

# Exploring the Awareness Level of B. Ed. College Teachers on Copyright Laws for E-Content Protection

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DOI: [10.36348/sb.2024.v10i05.002](https://doi.org/10.36348/sb.2024.v10i05.002)

| Received: 11.04.2024 | Accepted: 15.05.2024 | Published: 17.05.2024

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## Abstract

This research paper attempt to explore the awareness level of B. Ed. College Teachers in West Bengal, India, regarding copyright laws for e-content protection as an important aspect of intellectual property rights education. Basic objectives of this study is to measure the current awareness level among the B. Ed. College Teachers, understanding the factors that influence their awareness, and providing recommendations to enhance their awareness level. To achieve these objectives, a descriptive survey research design was adopted by the researcher, employing a semi-structured questionnaire to collect data from the B. Ed. College Teachers situated in three distinct districts of West Bengal; North 24 Parganas, Murshidabad, and Paschim Medinipur. Participants of this study were B. Ed. College Teachers in West Bengal, and a sample size of 151 respondents were purposively selected using the stratified sampling technique. Here in this study, researcher used descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and thematic analysis to analyse the data. Findings of this study revealed the existing level of awareness among B. Ed. College Teachers concerning copyright laws and regulations relevant to protection e-content. Additionally, this research identified various influential factors that shape their level of awareness. And this research significantly contributes to our understanding on the awareness level of B. Ed. College Teachers in West Bengal, India, pertaining to the copyright and e-content protection.

**Keywords:** Copyright, E-Content, B. Ed, College Teachers, Awareness level, West Bengal.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the context of conceptualizing IPR terminology, the term ‘IPR’ refers to Intellectual Property Rights, which represent the legal rights granted to individuals or organizations for their innovative, creative, and intellectual works or creations. These rights provide exclusive ownership and control over intangible assets, such as inventions, literary and artistic works, designs, symbols, and trade secrets (Farah *et al.*, 2015). So, in today’s knowledge-driven and data driven society, intellectual property rights (IPRs) play an increasingly important and crucial role in ensuring protective sustainable growth. If we don’t have a proper understanding of IPR, we may fail to protect our rights

over our intellectual creations and innovations. In relation to this, we have to learn about the background of intellectual property rights (IPR). All the laws and regulations concerning IPR originated in Europe. In India, the initial IPR regulations were established in 1856, following the patent system used in Britain. Over time, these rules have undergone modifications and changes, with the latest update occurring in 2019. Prior to that, revisions took place in 2000, 2003, and 2005 (Peng *et al.*, 2022). There’s another important point to consider and that is; IP and IPR are not the same thing. IP refers to innovative or creative work that is produced, while IPR is a legal safeguard for that specific IP, creation, or innovation.

IP [Intellectual Property]	IPR [Intellectual Property Rights]
It is the innovative or creative work that is produced, invented or created.	It is the legal safeguard for that specific IP, creation, or innovation work.

Now, we try to understand the categorization of IP in simpler terms. It can be broadly divided into two categories: (i) Industrial Property: Industrial property covers inventions (patents), trademarks, trade secrets, industrial designs, and geographic indications and (ii) Copyright: copyright encompasses literary and artistic works like novels, poems, plays, films, music, books, e-books, different types of creative contents and artworks (Deshpande *et al.*, 2022). Here copyright laws also play a crucial role in protecting intellectual property rights, particularly in the context of digital content such as e-books, online resources, and educational materials. For teachers, who serve as vital conduits of knowledge, it is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of copyright laws to ensure they do not inadvertently infringe upon the rights of content creators. By being aware of copyright laws, rules and regulations, teachers can confidently utilize and share digital materials in an ethical and legal manner. Furthermore, in the digital age where technology has become increasingly integrated into education, the need for e-content protection is important. Teachers must be cognizant of the necessary measures to protect these resources against unauthorized use or reproduction. Acquiring an understanding of copyright for e-content protection empowers teachers to take appropriate actions to prevent issues such as plagiarism, piracy, and the unauthorized dissemination of educational materials. Intellectual property rights education is equally vital as it fosters creativity, innovation, and respect for original works. When teachers possess knowledge about copyright laws and e-content protection, they can utilize these values for their students. Related to this context, raising awareness among B. Ed. College Teachers about copyright and e-content protection is of utmost importance due to their role as future educators and influencers of the next generation. Equipping them with a comprehensive understanding of copyright laws and e-content protection ensures they can effectively educate student-teachers on ethical and legal use of digital resources, fostering a culture of respect for intellectual property rights from an early age. Furthermore, as creators and distributors of their own educational resources, B. Ed. College Teachers need to protect their intellectual property rights. Awareness of copyright laws and e-content protection enables them to navigate copyright issues, secure appropriate licenses, and assert their rights as content creators. By raising awareness, we empower teachers to confidently integrate digital resources into their teaching practices while upholding intellectual property rights.

### Review of Related Literature

Here, presented relevant studies provides a valuable insight into the awareness and understanding of copyright laws among various groups, including college students, doctoral students, library staff, and educators. These studies shed light on the prevalent misconceptions and gaps in knowledge surrounding intellectual property rights (IPR) and copyright issues.

One common finding across these studies is the lack of awareness regarding the appropriate use of digital library resources. Wu *et al.*, (2010) discovered that only half of the college students surveyed were aware of utilizing these resources. This highlights the need for educational initiatives that address the misconceptions surrounding sharing digital resources and the assumption that all educational use qualifies as fair use. And it is crucial to educate individuals about the ethical and legal implications of using copyrighted materials. Studies conducted by Vasudevan and Suchithra (2013) and Glover and Korletey (2016) highlight the discrepancy in copyright awareness between different academic disciplines. Science stream students exhibited higher levels of copyright awareness compared to their non-science counterparts. This suggests a potential gap in copyright education, with non-science students needing more attention and support in understanding copyright laws. On the other side, another study which was conducted by Charbonneau and Priehs (2014) reveals the need to improve copyright services within academic libraries. With less than half of the library staff and student assistants being capable of providing copyright information, it is evident that further training and awareness programs should be implemented to enhance the support and guidance available to users. Another significant study, by Korletey and Tettey (2015) and Igudia and Hamzat (2016) highlight the importance of bridging the gap between knowledge and practice. While a significant portion of the respondents acknowledged the importance of citing sources, a considerable number did not consistently apply this knowledge in their work. This indicates the need for continuous reinforcement of copyright education and the integration of practical exercises to encourage proper citation practices. Related to the copyright infringement, another research, which was conducted by Wahid *et al.*, (2015) emphasizes the risks associated with copyright infringement in the context of sharing materials in educational institutions, particularly in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). It stresses the necessity for both content providers and users to be well-informed about copyright issues and their potential vulnerability when utilizing or sharing copyrighted materials. Onoyeyan's (2018) study reveals the prevalence of photocopying practices as a form of copyright violation, driven by factors such as high textbook prices and shortages. This underscores the importance of finding alternative solutions, such as open educational resources or affordable access to digital materials, to discourage copyright infringement while addressing the economic challenges faced by students. These studies collectively highlight the pressing need for improved awareness and understanding of copyright laws among students, teachers, and library staff. Efforts should be made to address misconceptions, provide comprehensive education on copyright issues, bridge the knowledge-practice gap, and enhance support services within academic institutions.

### Statement of the Research Problem

Based on the critical analysis of the reviewed studies, the existing research gap has motivated the researcher to conduct another study focusing on the awareness of copyright laws, specifically related to e-content protection, among teachers in B. Ed Colleges of West Bengal, India under the research title of; *Exploring the Awareness Level of B. Ed. College Teachers on Copyright Laws for E-Content Protection.*

### Research Design

For this research, descriptive survey research design was adopted by the researcher and it was conducted by using a semi-structured questionnaire

designed to collect data from the B. Ed. College Teachers in three different districts of West Bengal, namely; North 24 Parganas, Murshidabad, and Paschim Medinipur. This questionnaire comprised two parts: Part 1 collected demographic information of the respondents, while Part 2 collected information related to the research objectives. The target population of this study was B. Ed. College Teachers in West Bengal, India. Here, 151 respondents were purposively selected by using stratified sampling technique. All the participants were divided into strata based on the (i) district literacy rate and (ii) type of teacher training college, i.e., government and private colleges.

**Table no. 1: Demographic details of the Respondents**

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency of the respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	75	49.7%
	Female	76	50.3%
Age Group (in years)	20-30	42	27.8%
	31-40	65	43.0%
	41-50	29	19.2%
	51 and above	15	9.9%
Educational Qualification	Master's Degree	91	60.26%
	PhD	60	39.74%
Teaching Experience (in years)	Less than 5 years	45	29.8%
	5-10 years	58	38.4%
	11-15 years	28	18.5%
	More than 15 years	20	13.2%
District	North 24 Parganas	51	33.8%
	Murshidabad	53	35.1%
	Paschim Medinipur	47	31.1%
Type of College	Government	50	33.1%
	Private	101	66.9%

Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire by the researcher and it was available in both English and Bengali language to ensure maximum participation. Data collected from the survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations and with the help of thematic analysis.

Ethical considerations were followed by the researcher in this research. Informed consent was obtained from the respondents before the distribution of the questionnaire. And all the respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and their responses were used only for research purposes.

### Research Objectives

The following research objectives are identified followed for this study by the researcher:

1. To assess the current level of awareness among B. Ed. College Teachers in West Bengal, India regarding copyright laws and regulations related to e-content protection.
2. To identify the factors that influence the awareness level of B. Ed. College Teachers in West Bengal, India on copyright laws and e-content protection.
3. To provide recommendations for improving intellectual property rights education programs for B. Ed. College Teachers in West Bengal, India, with a specific emphasis on enhancing awareness of copyright laws and e-content protection.

### Findings of the Study

**Table no. 2: Level of Awareness on Copyright Laws and E-Content Protection**

Level of Awareness	Frequency (n = 151)	Percentage	Ratio or Proportion
High level	24	15.9%	Low Ratio
Moderate level	62	41.1%	Average Ratio
Low level	65	43.0%	Average Ratio

Findings of table no. 2 indicate that among the B. Ed. College Teachers in West Bengal, the level of awareness regarding copyright laws and regulations related to e-content protection varies. *Approximately*

*15.9% of the respondents exhibited a high level of awareness, while 41.1% demonstrated a moderate level of awareness. Conversely, 43.0% of the participants had a low level of awareness on this subject.*

**Table no. 3: Gender-wise Level of Awareness**

Gender	High (f)	%	Moderate (f)	%	Low (f)	%
Male	35	23.17	30	19.86	10	6.62
Female	27	17.88	35	23.17	14	9.27

Among the respondents, the level of awareness regarding copyright laws and regulations related to e-content protection also varied based on gender. Out of the male participants, 23.17% exhibited a high level of awareness, while 19.86% demonstrated a moderate level of awareness. On the other hand, 6.62% of the male participants had a low level of awareness on this subject. Regarding the female participants, 17.88% displayed a high level of awareness, while 23.17% showed a

moderate level of awareness. Similarly, 9.27% of the female participants had a low level of awareness regarding copyright laws and regulations related to e-content protection. So, all the data of table no. 3 indicates that there are differences in the level of awareness among males and females. While both genders showed a range of awareness levels, it seems that a higher percentage of females demonstrated a moderate level of awareness compared to males.

**Table no. 4: Educational Qualification wise awareness level**

Factors	High (f)	%	Moderate (f)	%	Low (f)	%
Master's Degree	5	3.31	30	19.86	56	37.08
PhD	21	13.90	27	17.88	12	7.94

Table no. 4 indicates, that the distribution of awareness levels regarding copyright laws and regulations related to e-content protection based on the respondents' educational qualifications. Among those with a Master's Degree, 3.31% displayed a high level of awareness, while 19.86% demonstrated a moderate level of awareness. Surprisingly, a significant percentage of 37.08% had a low level of awareness regarding this subject. On the other hand, among respondents with a PhD, a higher percentage of 13.90% exhibited a high

level of awareness, and 17.88% showed a moderate level of awareness. However, only 7.94% had a low level of awareness. These findings suggest that individuals with a PhD tend to have a higher level of awareness regarding copyright laws and regulations related to e-content protection compared to those with a Master's Degree. Additionally, the data indicates a relatively higher proportion of individuals with a Master's Degree who possess a low level of awareness on this issue.

**Table no. 5: Discipline-wise Awareness Scores among the B. Ed. College Teachers**

Discipline	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD ( $\sigma$ )	Minimum	Maximum
Science	2.17	0.78	1.35	4.67
Social Sciences	2.42	0.61	1.75	4.13
Linguistics	2.09	0.72	1.03	4.18

Table no. 5 provides the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum awareness scores for each discipline i.e. Science, Social Sciences, and Linguistics. A closer examination of the data reveals a concerning lack of awareness across all disciplines. The mean awareness scores range from 2.09 to 2.42 (linguistics and social science), indicating a relatively low level of understanding among the B. Ed. College Teachers in West Bengal. The standard deviations (ranging from 0.61 to 0.78) suggest a considerable

degree of variability in awareness scores within each discipline. Beside all these, the minimum and maximum scores demonstrate the range of responses within each discipline, highlighting the disparity in awareness levels. The minimum scores range from 1.03 to 1.75 (social science and linguistics), indicating some participants: extremely low awareness, while the maximum score 4.67 (science), representing the highest levels of awareness achieved within each discipline.

**Table no. 6: District wise level of awareness among the B.Ed. College Teachers**

District	Participants (n=151)	High Level (f with %)	Moderate Level (f with %)	Low Level (f with %)
North 24 Parganas	51	10 (19.61%)	18 (35.29%)	23 (45.10%)
Murshidabad	53	7 (13.21%)	20 (37.74%)	26 (49.06%)
Paschim Medinipur	47	12 (25.53%)	14 (29.79%)	21 (44.68%)

A total of 51 participants from North 24 Parganas district were surveyed. Among them, 19.61% demonstrated a high level of awareness, 35.29% showed a moderate level of awareness, and 45.10% had a low level of awareness on this subject. In Murshidabad district, 53 participants were surveyed. Of these, 13.21% exhibited a high level of awareness, 37.74% displayed a moderate level of awareness, and 49.06% had a low level

of awareness regarding copyright laws and regulations related to e-content protection. Similarly, in Paschim Medinipur district, 47 participants were included in the survey. Among them, 25.53% showed a high level of awareness, 29.79% demonstrated a moderate level of awareness, and 44.68% had a low level of awareness concerning this subject.

**Table no. 7: Factors that Influence the Awareness Level [Thematic Analysis]**

Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Frequency	Percentage
Awareness of Laws	Lack of Knowledge	LK1	25	13.37%
	Misinterpretation	MI1	31	16.58%
Training Programs	Limited Understanding	LU1	18	9.63%
	Insufficient Training	IT1	12	6.42%
Access to Information	Inadequate Resources	IR1	29	15.51%
	Limited Resources	LR1	27	14.43%
Importance of Laws	Technological Barriers	TB1	34	18.18%
	Lack of Priority	LP1	23	12.30%
	Perception of Irrelevance	PI1	35	18.72%

Here, table no. 7 presents the thematic analysis of qualitative data related to the awareness level of B. Ed. College Teachers on copyright laws. In this study, themes identified include “*Awareness of Laws*,” “*Training Programs*,” “*Access to Information*,” and “*Importance of Laws*.” Each theme is further divided into sub-themes, and specific codes are assigned to represent the corresponding text. In this table, frequencies represent the number of participants who expressed the corresponding code or sub-theme. And here percentages indicate the proportion of participants out of the total sample size who endorsed each code or sub-theme.

Under the theme of “*Awareness of Laws*,” two sub-themes emerged as significant factors. The *lack of knowledge* (LK1) was identified by 13.37% of the participants, while *misinterpretation* (MI1) was reported by 16.58% of the participants. These findings indicate that a considerable portion of the respondents lacks sufficient knowledge and understanding of copyright laws, which can lead to misinterpretations.

Regarding “*Training Programs*,” *limited understanding* (LU1) was highlighted by 9.63% of the participants, while 6.42% reported *insufficient training* (IT1). These results suggest that there is a need for more comprehensive and effective training programs to enhance teachers' understanding of copyright laws and regulations.

Sub-themes related to “*Access to Information*” revealed that *inadequate resources* (IR1) were reported by 15.51% of the participants, and *limited resources* (LR1) were identified by 14.43% of the participants. These findings emphasize the need for improved access to relevant information and resources to foster better awareness and compliance with copyright laws.

Under the theme of “*Importance of Laws*,” participants highlighted *technological barriers* (TB1) as a factor, with 18.18% reporting this concern. *Lack of priority* (LP1) was identified by 12.30% of the participants, while *perception of irrelevance* (PI1) was reported by 18.72% of the participants. These results suggest that addressing technological barriers, raising the priority of copyright laws, and changing the perception of irrelevance are crucial for improving awareness and compliance.

## CONCLUSION

So, this study indicates that a significant proportion of teachers possess a low level of awareness on the copyright related issue, which raises concerns about the proper use and protection of e-content in educational settings. Gender analysis reveals that while both male and female participants show a range of awareness levels, a slightly higher percentage of females demonstrate a moderate level of awareness compared to males. This indicates the need for targeted interventions to improve awareness among male teachers. On the other side, analysis of educational qualifications shows that individuals with a PhD exhibit a higher level of awareness compared to those with a Master's Degree, suggesting the importance of higher education in promoting awareness of copyright laws. On the other hand, the district-wise analysis highlights variations in awareness levels across different districts, indicating the need for district-specific awareness campaigns and interventions. While qualitative research offers rich insights, generalizability to a larger population can be limited. In this study, the sample size of 151 participants restricts the findings to the specific context and may not represent the entire population.



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