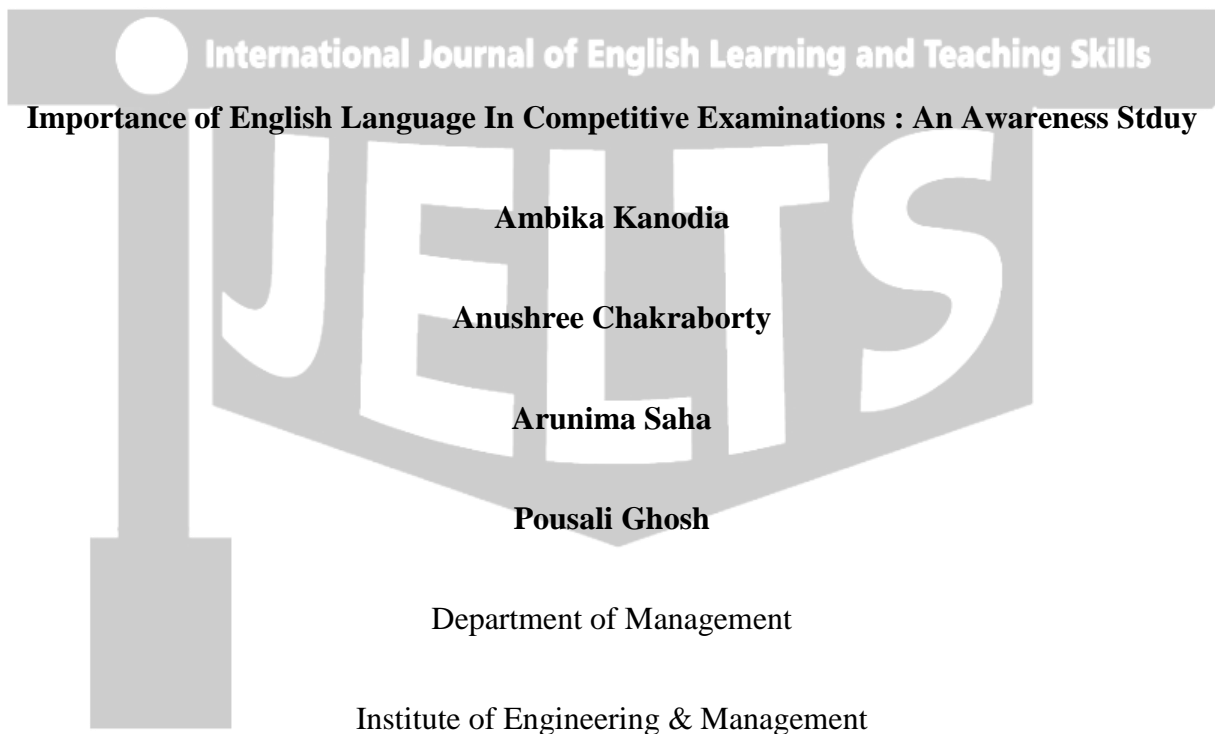


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EXAMINATIONS 1



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Importance of English Language In Competitive Examinations : An Awareness Study

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ABSTRACT

Competitive Examinations are held to examine the IQ, the Logical Quotient and the Analytical Understanding of the candidate. Generally all competitive examinations have few subjects in common like Quantitative Aptitude, Logical Reasoning and English Language. English is a language that is widely spoken and understood by people all over the globe. Being one of the most commonly used languages, English has occupied its place in competitive examinations in order to understand the reading, writing and understanding skills of candidates. Communication skills of a person are evaluated partly on the marks scored in paper of English Language in the various competitive examinations. Most of the educational institutions today have designed their curriculum where English is taught and learned as first language and mother tongue becomes the second language. This is a small example to prove the importance of English in our education system as well as well as our careers. When people sit for competitive examinations either for further studies or for various government or private jobs, English is an unavoidable paper. This somehow depicts the importance of English Language in various Competitive Examinations. Proper use of the language is also regarded as a skill developed with continuous practice and learning techniques. Learning English and gaining a fluency in the language widens the career prospects.

Key words: Competitive Examinations, Communication Skill, Career, Awareness, Opportunities, Language, Skill, Education, Candidates, English Language, Techniques.

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INTRODUCTION

The growing interest of young aspirants for various competitive examinations is because they have understood that clearing these examinations will bring them a step closer to their dream career. Competitive examinations have become an easy way for various organisations to assess the abilities of candidates on various parameters. Securing a permanent job is the most desired objective of young aspirants today. This not only improves their financial status but also reduces the burden of earning at early age. English language has become an unavoidable part of our lives today and we cannot deny this.

A competitive examination is a type of examination that ranks the candidate as per their scores or percentile in the examination and then selects the top rankers. These examinations are used as an entrance examination for various colleges and universities for the purpose of admission and also as an entrance exam for taking any job. In India there are various competitive examinations held throughout the year. Some of the competitive examinations are CSE (Civil Service Examination), TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language), CAT (Common Admission Test), MAT (Management Aptitude Test), IISO (International Social Study Olympiad), IOM (International Olympiad of Mathematics), and NSTSE (National Science Talent Search Examination). These competitive examinations are held all levels after class 10 and for all fields of education and job prospects. Various competitive examinations have various eligibility criteria depending upon the purpose and level of exam. Every year more than 3 crore candidates appear for these competitive examinations. Competitive examinations help the students to choose a career and/or identify their area of interest with a deeper knowledge about the subject. In India candidates can appear for these examinations from an early age. With the ever increasing level of competition, the competitive

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examinations play a vital role in the students' education life. These competitive examinations are usually organized at State, National and International levels by various recognized bodies.

English is the third most spoken language in the world. English as a language has had a deep influence in our country. India is a big country with diverse culture, traditions and numerous languages. It is interesting to see that as we move from one region to another, the language also is very different. But it is important to have a language with which we can connect to the world. The domination of the British helped India to realize long back that English is important for career advancement and respect in the business world. That is why quite importance is given to the studying of English language. Though English is not a native language of our country but in recent times it is seen that learning this language has helped the people in their overall development. Now English is quite popular in almost all the regions of this multilingual country.

English is one of the most preferred languages when it comes to education, especially higher education as well as for job seeking. In most of the schools the students learn their mother language as well as English. Most of the education boards and other recognized bodies use English as their official language. Even most of the competitive examinations that are held at state and national levels are conducted in English. Also English is given a great deal of importance as there is also a section comprised of questions from English in many competitive examinations like CAT, SSC, etc. The General English section in these examinations usually focuses on the knowledge and understanding of the English in terms of basic grammar, vocabulary and common important rules of the language. Usually the General English section comprises of 25% of the total question paper. This weightage may differ for different competitive examinations.

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PAST AND PRESENT

India was exposed to English Language with the entry of East India Company and since then English Language didn't leave us. Now it has become an inseparable part of Indian Subcontinent. India being one of the colonial states of East India Company had undergone innumerable changes, amongst other changes one major change was the Civil Service Examinations conducted to select Civil Servants for East India Company. Initially, civil servants for the East India Company were nominated by Directors of the company and then for their training were sent to London. In 1854, Lord Maculay's Report of the Select Committee of British Parliament suggested the concept of merit based modern Civil Service in India; this was the advent of Competitive Examinations in India. The syllabus of this examination was designed to have a predominance of European Classics which made it difficult for Indians. The language was English and that's how English Language gained popularity in the competitive examinations. From 1922, the civil service examinations were held in India; until then it was held in London. The committee responsible was named as Federal Public Service Commission. Later many other rank based examinations became a part of the Indian Education and Government Recruitment system. After the inauguration of Indian constitution in 1950, the Federal Public Service Commission was renamed as Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). Since then English has been a part of various competitive examinations held in India.

Today the young aspirants primarily think about getting a decent job to sustain their lifestyle. Appearing for various Competitive Examinations is the way to enter a professional course or getting various government jobs. Here English language plays an important role because it has become a language known to the population as it has gained universal acceptance and preference

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over other languages, hence the command over English Language is checked in various Competitive Examinations. English Language has developed to an immense level of significance in our day to day life, to keep up with upcoming changes in technology or work system good understanding about the language is extremely important. Even though the most spoken language in our country is Hindi but India is the second largest English speaking country in the world. English Language has become extremely important and this brings light to the awareness among people regarding English Language. With growing competition and easy access to various skill development courses, English language has its importance in all dimensions. We are well aware that most of these skill development courses are taught in English Language. Hence we cannot close our eyes to the vital role English Language plays in our lives both as students and as employees. There are many states in India where English is not taught proficiently which diminishes the opportunity horizon of the candidates.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For understanding the various perspectives of people on the context of the inter relatedness of English Language and Competitive Examinations, we have made a survey, using Google Forms. This Google Form was divided in five sections and total number of questions asked was eighteen. A sample of hundred respondents was collected out of which 96 respondents have appeared for competitive examinations held in India. We tried to collect data from people who have at least once appeared for any type of competitive examinations.

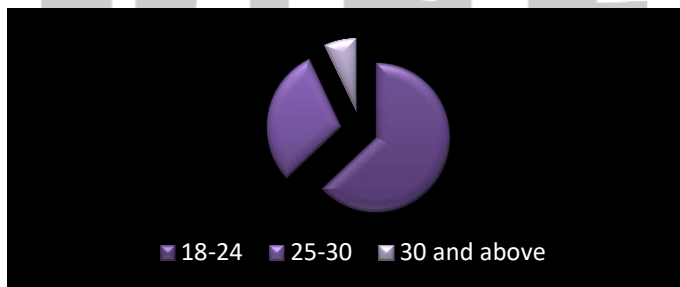
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FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

From our survey we found out the following results to the various questions asked in the questionnaire prepared by us:-

Age group of our respondents:-

The age group was divided in three segments where 18 to 24 years had the maximum share of 63%, then the age group of 25 to 30 was 30% and finally respondents above 30 comprised of 7% of the sample size of 100 respondents.



Q. Has the respondent ever appeared for any competitive examination?

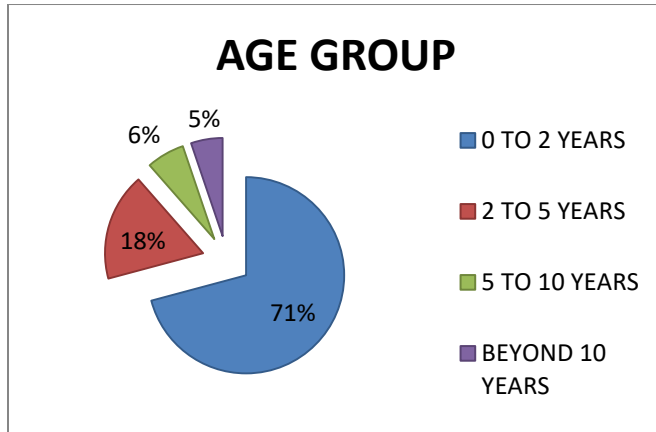
Ans. Out of 100 respondents 95 respondents have appeared for competitive examination, 1 respondent who is preparing for a competitive examination and the rest 4 respondents have not appeared for any type of competitive examination.

With the above question the basic section ends and the second section about competitive examinations begin.

Q. When did the respondent appear for the examination?

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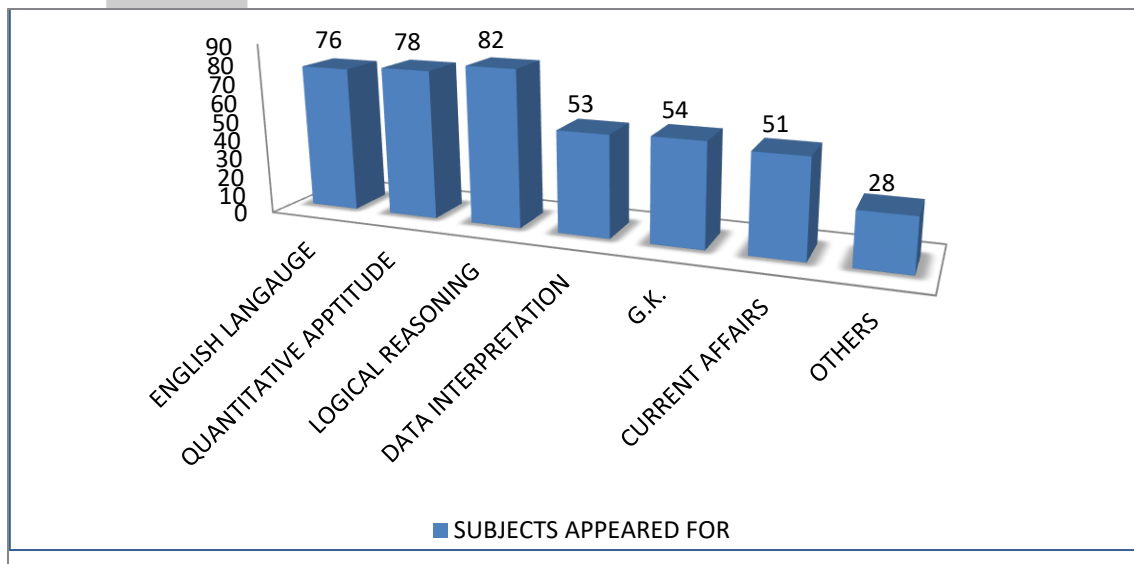
Ans. Out of 100 respondents we have 95 respondents who have appeared for competitive examinations and 1 is preparing for competitive examination. This leads to 96 respondents for this question. From 96 respondents:



68 respondents have appeared 0 to 2 years back
 17 respondents have appeared 2 to 5 years back
 6 respondents have appeared 5 to 10 years back and
 5 respondents have appeared beyond 10 years back

Out of the 96 respondents, 54 of them appeared for the examination for educational purposes and rest 42 candidates appeared for recruitment or job related examinations.

When asked about the subjects they have appeared for, the response was:-



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Q. How many respondents had English Language as a subject in their competitive examination?

Ans. Out of 96 respondents 94 respondents replied to this and among them 76 respondents appeared for English Language paper as a part of their competitive examination and rest 18 didn't.

Interpretation: - In majority of the cases English Language is a part of the competitive examinations and candidates have to appear for this paper. This marks the relevance of English Language in competitive examinations.

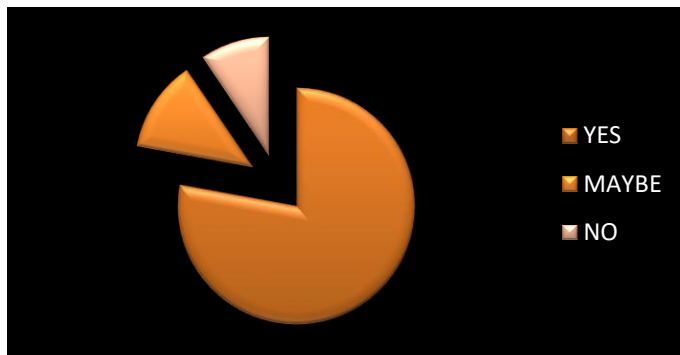
Here our second section ends and our third section begins about English Language.

Q. Was English Language taught as first language in their school?

Ans. Out of 100 responses to this question, 74 respondents were taught English as first language and 26 respondents were not taught English as their first language.

Q. Does early learning of English Language in school help in acquiring a better control over the language?

Ans. We received 95 responses to this question. 74 respondents answered 'yes' to the question, 12 answered ' maybe' and rest 9 responded 'no' to the question.



YES-74 respondents, 77.9%

MAYBE- 12 respondents, 12.6%

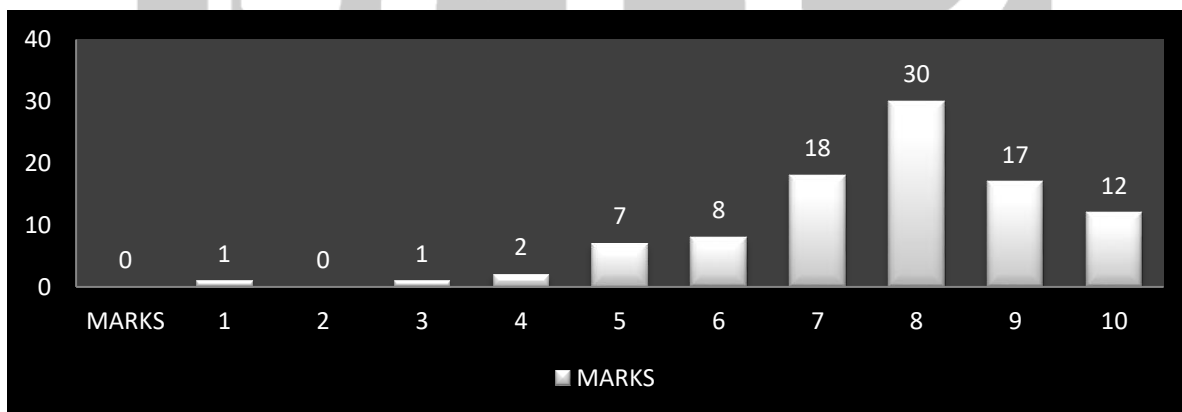
NO - 9 respondents, 9.5%

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Interpretation:- Mostly English is taught in primary education to improve the vocabulary of students. Learning English Language in early ages helps to gain confidence due to familiarity with the language. Our education system is designed in such a way that English has become a mandatory skill for all students. Only a very small percentage of the population is deprived of the benefit of early learning of English.

Q. How would they rank themselves on a scale of 10 on their fluency in speaking and understanding Everyday English Language?

Ans. We had 96 respondents to this question, where majority marked themselves 8 and only 5 respondents marked them below 5.



Interpretation:- Most people have a good understanding about the everyday English Language and they are confident about it. English is becoming an important part of our lives today.

Here our third section ends and forth section of English language and competitive examinations begin.

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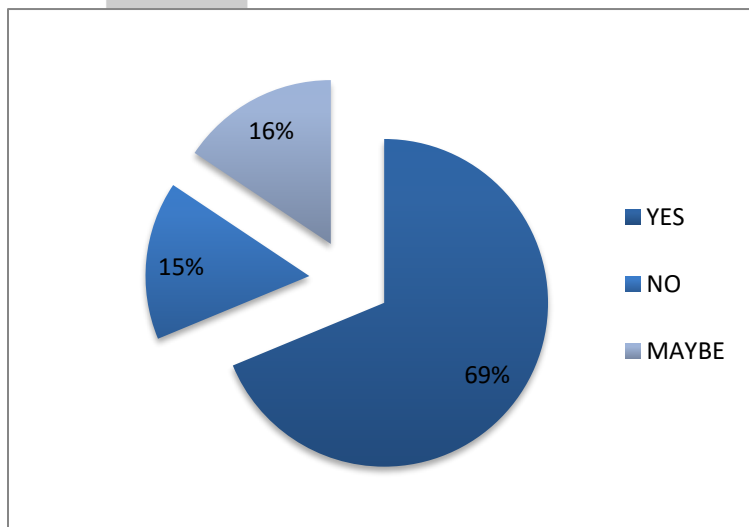
Q. Was English Language an easy paper for you compared to other subjects for your competitive examination?

Ans. Out of the 96 respondents, 57 respondents agreed that English Language was easier than other subjects. 25 respondents said that it was ‘almost’ an easy paper, whereas for 14 respondents English language was not an easy language.

Interpretation:- it is seen that majority of the respondents consider English Language as an easy paper compared to other subjects because they were taught English Language as a part of their primary education. All subjects were taught in English Language to majority of the respondents which brings a sense of ease to their minds, other than second language.

Q. Is English Language an important subject for competitive examinations?

Ans. Following response was received regarding the importance of English Language as a subject in competitive examinations:-



66 Respondents said that English Language is an important part of the competitive examination.

15 Respondents said that English Language is not an important part of the competitive examination.

16 Respondents said that English Language maybe an important part of the competitive examination.

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Q. Did English Language scores improve overall percentage/ percentile?

Ans. Out of the 95 respondents, 80% agreed that their scores in the English Language paper improved their overall scores in the respective competitive examination. While 20% respondents depicted that their overall scores didn't improve due to their English Language scores.

Interpretation:- It can be concluded from this section that people are comfortable with English Language as a part of their competitive examination syllabus and consider it as a scoring paper that uplifts the entire score card of the candidates. People have approved that they score better in English Language than other subjects with less preparation because they are familiar with the subject since their early learning.

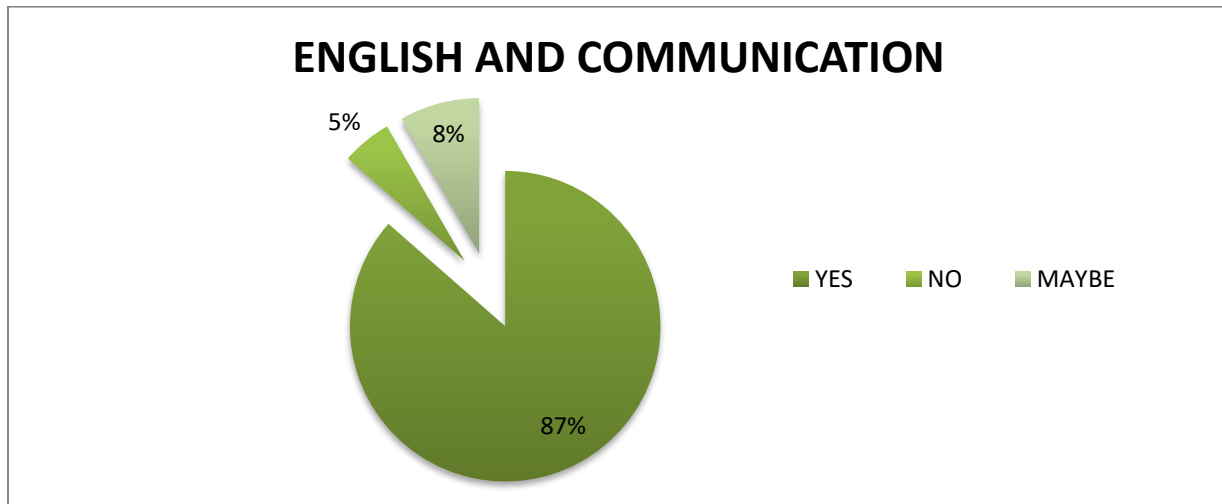
We are finally in the final section of our survey form- "Interview and Discussions"

Q. Do they feel that English has become an important part of their communication- both formal and informal?

Ans. Out of 96 respondents to this question, only 5 of them could deny that English is not an important part of our formal and informal communication. 83 of the respondents agreed that English has become a very important medium of communication whereas, 8 respondents were neutral and answered 'maybe' to the question.

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Q. Do they feel that their score in English section had any impact on their interview?

Ans. Among 96 respondents, 59 said yes, 22 said maybe and 15 said no. while it may not have direct impact but this question was directed to understand the indirect impact of English Language scores of the candidates.

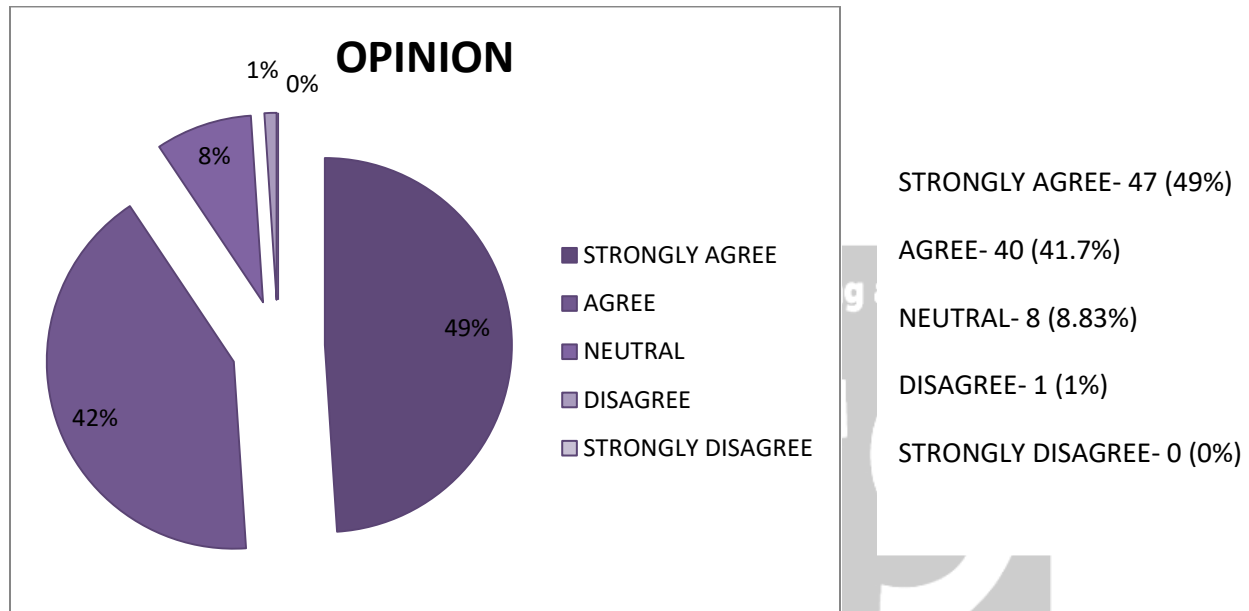
Interpretation:- The growing urge of communicating in English Language is explained by pie chart in the prior question. Generally the competitive examinations are followed by a round of group discussion and personal interview to evaluate the communication skill of the candidate. The language of communication is kept English so that everyone can participate and understand the common language, keeping aside the various native languages or regional languages. While marking the performance of students a part of weightage is given to their scores of respective competitive examination. Hence in the final selection process the communication skills and scores of students forms the base of judgment for the panel.

Q. "People with better control and comfort in communicating in English have an advantage in interviews"- opinion.

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Ans. The 96 respondents were given 5 options to support their answer, namely- strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Following pie chart shall explain the responses.



Q. If given a chance, would they want to wipe out English Language from various Indian Competitive Examinations?

Ans. To this question we received 100 responds, where 76% of the respondents were against the idea of pulling off English Language from various competitive examinations, 11% respondents stayed neutral and responded with 'maybe' while only 11% of the respondents wanted to wipe out English Language from various competitive examinations.

Interpretation:- As discussed earlier that majority of the respondents have a gained the knowledge about the subject as a part of primary education, staying in constant touch with the language has improved their fluency and command over the language. It has made English a very important part of our day to communication. Realising this government and other private educational bodies has incorporated English Language as a part of the study curriculum. Over

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the years it is seen that English Language has improved the scores of candidates in their competitive examinations. This could be the reason why most of the respondents declined the idea of wiping out English Language from various competitive examinations.

Q. Would they want to improve their command over English Language?

Ans. Among the 96 respondents, 80 respondents want to improve their English Language Skills, 12 respondents stayed neutral about it and 4 respondents didn't see scope of improvement in their English Language Skill.

Interpretation:- majority of respondents had marked them above 7 at a scale of 10 in their understanding and speaking skills of everyday English Language, majority of respondents want to improve their English Language, this explicitly explains the importance of English Language in our lives and career. It is important part of both education oriented and job oriented competitive examinations.

CONCLUSION

It is important to note that the sample size for this survey was quite small to draw any facts out of it. But the survey has helped to understand that there is a relation and dependency between the competitive examinations and English language. There are few points in general that could be concluded from this survey. They are:

- Most of the people appear for various competitive examinations throughout the year and they mostly belong to the age group of 18 to 24 years.
- Many competitive examinations are conducted in English comprising of questions from various sections like quantitative aptitude, general knowledge along with English as well.

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- A fair percentage of candidates learn English as a first language or a second language in their school life. It is also learnt from the survey that learning English at an early age has helped many in acquiring a better control in this language though there are many who may not be very convinced from this conclusion.
- Most of the candidates appear to be confident to communicate in English.
- While preparing for various competitive examinations almost half of the candidates have agreed that it was easier to prepare for English as compared to the other subjects. It can be understood that the level of questions for the English section is mediocre meaning it was neither too easy nor too difficult to attempt.
- A fair percentage (66%) believes that the English section in the competitive examinations is relevant and important.
- Majority of the population believed that English is a scoring section in the competitive examinations as it improves their overall score or percentile.
- English is indeed a part of our day to day communication, both formal and informal.
- Some candidates felt that there might be an indirect positive impact of learning English because it not only helps them to score better but also it helps them to appear for the interviews with much confidence as the mode of communication is mostly in English.
- It is quite evident that a fair percentage of the population is confident to communicate and finds the influence of English beneficial to them. That is why the majority do not agree with the suggestion of removing English from the competitive examinations.
- In most cases people are aware about the importance of English Language for various proficiency courses and job prospects.

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- Some Indian states still have a long way to go in developing good English learning schemes from primary education itself, like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Haryana.
- Finally it was seen that most of the candidates have an interest in learning this language and also to improve themselves more.

After the survey it is safe to conclude that now English is a very popular language in India which is quite well accepted by the natives. It is evident that people see English as an opportunity to compete in this so competitive world. From learning English as a first language in many schools to appearing in various competitive examinations which comprise English as a section it is clear that English has a great influence in a student's life. The purpose may be for higher education or it may be for better job prospects, English and many competitive examinations go hand in hand. It is well observed that people are aware about significance of English Language in their lives in all possible dimensions and parameters.

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A questionnaire was prepared to complete the research work of a sample size of 100 respondents.

A link to the Google form is provided below:-

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfNUHTyUzpcJgt2UrFbvRWS3lzIPWbrufwg51kT4TUK87g3RQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

