspur, Thiruvananthapuram, Thoothukudi and Chennai. On 16th June we had the inaugural at JBAS College for Women, Chennai, and an array of activities was flagged off by the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Shri. Dr. Rosaiah. The planned activities include competitions such as quiz, staging scenes from the plays, conversion of characters and exhibitions on the plays of Shakespeare for students and regional and national seminars for teachers. The awards are to be presented to the best performers at the valedictory function to be held in December in Chennai.

This year we received grants from two sources: the IATEFL grant, we were one of the two associates given the grant, enabled us to conduct 15 workshops in various parts of our country – from Tuticorin to Trupathi in the south to Bilaspur in the north and Shillong in the north-east. Besides, six workshops for cluster institutions of Kendriya Vidyalayas in the Chennai region were also conducted. A similar initiative has been undertaken with other groups of schools that are privately managed across the state. Needless to point out that among teachers there is an overwhelming demand for such workshops from many educational institutions. We find this as an ongoing project even after utilizing the IATEFL grant.

Another source of funding was from the Hornby Trust, which helped us to conduct workshops

for training teachers in the use of mobile technologies for enhancing the teaching and learning of English in the Indian context. These workshops drew teachers from various parts of the country and the use of podcast, padlet, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Google groups, Google Drive, blogs and mobile phones were dealt with and the participants unanimously felt that the workshops broadened their approach to teach English and make their classes engaging and motivating.

Peter Drucker has rightly said "Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work." In terms of the association membership it seems we have plateaued, unable to cross even 5000 when we have set our eyes on 10, 000 a couple of years ago. And, the chapters after reaching 63 we have brought them down to 46 after deleting some of the dysfunctional partners. However, this did not discourage us from launching new ones – this year has seen the birth of two chapters one at Namakkal in Tamil Nadu and the other at Gauhati in Assam. Let me take this opportunity to appeal to the chapter convenors to reach out to all the teachers in your regions to professionalize them, which was the prime objective behind establishing chapters.

Looking Forward:

Let me look at ELTAI Vis-a-Vis other associations of English language teachers, possibly for future directions.

While ELTAI is typically confining itself to teaching and learning of English language there are associations which have transcended these boundaries and moved on to carry out several socially relevant activities. ETAS, i.e. English

Teachers Association in Switzerland, with just about 700+ members has many projects, one among them is called Teacher-to-Teacher project, in countries such as Romania, India and Zimbabwe. Their project in Zimbabwe is known as the Matopo project, which is supported by the Roger Federer Foundation, has built 6 primary schools and one secondary school, constructed a dormitory for girls to pursue their education, given scholarship to 30 girls for 3 years to complete their secondary education as they believe in the principle of "Educate a woman, you educate a nation" and through Spend a Penny Project they built a number of girls' toilets.

The request, hence, to the ELTAI members is, as Albert Einstein mentions, "Once we accept out limits, we go beyond them", to suggest new pathways to the association to become relevant and meaningful to the society at large. And, to increase the membership of our association I appeal to the ELTAI members to seek library membership as libraries are expected to subscribe to journals and have earmarked funding for it. While the subscription for foreign journals runs into thousands of rupees annually, paying rupees 3000/- for ten years is a pittance for them but for us it is the survival.

Let me end with a personal thought: Dr. Verghese Kurien brought about the white revolution; Dr. M.S. Swaminathan heralded a green revolution; Dr. Sam Pitroda launched a telecom revolution but English language teaching is still awaiting a messiah who can launch a revolution for effective teaching learning processes of English in our country. Do you find yourself in the vanguard?

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