

“We Don’t Like to Compete, Our Task is to Create Competition”



N Subramanian is a successful entrepreneur and an expert in high volume data processing and data capture services. He is a person with very innovative ideas; he takes pride in pioneering lots of new concepts in examination testing at various universities in India. In conversation with N Subramaniam, MD, TRS Forma, with Pragya Gupta, he talks about e-Assessment, e-valuation and education technology market in India

Please throw some light on TRS Forma operations in India?

TRS is a professionally managed company, one that has access to lot of modern tools for catering to the data capturing and imaging related needs of various government and private institutions. TRS specialises in providing integrated solutions in the field of document and data capturing by using OMR and ICR techniques. Besides technological support, TRS takes pride in being exclusive distributor for the sophisticated range of OMR scanners of DRS plc., United Kingdom, and Sekonic of Japan. TRS is also a reseller for ABBYY Software of Russia and Archival and Retrieval software from Edocs.

TRS has one of the largest OMR bureaus in India, consisting of six high-end scanners each capable of scanning around 7200 sheets per hour. Scanning of these OMR sheets is a one step process and information gets accessed quickly, accurately and securely.

How do you see education technology market shaping up in India?

Technology in education is always an advantage and is accepted by the end users with full appreciation. Education technology market is definitely shaping very well in India and in one or two years it will change the complete outlook of the education in India.

What is the role of e-Assessment and e-Valuation in education? How do you see the adoption among school and higher education segment?

e-Assessment and e-Valuation definitely bring a big change in the quality of testing and evaluation which is very much required in today's situation. Schools and higher education segment are looking for such technology solutions to improve their quality and also to achieve that without much trouble. So we are finding that the acceptance level is increasing day by day for such solutions.

What is the market size of e-Assessment and e-valuation? How useful and safe is the technology?

The approximate market size for e-Assessment and e-Valuation is 500 crores. e-Assessment as you know has brought in high class change in the quality of examination and selection process. We have so many complications in the selection process. The volume swells every year. e-Assessment is a must for any examination or recruit-

ment process. Even though Government of India is working towards reducing the number of competitive exams, the process will take few years. With so many competitive exams being conducted the students also find it difficult to prepare for all these exams. e-Assessment can also be a good tool for giving students the confidence for facing such exams. Schools as such are yet to make use of the e-Assessment in a bigger level. Currently with the availability of mobile devices like the tablet PCs, the students can be given a short test after every class to get a feed back on the level of understanding in that class. Based on the analysis extra classes can be arranged to make the students understand the particular chapter properly.

How do you see the acceptance of e-Valuation by Indian education system?

e-Valuation is something which is being looked upon by the education boards and university. The necessity arises from the fact that getting the required number of proper valuers for each subject is difficult. When the shortage is there then each evaluator is asked to look at more booklets within the short time. This leads to lowering of quality. In e-Valuation the answer sheets are fully digitised, so an immediate archival can be done. It is made easy for evaluators to access the image copy of the answer booklet through the net or intranet. All facilities like key points for each answer and maximum marks for each question are controlled from the software. Hence errors are avoided to a great extent. There will not be any case for re-totaling. In case of request for revaluation, the complete image copy of the answer booklet can be given to the student; this has also become a mandatory under RTI rules. If the same booklet has to be re-valued that can be arranged immediately by posting that answer booklet again for the valuation. Good control on the valuation front can be brought in by administration module where the activities can be statistically viewed both individually and overall. This will help the exam controllers to take remedial action

at the right time if any valuator is not doing the right job or is not meeting the targets of valuation. So delay in results can be avoided. Also once the valuation is over the result preparation will be instantaneous. Slowly universities are getting on to pilot projects and upon successful implementation, full acceptance will come. Currently there are some practical difficulties of providing the required infrastructure and it will take some time to overcome the same.

Please share with us the details of latest products or solutions you are planning to launch in the Indian market.

Launch of automatic dummy numbering system for the subjective exams is a mile stone for TRS. This has been accepted by some of the leading universities like Bangalore University and Kanpur University. In Tamil Nadu, universities like Periyar University, Baratiar University, Alagappa University have implemented the system successfully. Our e-Valuation system has by now been fully tested and is now fully ready to be launched. We are the only company in India to have e-Valuation software developed indigenously. Another product that is being launched is our comprehensive Question bank software which can handle objective and subjective inputs for an organisation of any size. It is finding a good response and we are in the process of implementing it in 3 to 4 universities before April. We are also coming up with a security product for the certificates and mark statements. Even though more than a dozen security features are printed in every certificate, forgeries keep happening. Our product is so secured that duplicating or

tampering is impossible. The process of verification in case of our product is also very simple.

Tell us about your OMR, ICR and examination solutions?

The requirement of OMR or ICR solution comes due to the high volume of process. These are introduced to replace the manual data entry and to speed up the process. Of course, with all that speed the output will be more accurate than the manual methods. Because of the speed the results are out within the shortest time and so the selection process is fast. Quality of testing has improved a lot and the selections have been very fair. Some coaching centres, where OMR has been introduced, are conducting almost one test daily. These tests are mainly based on the previous day class, and they help the students in getting better understanding of their lessons.

Please share with us your future plans for the Indian market.

Most of TRS products and solutions are those that are in great demand in the country. TRS solutions are definitely required in every university and education board all over India. We plan to establish our presence entire country, and offer our services in a more professional manner. Currently we have our branches in Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Allahabad. We are in the process of opening new offices in Pune, Kolkatta and Jaipur. TRS may be the only company of this size to have a permanent R&D division where solutions for the current and future requirement are being prepared. We don't like to compete; our task is to create competition. ■

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