

A study of achievement in English of secondary school students in relation to certain demographic variables

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ABSTRACT: *In the present era, English has become one of the most effective global medium of communication. It plays the vital role being the language of the textbooks and medium of instruction at different levels of education. Proficiency in the English language may also increase students overall academic achievement. The present paper focuses on the study of achievement in English of secondary school students in relation to gender, place of living, type of school and different social categories. The study has been carried out on a sample of 532 secondary school students from Rajouri & Poonch district of Jammu & Kashmir. For the assessment of achievement in English of secondary students, the investigator has constructed and standardized an achievement test in English. Findings of the study indicate that majority of the students have a very low level of achievement in English as per the standard of the test. Also, results show the significant difference in achievement in English of secondary school students with regard to gender, type of school and social categories. However, location does not have any impact on achievement in English of secondary school students.*

Keywords: *Achievement in English, Secondary School Students, Demographic variables.*

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1. Introduction

English language is now widely used and can be considered as one of the most effective medium of communication in international business and technology-based industries. India has recognized the importance of English and has made various strategies in the field education to improve the standard of its citizen's English language capability. As a multilingual country, India represents a complex linguistic society, but one in which English is promoted as the key to modernization by policy makers. Apart from mother tongue and regional languages, students must have to learn the English language, as it is the language of international importance. After independence, various commissions and committees have been appointed by the government of India to look into the problem of whole educational structure and suggest remedies for its improvement. The commissions also take into account the issue of English language and give it due considerations at various levels of education. University education commission 1948 realized the importance of English language and argued that *“English, however, must be continued to be studied. It is a language which is rich in literature, humanistic and technical. If under sentimental urges, we should give up English, we would cut ourselves off from the living stream of ever growing knowledge.”* Secondary education commission 1952 also supported the study of English and stated *“It should be recognized that even in regard to many of the diversified courses in instruction as matters stand at present, a knowledge of English will be extremely useful for understanding the subject matter and for further study of the subject.”* The Kothari Commission 1964 also laid emphasis in studying English as a foreign language in these words *“As English will, for a long time to come, continue to be needed as a library language' in the field of higher education, a strong foundation in the language will have to be laid at the school stage.”* Keeping this in view, the commission recommended the three - language formula: (1) Mother-tongue or the Regional language. (2) The official language of the union (Hindi) or the associate official language (English) so long as it exists. (3) A modern Indian or foreign language (not covered under I & II and other than medium of education). Thus English is given a due place at all level of education. Today, mostly the languages of the text book and the medium of instruction are in English language.

The importance of English has always been recognized in India. English language has been used in all programs offered, whether Science and Technology based or the Social Science based etc.

To be effective, it must be used right from students' entry into any programs offered. There is no denying the fact that English language can enhance educational attainment and improve communication ability of the students. Students who are poor in English language face numerous problem not only in communication but also in their academic achievement. When students' efficiency in English is good, it will definitely improve their academic performance. Previous researchers (AlHaddad et al., 2004; Maleki and Zangani, 2007; Sahragard & Baharloo 2009; Sahragard et al. 2011; Aina et al., 2013; Sadeghi et al. 2013; Ghenghesh, 2014; Kumar, 2014) have reported that efficiency in English language had positive impact on students' academic performance. Whereas the researcher (Adegboye, 1993) has found that lack of proficiency in English language is one of the factors contributing to poor performance in Mathematics. Similarly (Racca and Lasaten, 2016) have found significant positive relationship between the students' English language proficiency and their academic performance in Science, Mathematics and English.

In view of the above mentioned effectiveness of English proficiency prove to have significant impact on students' academic performance, and many researchers have strongly agreed that students should have efficiency in English, so as to enhance their achievement. Based on these reasons, the investigator felt very interested in assessing the achievement in English of secondary school students in relation to certain demographic variables.

2. Objectives of the study

1. To find out the level of achievement in English of secondary school students
2. To find out the differences in achievement in English of secondary school students according to gender, place of living, type of school and social categories

3. Methodology

3.1. Method of Research: In the present study the descriptive survey method has been employed.

3.2. Population and sample: The present investigation is based on the population of secondary school students from Rajouri and Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir. So all the students studied in secondary schools of Rajouri and Poonch district of J&K, constitute the population of

this study. Multistage random sampling technique has been employed for the collection of data. The study has been carried out on a sample of 532 secondary school students.

3.3. Research tool: For the assessment of achievement in English of secondary school students, the investigator has constructed an achievement test in English. Test consists of total 50 item. Reliability of the tool is .90.

3.3.1. Personal data sheet: For attaining information regarding gender, type of school, place of living and social category personal data sheet had been developed by the researcher.

3.4. Analysis of data: The obtained data has been analyzed using SPSS 20.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Level of achievement in English of secondary school students

Table 1: Represents percentage of students at different levels of achievement in English

Levels of achievement in English	No. of students	Percentage
Very high	8	1.5
High	91	17.5
Average	161	30.3
Low	105	19.7
Very low	167	31.4
Total	532	100.0

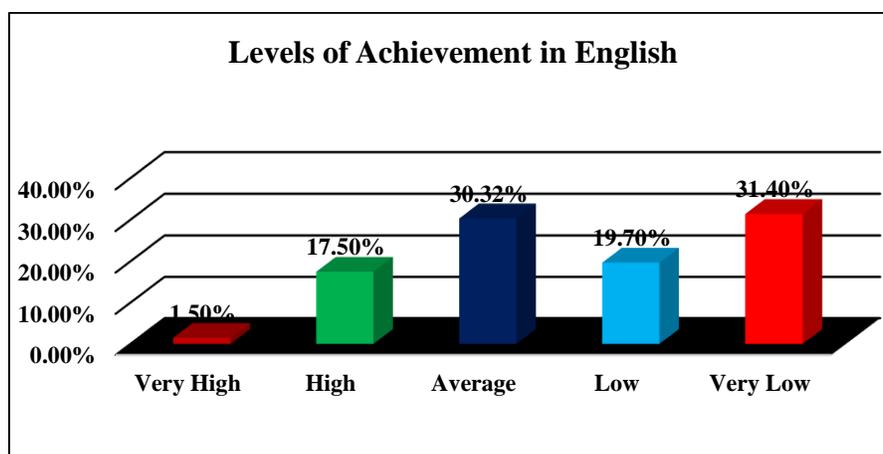


Figure 1: Represents different levels of students 'achievement in English

Table (1) and figure (1) reveal that out of 532 secondary school students, 8 students (1.5%) have very high Achievement in English, 91 students (17.50%) have high Achievement in English, 161 students (30.32%) have average Achievement in English, 105 students (19.70%) have low Achievement in English and 167 students (31.4%) have a very low level of Achievement in English. The possible reason behind such results may be the non-availability of proper educational facilities in the area. Also, the Rajouri & Poonch area is located on India and Pakistan border and effected by cross border firing, due to which administration has to close the schools. During the survey the researcher has also found the dearth of English teachers in the schools.

4.2. Differences according to gender

In order to find out the differences in achievement in English of secondary school students independent sample t-test is calculated as shown in the table 2.

Table 2: Represents differences in achievement in English of secondary school students according to gender

Gender	N	Mean	s.d.	t- value	df	Level of Significance
Male	257	22.73	8.95	-2.89	530	.004 (Significant)
Female	257	24.97	8.89			

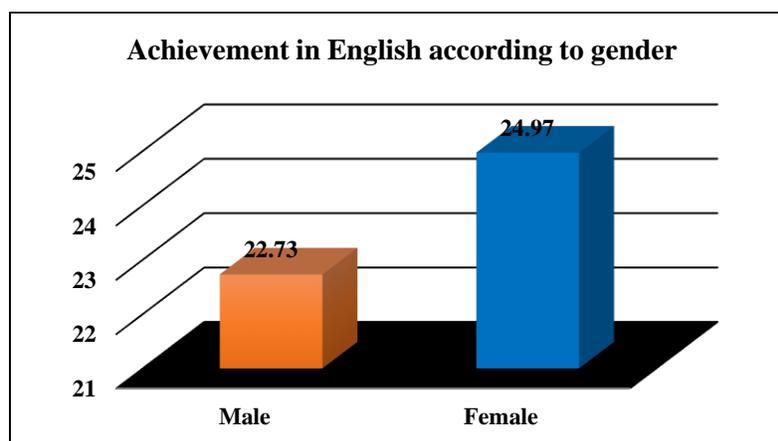


Figure 2: Representing differences in achievement in English according to gender

Table (2) and figure (2) indicate that the mean scores of male and female on achievement in English of secondary school students are 22.73 and 24.97 respectively. Here the calculated t-

value for the gender is -2.89, which is less than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. Thus it can be concluded that there exists significant difference in metacognitive awareness with regard to gender, whereby females were better in achievement in English than their male counterparts. The reason behind this result may be due to the fact that, nowadays females are ahead in every spheres of life than males. In every board, university or other competitive exams females are topper. Studies have also shown that females were high achiever and handworkers than males.

4.3. Differences according to place of living

In order to find out the differences in achievement in English of secondary school students according to their place of living, independent sample t-test is calculated as shown in the table 3.

Table 3: Representing differences in achievement in English according to their place of living

Place of living	N	Mean	s.d.	t- value	df	Level of Significance
Rural	264	23.50	9.08	-.992	530	.32 (Not significant)
Urban	268	24.27	8.88			

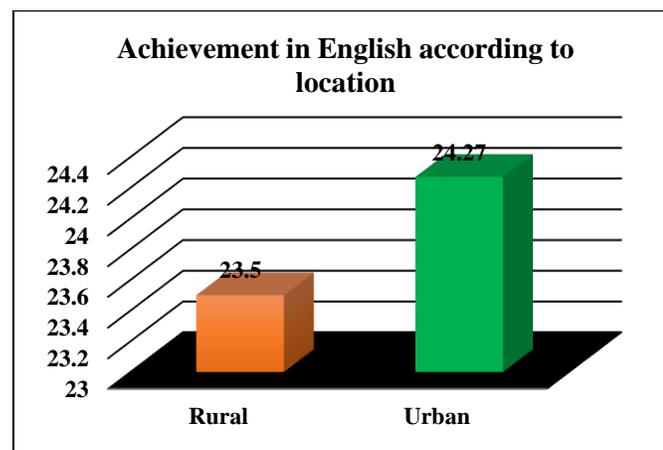


Figure 3: Representing differences in achievement in English according to their place of living

Table (3) and figure (3) indicate that the mean scores of rural and urban in achievement in English of secondary school students are 23.5 and 24.27 respectively. The mean score of urban secondary school students are higher than rural students, but the calculated t-value is -.992,

which is higher than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. Thus it can be concluded that rural and urban do not differ significantly on achievement in English. The reason behind this result may be the temporary migration of rural students to the urban schools for better education, but their native place is rural.

4.4. Differences according to type of school

In order to find out the differences in achievement in English of secondary school students according to their place of living, independent sample t-test is calculated as shown in the table 4.

Table 4: Represents differences in achievement in English of secondary school according to the type of school

Type of school	N	Mean	s.d.	t -value	df	Level of Significance
Govt.	303	19.68	7.88	-14.730	530	.000 (Significant)
Private	229	29.45	7.14			

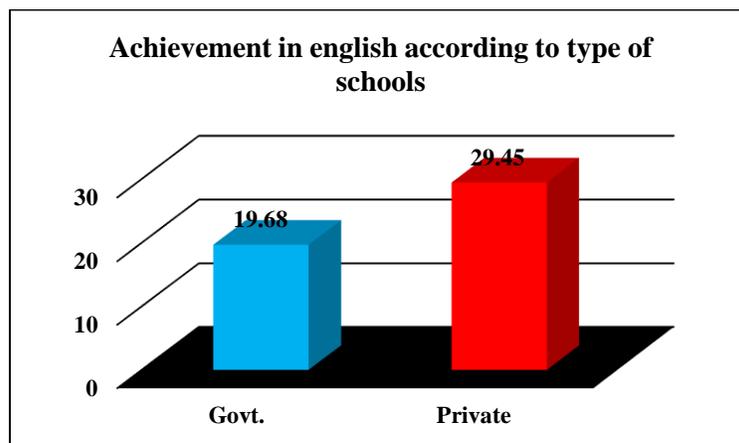


Figure 4: Represents comparison of Govt. and private secondary school students in achievement in English

Table (4) and figure (4) indicate that the mean scores of rural and urban on achievement in English of secondary school students are 19.68 and 29.45 respectively. Here the calculated t-value for the gender is -14.730, which is less than the table value at 0.01 level of significance. Thus it can be concluded that there exist a significant difference in achievement in English of secondary school students with regard to the type of schools. The possible reason behind such result is due to the fact that educational facilities, competent teachers, infrastructure facilities,

easy excess and the like are better in private schools in comparison to Govt. schools. Also, students from good socio- economic background are enrolled in private schools. Previous studies have also shown that private school students were high achiever than Govt. school

4.5. Differences in achievement in English of secondary school students with regard to their social category: In order to draw the differences, descriptive statistics and f-value have been calculated as shown in the table 5.

Table 5: Represents achievement in English of secondary school students with regard to their social category

Sources of knowledge	N	Mean	s.d.	F value	Level of significance
ST	105	23.52	8.63	5.126	.002 (Significant)
SC	103	22.78	7.86		
OBC	182	22.80	9.20		
General	142	26.35	9.31		
Total	532	23.89	8.98		

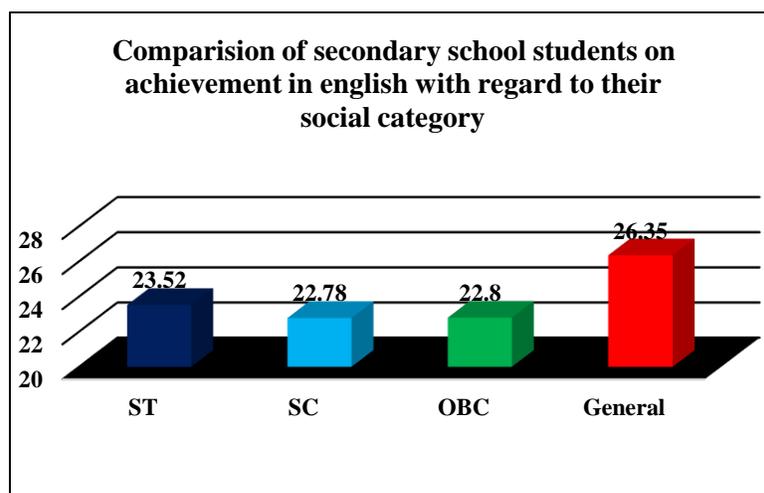


Figure 5: Distribution of mean scores in achievement in English of secondary school students based on their social category

Table (5) and figure (5) indicate that mean scores of secondary school students on achievement in English based on the their social categories i.e. Scheduled tribe (ST), Scheduled caste (SC),

Others backward classes (OBC) and General category are 23.52 with S.D. 8.63, 22.78 with S.D.7.86, 22.80 with S.D. 9.20 and 26.35 with S.D 9.31 respectively. Thus it can be concluded that the students belonging from different social categories differ significantly on achievement in English, whereby general category students are better in English achievement. The reason behind such results is that the students from ST, SC and OBC are living in far-flung areas and bond by different customs and traditions, their parents are also unaware about their education. Different surveys have also shown that tribal students are lagging behind in all major educational indicators.

5. Major findings of the study

Results of the present study reveal that majority of the Secondary School Students from Rajouri & Poonch district of Jammu & Kashmir have possessed a very low level of achievement in English. Out of 532 secondary school students, 8 students (1.5%) have very high Achievement in English, 91 students (17.59%) have high Achievement in English, 161 students (30.32%) have average Achievement in English, 105 students (19.70%) have low Achievement in English and 167 students (31.4) have very low level of Achievement in English. Results of the present study also reveal that there exists a significant difference in achievement in English of secondary school students with regard to gender, type of school and different social categories. Whereas location does not has any impact on achievement in English of secondary school students.

6. Implications and recommendations

The findings of the study make the readers aware of the achievement in English of secondary school students studying in Rajouri and Poonch district of Jammu & Kashmir, which is very low. The study also highlights the achievement in English of male and female, Govt. and private, Rural and urban secondary school students. Moreover, study also examine the English achievement of students from different social categories studying at the secondary level. Therefore, the educational policymakers and curriculum designers should modify English language teaching policy and curriculum to help students learn English more successfully. Specifically, the result of this study would encourage the curriculum designers to pay attention to the actual needs of the students during the curriculum renewal or development process.

The study recommends that parents, teachers, administrators, and educational policymakers should create awareness about the importance of English in the present era. Most of the government secondary schools are without language laboratory and qualified teachers to handle English language. Government and others concerned stakeholders should appoint qualified teachers and language laboratory should be provided where necessary. Also, mobile teachers should be appointed for tribal students.

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