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**SUCCESSFUL CAREER & LIFE FOR STUDENTS - A HOLISTIC & QUALITATIVE REPORT ON HOW SSB INTERVIEW INCREASES THE RATE OF SUCCESS IN LIFE**

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**Ujjwal Chugh**

Founder of the Community “SSB Recommendation Blueprint Journey”

Founder &amp; CEO, ISOLS Group

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**ABSTRACT**

*This research & study is to show that the rate of success in life & career becomes high for all those who undergo with SSB Interview (A selection procedure for becoming an officer in Indian Armed Forces) once in their student age. A survey was conducted with 75 plus people from different cities in India who have given SSB Interview. Even though many of the students who failed in SSB Interview to get the recommendation, have been able to do good in their life since they gave & experienced the SSB Interview in their life.*

**Keyword:** SSB Interview, Service Selection Board, Career Success, Student Success, Successful life.

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

For getting commissioned i.e. becoming an officer in Indian Armed Forces (either Indian Army or Indian Air Force or Indian Navy) there are various options or entry points starting from school (10+2), college graduation and after graduation. Every entry point has a criteria with a written test or evaluation test, and once you clear the first stage of written or evaluation test then the second stage irrespective of the entry scheme is the ‘SSB Interview’. Thus SSB Interview is the main gateway that every candidate has to clear in-order to become a uniform officer of Indian Armed Forces.

SSB, Service Selection Board, as the name illustrates is a board that makes the crucial decision in the selection process. It is a group of highly skilled officers from the Indian Armed Forces, responsible for selecting the candidates by rationally analysing their personality traits which a candidate ought to possess by virtue of being the Commissioned Officer in Indian Armed Forces.

SSB is generally perceived merely as an interview. In-fact, interview is just one part in the SSB process. The SSB evaluation procedure is divided into two phases. Phase I comprises of screening test. For graduating into Phase II each candidate has to successfully clear Phase I. Phase II constitutes of three parts and is aimed at evaluating the overall personality of the candidate.

“SSB is a 5 days evaluation which needs expression of thyself in order to cross check the Officers Like Qualities.”

**SSB Tests = INTELLIGENCE + PERSONALITY + ENDURANCE test.**

*Service Selection Boards (SSBs):*

Total thirteen Service Selection Boards are there across India, out of which four boards are for the Indian Army, four boards are for Indian Air Force, and five boards for the Indian Navy selection.

*Composition of SSB:*

The vital aim of selection system in SSB is to assess each candidate on the basis of his OLQs (Officer Like Qualities) and then rationally and methodologically explore and grade the potential of each candidate on the basis of traits required for being an Officer in Indian Armed Forces. For exploring and grading the potential of each candidate, each Service Selection Board comprises of three different teams of Officers:

1. The Psychologist
2. The Interviewing Officer
3. The Group Testing Officer

The above described composition of SSB forms a full-proof and accurate selection system.

**1.1 Problem Statement / Research Question:-**

Does preparing for SSB Interview increases your probability or rate of overall success in your career and life?

**1.2 Objective of Study:-**

- ✓ To analyse does SSB interview changes the mindset of the students appearing it.
- ✓ To Study the importance & impact of strategies & procedures used in SSB for evaluation.
- ✓ To find out how SSB Interview preparation plays a progressive role in increasing the rate of your overall success in your career & life.

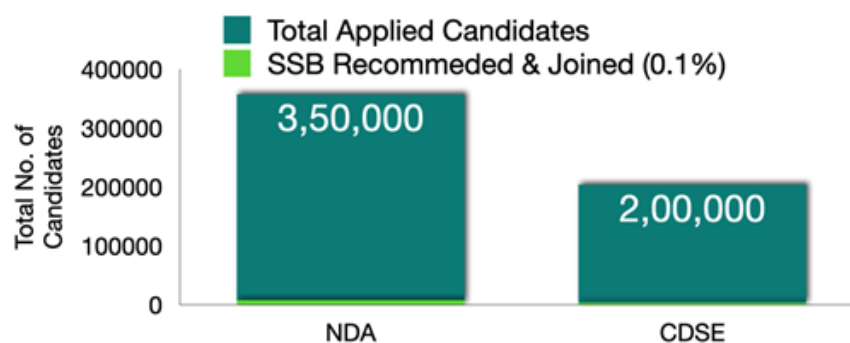
**1.3 Importance of the Research:-**

- ✓ This research will help practitioners/IAF Aspirants understand with clarity the SSB procedure system, the selection system wants & expectation, and how they are being assessed during the SSB.
- ✓ This research will help SSB Educators to understand the right & progressive way of training the IAF aspirants willing to become officer in IAF.
- ✓ This research will help Human Resource leaders & professionals to inculcate few procedures of SSB selection that can help them do better talent acquisition with higher efficiency & accuracy.
- ✓ This research will help enthusiasts in understanding that preparing for the SSB Interview will indirectly help them to get successful in other avenues of their career & life.

**2. METHOD (RESEARCH METHODOLOGY):-**

After clearing my own NDA written exam and getting the success in SSB Interview by getting recommendation twice consecutively in 2008 from 4 AFSB Varanasi SSB Board, the roots of this research paper started.

The research was started from the factual question: "Why selection ratio of SSB Interview is too low?" And this is the reality of SSB Interview that the recommendation ratio i.e. candidates clearing the SSB is too low, and that is why students had developed a notion that SSB is a toughest test & phase for getting into IAF.



NDA & CDSE are also the two entry schemes to get commissioned into Indian Armed Forces. The above chart shows approx. number of candidates applying within 6 months for the 1st stage (written exam) to get into IAF as an officer. The ones who will clear the written exam has to appear in SSB.

Interestingly, there has been shortage of officers in IAF but still the SSB selection ratio has been too low. Since I got successful recommendation from SSB board, and lot of aspirants preparing for SSB started approaching me, and then I got a strong inclination to research on this as I was successful in clearing SSB and I never found it tough which majority of students have developed their notion for the SSB.

Qualitative data research was started with the participants who have appeared for SSB considering three group of participants; the ones who failed in the SSB, the ones who succeed in their SSB phase, and the ones who were the serving officers in Indian Armed Forces. Since the outcome result of SSB i.e. the students getting successful recommendation from SSB was indefinite as intelligence is not just the only factor for recommendation, and at times even the candidate who is less spoken and not having very good communication is also getting recommended. Therefore, it calls for a qualitative research.

Both primary and secondary data were collected for beginning the qualitative research analysis.

- Primary Data:- It is the data of the students who are planning to appear SSB (they are fresher) and have been appearing for SSB (Failed & Succeed both) via One-2-One interview/interaction.
- Secondary Data:- It is the data from Blogs, Journals', and various other source of internet.

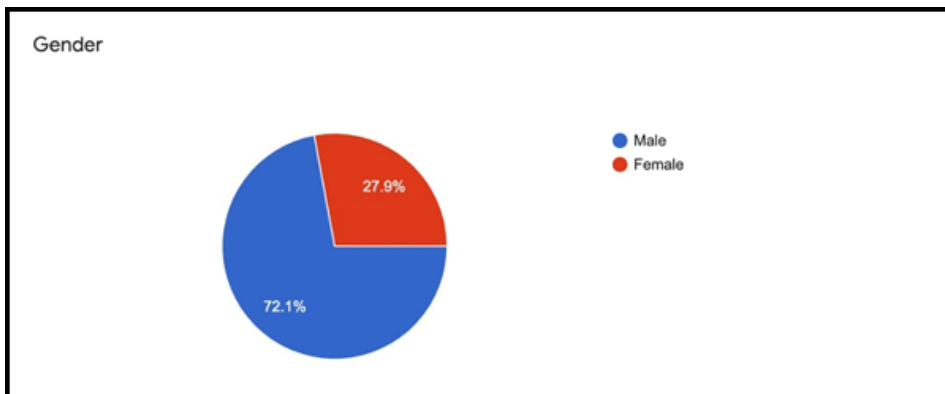
**3. SURVEY/INTERVIEW OF ASPIRANTS/STUDENTS:-**

More than 80 plus aspirant’s one-2-one data has been collected with the following set of questionnaire:

- FULL NAME
- GENDER
- ASPIRANT CURRENT STATUS? (FRESHER OR REPEATER OR RECOMMENDED CANDIDATE)
- CITY & STATE
- FAMILY BACKGROUND (PARENTS PROFESSION & EDUCATION AND ABOUT BROTHERS & SISTERS IF ANY)
- FROM WHICH ENTRY YOU ARE APPEARING FOR SSB?
- WHILE DOING YOUR SSB PREPARATION HAVE YOU OBSERVED ANY QUALITIES OR GOOD TRAITS YOU ARE ABLE TO INCULCATE IN YOUR PERSONALITY IN YOUR ROUTINE LIFESTYLE. (IF ANY, THEN DESCRIBE IN DETAIL)
- ONLY FOR SSB REPEATERS OF RECOMMENDED CANDIDATES (AFTER UNDERGOING REAL SSB ASSESSMENT HAVE YOU OBSERVED ANY QUALITY OR GOOD TRAIT THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO INCULCATE IN YOUR PERSONALITY IN YOUR ROUTINE LIFESTYLE?)
- WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT PROFESSION?
- WHAT HAVE YOU GAINED IN YOUR LIFE OR CAREER WHILE PREPARING FOR SSB OR BY GIVING SSB?

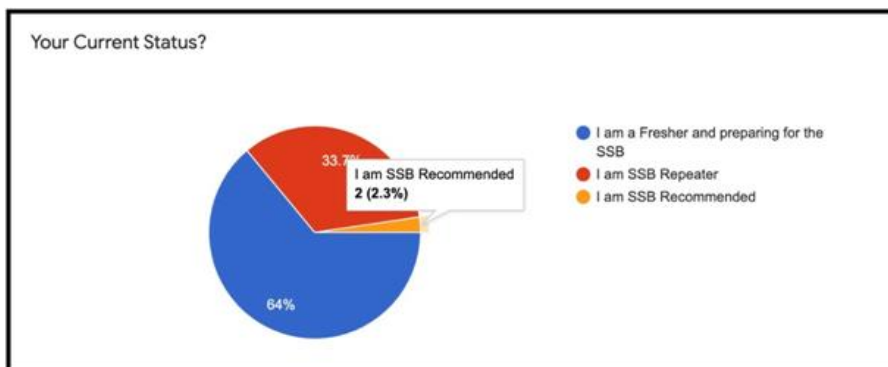
**3.1 Gender of the Aspirants Planning to appear or Appeared for the SSB:-**

Below given pie chart shows the percentage of male & female aspirants aspiring to get into Indian Armed Forces, and are inclined towards SSB stage.



**3.2 Current Status of the Aspirants with respect to SSB:-**

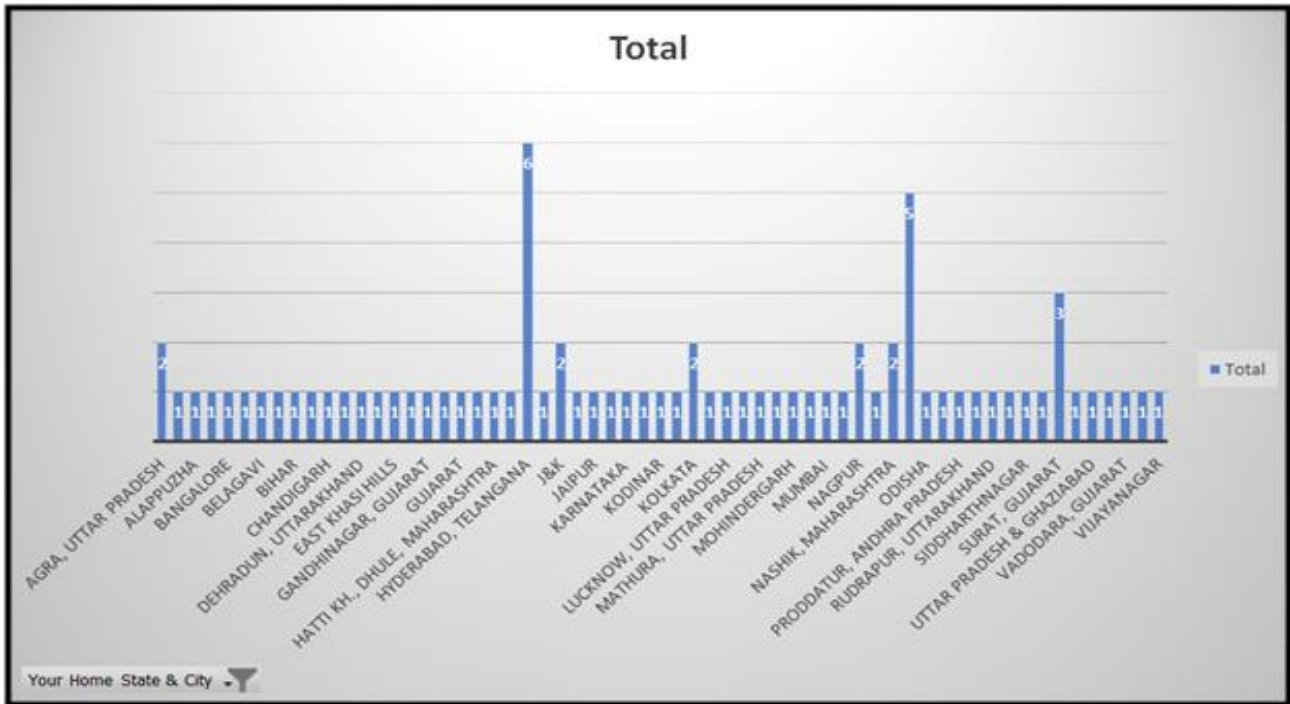
Below given pie chart shows percentage of aspirants; those who are freshers & preparing for the SSB, those who are SSB repeaters (either got screened out or conference out and have gone multiple times) and those who have got successful recommendation from SSB Board.





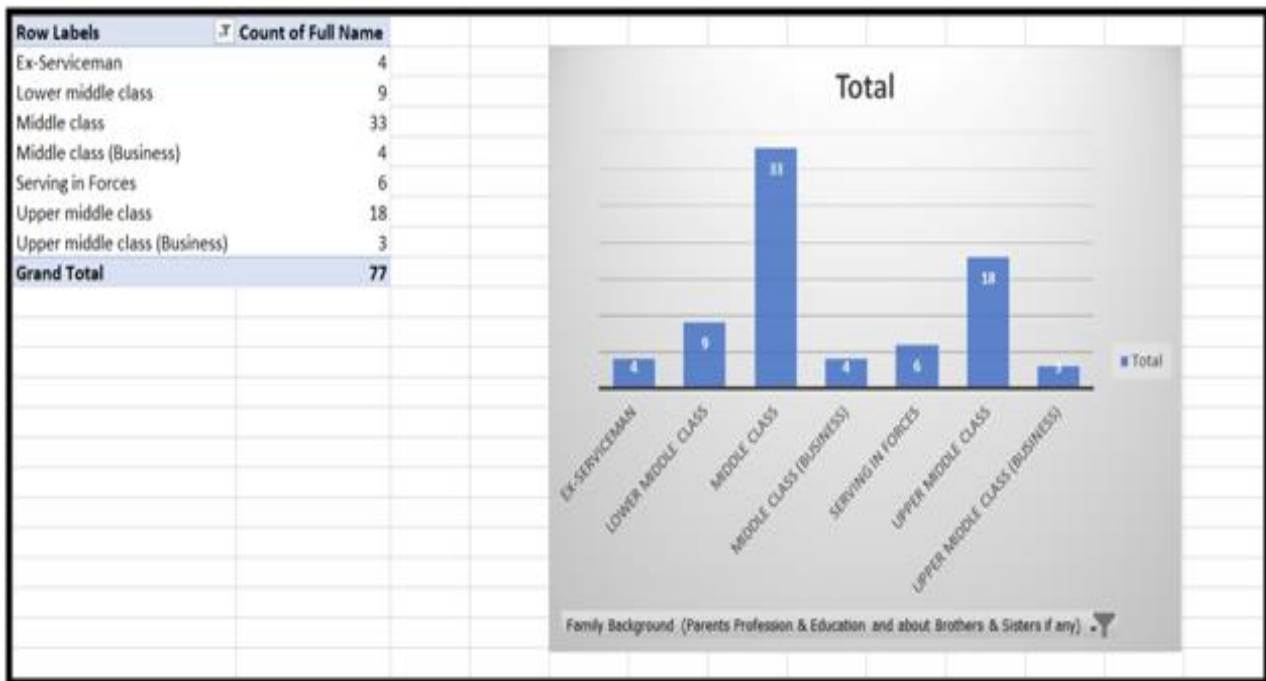
**3.3 Home State & City of Candidates/IAF Aspirants Surveyed:-**

Below given chart shows the State & City of the people aspiring to join Indian Armed forces and have been preparing for the SSB or they are the SSB Repeater or successful SSB Recommended.



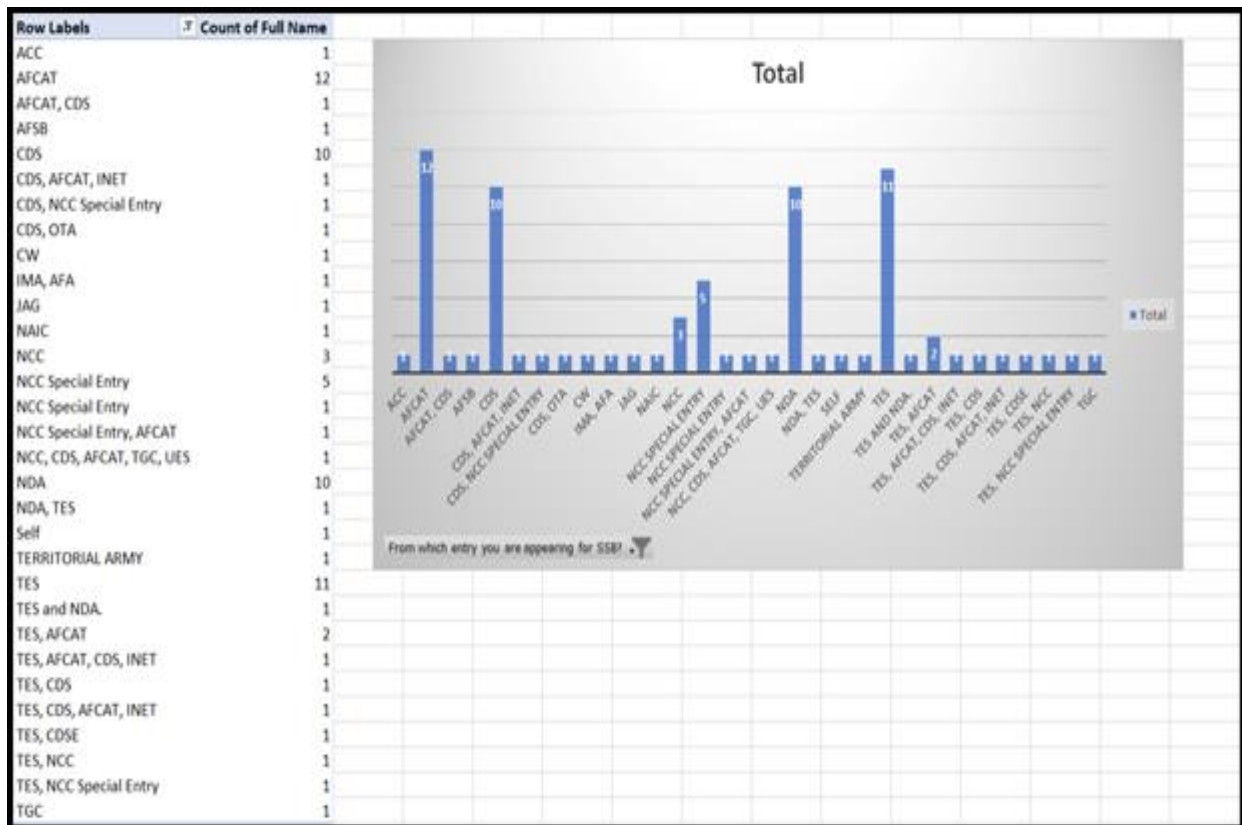
**3.4 Family Background of Candidates/IAF Aspirants Surveyed:-**

Below given graph shows the family background of the people aspiring to join Indian Armed forces and have been preparing for the SSB or they are the SSB Repeater or successful SSB Recommended.



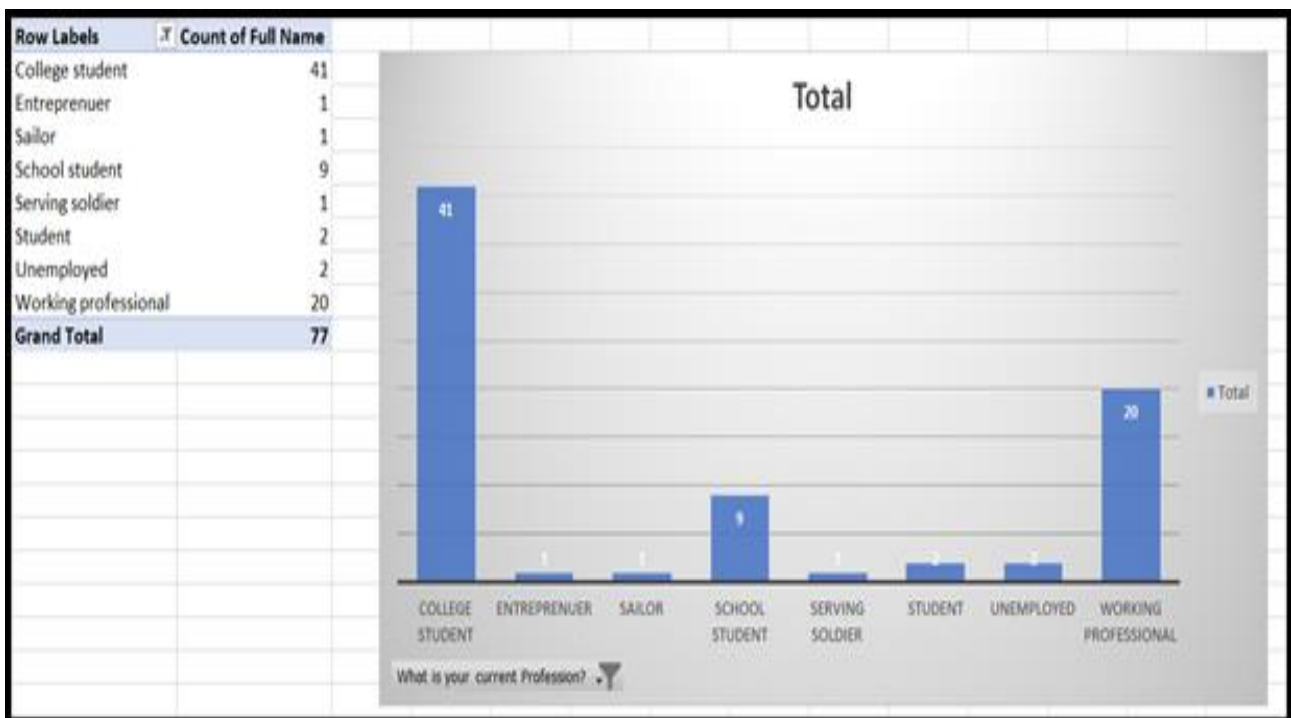
**3.5 Entry Schemes of IAF from which Candidates are Applying:-**

For getting into IAF and reaching the main stage i.e. SSB there are various entry points with different or specific entry criteria. For ex: NDA (This is 10+2 entry scheme), CDSE (Entry Scheme for Graduates), UES (Entry Scheme for Engineering Students). Given below is the graph showing the IAF entry scheme of the of the people aspiring to join Indian Armed forces and have been preparing for the SSB or they are the SSB Repeater or successful SSB Recommended.



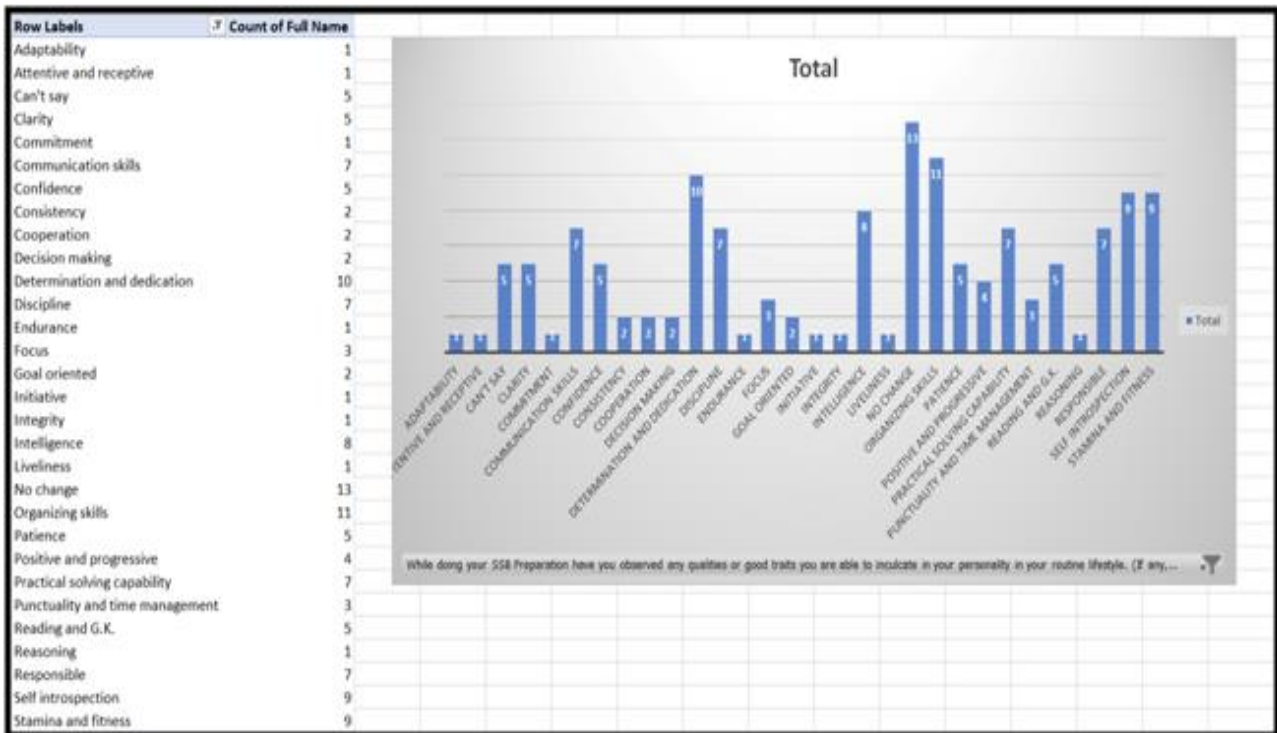
**3.6 Current Profession of the Candidates/IAF Aspirants:-**

Given below is the graph showing current profession of the people aspiring to join Indian Armed forces and have been preparing for the SSB or they are the SSB Repeater or successful SSB Recommended.



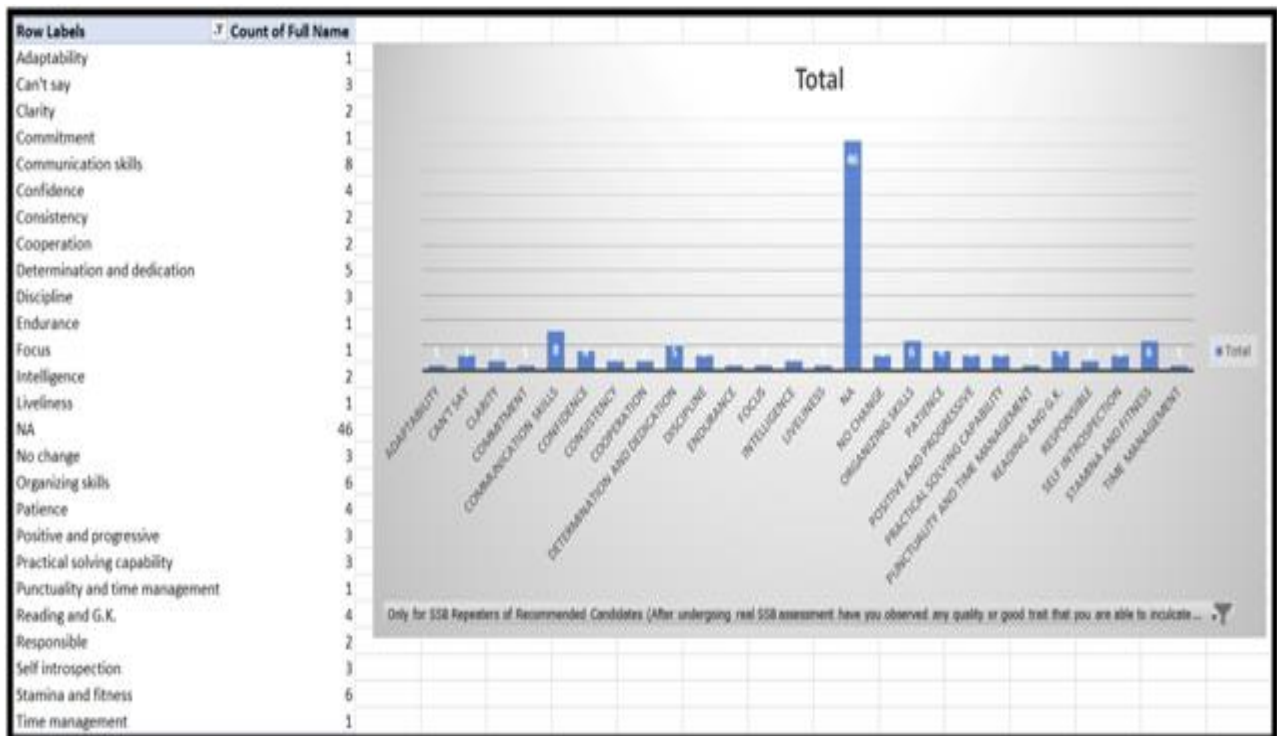
**3.7 While doing SSB Preparation candidates observation about the qualities & good traits they have been able to inculcate in their personality in their routine lifestyle:-**

After interviewing/surveying the aspirants, below given graph shows the various qualities & characteristics which the aspirants while *preparing for SSB* have been able to inculcate within their personality. These are those qualities which an aspirant requires directly or in-directly in the SSB also, and at the same point these are the qualities which determines person growth & upliftment in life & career.



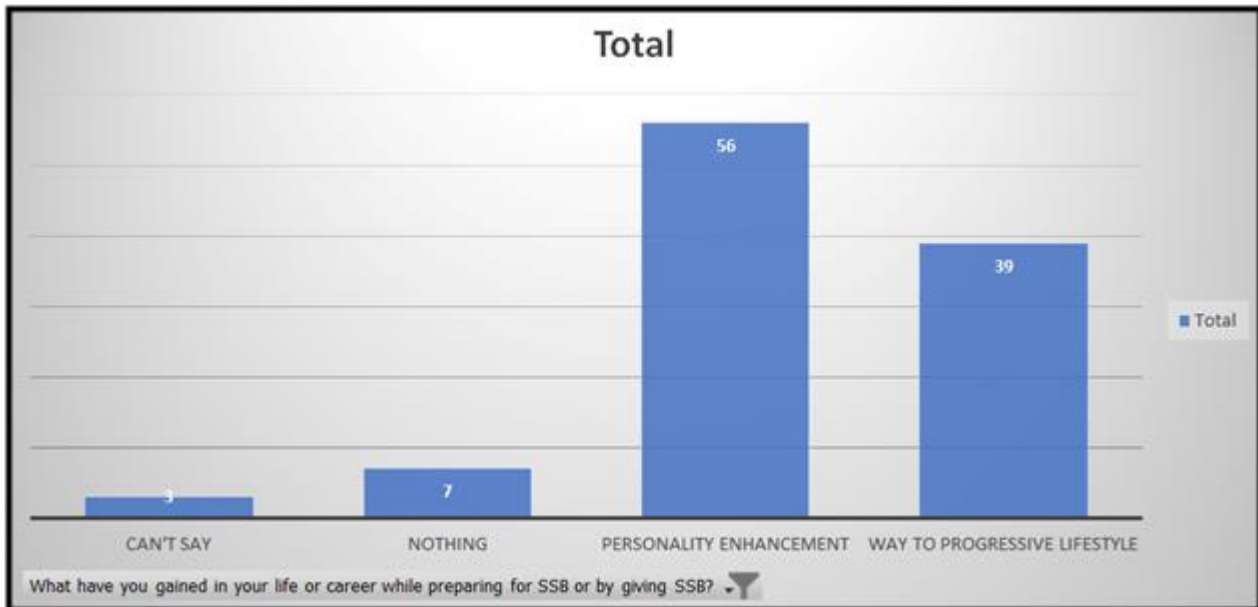
**3.8 After undergoing real SSB assessment candidates observation about the quality or good trait that they are able to inculcate in their personality in their routine lifestyle (If has only been answered by SSB Repeaters or Recommended Candidates):-**

After interviewing/surveying the aspirants, below given graph shows the various qualities & characteristics which the SSB Repeaters or SSB Recommended candidates while *undergoing realtime SSB assessment* have been able to inculcate within their personality. These are those qualities which an aspirant requires directly or in-directly in the SSB also, and at the same point these are the qualities which determines person growth & upliftment in life & career.



**3.9 What candidates have gained in their life or career while preparing for SSB or by giving SSB?:-**

After interviewing/surveying the aspirants, below given graph shows, at a macro level what the aspirants have gained while *preparing for SSB or undergoing realtime SSB assessment* within their self.



#### 4. POSITIVE IMPACTS OF SSB PREPARATION & REALTIME SSB ASSESSMENT ON THE IAF ASPIRANTS/CANDIDATES:-

- **76% aspirants** have gained a decent positive impact in their personality traits and characteristics while preparing for the SSB. Candidates have been able to inculcate traits like Adaptability, Attention & Receptivity, Clarity, Commitment, Confidence, Consistency, Communication Skills, Dedication, Determination, Endurance, Focus, Goal Oriented, Initiative, Integrity, etc as showed in 3.7.
- **80% aspirants** who have undergone the realtime SSB assessment have gained a very positive impact in their personality traits and characteristics. Candidates have been able to inculcate traits like Adaptability, Attention & Receptivity, Clarity, Commitment, Confidence, Consistency, Communication Skills, Self Introspection, Decision Making, Dedication, Determination, Endurance, Focus, Goal Oriented, Initiative, Integrity, etc as showed in 3.8.
- Out of total candidates interviewed; **87% candidates** have experienced a strong “*personality enhancement*” and have gained “*way to progressive lifestyle*” while preparing for SSB or after giving SSB.
- Majority of candidates have enhanced their personality traits while undergoing SSB preparation & realtime SSB assessment, and this gain in their personality & lifestyle has helped them to perform more efficiently in other spheres of life too thus, helping them succeed in their career & life.

#### 5. NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF SSB PREPARATION & REALTIME SSB ASSESSMENT ON THE IAF ASPIRANTS/CANDIDATES:-

No negative impact on candidates have been seen while they have undergone with the SSB preparation or realtime SSB assessment. It has been observed that 13% candidates found no change or they are not sure to say about any positive impact in their personality.

#### 6. RESEARCH & FINDINGS:-

- 1) **76% aspirants** have gained a decent positive impact in their personality traits and characteristics while preparing for the SSB.
- 2) **80% aspirants** who have undergone the realtime SSB assessment have gained a very positive impact in their personality traits and characteristics.
- 3) **87% candidates** have experienced a strong “*personality enhancement*” and have gained “*way to progressive lifestyle*” while preparing for SSB or after giving SSB.
- 4) It has been found that the candidates who prepared for SSB or appeared for SSB but unable to join Indian Armed Forces are doing well in their life & career; be it ever managing their day-2-day life or working in corporates or pursuing their entrepreneurial career.

The above finding of the research can also be validated from a below caste study:

Joining Indian Armed Force has also been a dream of lot many such people who failed to get recommended from SSB and were unable to join IAF. But later on they have done fantastically well in their life & career, and have become a very influential personality of their domain. Below is the glimpse of sun people:

**(i) APJ Abdul Kalam**

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam was also one of those who had applied for the Air Force. He did make it to the interview stage but was rejected later. Remembering his stint with SSB, Dr Kalam said:

*“I appeared for the interview at DTD & P (Air) and did well at the interview. The questions were of a routine nature, and did not challenge my knowledge of the subject. Then I proceeded to Dehradun for my interview at the Air Force Selection Board. At the Selection Board, the emphasis was more on “personality” than on intelligence. Perhaps they were looking for physical fitness and an articulate manner. I was excited but nervous, determined but anxious, confident but tense. I could only finish ninth in the batch of 25 examined to select eight officers for commissioning in the Air Force and was deeply disappointed. It took me some time to comprehend that the opportunity to join the Air Force had just slipped through my fingers.”*

**(ii) Amitabh Bachchan**

The Bollywood giant, Amitabh Bachchan had also sat for the SSB and was rejected. He said:

*“I was a defence aspirant like you all who have appeared various times for the SSB. I tried couple of times but could not make it. Of course there are emotions, dissatisfaction and disappointments but you have to move ahead with life. Fortunately, I was destined for something else.”*

**(iii) Rahul Dravid**

Rahul Dravid's name is synonymous with the cricket greats of all times. He is one of the best cricketers the country has ever produced. Dravid too had a dream of joining the armed forces. He, however, could not clear the SSB. He proved his worth in the field of sports and became one of the best cricketers of all times. Dravid is still remembered for his sincere professionalism and love for the game.

**(iv) Shah Rukh Khan**

One of the leading actors of the Hindi film industry, Shah Rukh Khan too was a defence aspirant. He had tried his luck at the SSB but he did not succeed. His parents were also not too keen that he joined the army. Through sheer hard work and determination, Shah Rukh Khan went on to become one of the foremost actors of today's generation. He has also beautifully essayed the characters of army personnel in films like 'Veer Zaara', 'Jab Tak Hai Jaan' and 'Army'. His role as an army officer in the television series 'Fauji' catapulted him to fame.

**CASE STUDY CONCLUSION**

Just like the above few examples there are many examples of the people from different walks of life who wanted to get into IAF and have gone through & prepare themselves for SSB but were unable to get selected or join the forces, Still now they are joining very well in their life because while preparing consciously for the SSB & dream career IAF they have been able to transform their personality in many ways.

Even the roots of this research paper started with myself introspection. I have undergone SSB twice and got successfully recommended both the times but I was detected with 0.25 myopia in medical due to which I was unable to join Indian Air Force for which I am always passionate. After that I started my entrepreneurial career in the 2nd year of engineering and from that point the whole landscape of life & career has changed fantastically. Looking backwards when I tried connecting the dots and was trying to find the reason that how an ordinary person like me has been able to do all this and became versatile? So, I got a connect & traces that SSB and my passion for IAF has played a vital role in making of who I am today. And then to validate the same, the research started as I wanted to check that what other people gone through SSB feel and how they are doing in their life & career. With the research while doing interview/survey of candidates it got clear that SSB plays a very important reason in enhancing your personality to lead a better life & career and why it happens.

**8. CONCLUSION:-**

The SSB is one of the unique and finest assessment system that assess the true self and personality of the candidate. It has been designed so scientifically & logically in such a way that candidate's true self reflects automatically while undergoing this assessment. Therefore, candidate preparing for the SSB do not have to just train him/her at the skill level like other exams rather candidate has to undergo a series of self transformation at physical, mental & emotional level to achieve that point which results in his/her successful recommendation.

Based on the interview/survey done with the candidates preparing for SSB or have undergone the SSB assessment, majority of them have been able to inculcate various personality traits or qualities within their self and in their daily routine which clearly shows that candidates have achieved different level of transformations and based upon that they have shared their experience. Since, these transformations help in enhancing the overall personality and gives a way to lead a progressive lifestyle (both of these are important factors for leading a successful life & career), therefore, these candidates have a higher probability to get successful in life & career.

Hence, this is clearly validated from this research that rate of success in life & career becomes high for all those candidates who undergo with SSB Interview or preparing for the SSB.

**8. RECOMMENDATION:-**

SSB system is adding an overall value to the life of candidates who are preparing for it or undergoing the assessment even though they fail to get recommended. We can set SSB assessment as a guiding model for other examinations and assessment exams as well, few things from SSB assessment can be picked up and can be amalgamated with other exams standards to create value in candidate's life & career who is preparing or

appearing for the other exams. For ex: Corporates uses the few assessment types of Psychology module of SSB as SWOT test to analyse Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats while hiring talents.

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## ABOUT AUTHOR

Ujjwal Chugh, is a young Entrepreneur, Author and Digital Visionary, currently CEO & Founder of ISOLS Group - A leading IT, Technology & Digital Company, and he has earned a distinction at various grounds and have won numerous of hearts. He is a dynamic versatile personality, always willing to demonstrate his great potential for innovation and to bring a transformation. Mr Chugh is a qualified Engineer in Information & Technology from IP University, and has an interest in exploring various prospects & opportunities of success and transformation through innovative ideas.

Prior his entrepreneurial career, he had a special craving to be a fighter pilot in the Indian Air Force. He cracked NDA and SSB twice with high aplomb but got medically unfit to serve Indian Air Force as he was detected 0.25 myopic. Thereafter, he started his entrepreneurial career, and simultaneously he contented his passion by joining Indian Air Wing for two years where he has flown the Microlite STOL 701 at No.1 Delhi Air Sqd (Flying Branch) representing Delhi at Vayu Sena Camp, Bengaluru as a Cadet. He has been inspiring & channelizing the youth for joining the Indian Armed Forces through his Top Rated "How To Crack SSB" Book having 1.4 lac followers, and by contributing his practical knowledge for the SSB Interview from where he got successful recommendation twice. Currently there is a large pool of aspirants are getting trained under him.

Moreover his book "How To Crack SSB" has created lot of success stories of the aspirants, and also the book's 3rd edition has been applauded with forewords from:

- Shri. Satpal Maharaj Ji - Ex-Chairman of Standing Committee of Defence & currently the Cabinet Tourism Minister Uttarakhand
- General(Dr.) V.K. Singh, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, ADC (Retd)
- Major General Dilawar Singh
- Lt, General Ghanshyam Singh Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)

Mr. Ujjwal Chugh owe all his success to his mentors & Gurus. Right from the inception of a Technology Company from his college days and as a mentor to aspirants, working professionals, business owners & student, whatever he could achieve in his Entrepreneurial career is all because of one of his mentors Indian Armed Forces (precisely SSB) . His formula being simple to practically implement and integrate the learning in everything you do with consistency and action-oriented approach.

Currently, the Founder & CEO of ISOLS Group - A leading Technology & Digital Firm which houses young and creative minds. The launch of very first Digital Marketing Dictionary in the whole world authored by him & launched at World Book Fair, was another bold step he took towards digitisation.

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Hundreds of Institutions have invited him to enlighten the students, entrepreneurs, professionals, . He is the master key behind the less ordinary lives of many and he himself continues to give a platform to the pool of talent and support lot of aspirants, entrepreneurs, start-ups, brands, professionals etc for their life & career success. He has been an influential speaker at various public forums and meets like TEDx, etc.

Besides the massive love and support he has been recognised by lot many influential personalities and have lots of accolades to his credit.

- Dr. Kiran Bedi presented a Token of Appreciation for Outstanding Contribution (Best Speaker) at the Annual Entrepreneurship Summit.
- National Gaurav Award at Vigyan Bhawan by the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs- Muktar Abbas Naqvi, for igniting the spark of Entrepreneurship & Digital Marketing within the youth of India.
- Shaheed Bhagat Singh Bravery Award for excellence as an outstanding young Entrepreneur & Digital Visionary for bringing the positive renovations in the sphere of digital education and channeling the youth for doing great work for their motherland India. Award presentation by renowned Bollywood star Shri Raza Murad Ji.
- Awarded “Real Sanwad Excellence Award” ‘as an outstanding speaker’ award presented by Ex MP of Canada.
- Many More...

Being in the space throughout his early age, the passion and dedication of Mr. Chugh in creating true leadership has been incredible. He adores to share his real time experiences with strong integrity. Driven by the law of nature, his messages are simple, powerful, practical, enlightening and life changing.