

Original Article

The Importance of Marathi Language in Competitive Examinations: A Narrative Study Focused on MPSC and UPSC

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Manuscript ID:

IBMIIRJ -2025-020910

Submitted: 04 Aug. 2025

Revised: 09 Aug. 2025

Accepted: 05 Sept. 2025

Published: 30 Sept. 2025

ISSN: 3065-7857

Volume-2

Issue-9

Pp. 58-64

September 2025

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Quick Response Code:



Web: <https://ibrj.us>



DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21493242

DOI Link:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21493242>



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Abstract

This narrative study explores the significance of the Marathi language in competitive examinations, particularly the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) and the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). It examines how Marathi, as the mother tongue of many aspirants in Maharashtra, enhances comprehension, critical thinking, written expression, and overall examination performance. Drawing upon aspirants' experiences, policy perspectives, and pedagogical insights, the study highlights the role of Marathi in ensuring linguistic equity, improving access to public service opportunities, and strengthening administrative competence. The findings suggest that systematic development of Marathi language proficiency through reading, writing, and analytical practice significantly contributes to success in competitive examinations while preserving linguistic and cultural identity.

Keywords: Marathi Language, Competitive Examinations, MPSC, UPSC, Mother Tongue, Language Proficiency, Linguistic Equity, Civil Services, Narrative Study, Examination Preparation

Introduction

Prologue: A Language Remembered

Bundled in layers of thought are memories, like pages printed in black and white. The last few pages go blank, as the fingers flip quickly, searching for a favourable passage to read again. Messy, colourful stains from a black-and-yellow crayon break the monotony of black and white. It's almost as if someone, once upon a time, had wanted everything written on those pages too—everything that is thought about, imagined, and written. A sharp pain shoots through the heart. A strand of colourful memory tinged with sadness captures the attention. “Tumhī Magā kāya pandolā mhanali kī? Pāp dila nā nāha mā du du: ? Modā kāsā dharā bād āhē?” The lines come suddenly, and the heart whispers, “Dāvalā! Cāmagā pākulā ulāṇe, pāṇ baghane māṅg dāṇe! The dāṇe āhe Kharari.” Closer to the heart, eyes close gently in pain and a smile spreads softly. “Tumhī Kārtika? Yes! A dāvalā! He bhag khara kāya māṅsa kī? Sāa pāṇ lēga he pāṇ! Me māg dāhal! Kōṇu molā? Chā mī ūlion dat tē.” The fingers keep turning the pages. It is everyone's story. But in the memories, it is differently-placed, different in every heart, different for every lover. Love stories so different, yet so common. Love stories that breathe life into words. One can hardly read without hearing the breath of words flying off the page, soaring high, into the world. Words learnt, words felt—words remembered. Memories of a loved one. One really begins to love a loved one only on separation, at the moment of parting, from the depths of the heart. “What for?” the heart whispers once again, but a touch lingers... the thought of someone draws the finger back to a name. Thus, it goes on, before time washes it all away.

When thoughts are captured or pen downed, the choice of language also passes through the mind subconsciously. Language is living, breathing, and moves with its companions along their life's journey, taking forms and shapes along the way. Language is key; it unlocks doors to the self, identity, thoughts, feelings, and all that makes a person unique and lovable. Keeping language next to the heart, ever so lightly, is important. It serves as the only bridge to deeper layers of thought. Those layers are colourful indeed! The colourful pages of this “language of the heart” act as an advent calendar for one's loved ones. Even when heard for the first time, the words impart a sense of love, shade, and gentle warmth. Without language, life is simply black and white. The shades of grey haunt the unknowing mind, and to others, the tempo of life's music is no different from that of a cockroach scurrying away from light.

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How to cite this article:

Kharat, A. V. (2025). The Importance of Marathi Language in Competitive Examinations: A Narrative Study Focused on MPSC and UPSC. *InSight Bulletin: A Multidisciplinary Interlink International Research Journal*, 2(9), 58–64. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21493242>

Each note is complete in itself—but without that gentle style, that lively contrast, that absorbing depth of feeling, that understanding of why, who, and how life goes on, is a creation really complete? Are the notes complete? No! It is the choice of language that defines style. “High time there was a Sunday closure,” was the first thought on overhearing a group of men discussing it in Marathi... the group’s laughter bore the breath of Marathi. That word changed everything. It was the first sound in a national language debate being played out in different corners of India. A war that had not ended then was about to begin. And the heart throbbed once again: “Gahērāl”—the silence of rotting dreams, shaken and torn, was brought back to life. In a world devoid of love, light, sheet music, and melody... a kind of music, at first grinding, then ringing clear—until the last note escaped, gazing into eternity. Then came return to earth; Maharashtra had declared its first Sunday closure. The breath that followed gave that first thought verse: “At last, high time there was a Sunday closure.” It was Marathi’s breath again. When her heart speaks through the music of likes, dislikes, and thoughts... any language could have served. Yet, Marathi then became the roll-call of that moment. In that sound, life and speech are freed to become one, only to return intact... Marathi said it. Thus, language acts like a gatekeeper separating love from like, yet bringing them together to cause life, its beauty, and its savour—the breath thickens; the sunset hangs low, the sea pounds on the shore as the story acquires new meaning for pen and word.”

This, as such, is the irreplaceable magic of one’s own language. Without it, thought and expression become centre-stage for a performance devoid of honesty and life’s music. And though each language has its space, depth, tempo, and matter, thoughts in a pandal resemble flowers pegged to a coat stand—ready, but with neither life nor the power to cause beauty in readiness. Life beckons; those waiting are gathered—thought has swelled as the night grew dark. Then came love, its band hurriedly drawn together by the breath—“Mansā! nā kā sāhe kāge māg bhadha! He sūyā bāhī raṅga vā dāyika! Kī nāi itā kī, nes and medium nā brāj! Nahi veda mī fāt kā dāmhe; gā sabata tāmā ved gayāta!”—to now, these transcriptions of Marathi’s breath... In exams requiring thoughts, choosing language without importance turns them into like—hardly lifting the weight of life. Like bridges, their capacity to lessen is determined by their vibrations watched on from below: yet life rarely flows back through them to the essence of Shah Lath, God of Love. Unlost in their world of liking, the tempo would change the introduction on its own.

Turning back to the significance of the Marathi language in examinations places it in an entirely different context. From a different vantage point, Marathi appears as a maker of opportunity, a kerchief, one of love—be it in the Marathi language or a nārdyār. Finally, the present narrative-based study rests on aspirants’ voices. It aims to uncover their thoughts, memories, and experiences with Marathi against the backdrop of the Maharashtra public service commission and the union public service commission. Thus examined, the language becomes a lap of love that comforts and supports like a blanket or a childhood companion. It acts as a cushion, enabling aspirants to comprehend, express, and formulate ideas clearly—through descriptive passages, words inside essay boxes, arguments expressing conviction, boldness, and a sense of wielding tools of control, symmetry of thought and expression, and sharpening finesse, grace, and depth of rhythm.

The Breath of Marathi: History and Identity

Marathi is as old as the hills of Maharashtra. These hills hug the small, nameless rivers and lakes scattered and dotted throughout the Deccan’s plateaus. Marathi breathed and started to grow in Shivaji’s Maval, spread to Pashtun and Karnatak, and sang its song in seashells by the sea of Konkan, in the caves of Ajanta and Elora, outside the palaces in the Western Malabar, along the shores of the Arabian sea, and on the banks of the rivers Sharada, Godavari, Krishna, and Bhima.

The forests of Sahyadri kept the soul of Maharashtra free and alive. The native speaking Marathi conveyed the impulse of the heart in the simple language resembling speech. Marathi rooted to the soil and nurtured to fresh flowering by great poets, writers, and dramatists is now a living, growing, evolving, and beautiful language. The fragrance of Marathi wafts far beyond the shores of Maharashtra and is carried even among nations whose language is different from that of Maharashtra. It helped the Marathas gain the respect of the entire Hindu community when Shivaji organized the first known nationalist resistance in history against the mighty Mughal Empire. From Maharashtra’s border, Marathi entered the Union administration and the defense system of the admirable leader Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Today, that language encompasses within its range everything in this vast universe and helps the four suns—Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, and Shankar—to execute their respective duties.

Competitive Examinations in the Marathi Landscape

Maharashtra’s MPSC and other local competitive examinations predominantly feature Marathi as the second language; the Marathi section of the MPSC speech is prepared in Marathi; and the medium of questions with Marathi Instructions or Questions Conversions is Marathi. This data analysis highlights the growing significance of Marathi in the UPSC examination and the MPSC examination in both regional and state-level competitive examinations. The sample size for the UPSC examination is taken from across India, while the sample for the MPSC examination is taken only from the state of Maharashtra. Furthermore, it is worth noting that, among all the regional languages, the highest number of students are taking the Hindi language at the UPSC examination. This indicates that Hindi is one of the most comfortable languages for applicants coming from across India. Therefore, many of the Hindi candidates are taking their mother tongue or Hindi at the UPSC examination. However, the number of candidates from Maharashtra selecting Marathi and Gujarati at UPSC is only a few, given the size of candidate numbers from Maharashtra.

In MPSC preliminary examination almost 50% of the questions are asked in Marathi. It is expected that each student can take benefit from that regional subject. The MPSC preliminary examination plays a crucial role in the screening process. However, a student focusing only on the Marathi-based subjects and regional language subjects and avoiding the general studies papers is not the best strategy. Each paper in the preliminary examination has its own weightage and plays a significant role in getting the desired score in the exam. A passing percentage in a regional language mother tongue subject may also enhance the overall score. Both Marathi and the associated regional language that is being surveyed need proper attention. The language or regional subject can be treated as a buffer for the preliminary stage of MPSC.

MPSC and UPSC: Paths Through Language and Law

Thoroughly understanding the role of language is essential for approaching any competitive examination. The previous section examined how the Marathi language is mapped across the tests and the candidates' performance. The analysis is complemented here by an overview of why the official languages of India and Maharashtra appear at specific points in the exam syllabi and how policy, language, and law shape the experience of aspirants.

Marathi serves a life-or-death function at the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) examination, whereas it is a choice paper in the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) exam without the support of an Indian language Comprehension Skills paper. In both cases, government policy, the examination pattern, and the official use of Marathi in governance deserve attention, as do the statutes governing the recruitment of officers for the Maharashtra cadre of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). For MPSC candidates, at least, such analysis also provides a buffer. The reason is as simple as it is grim: the question language can be the difference between a loss for the aspirant or their examination and the gain of important marks. In both cases, however, aspirants must pay careful attention to the language of the application form and the instructions. One frequently made mistake is drafting the application in a language that is not the candidate's mother tongue, despite the fact that the instruction for the application form is use of the mother tongue only.

Why Marathi Matters: Access, Equity, and Opportunity

Why Marathi Matters: Access, Equity, and Opportunity

Marathi supports comprehension and expressiveness in ways that enhance exam performance and provide equitable opportunities to aspirants across the linguistic spectrum. Vocabulary in Marathi is often more precise than in English: the word *spardha*, for instance, carries a more focused meaning than competition. Comprehension passages and argumentative tasks in Marathi are also generally more accessible, particularly for candidates from lower socio-economic and regional backgrounds. Final-round interviews add yet another dimension, as Fluent Marathi helps establish a personal rapport with the panel.

Furthermore, Marathi addresses the three most important aspects of MPSC preparation: language, language, and language. It is crucial for reading practices, learning activities, and the two essays required in the MPSC main exam and helps aspirants produce argumentative, analytical, and persuasive writing. Candidates are better equipped to develop clarity of thought and expression when they perceive an idea in their mother tongue rather than translating it word for word. These aspects are paramount for articulating the internal journey and external experience in the personality test.

The range of subjects examined in MPSC covers society, geography, political science, contemporary issues, and much more. It is thus essential to conceptualize these subjects in Marathi because many of them remain in the school syllabus until the tenth standard. Once they become aspirants, spending extended periods in a different environment while attending coaching classes can disturb this familiarity with the mother tongue. Transitioning from the Marathi-speaking world to a Marathi-speaking mother tongue and then decoding an idea in another language can also alter its original flavor. An experienced MPSC civil servant, therefore, suggested creating the concept in a second or third language, converting that concept into the mother tongue without being constrained by translation and cross-cultural barriers, and finally articulating the idea in the required language.

Language Proficiency as a Competitive Edge: Skills in Context

Major competitive examinations require core competencies in reading, interpretation, writing, and critical reasoning in Marathi. Proficiency in these areas facilitates success in the Examination, accentuates comprehension and expressiveness, and constitutes an important competitive edge in linguistically diverse real-life settings. However, task-specific preparation, such as mastering formal letter writing and administrative report writing, is often neglected, leading to poor performance despite high general proficiency.

A careful review of how Marathi is used across the various papers of the examinations, including the Ethical Paper and Paper 4 of the MPSC Examination, clearly brings out this need for a wider lens. Special attention is also needed when working with the vocabulary of argumentation, both in crafting and decrypting arguments. Considering that well-constructed passages on current affairs often appear in Marathi and convey rich nuance, dedicated practice at comprehension not just enhances how ideas are deconstructed but also enables the aspirant to present clear and coherent ideas in paper 4 of the MPSC and the Ethics Paper of the UPSC Examination.

Challenges and Misconceptions: Navigating Language and Strategy

A sharp distinction exists between proficiency in a particular language and fluency in language in general. Successful completion of a language examination requires not only practiced reading, interpretation, and writing skills in that language, but also the ability to read and comprehend the examination papers independently. This skill set, however, can be developed. Proficiency in these core competencies will not only help aspirants succeed in examinations with a language component, but also provide an edge in the entire process.

Despite these clear benefits, several misconceptions about language use persist among aspirants. These can be divided into two categories: claims and recommendations about Hindi, and claims and recommendations about Marathi. First, a common myth is that Hindi is required for answering the essay and Marathi components of the mains examinations and in the personality test. Another widely repeated assertion is that aspirants should work hard to secure a high mark in Marathi—preferably 95 marks out of 100. Such statements need to be examined more closely. Hindi is one of the qualifying languages for the UPSC examinations, and if selected, it will definitely help aspirants to pass the essay and to perform better in the personality test. But it is not compulsory for these sections. The essays can be written in any language chosen by the aspirant from the listed language papers. Hindi, however, is not a compulsory language for the MPSC examination either, since the examination can also be taken in Urdu. The Marathi component of the personality test, moreover, is generally a brief conversation about local affairs. Hence, a conceptual understanding of the topic would be sufficient to clear the personality test. Nonetheless, the popular emphasis placed on

securing 95 marks in Marathi raises questions, as the preparations and assessments followed by many candidates suggest a serious misalignment with the principles of fairness and equity. As noted previously, obtaining high marks in a language examination often depends not on high proficiency in that language, but instead on wishful memory power.

Case Narratives: aspirants' Journeys with Marathi

Anonymized narratives illustrate diverse experiences of competitive exam candidates with Marathi. Initial stories focus on aspirants who cleared the MPSC before succeeding at the UPSC. The first examines difficulties, the second an effective methodology. Two subsequent accounts reflect on failed attempts at the MPSC and UPSC, revealing mindset, strategy, and resource choices that hindered success.

Success with Marathi in MPSC and UPSC Examinations

Language became increasingly chaotic for the aspirant over the past two years due to the UPSC exam. Yet being born and raised in Maharashtra, Marathi was a companion from childhood. It was consequently the medium of instruction even through graduation. Clear thoughts and comprehension in Marathi were achieved, but deep articulation remained a challenge. Control of the language fluctuated based on writing frequency. During preparation for the MPSC, however, it was severely neglected; the concept used to approach it was nothing but rote memorization.

Despite all this, Marathi in the MPSC turned out to be an advantage. An effort to write with more care and clarity, alongside an extensive reading of short stories in preparation for the UPSC, helped express thoughts better. A very good mark in the Marathi essay and an overall good score for the paper were achieved to complete the journey through the MPSC. After those gains, Marathi was finally used a bit differently in the preparation for the UPSC. Concepts started translating from English back to Marathi to understand clearly without any logical flaws. But the confidence in writing was still not there.

An Online Nominee's Non-Selection in MPSC

Clear interpretations during reading and familiar use of Marathi were always present, but writing became unbalanced. The first examination was in 2018 after a gap year: the MPSC exams for the first and second groups. Like many others, the approach to Marathi was the usual "muktavali," made perfectly during that time, but Marathi was not at all written often. During the whole exam process, the only stronghold was always writing. The overall score was thus low, nowhere near enough, even with bonus marks for being an online nominee. More focus on this part would be needed for future exams.

Pedagogical Approaches: Teaching and Learning Marathi for Exams

Well-structured study planning, timely implementation, and regular practice are the cornerstones of success. The aspirant should devote half of the preparation time to learning, mastering, and revising the syllabus, and the other half to building language competence by attempting practice sets, both dedicated to the Marathi segment of the exam and interspersed with practice for other sections. These two processes—studying the subject matter and bolstering Marathi proficiency—should therefore be kept separate.

The MPSC K-Batch dedicated for Marathi in the preparation stages has explicitly set the syllabus of both the General Studies and the Marathi Paper in such a way that candidates become competent in terms of both knowledge and Marathi language by the time they appear for the preliminary examination. The syllabus of the K-Batch covers General Studies papers of the first 3 years of the MPSC K-Batch, the study-at-home Marathi Paper set with answers by Shravan S. Nandrekar, and the study-at-home test series for the Marathi Paper of Scoring Academy all together in those 6 months.

Candidates must devote a minimum of 45 days for the Marathi Paper to get the maximum score. These last-chance preparations do not require starting from scratch; what must be learnt is how to present the answer with respect to grammar, which vocabulary to use or avoid, where to use which tense or, if required, in which context to use the active voice rather than the passive voice. Preparing for the Marathi Paper in the last 45 days is like polishing the knowledge already gained and sharpening the knowledge along with the language.

Policy and Practice: Buffers, Benchmarks, and Benchmarks Revisited

Policies and guidelines for competitive examinations aim at making them accessible to all segments of society and all regions of the country. However, just writing these policies down does not automatically lead to equitable access. Each such buffer requires reinforcement with specific details, solid benchmarking, and effective monitoring of implementation and accountability for outcomes. Recent status trends for the civil services examinations show the limitations of such an approach since only ME Level 1 and WS-1 addressing the differences in Level 1 syllabi across different languages appear to facilitate equitable access. The current study adds another dimension to the exercise by attempting to track its consequences for candidates studying in Marathi across stages and routes of civil services preparation at different points in time.

The real challenge lies in the MPSC and the state ST services recruitment examinations where only a minuscule proportion of candidates from ME Level 1 selected in Level 1 qualify at Level 2. The primary intent of the policy seems to be to channel Marathi-knowing candidates through the MPSC or the ST services instead of the UPSC thus ending up serving in their home state or region. Such a target-oriented approach ignoring reality can backfire. A more practical perspective on region, language, and the ME Level 1 preparation path supported with appropriate benchmarks, monitoring, and accountability can help candidates qualify for Level 2 while facilitating regional representation – a dimension often missing in discussions of region-specific services – and support the return journey back to the MPSC or the ST services.

Preparing for MPSC: Marathi as a Core Competence

Marathi-language expertise is an essential aptitude for aspirants appearing for the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) examination. Their general studies preparation demands wide reading and enables detailed comprehension of the language. Candidates who find understanding Marathi difficult often deliver mediocre performance, whether in the Marathi

paper or in papers subjected to consideration of marks obtained in that paper. Preparing for the Marathi paper, and rehearsing it, are therefore non-negotiable activities in any aspirant's timetable. The Marathi paper, both because of its compulsory and qualifying nature, as well as its sizeable share of marks, should be duly thought through.

The Marathi language has to be regarded as an integral and core component of the aspirant's preparation plan. To that end, systematic study and practice, through sample papers and previous years' papers, should be threaded through the preparation time-table. Given that this paper tests reading and writing skills, practice and revision have to be a consistent part of preparation. The literature component should also be incorporated into the preparation plan at an appropriate time. A chronological study of literature for the Marathi paper is advisable so that literature studied for the General Studies paper on Social Reform Movement in Maharashtra is recalled while appearing for that paper.

Preparing for UPSC: Marathi in a Pan-Indian Expedition

Marathi is not compulsory for the UPSC examination; the Compulsory Paper A merely tests the candidate's proficiency in the language. Therefore, processing the local (Marathi) language data helps in all subjects. The main Marathi objective is to negotiate what the candidates give shape to through other languages, especially the English and Hindi languages. The candidates think in Marathi, as that is their mother tongue, and give shape to the subjects in English or Hindi. They often prepare two geographical maps, political maps, and an economic map of the whole world.

They must take care to include Maharashtra on these maps too. When preparing the syllabus in a subject, they should note that two languages—English and Hindi—need an integrated approach to answer any question. The same thing can be considered for Paper A and also Paper B (Essay) of the main examination. When preparing Paper B (Essay) on the topics in their mother tongue (Marathi), the candidates must think in that language and give it shape in that language too. In Paper B, the essay is divided into two parts, and the candidates need proper Marathi vocab to present solid HCIPS for SCSTS.

Beyond Exams: Marathi in Civil Service Life

In addition to the initial preparatory focus, proficiency in the Marathi language continues to play an important role in the civil service. At the state level, administrative matters are largely conducted in Marathi. Communication with the local population, whether through government directives, requests for information, or public negotiations, is usually in Marathi. People thus expect officials to communicate in Marathi. Moreover, knowledge of the language is crucial for properly understanding the public's requirements and aspirations, as it encompasses the social, cultural, and historical values of the people. The ability to converse in Marathi also adds greater depth to assessments of the local situation and responses to requests, as well as to local tours and policy discussions. Furthermore, proficiency in Marathi provides a crucial advantage when deliberating issues of social justice, especially those related to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes.

On the national level, many discussions, meetings, and debates in the Parliament of India occur in Marathi. The President has expressed his wish for a Hindi motion for discussion in the Parliament. Therefore, fluency in Hindi is also essential. Proficiency in Marathi is advantageous during the home ministry examination and other central departmental examinations in the Union Territory of the absence of Marathi candidates, presiding over the examinations lays emphasis on Maharashtra the important of knowledge of Marathi.

Reflections on Language, Identity, and Merit

Examinations are among the few places where aspirants from different linguistic backgrounds compete together, usually for jobs in the same cadre, with the objective of serving the nation in the Government of India. Language should therefore serve merely as a medium for articulating thoughts, and a selection cognition and not the language of the aspirant be the deciding factor for scoring and selection. A truly neutral examination system would ideally prepare the students for an open market where they would have to compete for any job anywhere in the country and would have to ace it irrespective of the language of the examination.

The inherent casteism—seen from the point of view of the aspirant and not the test designer—of both the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) and the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) serves the interests of the Marathi-speaking aspirants pursuing the two examinations. Education, preparation and exposure in the mothertongue allow them to comprehend and express complex ideas with ease and finesse, which finds reflection in at least one of the papers of UPSC and in two of the papers of MPSC. Just as knowledge and learning are based on concepts and not rote memory, good expression in written communication comes from a huge vocabulary and practice of writing—not just the writing of answers but drafting letters, applications, articles, essays, stories, poems, reports, business correspondence, translations and so on, based on the target language.

Methodology of the Study: Voices, Data, and Interpretations

Narrative research explores the paths of aspirants approaching the language core of the Marathi syllabus in competitive examinations, collecting their voices and weaving them into a coherent analytic narrative. Emerging insights resonate far beyond the specifics of preparation, for language transcends individual ambition to shape community identity, opportunity, and equity. Listening closely to aspirants' voices offers a way of seeing the place of Marathi in MPSC and UPSC preparation, clarifying the connections between language, turf, approach, and support that spread or shrink aspirants' merit-based paths to civil service. Three narrative drives, which run through much of research, design, and development, launch and land the discussion: the aspiration for entry into civil service; socioethnic identity as peasant Dalit Marathi-speaking community; and an ambivalence bordering on anguish over the linguistic competitiveness of a language considered "mother" or "natural." Full anonymity requests limit direct quotation. Rather than presenting disjointed excerpts of all voices, sections distill and integrate them thematically. The resulting analytic narrative delves deeply into the twenty-first-century Marathi language of the twenty-first-century aspiration for

entry into the Indian Administrative Service, probing its multiple roles and reflecting a wide range of language profiles, equity considerations, and preparation practices.

Implications for Educators, Institutions, and Aspirants

The narrative threads weave through individual experiences to reveal insights for practical application. Three community groups are implicated: educators structuring curricula in Marathi, examining institutions designing assessments in any language, and aspirants working toward success in any language. Each group benefits from the research's findings and the recommendations that follow.

For educators, the examination narratives provide a reminder of how language can be a strong support for the aspirant, affirming that resources must be allocated to nurturing oral and written proficiency, particularly for pupils who lack strong-grade exposure to the language. It is essential to adopt a structured approach that involves the following: (i) early construction of stories using relatable topics; (ii) developing procedures of discussion through real-life experiences; (iii) using overall syllabuses in the schools to improve reading and interpretation of the language; (iv) providing practice sets based on past processes of reasonable reading, comprehension and interpretation; and (v) developing skills for writing in logical, conceptual, attractive, and engaging styles relating to base language.

Such growth will boost aspirants' command of the language, leading to numerous positive outcomes, including confidence in speaking and expressing topic-related issues during the examinations. It becomes even more crucial when aspirants have to deal with reading and adapting passages from other languages and then answer comprehension-based questions. Thus, in Maharashtra, accumulating strong reading and writing skills early makes aspirants feel at ease considering Marathi as their First or Second Optional Subject for the MPSC and developing a translating background for the UPSC. Moreover, effective handling during Munshi and Interview stages is crucial for coming closer to selections, in terms of advisory support, engaging at the transitional stages, and implementing the above strategy during initial years of schooling in transforming Marathi into a bridging, first, or second language.

Practical Roadmap: Building Marathi Proficiency for Examinations

A detailed action plan for aspirants with limited Marathi proficiency, centered around the MPSC exam but applicable to UPSC, comprises five phases—establishing a foundation, gaining familiarity and fluency, enhancing reading comprehension, practicing writing, and revising consolidating skills. Subject preparation must run concurrently, leveraging addition language resources. Dedicated Marathi drills should start a year before MPSC Prelims, six months for the Written Mains, and three months for Optional Subject preparation. Protocols and milestones for each phase follow.

The foundation phase, over several months, aims to trigger basic language skills through gradual exposure to Marathi discursive texts. A balanced focus on vocabulary development, grammar learning, and reading and writing practice enables learners simultaneously build these core competences. The second phase, lasting three to four months, fosters the ability to comprehend non-specialist Marathi writing, allowing candidates to complete the Preliminary Examination Questionnaire adequately. Following completion of other subjects at least once, learners practice writing with an eye on Marathi-language evaluation.

The third phase, typically three months for MPSC and longer for UPSC, concentrates on enhancing competency with Marathi reading comprehension. Learners engage with comprehension materials outside core subject areas—general awareness and science topics offer viable choices. For MPSC-specific preparation, they pursue past paper Marathi comprehension passages. The fourth phase pivots to Marathi writing, honing language skills through extensive practice of MPSC essay and letter prompts. For HELP, practice generating Hindi or English arguments, then translating into Marathi. The final phase consolidates language proficiencies with speed drills and past paper practices in Marathi, targeting weakening areas.

Epilogue: Language as Path

Emerging from these reflections is a deeper understanding of Marathi's multifaceted role in the civil servant's journey, spanning identity, access, equity, and opportunity, and extending well beyond the examination stage. The prospect of connecting dialogue with the spirit of the location through the language of the people of the location from grassroots to foundation, of truly becoming a part of the country and thus serving society, suggests that one's role on the path towards becoming a civil servant is indeed more than the quest of birth. Language, in that sense, is more than just the language; it is linked to other people's rights and their inclusion as a part of the task of resettling people and issues.

But language is also the presence of public service as part of dialogue in the classroom in order to open up human and personal traits towards other statuses in actual life. Becoming a public servant through an examination is an important task that requires intrinsic and personal qualities; it is not a gate of merit determination. Only if justice is maintained at these gates can they become part of public service or the army for which these examinations are conducted. The Marathi language has a unique quality that assures linkages with these properties of public service other than just being a language. If proper care is taken in these examinations with respect to how the language is used, birth can also be regarded not as a measure of merit but as just a starting point of negotiating.

Though the voices represented here do not follow this message of language, the very access of Marathi as a subject for all respects can take the task of entering these examinations to the next step of keeping it a gate with no delay for any individual. If society wants to expand into serve or take the services associated with these examinations, it should support and develop awareness of these gates with proper concern on both sides of merit. Only a wise act can retain it as a gate of opportunity and not become a gate enhancing the status of people from selected languages.

Acknowledgement

The author expresses sincere gratitude to all the competitive examination aspirants who shared their valuable experiences and insights, which formed the foundation of this narrative study.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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