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## **An Analysis of Higher Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in English in Relation to Specific Demographic Factors**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The concept of education is regarded as the most crucial component for the general development of the nation. English has emerged as one of the most useful languages for communication on a worldwide scale in the modern period. English plays an important role in the field of education as it is used as the medium of instruction and language of textbook. Proficiency over English language can also improve the overall academic successfulness of a student. The present paper focuses on the study to examine how gender, place of residence, and kind of school related to academic performance in English among students in higher secondary schools. For the purpose of the study, 2250 students have been included from different H.S. schools and colleges of Kokrajhar, Udalguri, Baksa and Chirang districts of Assam, a state of India. Depending on a student's gender, location, and kind of school, the study's findings demonstrate a significant gap in the ability of English language among the students of H.S. School.

**Keywords:** Higher Secondary, students, English, academic performance.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

English as a language is considered as an efficient mode to communicate the world. In the world of worldwide business and technology-based organizations English language plays a pivotal role. India, a multilingual country, has a linguistically sophisticated civilization, but politicians there promote English as the path to modernity. Students should learn English since it has a global audience in addition to their own language and other native languages. The government of India has created a number of commissions and committees to investigate the issue with the entire educational system since independence. In the year 1948 the educational commission of universities recognized English as one of the most important languages of the world and advised the continuity of the same to study. If we were to give up English because of sentimental reasons, we would be shut off from the on-going flow of knowledge that is constantly expanding. "It should be recognized that even in regard to many of the diversified courses in instruction as matters stand at this point, knowledge of English will be extremely useful for understanding the subject matter and for further study of the subject," the Secondary Education Commission of 1952 stated in support of the study of English. The Kothari Commission of 1964 also emphasized on the study of English. The commission argued that in the sphere of college and university level education English will play a significant role for a long time in future and it will be required as the language of library, so it should be introduced from the school level so that students can have a good grip over the language. Considering all these, the panel suggested some formulas of languages such as: (i) First language or the local tongue. (ii) Hindi is the official language of the country or English is the co-official language if it is not changed (iii) A contemporary Indian or foreign language (not under i & ii except the medium of instruction).

In India, English has long been valued for its importance. All of the programmes provided, whether they were focused on social sciences or science and technology, etc., utilized the English language. It must be utilized as soon as pupils enroll in any programmes provided for it to be effective. There is no doubting that learning English may help pupils become more academically successful and communicate more effectively. Students with weak English language skills struggle in many ways, hindering both their academic performance and communication. Good English proficiency among pupils would undoubtedly boost their academic achievement (AlHaddad et al., 2004; Maleki and Zangani, 2007; Sahragard and Baharloo, 2009; Sahragard et

al., 2011 and Sadeghi et al., 2013). Researcher like Ghenghesh (2015) indicated that students' academic performance was positively impacted by their proficiency in the English language. Adegboye (1993), a researcher, found that the factors contributing to miserable performance of students in the subject like mathematics is the root cause of poor English proficiency. Racca and Lasaten (2016) also discovered a strong correlation in connection with the academic achievement of students in Science, Mathematics, and English and their English language ability.

Most of the academics genuinely believe that understudies must be proficient in English so that they can improve their performance since the competence of English has shown a significant influence on the educational achievement of the students. So, the researcher is highly interested to examine how specific demographical parameters related to the competence of English language among the pupils of H.S. School.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

One of the most important measures of success in an educational institution is its academic achievement and how effectively pupils handle their education. A student, teacher, or institution's ability to achieve its educational goals is another important factor that determines whether it is considered a good school or good university (Ankomah, 2002). Academic achievement, which is a result of education, is the ability to do well on tests that measure what has been learned (Otoo, 2007). Another important factor to determine the future of a youngster generally depends on the educational achievement of a student, particularly at the level of H.S. School. It is reliant on the students' competency, or their aptitude and understanding of the subjects they are studying, because it is tied to the material of curriculum and their intellect (Aremu & Sokan, 2003, as cited in Osei-Mensah, 2012). It is sometimes referred to as educational success for scholastic performance (Babatunde & Olanrewaju, 2014).

Exams as a measure of a quality education are one approach to evaluate student performance in school (Adams, 2000, as cited in Yeboah, 2014). Exam scores are used to gauge academic success since they reflect how well students are able to use newly learned information and abilities. Written and verbal exam along with presentation of paper and assignment measures the ability of a student. In order to rank and classify pupils on a quantitatively evident scale, performance results are shown as grade along with side remarks reflecting the performance of a student.

Numerous factors influence academic achievement. Students' scholastic performance is directly impacted by the attitude some instructors have toward their work, which is shown in the miserable presence of students in the class room, delay to institution, critical comments on the achievements of students which may hurt the egos, and bad instructing techniques (Adesemowo, 2005). Mzokwana (2008) claims cultural circles, cognitive problems, replacement of syllabus, and the assignment of subjects to instructors disregarding their expertise area are all variables which left a negative impact on students and hinder learning. In addition to these factors, Alton-Lee (2001, as cited in Dorleku, 2013) lists the following as others that must be taken into consideration in order to guarantee academic success for students: classroom size, available tools of instruction, evaluation techniques, student behaviour, schooling system, new syllabus, class congestion, motivation, and background of students.

The school's culture or atmosphere is its lifeblood and what makes instructors and students fall in love with it and like to participate in it (Weber, 2000, as cited in Dorleku, 2013). Such types of schools play a significant role in the academic success of a student. Effective teaching is influenced by school culture. Wheeler and Richey (2005) points out that great educational and instructional outcome are ensured by such institutions that offer safe, supportive settings for both learners and teachers. Colleges set learning objectives for their students and foster an environment that encourages success (Ankomah, 2002; Fleischman & Osher, 2005).

Each student has a distinctive set of characteristics, including cultural heritage that can either support or impede academic progress, according to Gray, Griffin, and Nasta's (2005) research. Language ability is crucial for students' academic success (Rickford & Wolfram, 2009). Students are more likely to fail if the language of his home and school is different. It becomes worse when understudies don't understand the educational medium or don't speak the same language. As a result, language and communication techniques may prevent kids from achieving academic achievement.

There is no one, agreed-upon definition of what constitutes a rural region because the term "rural" has diverse meanings in various nations (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). Kashaa (2012) in his study revealed that only characterizes rural regions as underdeveloped because they lack several government developmental initiatives including clean water, power, excellent roads, and educational facilities to enhance the life of the populace. Rural and urban cultures can coexist; however there are contrasts between the two since major rural towns that are close to metropolitan centres are similar with the urbanized region sometimes rather than with the rural or little towns. 75% of the poorest people in Sub-Saharan Africa live in rural regions, which is where poverty is most prevalent. Though a countryside school provides homely atmosphere, clean breeze, less crime and better life experience, still many instructors reject remote areas appointment because they are concern

about the conditions of houses, teaching tools, medical services, institutional funds along with career growth (Acheampong & Lewin as cited in Mulkeen, 2005; Armah, 2013; Hedges, 2000), as well as dialectal differences (Coultas & Lewin, 2002).

The country of Ghana has made efforts to raise the living standards of people as well as boost the economy, but these efforts left a legacy of glaring disparities in progression in terms of inhabitants and spatial patterns, allocation of infrastructural development, and levels of socioeconomic task. As a result, there are noticeable differences between metropolitan and remote locations regarding the disbursement and standard of academic amenities and employees, even there are minor differences in the utilization of resources too and admission to graduate school between metropolitan and remote institutions. (UNICEF, 1990, as cited in Siaw, 2009). Millions of countryside residents have additionally relocated to urban regions due to increased rural-urban migration.

According to Atuahene and Owusu- Ansah (2013), Banson (2010), Osei- Menah(2012), Owusu-Afriyie (2009), and the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana (2002), different educational opportunities exist in rural, urban, and regional areas of Ghana. Such variations are brought about by the deviation of educator - pupil fractions, capacities of managing people, levels of school infrastructure, as well as additional amenities. Ghana's remote area's school has poor enrollment which has insufficient provisions and inadequate space. Moreover, those schools have unskilled instructors and lacks in teaching tools including books. Contrastingly, institutions in metropolitan often have more competent instructors, more students' enrollment, greater funding and monitoring, better facilities along with sufficient materials to perform (Anamuah-Mensah, 2002). Today's urgent issue is the differences regarding the performance of the schools in cities and remote areas because prior attempt to narrow the gap was primarily urban-biased. (UNICEF, 1990, as cited in Siaw, 2009).

Karim et al. (2020) conducted a study on academic achievements of pupils in English between tribal and non-tribal students of H.S. Schools in Assam, India, and discovered significant differences in the majority of the factors evaluated. Ahmed et al. (2022) compared English proficiency with that of other secondary-level subjects by using Mahalanobis distance, and they discovered no statistically significant difference for the variable under consideration. Similar types of outcomes were also seen at the 12th grade level (Ahmed et al. 2021).

There is a substantial difference in the amount of time spent sleeping, studying, and using social media before and during the COVID-19, according to a study conducted by Capinding (2021) on learning and academic performance of education students before and after the COVID-19. The academic performance of students did not significantly alter between the epidemic and before it occurred, nevertheless. The study also found a highly significant correlation between the amount of time spent studying and academic success, as well as between the amounts of time spent studying and using social media. However, there is no statistically significant correlation between students' academic performance and their usage of social media during the pandemic or their sleep habits.

Wu et al. (2022) found that Motivation and Grit both significantly impacted the English language proficiency of Major students at a public Chinese university who did not speak English. When examining the association between motivation, grit, and English language proficiency, grit is found to be the greatest predictor.

The COVID-19 pandemic may be having a major and detrimental impact on the mathematical achievement of Spanish children in the ninth grade, according to the primary findings of the study design by Molinear et al. (2022). Both male and female students' mathematics achievement has been considerably impacted by this pandemic; however, male pupils appear to have been more negatively impacted than their female counterparts, with a significantly higher decline in scores.

Researchers discovered no study focused on academic performance in English among 12th grade students from different genders, locations, and kinds of schools in the Indian state of Assam's Kokrajhar, Udalguri, Baksa, and Chirang districts after going through widely reviewed literature in India as well as abroad. So this study tries to focus on investigating academic performance in English among 12th grade students in relation to gender, location, and kind of school.

### **3. Objectives of the study**

1. To determine whether students in the twelfth grade perform differently in English depending on their gender.
2. To ascertain if pupils in the twelfth grade differ in their academic achievement in English depending on the places they live.
3. To determine whether students in the twelfth grade perform differently in English depending on the type of school.

### **4. Hypothesis of the study**

In the present study the following research hypotheses were framed:

**H01:** Students in the 12th grade perform similarly academically in English regardless of their school's locality.  
**H02:** No discernible gender difference is found in the educational achievement of 12th grade English pupils.  
**H03:** No substantial difference regarding academic performance in English of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students according to type of school.

**5. METHODOLOGY**

**Method of Research**

For the purpose of this study, descriptive survey methodology was used to collect data and the location of schools.

**Population and Sample**

The sample of the current research is made up of students at H.S. Schools in the Indian state of Assam's Kokrajhar, Udalguri, Baksa, and Chirang districts. Thus, the sample of this research is made up of all students who attended upper secondary schools in the Indian Assam districts of Kokrajhar, Udalguri, Baksa, and Chirang. Multistage random sampling method and stratified random sampling method is used to collect the data and schools correspondingly and 2250 pupils of H.S. schools and colleges made up the study's population. These higher secondary school students were studying in class 12th in various public and private H.S. institutions including colleges. The break-up of the sample is given below in Table 1.

**Table 1: Demography of the population.**

Variable			N = 2250	%
Govt. School Students		Urban Students	733	32.58
		Rural Students	925	41.12
Private School Students		Urban Students	544	24.17
		Rural Students	48	2.13

**Personal Data Sheet**

The researchers had created a personal data sheet to collect data on gender, kind of school, and location of residence of school.

**6. RESULTS**

The current study was analyzed according to hypotheses in the following way:

**Hypothesis**

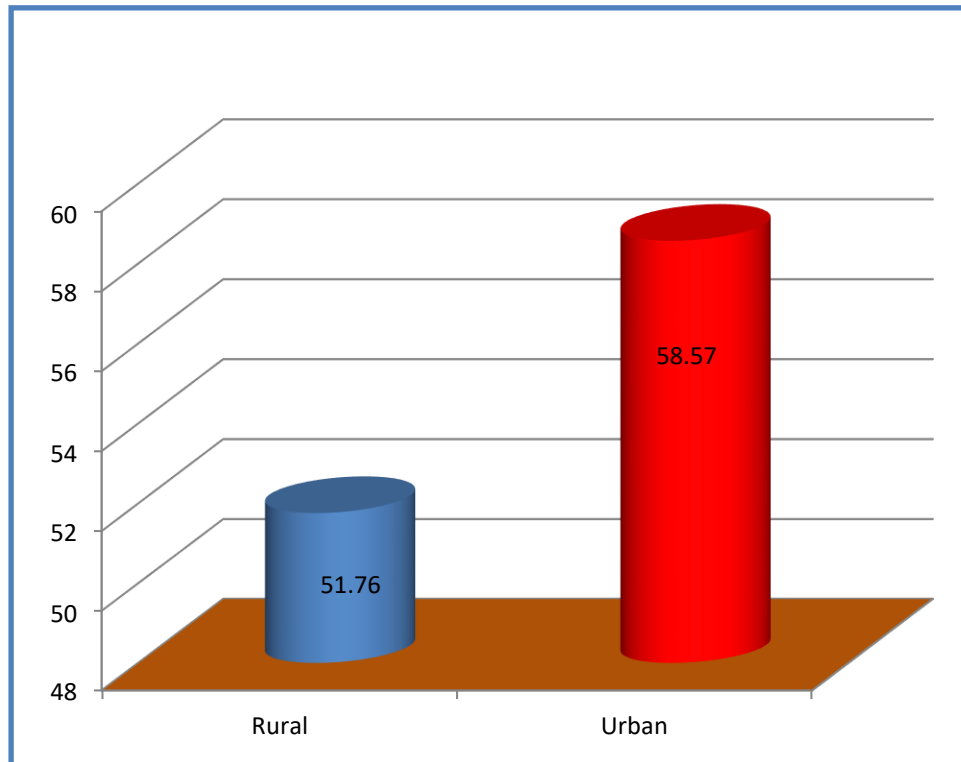
H01. Students in the 12th grade perform similarly academically in English regardless of their school's locality.

**Table 2A: Group statistics of academic performance in English regarding location of school.**

Location of School	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Std. Error Mean (SE)
Rural	973	51.76	14.181	.455
Urban	1277	58.57	15.633	.437

**Table 2B: Value of independent samples t-test of academic performance in English regarding location of school.**

	t	df	Mean Difference (MD)
Equal variances assumed	10.646	2248	6.806
Equal variances not assumed	10.787	2180.97	6.806



**Figure 1: Levels of academic performance in English according to location**

Table-2 (A & B) and Figure-1 show that the means of rural and urban students' scores of academic performance in English are 51.76 and 58.57 with standard deviations 14.181 and 15.633 correspondingly. Now at 0.01 level of significance, the estimated value of "t" is 10.646, which is higher than the significance value. Therefore, null hypothesis  $H_0$  is discarded due to a significant disparity in the educational outcomes in English among the students who attend rural and urban schools.

**Hypothesis-H02**

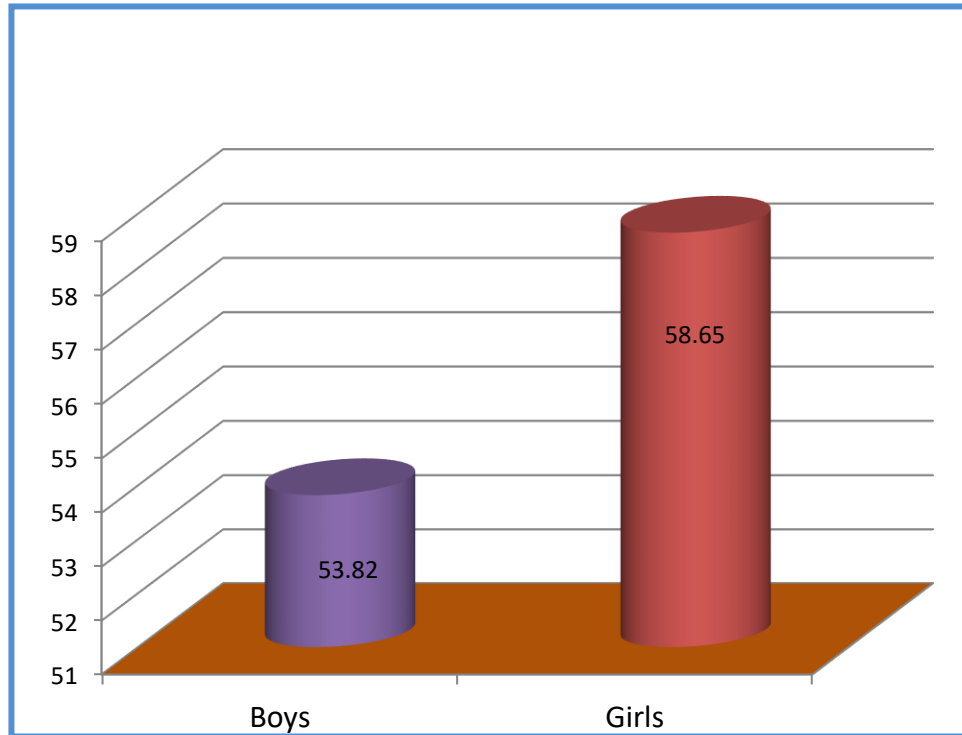
No discernible gender difference is found in the educational achievement of 12th grade English pupils.

**Table 3A: Group statistics of academic performance in English regarding gender.**

Gender	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Std. Error Mean (SE)
Boys	1408	53.82	14.939	.398
Girls	842	58.65	15.633	.540

**Table 3B: Value of independent samples t-test of academic performance in English regarding gender.**

	t	df	Mean Difference (MD)
Equal variances assumed	7.282	2248	4.828
Equal variances not assumed	7.195	1702.741	4.828



**Figure 2: Levels of academic performance in English according to gender**

The average academic performance in English for boys and girls pupils is 53.82 and 58.65, with standard deviations of 14.939 and 15.673 correspondingly, according to Table 3 (A & B) and Figure 2. At the 0.01 level of significance, the computed value of "t" is 7.282, which is higher than the number in the table. As a result, null hypothesis H02 is disproved since there is a significant disparity in the academic performance ratings for boy and girl pupils in English.

**Hypothesis - H03.**

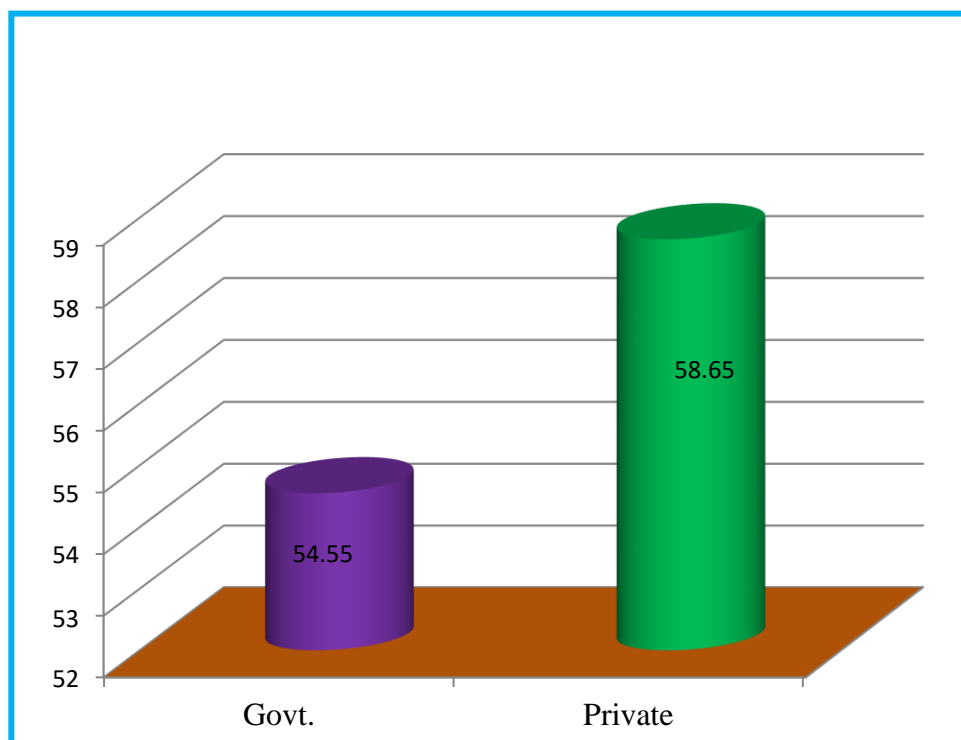
No substantial difference regarding academic performance in English of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students according to type of school.

**Table 4A: Group statistics of academic performance in English regarding type of school.**

Type of school	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Std. Error Mean (SE)
Public	1658	54.55	15.183	.373
Private	592	58.65	15.585	.641

**Table 4B: Value of independent samples t-test of academic performance in English regarding type of school.**

	t	df	Mean Difference (MD)
Equal variances assumed	5.597	2248	4.097
Equal variances not assumed	5.528	1017.740	4.097



**Figure 3: Levels of academic performance in English according to location**

Table-4 (A & B) and Figure-3 indicate that the mean scores of students belonging to Govt. and Private school on academic performance in English of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students are 54.55 and 58.65 correspondently. So at the significant level of 0.01, the estimated t-value in this case for the kind of schools is 5.597 that are higher than the number in the table. Therefore, it can be said that there is a substantial disparity between the academic performances of 12<sup>th</sup> grade pupils in English depending on the nature of institutions. Therefore, null hypothesis H<sub>03</sub> is disproven.

## 7. DISCUSSION

The current study's objective was to determine how well the students in the 12th grade performed academically in English based on their gender, place of residence, and kind of school. The study's result has been discussed under the following:

### Place of residence

Based on the analysis of the current study, it was determined that there were significant distinctions between the two groups, i.e., rural and urban. As a result, the null hypothesis Ho<sub>1</sub>, which asserts that "Students in the 12th grade perform similarly academically in English regardless of their school's locality," is wholly disproven.

### Gender

According to the analysis of the current study's results, there is a significant gender gap in metacognitive alertness, with girls surpassing their male peers in educational attainment in English. Because of this, the null hypothesis was rejected by Ho<sub>2</sub>, who concluded that "No discernible gender difference is found in the educational achievement of 12th grade English pupils."

### Type of school

The analysis of the current study's findings showed that the two groups (private and public) were not determined to be equal. It indicates that private school pupils have outperformed their public school peers in terms of educational attainment in English. This resulted in the null hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> 3 being rejected.

## 8. CONCLUSION

According to the study's findings, there are considerable differences among the students of 12th grade students regarding their achievement in English depending on their sexuality, school's nature, and region. However, the locality of pupils in the 12th grade has no bearing on their academic success. The analysis of the result made it clear that students belonging to rural and urban schools were found to have significantly different of academic performances in English. The results showed that urban kids improved academically more than rural peers did. This outcome can be a restricted atmosphere and a lack of prospects. Again, from the analysis of the result regarding gender, it may be inferred as a sizable gender gap in metacognitive



alertness where females outperforming the males peer in educational achievement in English. This outcome is because of that women are currently outnumbering men in every aspect of life. Females consistently achieve the highest scores in all boards, universities, and other competitive exams. Numerous studies demonstrate that women may work hard and achieve more than men do. Additionally, it is clear from the analysis of the data that kids in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade perform very differently in English depending on the institutions they attend. The finding revealed that the Private school students gained in academic performance than their Govt. counterparts. It is because the private institutions have all the facilities like audio- visual aids, sufficient number of teaching tools, good teaching-learning environment and best teachers rather than the government institutions. Additionally, kids from financially sound families take admission in private institutions. According to earlier surveys, kids at private institutions performed better academically than those in government institutions.

## 9. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of the results shows that the educational achievements of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students of Kokrajhar, Udalguri, Baksa, and Chirang districts of Assam regarding English is not satisfactory. It also sheds some lights on the academic performance of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in English among rural and urban, government and private institutions' students. So the policy and curriculum makers of education should think over it and a modification should be chalk out so that students have a better grip on the language. This research specifically suggests the syllabus makers to concentrate on students' basic requirements while updating or developing the syllabus. The report suggests bringing awareness among the students regarding the value of English in today's world from parental, instructors, administrations and academic official's side. The majority of government high schools, junior colleges, and colleges lack a language laboratory and trained English teachers. The government and other interested parties should recruit trained teachers, and a language laboratory should be established when appropriate. Additionally, mobile teachers should be sent to remote communities.

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