

# College Students’ Attitude and Motivation towards Learning English Language: An Analytical Study of Haryana

Dr. Geeta Gupta

Associate Professor of English, Hindu Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jind, Haryana, India

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## Abstract

*English today is far more than a subject studied in school or college; it is a passage to opportunity, self-confidence and global connection. In India, where countless languages coexist, English often becomes the common ground, especially for young people in search for education and careers. This study explores the attitudes and motivation of college students in Haryana towards learning English, focusing on how these factors shape their engagement and aspirations. Surveying 445 students from three districts, the research reveals that learners generally hold a strong and positive outlook towards English. Many express a genuine desire to master the language, putting in extra effort beyond classrooms—whether through reading, speaking or getting exposed to English media. Motivation emerges as both intrinsic, such as self-development and personal growth and extrinsic, tied to employability, social respect, and global communication. Interestingly, female students consistently show stronger enthusiasm and commitment than their male counterparts, while urban-rural differences are less pronounced, highlighting English as a shared aspiration across the region. The findings underscore that English is not merely an academic requirement; it is deeply woven into the students’ vision of success, identity and mobility. Attitude and motivation together act as powerful drivers, transforming language learning into a pathway for personal empowerment and future opportunities.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language is soul of human existence. It is more than just words; it is a means to connect with our surroundings. India is a linguistically rich and culturally diverse nation where English has carved out a special place. With numerous languages and dialects across the length and breadth of India, English usually serves as a common ground. It has made its way into everyone’s life. Students, professionals and people in general consider it as a bridge towards opportunity, growth and prosperity. Globalisation of economies has not only reduced the trade barriers but has shrunken the language and cultural barriers to a great extent. Majority of the

professional courses have adopted English as the language of instruction. The students in degree colleges too study English as a compulsory language at undergraduate level. For students, English is not merely a classroom requirement but a passport to success. Beyond academics, English plays a vital role in shaping personality and confidence of students through participation in declamation contest, debates and group discussions. Ability to put forward one’s ideas clearly and coherently often boosts self-esteem. For many young people, getting language proficiency is traversing from hesitation to self-confidence. It has become the language of technology and the internet. It is considered as a ladder of social mobility—a way

to break barriers and find dignity in education and work. English is one language that simultaneously plays many roles - academic, professional, economic, cultural and unifying - all at once.

Attitude and motivation work as drivers or stimulus for students that affects their commitment, effort and consistency in learning, thereby determining their academic performance and general well-being (Thang & Ting, 2011). Attitude explains students' feelings about a language. A positive attitude promotes proactive thinking process and resilience against future personal and professional challenges. Students' motivation fuels them with energy and gives direction to reach the set educational goals (Zubairi & Sarudin, 2009; Dörnyei, 1994). These two factors are intertwined, a positive and receptive attitude enhances motivation, and simultaneously motivation reinforces positive attitude, resulting in students' academic success (Al Mamun & Rahman, 2018). Learning English language in multilingual countries like India is a challenging task and these two forces together determine not just classroom success but also future job opportunities.

Research has documented that attitude is not a insignificant variable; it robustly influences learners' achievement. Language learners with an affirmative attitude towards the language and its native speakers will exert greater effort to learn (Gardner et al., 1985). Studies that conducted survey of language learners found that enjoying the subject matter, perceiving language as useful and teacher's support are top predictors of positive attitude and constant motivation (Imsa-Ard, 2020). Motivation can be extrinsic or intrinsic. Both types of motivation are important for college students. Dörnyei's work on motivation through classroom teaching methods exhibited that teachers can enhance motivation by setting clear goals and offering relevant tasks. Circumstances and background play vital role in learning a language. Research across the globe has portrayed that socio-economic factors, schooling, and exposure to English language in informal settings influence students' attitudes and motivation to learn. Empirical work has found that students belonging to urban areas or who have professional background exhibit greater levels of motivation as they associate English with employability (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009). Attitude and motivation are dynamic concepts which change with time and life experiences.

Therefore, it becomes imperative for educators to provide positive stimuli to students through teaching-learning environment. The objective of the present study is to investigate attitude and motivation of students enrolled in colleges of Haryana to learn English language.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objective of the study the researcher has collected primary data with the help of a survey questionnaire. The study aimed to assess attitude and motivation of students enrolled in degree colleges of Haryana, therefore, the sampling unit comprised of student enrolled in degree colleges of Haryana. Further, in view of time and money constraints, the sampling area for the study was confined to Bhiwani, Hisar and Jind districts representing Hisar administrative division of Haryana. The questionnaire consisted of statements pertaining to learners' attitude towards English language and their motivation to learn English language. The students had to mark their choices on a five point Likert scale of agreement on which the options varied from strongly disagree coded as one to strongly agree that was coded as 5. The interpretation of mean scores of the respondents from a 5-point summated agreement scale is as follows: Strongly Agree = 5 – 4.51, Agree = 4.5 – 3.51, Neither Agree nor Disagree = 3.5 – 2.51, Disagree = 2.5 – 1.51, Strongly Disagree = 1.5 – 1. Two statements pertaining to factor 'Attitude towards English' are negative, hence reverse coded (I feel that it is hard or stressful to learn English and Learning English is a waste of time).

In all 500 questionnaires were distributed to college students across three districts. The responses were checked for accuracy. All the incomplete or straight responses were excluded for final analysis. Finally 445 responses were found usable.

Out of total 445 students, there were 233 female students and 212 male students. Based on area to which the respondents belonged, there were 258 students from urban areas representing district headquarters and rest were classified as from rural area. Statistical techniques including mean, standard deviation, one-sample t-test and independent sample t-test have been used to find interpretable meaning from the collected data.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographics	Sub levels	Frequency	(%) Rounded off to nearest Decimal
Gender	Male	212	47.6
	Female	233	52.4
Area	Urban	258	58.0
	Rural	187	42.0
Total No. of Respondents = 445			

Source: Author's compilation

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides a detailed discussion of results based on analysis of data with respect to students' attitude towards English language and their motivation to learn English language.

Attitude determines to what extent students engage with a subject and their general outlook towards the subject. Students' attitude towards English has been determined with the help of five statements (Table 2).

#### Students' Attitude towards English Language

Table 2: Students' Attitude towards English Language

Statement	Mean	SD	t-Value	p-Value
I have strong desire to learn English.	4.41	0.728	40.806	0.000
I put extra efforts to learn to speak in English.	4.05	0.822	26.874	0.000
I prefer reading English newspapers and watch English movies/series to improve my English.	3.93	0.938	20.824	0.000
I feel that it is hard or stressful to learn English.	3.81	0.757	22.619	0.000
Learning English is a waste of time	3.69	0.714	10.816	0.000

Source: Author's compilation

First three statements depict positive attitude and the last two portray negative attitude towards English. The mean scores of all the statements in Table 2 indicate generally positive attitude, though with some variations in the extent of agreement. These

attitudinal differences have also been analysed across gender for male and female respondents and across area for respondents belonging to rural and urban areas as presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Students' Attitude towards English Language across Gender and Area

Statement	Gender Mean (F)	Gender Mean (M)	t-Value	p-Value	Area Mean (U)	Area Mean (R)	t-Value	p-Value
I have strong desire to learn English.	4.56	4.24	4.686	0.000	4.47	4.35	1.699	0.090
I put extra efforts to learn to speak in English.	4.14	3.93	2.675	0.008	4.11	4.06	0.502	0.615
I prefer reading English newspapers and watch English movies/series to improve my English.	3.95	3.89	0.635	0.526	3.87	3.94	-0.769	0.441
I feel that it is hard or stressful to learn English.	3.78	3.84	-0.891	0.373	3.85	3.75	1.128	0.260
Learning English is a waste of time	3.62	3.74	-0.958	0.428	3.64	3.73	-0.919	0.403

Source: Author's compilation

The highest attitudinal mean value (mean = 4.41) appears for the statement “I have strong desire to learn English.” This figure is close to 4.5, indicating that the students significantly acknowledge the importance of English language and have positive attitude to acquire proficiency in English. A very high t-value (40.806,  $p < 0.001$ ) further supports the results are robust. Gender-wise, female students (mean = 4.56) have scored higher than males ( $M = 4.241$ ), as confirmed by a significant t-test ( $t = 4.686$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This implies that female learners have demonstrated greater enthusiasm and commitment towards English learning. Interestingly, no significant urban-rural difference was found, indicating that desire to learn English language is universal across urban and rural settings.

The second statement, “I put extra efforts to learn to speak in English,” recorded a mean of 4.05, which is statistically significant, indicating that students are not just passive takers of what is taught to them in the class but are actively working to improve their language skills. Gender differences are again statistically significant ( $t = 2.675$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ), with females (mean = 4.14) exhibiting more dedication and hard work than male counterparts (mean = 3.93). The lack of urban-rural divide implies that extra effort to practice English is a general pattern observed among the students, regardless of the place to which they belong.

The mean score for the third statement, “I prefer reading English newspapers and watching English movies/series to improve my English,” is 3.93, which although positive, is slightly lower than the previous two. This advocates that while students have a positive attitude towards English media, fewer of them accept it as a regular practice. The significant t-value (20.824) indicates this attitude is present across the sample. However, the difference across gender ( $p = 0.526$ ) and area ( $p = 0.441$ ) are not significant, suggesting that this habit is not influenced by demographic variables. It may be inferred that while students may be willing to expose themselves to English content on media, they are not ready to walk an extra mile to do this.

The fourth and fifth statements have been reverse coded as they reflect negative attitude towards English. The fourth statement “I feel that it is hard or stressful to learn English,” yielded a mean score of 3.81. As the statement is reverse coded, the moderately high perception indicates that the students disagree with the remark that learning English is difficult and stressful. In other words, the

students not only have a positive attitude towards the language, they also recognize that learning English is not arduous. The t-value (22.619,  $p < 0.001$ ) confirms that this feeling is statistically significant across the sample. Importantly, neither gender nor area differences are significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). Thus, lack of difficulty in learning English appears to be a shared experience, unaffected by demographic variables.

Students unanimously agree that learning English is not a waste of time. As the statement five is reverse coded, the somewhat high mean score of 3.69 reflects that the students disagree with the statement. This attitude is also pervasive across gender and area as indicated by insignificant t-values.

The results of the study reveal that the overall attitude of students towards English language learning is significantly positive. This enthusiasm and willingness is even more profound among female students. The positive attitude as represented by desire, effort and media engagement outweigh the stress and difficulty in learning the language.

### **Students’ Motivation to Learn English Language**

Motivation to learn includes the internal and external factors that stimulate a person to acquire a given set of knowledge, learn required skills and keep trying despite challenges to achieve the learning goals. While attitudes reflect students’ perceptions and feelings, motivation determines their actual drive to continue learning. Table 4 presents five statements used to measure the level of motivation among the college students to learn English language.

The results reveal existence of strong motivation among students to learn English as evident from highly significant t-values for all the statements, suggesting that students not only have positive outlook towards English but they have strong motivation too to actively pursue English learning due to its utility in personal, professional and social life. The first two statements reflect the intrinsic motivation to learn English. Intrinsic motivation is the desire or drive to perform an activity due to its inbuilt contentment. It is unaffected by external factors of stimuli. It comes from innate drives like inquisitiveness, interest or the sheer pleasure of learning. The last three statements reflect extrinsic motivation of the students to learn English language. Extrinsic motivation is the impetus to perform an action due to factors that are external to the learner. It may be induced by desire to earn a reward, get appreciation or even to avoid a punishment. Studies have suggested that students are usually more

extrinsically motivated (Ming, 2004). The demographic differences, across gender and area, in motivation levels of students to learn English language have also been mapped in Table 5.

*Table 4: Students' Motivation to Learn English Language*

Statement	Mean	SD	t-Value	p-Value
Learning English is good for self development.	4.56	0.556	59.305	0.000
Learning English helps me to interact with people from different cultures and countries.	4.53	0.718	45.039	0.000
Fluency in English would help me to get better job.	4.63	0.552	62.432	0.000
People who are good at English are respected in the society.	3.99	0.875	23.891	0.000
Proficiency in English is a sign of high social status.	3.91	0.927	20.668	0.000

Source: Author's compilation

*Table 5: Students' Motivation to Learn English Language across Gender and Area*

Statement	Gender Mean (F)	Gender Mean (M)	t-Value	p-Value	Area Mean (U)	Area Mean (R)	t-Value	p-Value
Learning English is good for self development.	4.63	4.48	2.845	0.005	4.64	4.53	1.992	0.047
Fluency in English would help me to get better job.	4.72	4.53	3.680	0.000	4.66	4.66	0.103	0.918
People who are good at English are respected in the society.	4.09	3.88	2.520	0.012	4.02	4.09	0.824	0.410
Proficiency in English is a sign of high social status.	4.00	3.80	2.313	0.021	4.14	3.72	4.418	0.000
Learning English helps me to interact with people from different cultures and countries.	4.57	4.49	1.178	0.239	4.71	4.41	3.964	0.000

Source: Author's compilation

The highest mean score of 4.63 (Table 4) is for statement "Fluency in English would help me to get better job". Research has documented that learners from the countries where English is not the first language use it for purposes such as schooling and employment, overseas higher studies and to get work visas (Hopkyns et al., 2018). This underscores the instrumental motivation among college students, where English is clearly seen as a prerequisite for employability. High t-value (62.432) highlights the consistency of this perception. Gender differences are significant, with females (mean = 4.725) rating employability benefits higher than males (M = 4.533). Interestingly, area differences are negligible (p = 0.918), meaning students across rural and urban

contexts equally recognize English as a career tool.

The second-highest score is for the statement "Learning English is good for self-development" (mean = 4.56). Students perceive English as not just functional but also empowering in terms of confidence, knowledge, and personal growth. Overcoming the challenges of learning a language other than your native language helps to build resilience. Learning English language broadens your outlook by giving access to literature, movies, and media from other countries. The significant t-value (59.305, p < 0.001) supports this finding. Females (mean = 4.635) again rated self-development higher than males (mean = 4.486; t = 2.845, p = 0.005). A significant area difference (t = 1.992, p = 0.047) also

exists implying that urban students (mean = 4.64) may place slightly more emphasis on the self developmental role of English compared to rural peers.

The statement reflecting extrinsic motivation to learn English, "Learning English helps me to interact with people from different cultures and countries," has a mean value of 4.53. This demonstrates that students are conscious of English's global communicative abilities. The t-value (45.039,  $p < 0.001$ ) reinforces the importance of this belief. Area differences are significant (Urban mean = 4.71, Rural mean = 4.41;  $t = 3.964$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that urban students are more exposed to cross-cultural contexts in comparison to rural counterparts. Gender differences, however, are not significant ( $p = 0.239$ ), indicating that both male and female learners equally value global interactions.

Statements linked to extrinsic motivation of societal recognition also provide key insights. "People who are good at English are respected in the society" scored a mean of 3.99, while "Proficiency in English is a sign of high social status" scored 3.91. These moderate but significant means suggest that students recognize English as a symbol of prestige, but their motivation is more strongly driven by practical benefits of English language like getting job and self-development. For both statements, gender differences are statistically significant, with females again showing higher agreement than male students. Area differences were significant only for the second statement ( $t = 4.418$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), where urban students associated English proficiency more with high status compared to rural students.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, college students demonstrate highly positive attitudes and strong motivation towards learning English, driven largely by recognition of its role in career success, self-development, and cross-cultural communication. While they acknowledge the challenges of learning English, these do not diminish their desire to achieve proficiency. Gender differences consistently favour female learners, highlighting their stronger engagement with English. Urban-rural differences, though less consistent, point to the advantages of exposure and opportunities in shaping motivational factors. Thus, English emerges not only as an academic subject but as a multifaceted tool for personal growth, employability, and social recognition, reflecting its deep integration into the aspirations of today's college students.

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