



# Trapped in the Web: A Study of Internet Addiction of Prospective Teachers of North 24 Parganas of West Bengal

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<p><b>Received</b> 17/06/2025</p> <p><b>Accepted</b> 21/06/2025</p> <p><b>Published</b> 09/07/2025</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p><i>The increasing integration of internet-based technologies into everyday life has transformed the way individuals learn, communicate, and engage socially. Among those most affected are prospective teachers who not only rely heavily on digital tools for academic purposes but are also expected to model responsible technology use. This study investigates the level of internet addiction among prospective teachers in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, focusing on differences based on gender and location of residence. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 100 teacher trainees selected through simple random sampling. The Internet Addiction Test (IAT) developed by Dr. Kimberly S. Young (1998) was employed as the assessment tool. Statistical analysis using the t-test revealed a significant difference in internet addiction between male and female prospective teachers, with males exhibiting higher levels of addiction. However, no significant difference was found based on location of residence (rural vs. urban). The findings suggest a need for digital wellness programs within teacher education to foster balanced and mindful internet usage among future educators. This is vital for ensuring the psychological well-being and pedagogical readiness of teachers in a digitally driven educational landscape.</i></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Digital Wellness, Gender Difference, Internet Addiction, Prospective Teachers, Teacher Education</p>
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## Introduction

The rapid integration and advancement of digital technologies into daily life has shaped communication, learning, and social interaction in a new dimension, especially for young adults. Among them, prospective teachers are not only consumers of digital tools but also future facilitators of digital learning. While the internet provides vast resources for academic and professional development, its extreme use has caused internet addiction (IA). The excessive or poorly controlled obsessions, desires, or behaviours related to computer use and internet access

that cause impairment or suffering are the features of internet addiction, a behavioural disease (Valley Spring Editorial Team, 2024). It is commonly defined as “excessive or poorly controlled preoccupations, urges, or behaviours regarding computer use and internet access that led to impairment or distress” (Shaw & Black, 2008).

## Review of Literature

Research indicates that university students, including teacher trainees, are among the most vulnerable groups for internet addiction due to the academic reliance on digital platforms and increased social networking (Kuss & Lopez-Fernandez, 2016). A study by Nayak (2021) on B.Ed. trainees found that nearly 35% showed moderate to severe symptoms of internet addiction, often linked to prolonged use of social media and online entertainment. Internet addiction among prospective teachers is associated with several psychological concerns, including stress, anxiety, depression, and poor sleep quality (Alavi et al., 2012). It also correlates with reduced academic performance and low classroom engagement, as excessive use can lead to procrastination and attention deficits (Sundarasan et al., 2020). The concern extends beyond health and academic issues. Prospective teachers with internet addiction may face reduced self-efficacy, impaired communication skills, and inadequate classroom management capabilities, all of which are essential for effective teaching (Ching et al., 2017). Moreover, heavy reliance on internet resources without critical evaluation skills may impact pedagogical creativity and authenticity. Several studies have reported gender differences in internet use patterns among teacher trainees. Male students tend to engage more with gaming and information browsing, while females are more inclined towards social networking (Kuss & Griffiths, 2015). Other factors such as socio-economic background, rural-urban divide, and access to digital devices also play a significant role in influencing addiction levels (Kumar & Sharma, 2019). Addressing IA among trainee teachers requires institutional awareness, digital wellness programs, and curriculum integration of responsible internet usage. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and mindfulness practices have shown promise in reducing IA symptoms (Young, 2011). Teacher education programs must foster digital discipline and promote balanced tech use to prepare mentally healthy educators for digital classrooms.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To study the difference in internet addiction of prospective teachers of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal in regard to gender.
2. To study the difference in internet addiction of prospective teachers of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal in regard to location of residence.

## Hypotheses

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in internet addiction between male and female prospective teachers of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in internet addiction between rural and urban prospective teachers of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal.

## Methodology of the Study

### Method

The present study has adopted descriptive survey type research.

### Population

All the prospective teachers of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal have been considered as the population of the study.

### Sample & Sampling Technique

The data for the present study has been collected from 100 prospective teachers from different colleges and universities of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal using simple random sampling technique

### Scale Used

The *Internet Addiction Test (IAT)* by Dr. Kimberly S. Young (1998) has been used for the collection of data.

### Statistics Used

To analyse the data, the researcher has used appropriate descriptive statistics like mean, standard deviation, and inferential statistics like 't' test.

## Result and Discussion

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics with t value of internet addiction of prospective teachers of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal in regard to gender and location of residence

Pair of Comparison	N	M	S.D.	Md	df	Calculated 't' value	Critical 't' value	Remarks
Male	43	36.63	19.995	9.295	98	2.783	2.01 (0.05) & 2.68 (0.01)	Significant
Female	57	27.33	13.362					
Rural	35	35.63	18.463	6.613	98	1.869	2.01 (0.05) & 2.68 (0.01)	Not Significant
Urban	65	29.02	15.970					

*Level of significance 0.01*

Table 1 shows that the mean score of internet addiction of male and female, & rural and urban prospective teachers of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal are 36.63 and 27.33, & 35.63 and 29.02 respectively with mean difference 9.295 and 6.613. The standard deviations are 19.995 and 13.362, & 18.463 and 15.970 respectively. The calculated 't' value for male and female prospective teachers is 2.783 that is greater than that of critical 't' value for the degree of freedom 98 whereas the calculated 't' value for rural and urban prospective teachers is 1.869 that is less than that of critical 't' value for the degree of freedom 98. So, the calculated 't' value is significant at 0.01 level of significance in regard to gender but not in regard to location of residence of prospective teachers of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal.

Result revealed significant difference in internet addiction between male and female prospective teachers of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. So, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) "There is no significant difference in internet addiction between male and female prospective

teachers of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal” is rejected. It also revealed no significant difference in internet addiction between rural and urban prospective teachers of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. So, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) “There is no significant difference in internet addiction between rural and urban prospective teachers of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal” is accepted.

## Conclusion

So, internet addiction has its own unique ranges in this digital era. The present study reveals that internet addiction differs among the prospective teachers of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal between in regard to gender, whereas no significant difference has been found in regard to location of residence.

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