



# Investigating the Knowledge and Awareness on Learning Difficulties and Assistive Technological Tools among Student Teachers of Jalpaiguri District

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**Abstract:** Learning difficulties do not include mental retardation, sensory deficits, emotional disturbances, or learning disabilities; rather, they pertain to delays, deviations, and performance differences in the fundamental academic courses, such as math, reading, writing, spelling, and speaking. Unfortunately, the majority of these student never receive a learning difficulty diagnosis. These students are frequently referred as slow, behind, unable, and failures by teachers, parents, and school officials as a result of a lack of knowledge on their part. The goal of the current study is to investigate the B.Ed. student teachers' existing knowledge about learning difficulties. A test of teacher awareness regarding learning difficulties and assistive technological tools have been designed and administered among them to assess the level of knowledge and awareness on learning difficulties and assistive technological tools.

**Keywords:** Learning Difficulties, Assistive Technological tools, Student Teachers

## Introduction:

Today's classrooms have turned into inclusive classrooms. It informs the fact that inclusive education is a significant component in the system of education in India. We can say that individuals with difficulties or persons with special needs can learn in schools together with normal individuals. "This idea has come from the idea of social justice, which demands that all people have human rights without any discriminations" (OECD, 2001). "The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Difficulties also says that access to education is a right. However, inclusive education may make special aid, care or knowledge for persons with difficulties difficult if enough reasonable accommodation are not given. Inclusion is not an experiment to be tested but a value to be followed. All the children whether they are disabled or not have the right to education as they are the future citizens of the country. The regular schools with this inclusive orientation

are the most effective measures of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system” (UNESCO, 2012).

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan on Inclusive Education response “expressed the demand for quality basic education all over the country to all Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in the age group of 6-14 years irrespective of any diversity i.e., kind, category and degree of disability. The ‘Zero Rejection Policy’ which means that no child having special needs should be deprived of the Right to Education is the basis of Inclusion. To further facilitate the inclusion of CWSN in mainstream schools, the National Council for Education Research and Training has prepared books on curricular adaptations for children with visual impairment, hearing impairment, cognitive impairment and intellectual impairment for general teachers at primary and upper primary levels”.

In order to integrate students with disabilities, students from all dimensions, and regular students in the same classroom, higher authorities in India have developed a variety of regulations and suggestions for inclusive education. Every suggestion has some goals and objectives that should be accomplished in inclusive education. There are numerous ways and approaches to managing the inclusive classroom in the guidelines. Infrastructure, curriculum, teacher preparation, and other topics are covered. We have a diverse group of kids in an inclusive environment. When a teacher is dealing with a class of 30 to 40 pupils, some of them may be normal, some may have disabilities, and some may have learning issues.

According to observations, a teacher's most significant responsibility is to maintain the classroom by attending to the requirements of each and every student. In order to support or reach every student within the allotted time, he must examine the most effective teaching methodologies or methods for the entire class. He must also determine the method by which he might make himself reachable to every student in the classroom. The instructor has a duty or responsibility to be aware of everyone who is in the classroom. High ability, low ability, and kids with learning disabilities can all coexist in an inclusive classroom.

## **Review of Related Literature**

Only 10% of primary school teachers overall had adequate awareness of learning impairments, according to Sandhya Rani and Geetha Reddy's study, which found that 55% of primary school teachers had only moderate knowledge of learning disabilities and 38% had poor knowledge (2021). According to Rajendra Kunwar, Bhupal Kumar, and Lekhnatg Sharma's findings from 2021, more than 70% of schoolteachers had insufficient knowledge of MLD, and the demographic variables had no appreciable impact on this knowledge. According to Anaswara et al. (2021), 48.1 percent of teachers in both private and public schools had sufficient awareness of learning disabilities, and 89 percent of teachers had a positive attitude. According to Mekdes Dessie et al. (2021), only 44.8 percent of public elementary school instructors and 84.1 percent of private school teachers had positive attitudes and strong knowledge of students with attention deficit disorder. Despite having little general awareness of attention deficit disorder, elementary school teachers' attitudes about the condition were satisfactory. Pre-primary school teachers were thought of more

favourably than primary regular school teachers, according to Poonam Sharma et al. (2021).s research. They discovered that the perception levels of ordinary primary school teachers and pre-primary school instructors were significantly different. Overall findings indicated that teachers in pre-primary and primary regular schools had a positive impression of how to integrate students with learning difficulties.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the degree of knowledge and awareness of learning difficulties among student teacher
2. To assess the degree of knowledge and awareness of assistive technological tools among student teacher.
3. To comprehend and identify the socio-demographic elements affecting student teacher' knowledge and awareness of learning difficulties.
4. To comprehend and identify the socio-demographic elements affecting student teacher' knowledge and awareness of Assistive Technological Tools.

### **Materials and Methods**

This study used a cross-sectional survey approach using a descriptive research design. The study's participants were aspiring trainee school teachers in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri District. Lack of Probability, a convenient sampling strategy was utilised to gather information from 100 student teachers from a Teacher Training College in the aforementioned district. The trainee teachers were told about the study and provided with their consent. A structured questionnaire was used to gather the information. The procedure was conducted in a private manner. Utilizing both descriptive and inferential statistics, collected data were examined. The data was examined using SPSS. Mean, standard deviation, reliability coefficient, and correlation were utilised as descriptive statistics.

### **Result and Discussion**

#### **Descriptive Analysis**

This research has subjects in Jalpaiguri District B.Ed. Student Teachers. Data have been collected on their Knowledge and Awareness on Learning Difficulties and Assistive Technology

Table 1.1

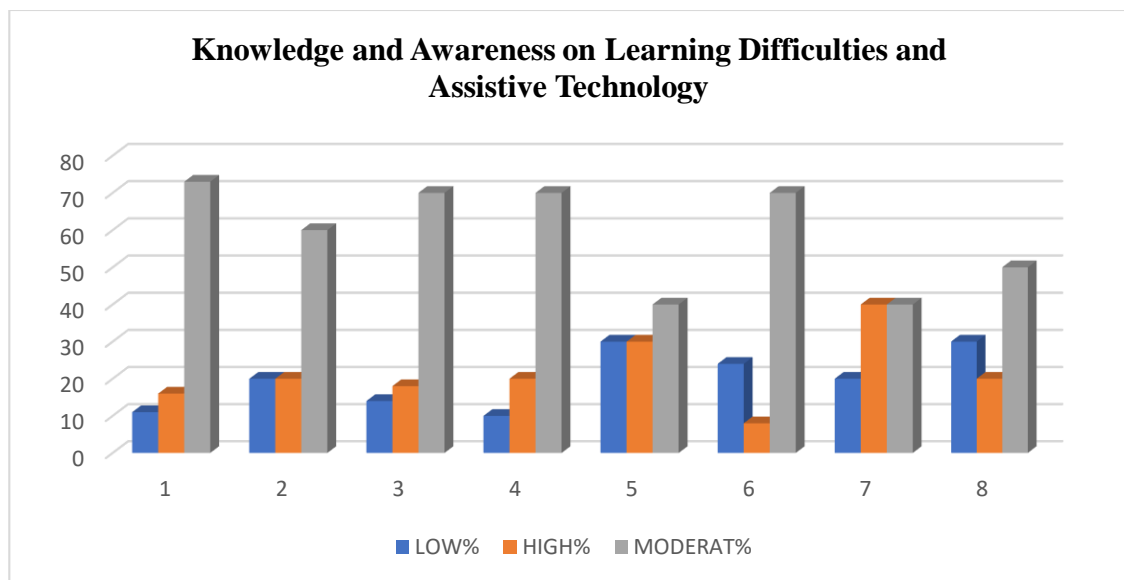
**Mean and Standard Deviation of Knowledge and Awareness on Learning Difficulties and Assistive Technology among the B.Ed. Student Teachers of Jalpaiguri District**

**(Maximum Score: 100)**

SL. No	Knowledge and Awareness on Learning Difficulties Dimensions	Student Teachers N = 100		Low	Moderate	High
		Mean	S. D			
1	Alphabetical Difficulties	59.8	9.92	11 (11%)	73 (73%)	16 (16%)
2	Reading Difficulties	65.3	8.49	20 (20%)	60 (60%)	20 (20%)
3	Phonological Difficulties	57.67	5.73	14 (14%)	70 (70%)	18 (18%)
4	Writing Difficulties	64.7	8.73	10 (10%)	70 (70%)	20 (20%)
5	Calculation Difficulties	65.2	9.13	30 (30%)	40 (40%)	30 (30%)
6	Assistive Technology	36.64	4.38	22 (22%)	70 (70%)	8 (8%)
7	Inclusive Education	44.5	5.18	20 (20%)	40 (40%)	40 (40%)
8	Overall KALD	393.0	44.82	30 (30%)	50 (50%)	20 (20%)

It has been inferred from the above table that the Student Teachers shown mostly Moderate Knowledge and Awareness on Learning Difficulties in all the dimensions viz. Alphabetical Difficulties (73%), Reading Difficulties (60%), Phonological Difficulties (70%), Writing Difficulties (70%), Calculation Difficulties (40%) Assistive Technology (70%) and Inclusive Education (40%). Whereas the Low level persists in Alphabetical Difficulties (11%), Reading Difficulties (20%), Phonological Difficulties (14%), Writing Difficulties (10%), Calculation Difficulties (30%), Assistive Technology (22%) and Inclusive Education (20%). The High level persists in Alphabetical Difficulties (16%), Reading Difficulties (20%), Phonological Difficulties (18%), Writing Difficulties (20%), Calculation Difficulties (30%) Assistive Technology (8%) and Inclusive Education (40%).

It has been also revealed that in 'Overall Knowledge and Awareness of Student Teachers on Learning Difficulties and Assistive Technological Tools', 50% are in Moderate level, 30% are in Low level and only 20% of High School Teachers have a High level of Knowledge and Awareness on Learning Difficulties and Assistive Technological Tools for Assisting children with learning difficulty.



**Figure No. 1** Mean and Standard Deviation of Knowledge and Awareness on Learning Difficulties and Assistive Technology among the B.Ed. Student Teachers of Jalpaiguri District.

Statistically it has been found that, the majority of student teachers have inadequate knowledge and awareness on learning difficulties and assistive technology. This can be brought on by the absence of programmes for teacher preparation that address learning difficulties and assistive technological tools. Additionally, the student teachers are not interested in receiving any additional training that focuses on how to deal students with learning difficulties. The educational authorities should continuously train student teachers on how to teach students with special needs children.

Findings of the study are supported by the similar studies were conducted are Comparative study of private and government school instructors in regards to knowledge of children's cognitive disabilities in chosen schools in Mangalore, Shanthi and Shambhavi (2016). Pre-primary school teachers were thought of more favourably than conventional primary school teachers, according to Poonam Sharma et al. (2021).s research. They discovered that the perception levels of ordinary primary school teachers and pre-primary school instructors were significantly different. Overall findings indicated that teachers in pre-primary and primary regular schools had a positive impression of how to integrate students with learning difficulties. According to Urvashi Goel's research from 2021, 49 teachers, or 49 percent, had prior knowledge of and awareness of learning difficulties.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

While the majority of student teachers had good attitudes, the majority of them had limited understanding on identification of learning difficulties in children. The recommendation helped new school instructors get better knowledge and attitudes. It is crucial that the Teachers Training Programmes, DIET and B.Ed. should provide the teachers with knowledge and an attitude towards children with special needs because secondary level instructors are playing a crucial part in a student's education. Health and education are the most crucial facets of human resource development thus, we owe it to them.

- ❖ In-service training programs should be planned at district level.
- ❖ Innovative Instructional / Remedial Strategies should be developed to overcome learning difficulties in students.
- ❖ Training of early identification and assessment should be given to high school teachers and primary school teachers.

The instructor must now recognise the student who is having difficulty because their participation in the inclusive classroom is so crucial. Once it has been determined, the student teacher must develop an effective teaching plan and offer the pupils assistive devices or technology to enhance their learning.

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