Awareness and Preparedness of Higher Education Students for Competitive Exams

*Mr. Hemantha Kumar K P
Guest Faculty, Department of Social Work
University College of Arts, Tumkur University, Tumkur

***Abstract*—In today's dynamic educational landscape, competitive examinations play a essential role in formative career prospects and higher educational opportunity for students. This study explores the levels of awareness and preparedness among higher education students regarding competitive exams, with a specific focus on their sympathetic of the requirements, available resources, and strategies for success. The research also examines the sway of socio-economic backgrounds, institutional support, and personal aspirations on students' readiness.**

A descriptive research design, combining interviews with structured questionnaires was employed to gather data from undergraduate and postgraduate students across various disciplines. Result make known that while a significant number of students are aware of the importance of competitive exams, there exists a gap in their practical preparation due to limited access to guidance, financial constraints, and lack of structured coaching. The study highlights the need for enhanced institutional initiatives, including career counseling, skill development workshops, and subsidized preparatory resources.

The research underscores the importance of bridge the gap between awareness and action, offering actionable recommendations to educators and policymakers for fostering an ecosystem that equips students to navigate competitive examinations effectively. This effort is very important for empowering students to realize their potential and contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic fabric of the nation.

***Keywords*—Competitive Exams, Higher Education Students, Awareness and Preparedness, Career Aspirations, Institutional Support**

I. INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of higher education is not just a pathway to acquiring knowledge but also a grave phase in determining students' aspirations and profession trajectories. In an more and more competitive world, achievement in various competitive examinations has become a crucial determinant of professional opportunities and educational advancements. These exams, ranging from government service exams to professional entrance tests, require a blend of academic knowledge, planned preparation, and psychological readiness.

Awareness of such exams and preparedness to tackle them effectively is essential for higher education students. It reflects not only their career ambitions but also their ability to adapt to the demands of competitive landscapes. However, the extent of students' consciousness about the diverse opportunities available and the preparedness strategies they take on remain varied, prejudiced by factors such as socio-economic background, access to resources, and institutional support systems.

This study focuses on assessing the levels of awareness and preparedness among higher education students for competitive exams. It aims to understand the factors influencing their readiness, the challenges they face, and the role educational institutions play in equipping students for these exams. By examining these aspects, the study seeks to contribute to the discourse on enhancing student competitiveness and bridging gaps in preparation strategies, ultimately supporting students in achieving their academic and career aspirations.

Through this research, it is anticipated that actionable insights will emerge, guiding policymakers, educators, and students towards more effective preparation for competitive examinations.

Rationale of the Study:

The competitive exam ecosystem is a critical entry to important academic programs, professional courses, and coveted career opportunities in both public and private sectors. For students in higher education, these exams represent not only a test of their academic capabilities but also an assessment of their planned preparation, time management, and adaptability to high-pressure scenarios.

Despite the importance of competitive exams, significant disparities in awareness and preparedness are often observed among students. Factors such as access to information, socio-economic status,

institutional support, and cultural influences shape students' preparedness. Many students, particularly from rural or underprivileged backgrounds, may lack awareness of the opportunities that these exams present or the resources required to prepare effectively. Furthermore, the rapid evolution of exam formats, syllabi, and assessment methodologies poses an additional challenge.

The rationale for this study stems from the need to bridge these gaps by understanding the present state of awareness and preparedness among higher education students. By identifying barriers and enabling factors, this study aims to provide insights that can inform strategies for improving access to information, enhancing institutional support systems, and fostering evenhanded preparation opportunities.

Additionally, the findings of this research can guide policymakers, educators, and career counselors in scheming targeted interventions to empower students. This includes establishing resource hubs, offering modified coaching, and creating mentorship programs that deal with the specific needs of students from diverse backgrounds.

In the end, this study seeks to contribute to the broader goal of equipping students to excel in competitive exams, thereby enabling them to access better educational and career opportunities and contribute meaningfully to society.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive research design to explore and analyze the awareness and preparedness of higher education students for competitive examinations. The descriptive approach is suitable as it allows for the systematic collection and analysis of data to understand current conditions, opinions, and behaviors of the target population without manipulating the study environment.

Objective of the study

1. To understand the socio-economic background of students and how it affects their preparation for competitive exams.
2. To find out the students' attitudes and thoughts about competitive exams.
3. To assess the current preparation level of students for competitive exams.

Population and Sample

The population for the study comprised undergraduate and postgraduate students from various disciplines across different colleges affiliated with Tumkur University. A total of 69 students were selected as respondents using a purposive sampling technique, ensuring representation from various academic streams and socio-economic backgrounds. This sampling method was chosen to focus on students who are potential aspirants of competitive examinations.

Data Collection Tools

Data was collected through a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

- The questionnaire included both closed-ended and Likert scale-based questions designed to assess:
  - Students' socio-economic background
  - Their attitudes and beliefs about competitive exams
  - Their current level of preparation and access to resources
- The interviews were conducted with a smaller sub-sample of participants to gather in-depth insights on perceived barriers, motivations, and support systems.

The tools were pilot tested on a small group of students to ensure clarity and relevance, and necessary modifications were made before final administration.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection was carried out over a defined period through offline and online modes, depending on student accessibility and convenience. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring ethical standards such as confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation.

Data Analysis

The collected quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistical methods such as frequencies, percentages, and tabulation to summarize responses. Qualitative responses from interviews were analyzed thematically to identify common patterns and key insights related to preparation practices, challenges faced, and institutional support.

Scope and Limitations

While the study provides meaningful insights into students' awareness and preparedness, it is limited to a sample size of 69 and specific to the institutional context. The findings may not be generalizable to all higher education students but

can serve as a foundation for broader future research.

III. DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

1. Age of the respondents

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	18-20	42	61
2	20-25	22	32
3	25-30	3	4
4	30 and Above	2	3
	Total	69	100

The age distribution of the respondents indicates that the majority are in the 18–20 age group, comprising 61% of the total sample. This suggests that most participants are likely undergraduate students in the early stages of their higher education journey. The second largest group is the 20–25 age bracket, making up 32% of respondents. These students are probably in the later years of undergraduate programs or pursuing postgraduate studies. Only a small proportion of students fall into the 25–30 (4%) and 30 and above (3%) categories. This indicates that mature students or those returning to education after a break form a minor part of the sample.

Overall, the data reflects that the study primarily represents young higher education students, which is relevant, as this demographic typically forms the largest share of candidates preparing for competitive exams. Their age also aligns with the critical period for career decision-making and academic transitions.

2. Family's Approximate Monthly Income

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Less than ₹10,000	37	54
2	₹10,001–₹30,000	20	29
3	₹30,001–₹50,000	5	7
4	₹50,001–₹1,00,000	6	9
	More than ₹1,00,000	1	1
	Total	69	100

The income data reveals that a majority of the respondents (54%) come from families earning less than ₹10,000 per month, indicating a low-income background. This suggests that more than half of the students may face financial challenges in accessing quality resources for competitive exam preparation, such as coaching, study materials, or digital tools. About 29% of students fall in the ₹10,001–₹30,000 income bracket, placing them in a lower-middle-income category. While they might have slightly better access to resources than the lowest income group, financial constraints likely still affect their preparation options. Only 7% of the respondents belong to families earning ₹30,001–₹50,000, and 9% are from the ₹50,001–₹1,00,000 income group. These students are more likely to afford preparatory services and support systems. A mere 1% of respondents come from families earning above ₹1,00,000, indicating that very few participants are from high-income households.

This distribution highlights a significant economic disparity among students and underscores the need for institutional financial support and affordable preparatory resources to ensure equitable access to competitive exam preparation opportunities.

3. Parents' Highest Level of Education

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Illiterate	5	7
2	Primary school	17	25
3	Secondary school	21	30
4	Higher secondary	15	22
	Graduate or above	11	16
	Total	69	100

The data shows that 30% of respondents' parents completed secondary school, followed by 25% with only primary education, and 7% who are illiterate. This means over 60% of students come from families with limited formal education, which may affect academic guidance at home.Only 16% have

parents who are graduates or above, suggesting fewer students have access to higher-educated parental support. These figures highlight the need for educational institutions to step in with guidance and mentorship, especially for first-generation learners.

4. Parents' Main Occupation

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Agriculture/Labor work	52	75
2	Government job	5	7
3	Private job	4	6
4	Business	6	9
	Unemployed	2	3
	Total	69	100

The data reveals that a significant majority of the respondents (75%) come from families engaged in agriculture or labor work, indicating a predominantly rural and working-class background. This occupational group is often associated with financial instability and limited exposure to competitive exam systems. Only 7% of respondents' parents are employed in government jobs, and 6% in private jobs, both of which may provide a more supportive academic environment due to greater awareness of educational opportunities. Around 9% are involved in business, while 3% are unemployed, reflecting additional economic vulnerability. This occupational distribution emphasizes the need for targeted educational interventions and support systems—especially for students from agrarian and low-income families—to bridge the gap in awareness and access to resources for competitive exam preparation.

5. Access to Sufficient Financial Resources

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	8	12
2	Agree,	30	43
3	Neutral,	14	20
4	Disagree	15	22
	Strongly Disagree	2	3
	Total	69	100

The data shows that only 12% of respondents strongly agree, and 43% agree that they have sufficient financial resources to prepare for competitive exams. This means that just over half (55%) of the students feel financially capable of accessing preparation tools like coaching, books, or online materials. However, 20% remained neutral, possibly indicating uncertainty or fluctuating financial support. Notably, 22% disagree and 3% strongly disagree, showing that 1 in 4 students face clear financial barriers in their exam preparation. This reflects a significant inequality in access, reinforcing the need for scholarship-based programs, subsidized coaching, and institutional financial aid to support economically weaker students in preparing for competitive exams effectively.

6. Impact of Family's Financial Situation on Coaching and Study Material Access

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	10	14
2	Agree,	34	49
3	Neutral,	11	16
4	Disagree	13	19
	Strongly Disagree	1	1
	Total	69	100

The data clearly shows that 63% of respondents (14% strongly agree and 49% agree) believe their family's financial situation affects their ability to join coaching classes or buy study materials. This is a strong indication that economic constraints are a major barrier to exam preparation for a majority of students. Another 16% remained neutral, possibly reflecting uncertainty or irregular support, while 20% (combined disagree and strongly disagree) do not see finances as a limiting factor—likely

representing those from relatively stable or supportive economic backgrounds. Overall, this points to a deep divide in educational opportunity based on economic status and underscores the urgency for policy-level interventions, such as free coaching schemes, low-cost preparatory resources, and digital learning access, to ensure equitable exam preparedness.

7. I receive encouragement from my family to prepare for competitive exams.

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	17	25
2	Agree,	41	59
3	Neutral,	4	6
4	Disagree	6	9
	Strongly Disagree	1	1
	Total	69	100

The table reflects that a significant majority of respondents receive encouragement from their families to prepare for competitive exams. A quarter (25%) of the participants strongly agree, and nearly 59% agree with the statement, indicating that family support plays a crucial role in motivating students. This shows that most students feel positively influenced by their families in their exam preparation, which could be a key factor in their overall readiness and success. However, there is a small proportion of respondents who do not experience such encouragement. About 6% of the participants remain neutral, and 10% either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting that some students may not have sufficient family support in their exam preparation. Despite this, the overall trend indicates that family encouragement is a prevalent and significant factor in students' preparation for competitive exams.

8. Socio-economic Background and Opportunities for Exam Preparation

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	11	16
2	Agree,	46	67
3	Neutral,	6	9
4	Disagree	5	7
	Strongly Disagree	1	1
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "My socio-economic background provides me with adequate opportunities to focus on exam preparation," based on data from 69 respondents. A majority, 67% (46 out of 69), agree that their socio-economic background allows them to focus adequately on their exam preparation. This suggests that for most students, their financial and social circumstances provide them with the necessary resources and stability to dedicate time and effort to preparing for competitive exams. On the other hand, 16% (11 out of 69) strongly agree with the statement, indicating that their socio-economic background significantly supports their exam preparation. However, a small percentage, 9% (6 out of 69), remain neutral, and only 8% (6 out of 69) disagree or strongly disagree, reflecting that a small number of students face challenges in accessing the resources and opportunities required for effective exam preparation due to their socio-economic status. Overall, the data highlights that the majority of students feel their socio-economic background provides sufficient support for exam preparation.

9. Perception of Advantage in Competitive Exams Based on Socio-economic Background

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	10	14
2	Agree,	47	68
3	Neutral,	5	7
4	Disagree	7	10
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "I feel that students from privileged socio-economic backgrounds have an advantage in competitive exams," with data from 69 respondents. A significant majority, 68% (47 out of 69), agree with the statement, suggesting that most students perceive an advantage for those from privileged socio-economic backgrounds in preparing for and succeeding in competitive exams. This indicates a widespread belief that financial resources and social advantages contribute to better access to exam preparation materials and coaching. Furthermore, 14% (10 out of 69) strongly agree, reinforcing the perception that privileged students have a notable advantage. A smaller proportion, 7% (5 out of 69), remain neutral, while 10% (7 out of 69) disagree with the statement. Notably, no respondents strongly disagreed, which suggests that, although some students may not fully agree, there is a general consensus that socio-economic privilege plays a role in providing an edge in competitive exams.

To find out the students' attitudes and thoughts about competitive exams.

10. Students' Belief in the Importance of Competitive Exams for Career Advancement

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	24	35
2	Agree,	38	55
3	Neutral,	4	6
4	Disagree	3	4
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "I believe that competitive exams are important for career advancement," with data from 69 respondents. A majority of respondents, 55% (38 out of 69), agree that competitive exams are crucial for career progression. This suggests that most students recognize the importance of these exams as a stepping stone for professional opportunities and success. In addition, 35% (24 out of 69) strongly agree with the statement, further emphasizing the significance they place on competitive exams in advancing their careers. A small proportion, 6% (4 out of 69), remain neutral, and only 4% (3 out of 69) disagree, indicating that most students see the value in competitive exams. No respondents strongly disagreed, reflecting a general consensus on the importance of these exams for career advancement.

11. Students' Confidence in Their Future Due to Competitive Exam Preparation.

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	29	42
2	Agree,	34	49
3	Neutral,	3	4
4	Disagree	3	4
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "Preparing for competitive exams makes me feel confident about my future," based on data from 69 respondents. A majority of students, 49% (34 out of 69), agree that preparing for competitive exams boosts their confidence about the future. This indicates that a large portion of students view exam preparation as an important factor in building self-assurance for their career and life prospects. Additionally, 42% (29 out of 69) strongly agree with the statement, showing that for many students, competitive exam preparation is a significant confidence booster. Only 4% (3 out of 69) are neutral, and an equal 4% (3 out of 69) disagree, suggesting that while most students feel confident due to their preparation, a small minority do not feel the same. No respondents strongly disagreed, further supporting the idea that competitive exam preparation is generally seen as a confidence-building activity.

12. Students' Perception of the Fairness and Unbiased Nature of Competitive Exams

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	39	57
2	Agree,	12	17

3	Neutral,	8	12
4	Disagree	10	14
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "I find competitive exams to be fair and unbiased," based on data from 69 respondents. A significant majority, 57% (39 out of 69), strongly agree that competitive exams are fair and unbiased. This suggests that a large proportion of students believe that these exams are conducted in a just manner, with equal opportunities for all participants. Additionally, 17% (12 out of 69) agree, further indicating that a sizable portion of students feel positively about the fairness of competitive exams. However, there are 12% (8 out of 69) who are neutral, and 14% (10 out of 69) disagree, indicating that some students perceive certain biases or unfairness in the system. Notably, no respondents strongly disagreed, which suggests that while there are some concerns, the overall perception of fairness remains generally positive among the majority of respondents.

13. The Impact of Fear of Failure on Students' Preparation for Competitive Exams

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	37	54
2	Agree,	3	4
3	Neutral,	12	17
4	Disagree	17	25
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "The fear of failure discourages me from preparing for competitive exams," based on data from 69 respondents. A majority, 54% (37 out of 69), strongly agree that the fear of failure discourages them from preparing for competitive exams. This indicates that a significant portion of students feel overwhelmed by the possibility of failure, which affects their motivation and readiness for the exams. In contrast, 4% (3 out of 69) agree, suggesting that fear of failure may discourage a small number of students. A larger proportion, 17% (12 out of 69), remain neutral, indicating some uncertainty or ambivalence about the impact of failure on their preparation. However, 25% (17 out of 69) disagree, suggesting that a substantial number of students are not significantly affected by the fear of failure and continue to prepare despite it. No respondents strongly disagreed, which points to the fact that while fear of failure is a factor for many, not all students feel discouraged by it.

14. Students' Motivation to Work Hard for Competitive Exams

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	24	35
2	Agree,	36	52
3	Neutral,	4	6
4	Disagree	5	7
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "I am motivated to work hard to clear competitive exams," based on data from 69 respondents. A significant majority, 52% (36 out of 69), agree that they are motivated to work hard to clear competitive exams, suggesting that motivation plays a key role in their preparation efforts. Additionally, 35% (24 out of 69) strongly agree, indicating that a large portion of students are highly driven to put in the necessary effort to succeed in competitive exams. Only 6% (4 out of 69) remain neutral, and 7% (5 out of 69) disagree, implying that while the majority are motivated, a small group of students might struggle with staying motivated. No respondents strongly disagreed, further emphasizing that motivation is generally a positive force for most students in their exam preparation.

To assess the current preparation level of students for competitive exams.

15. Students' Dedication to Studying for Competitive Exams

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	17	25
2	Agree,	40	58
3	Neutral,	9	13
4	Disagree	3	4
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "I regularly dedicate time to studying for competitive exams," based on data from 69 respondents. A significant majority, 58% (40 out of 69), agree that they regularly dedicate time to studying for competitive exams, indicating that most students are committed to their preparation and consistently allocate time for it. Additionally, 25% (17 out of 69) strongly agree, showing that a quarter of the respondents are highly disciplined in their study routines. However, 13% (9 out of 69) remain neutral, which may suggest varying degrees of commitment or uncertainty regarding their study habits. Only 4% (3 out of 69) disagree, indicating a small number of students who do not regularly set aside time for exam preparation. No respondents strongly disagreed, indicating that all students engage to some degree in preparation, although the frequency and consistency may vary.

16. Students' Understanding of the Syllabus and Requirements of Competitive Exams

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	16	23
2	Agree,	41	59
3	Neutral,	7	10
4	Disagree	5	7
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "I have a clear understanding of the syllabus and requirements of competitive exams I plan to take," based on data from 69 respondents. A majority, 59% (41 out of 69), agree that they have a clear understanding of the syllabus and requirements for the competitive exams they plan to take, suggesting that most students are well-informed about what is expected in their preparation. Additionally, 23% (16 out of 69) strongly agree, indicating that a significant portion of students have a thorough grasp of the exam structure and content. A smaller percentage, 10% (7 out of 69), remain neutral, while 7% (5 out of 69) disagree, suggesting that some students may not be fully aware of the details or requirements of their exams. No respondents strongly disagreed, reflecting that the majority of students feel they have a good understanding of their competitive exams.

17. Students' Use of a Structured Timetable for Exam Preparation

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	12	17
2	Agree,	41	59
3	Neutral,	9	13
4	Disagree	7	10
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "I use a structured timetable for my exam preparation," based on data from 69 respondents. A majority, 59% (41 out of 69), agree that they use a structured timetable for their exam preparation, indicating that most students organize their study time systematically to manage their preparation effectively. Additionally, 17% (12 out of 69) strongly agree, showing that a portion of students are highly disciplined in following a structured study schedule. However, 13% (9 out of 69) remain neutral, suggesting varying levels of commitment to using a timetable. 10% (7 out of 69) disagree, indicating that some students may not follow a

structured plan, possibly relying on more flexible or less organized study methods. No respondents strongly disagreed, suggesting that while not all students follow a strict timetable, most at least attempt to plan their study time in some way.

18. Students' Confidence in Their Level of Preparation for Competitive Exams

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	15	22
2	Agree,	43	62
3	Neutral,	7	10
4	Disagree	4	6
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "I feel confident about my level of preparation for competitive exams," based on data from 69 respondents. A majority, 62% (43 out of 69), agree that they feel confident about their level of preparation for competitive exams, indicating that most students believe they are adequately prepared. Additionally, 22% (15 out of 69) strongly agree, showing that a significant portion of students feel highly confident in their readiness for the exams. However, 10% (7 out of 69) remain neutral, suggesting some uncertainty or mixed feelings about their preparation. A smaller group, 6% (4 out of 69), disagree, indicating that they may not feel fully prepared or confident in their preparation level. No respondents strongly disagreed, highlighting that confidence in preparation is generally positive among the majority of students.

19. Students' Use of Guidance or Coaching Classes for Exam Preparation

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	10	14
2	Agree,	45	65
3	Neutral,	5	7
4	Disagree	8	12
5	Strongly Disagree	1	1
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "I seek guidance or attend coaching classes to enhance my preparation," based on data from 69 respondents. A significant majority, 65% (45 out of 69), agree that they seek guidance or attend coaching classes to improve their exam preparation, indicating that most students rely on external resources to enhance their readiness for competitive exams. Additionally, 14% (10 out of 69) strongly agree, suggesting that a notable portion of students are highly engaged in formal coaching or guidance sessions. However, 7% (5 out of 69) remain neutral, which may reflect some uncertainty or varying levels of reliance on coaching. 12% (8 out of 69) disagree, indicating that these students may prefer self-study or other methods of preparation. Only 1% (1 out of 69) strongly disagree, showing that very few students reject the idea of coaching or guidance altogether.

20. Students' Practice of Taking Mock Tests for Performance Evaluation

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	14	20
2	Agree,	43	62
3	Neutral,	11	16
4	Disagree	1	1
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "I frequently take mock tests to evaluate my performance," based on data from 69 respondents. A strong majority, 62% (43 out of 69), agree that they regularly take mock tests, suggesting that most students recognize the value of self-assessment in their competitive exam preparation. Additionally, 20% (14 out of 69) strongly agree, indicating that a significant portion of students are highly committed to using mock tests as a tool for tracking their progress and identifying areas for improvement. A smaller percentage, 16% (11 out of 69), remain

neutral, which may reflect inconsistent testing habits. Only 1% (1 out of 69) disagree, and no respondents strongly disagree, showing that nearly all students understand the importance of mock tests in effective exam preparation.

21. Students' Consistency and Discipline in Competitive Exam Preparation

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	13	19
2	Agree,	38	55
3	Neutral,	7	10
4	Disagree	8	12
5	Strongly Disagree	3	4
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "My preparation for competitive exams is consistent and disciplined," based on data from 69 respondents. A majority, 55% (38 out of 69), agree that their preparation is consistent and disciplined, indicating that more than half of the students maintain regular study habits and a focused approach toward their exam goals. Additionally, 19% (13 out of 69) strongly agree, reflecting a group of highly dedicated and well-organized students. However, 10% (7 out of 69) remain neutral, suggesting some variability in their preparation routine. On the other hand, 12% (8 out of 69) disagree and 4% (3 out of 69) strongly disagree, pointing to a portion of students who may struggle with maintaining consistency and discipline in their preparation. This data highlights that while most students show commitment, there is still a notable minority who face challenges in sustaining disciplined study practices.

22. Effective Use of Online Resources and Study Materials by Students

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	10	14
2	Agree,	45	65
3	Neutral,	8	12
4	Disagree	6	9
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "I use online resources and study materials effectively for my preparation," based on data from 69 respondents. A substantial majority, 65% (45 out of 69), agree that they effectively use online resources and study materials, indicating that digital tools play a key role in students' competitive exam preparation strategies. Additionally, 14% (10 out of 69) strongly agree, showing that a segment of students are highly confident in their ability to utilize these resources efficiently. On the other hand, 12% (8 out of 69) remain neutral, and 9% (6 out of 69) disagree, suggesting that some students may face difficulties in accessing or making the best use of online materials. No respondents strongly disagreed, highlighting a general positive trend in the adoption and effective use of online learning tools among the majority of students.

23. Students' Awareness of Latest Trends and Patterns in Competitive Exams

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	16	23
2	Agree,	44	64
3	Neutral,	5	7
4	Disagree	4	6
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "I am aware of the latest trends and patterns in the exams I am preparing for," based on data from 69 respondents. A significant majority, 64% (44 out of 69), agree that they are aware of the latest trends and patterns in the competitive exams they are preparing for. This suggests that most students actively stay updated with recent developments in exam formats, question styles, and syllabus changes. Additionally, 23% (16 out of 69) strongly agree, reflecting a

highly informed group that likely tailors their preparation strategies based on current exam trends. A small portion, 7% (5 out of 69), remain neutral, and only 6% (4 out of 69) disagree, indicating that while a few students may lack up-to-date information, the overall awareness among students is quite high. No respondents strongly disagreed, which reinforces the finding that staying informed about exam patterns is a common and valued part of students' preparation.

24. Students' Self-Assessment of Readiness for Competitive Exams

SL No	Particular	Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	16	23
2	Agree,	44	64
3	Neutral,	5	7
4	Disagree	4	6
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	69	100

The table presents responses to the statement "I believe I am fully prepared to take on the challenges of competitive exams," based on data from 69 respondents. A large majority, 64% (44 out of 69), agree that they feel prepared to face the challenges posed by competitive exams, indicating a strong sense of self-confidence and perceived readiness among students. Additionally, 23% (16 out of 69) strongly agree, highlighting a group of students who are highly confident in their preparation and capabilities. Meanwhile, 7% (5 out of 69) remain neutral, which could suggest uncertainty or fluctuating confidence. Only 6% (4 out of 69) disagree, and no respondents strongly disagreed, pointing to an overall positive outlook among the student group regarding their preparedness for competitive exams.

IV. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to assess the awareness and preparedness of higher education students for competitive examinations, with a focus on the socio-economic background, attitudes, and current preparation levels. Based on the survey data collected from a diverse sample of students, several important insights have emerged.

Firstly, it is evident that a student's socio-economic background significantly influences their access to resources and opportunities for exam preparation. Students from urban and economically stable families generally have better access to coaching, study materials, and guidance. In contrast, students from rural or economically weaker sections often face challenges such as lack of proper coaching facilities, limited awareness about exam patterns, and financial constraints.

Secondly, students' attitudes towards competitive exams varied widely. While a significant proportion expressed strong motivation and aspirations for government or professional careers, many also reported anxiety and low confidence, particularly those without adequate support systems. The role of family encouragement and institutional support was found to be critical in shaping positive attitudes.

Thirdly, the level of actual preparedness among students was found to be moderate. While many students were aware of major competitive exams, fewer had taken concrete steps such as joining coaching classes, following a regular study plan, or using online learning platforms. This gap between awareness and action highlights the need for more structured guidance and preparatory support at the college level.

In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of targeted interventions to bridge the gap in awareness and preparedness for competitive exams. Educational institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders must prioritize mentorship, financial aid, and inclusive preparatory programs—especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds—to ensure equal opportunities for success in competitive examinations.

REFERENCES

[1] Aggarwal, R. (2015). *Impact of Socio-Economic Status on Students' Performance in Competitive Examinations*. Journal of Education and Social Policy, 2(3), 45-56.

[2] Kumar, V., & Mehta, S. (2017). *Factors Influencing Career Choices and Preparedness for Competitive Exams among College Students*. Indian Journal of Higher Education, 31(2), 112-123.

[3] Sharma, R., & Singh, M. (2016). *A Study of the Awareness of Competitive Examinations among University Students in India*. Journal of

Educational Research and Innovation, 3(1), 70-80.

[4] Jha, S., & Ghosh, P. (2019). *Anxiety and Attitude of Students Towards Competitive Exams in India: A Psychological Perspective*. International Journal of Educational and Psychological Studies, 7(4), 155-167.

[5] Rani, R., & Sharma, M. (2020). *Impact of Family Support on Competitive Exam Preparation: A Study of Indian Students*. Journal of Educational Psychology, 15(2), 45-59.

[6] Gupta, N., & Kapoor, D. (2021). *Role of Socio-Economic Factors in Access to Resources for Competitive Exams: A Comparative Study*. International Journal of Educational Research, 9(1), 101-115.

[7] Soni, R., & Agarwal, P. (2018). *Preparation Strategies for Competitive Exams: Insights from Students in Urban and Rural Areas*. Journal of Career Development, 25(2), 129-141.

[8] National Testing Agency (NTA). (2020). *Competitive Exams and Their Significance for Higher Education Students in India*. Retrieved from https://nta.ac.in