5.0. Introduction

Special education is an interesting new field of professional activity in education. Special education is meant to provide specially designed instructional programme to compensate or overcome the disabilities in students. Learning difficulties is the most recent classification to be included as a category of disability. Since the term was introduced, it’s use has become widespread in education but still educators remain unsure about the nature of its category.

In India, special education is an emerging discipline and an essential part of the modern education system. It includes all aspects of education, which are necessary to successfully run the courses and training programmes for abnormal students. The stream of special education requires specially designed courses and a particular type of instruction to be used for teaching the students, who are uncommon. In fact, special education demands special techniques, tact’s and strategies to be adopted for a successful exercise.

In fact, special education is not a separate system, it is an integral part of the total programme of education. The teachers and trainees in the field of special education are supposed to be apt in normal teaching first and further require special acumen in this discipline, for imparting education to those student and students, who are not ordinary. They lack some capabilities and have a special knack for some other things.
As generally considered, special education is not a total programme which is entirely different from the education of ordinary student. Rather it includes those aspects of education which are specific in addition to the regular programme for all students. In some developed countries like USA and UK, these types of schools are mostly residential. But in a developing country like India, residential schools are very rare and now care is being taken to provide certain facilities to these students.

The field of special education encompasses heterogeneous groups who demand varied services: visually impaired, hearing impaired, mentally retarded, orthopedically handicapped, student with behavior disorders, gifted or talented and finally the learning disabled. The special needs students from the major category of horn and the learning disabled form a sub group.

The educational system is successful only if it meets the diversified needs of heterogeneous groups of students. Any inclusive class room must provide specially designed instructional programme to compensate/overcome the disabilities is called learning difficulties in European countries. In America, the term learning difficulties is widely used in the place of learning disabilities. In India, usage of the term the learning disability is more frequent for learning difficulties due to exposure to the American literature.

5.1. Need for the Study

As Special education is in its infancy stage and its sub area learning difficulties is in its embryonic stage in India. Learning difficulties is a dynamic and expanding field. Learning difficulty individuals are found across all ages, socio-economic levels, and races and their problems range from mild to severe. At this juncture, to meet this challenge effectively, the teachers should have a through knowledge and understanding of the nature of learning difficulty and the process of diagnosis of academic and non-academic problems emanating among students with learning difficulties.
To accomplish this task effectively, there arises a need to develop certain competencies among teachers. As a teacher, he has to cater to the needs of this type of students with specific instructional strategies, materials, teaching techniques and approaches. At this juncture, it is essential to spell out the specific competencies for a teacher to be effective in dealing students with learning difficulties. The exhaustive list of competencies required for high school teachers about the nature of learning difficulties, causes and characteristics of learning difficulties, identification and assessment of learning difficulties, use of instructional strategies, utilization of instructional materials, guidance and counseling to the students with learning difficulties and their parents is very important. Further, studies which probe into the effect of personal variables on the required competencies of high school teachers to deal students with learning difficulties will go a long way to organize need based and situation oriented in-service and pre-service training programmes to the teachers. Researches which focus their attention on the above said aspects are of paramount importance.

5.2. Title of the Problem

Competencies Required for High School Teachers to Deal Students with Learning Difficulties

5.3. Operational Definition of the Terms used in the studies

It is important to define all the important terms used in the study. These definitions help to establish the frame of reference with which the study approaches the problem.

**Competencies**

Houston (1987) stated that competencies are the requirements of a competency based teacher education, which include the knowledge, skills, attitude and values the student (the teacher trainee) must demonstrate for successful completion of the programme.
Selvam (1996) defined competence as referring to ‘fitness to undertake, efficiency to withstand and capacity to excel’.

The Hutchinson Encyclopedia Dictionary (1994) defines competencies as ‘being competent’.

Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990) state competence ‘as ability, the state of being competent, competent as adequately qualified or capable or effective’.


Weber (1972) defines competencies as ‘the broad sense of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors that facilitate intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth in students’. Competencies having knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform duties of a specific profession. Knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform the teaching profession effectively and efficiently.

The International Encyclopedia of Education (1985) defines competence as ‘adequate for the purpose; suitable, sufficient, or as qualified, admissible or as capable’. In a sense, it refers to adequate preparation begin a professional career and has a direct linkage to certification requirements.

Webster’s New World College Dictionary (2000) explains competence as condition (or) quality of being competent, ability, fitness.

In the present study, competencies refer to the teacher’s knowledge, ability, and performance skills to constitute effective teaching programme to deal students with learning difficulties.

High School Teachers

The Chambers 20th Century Dictionary (1983) describes teacher ‘as one whose profession is or whose talent is the ability to impart knowledge, practical skill or understanding’.
In this study high school teachers refers to ‘those who are working in High schools or Higher secondary school (i.e.) from VI to X standards in Government, Private and Aided schools’.

**Learning Difficulties**

Learning disability is the common usage in American and learning difficulties is the normal usage in European culture. Both the terms refer to the difficulties in learning. In Indian context, learning disabilities and learning difficulties are synonymously used to express the difficulties that may arise due to significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities.

The term learning difficulties was first introduced in 1963. Kirk coined the term “Learning disability” that used it to describe a group of students with specific learning deficits, he stated that a learning disability refers to a retardation, disorder or delayed development in one or more of the process of speech language, reading, spelling disability results form a possible cerebral dysfunction and/or emotional (or) behavioral disturbances, not from mental retardation sensory deprivation or cultural (or) instructional factors.

**Learning Disabilities: A New Definition**

Learning disabilities refers to a variety of disorders that affect the acquisition, retention, understanding, organization or use of verbal and/or non-verbal information. These disorders results from impairments in one or more psychological processes related to learning or otherwise lack of average abilities essential for thinking and reasoning. Learning disabilities are specific not global impairments and as such distinct from intellectual disabilities.
From these definitions, it can be concluded that learning disabilities / difficulties are more concerned with language learning and its usage in reading, writing, spelling, speaking, calculating and organizational difficulties. This disability is a result of psychological, neurological, emotional, behavioral and cultural abnormalities of students.

In the present study, the term learning difficulties refer to the difficulties experienced by the students to language learning and its usage in reading, writing, spelling, speaking, calculating and organizational difficulties.

5.4. Objectives of the study

1) To develop a questionnaire to identify the required competencies for the high school teachers to deal students with learning difficulties.

2) To find out the significant differences, if any, in the required competency on various aspects (Nature of learning difficulties, Identifying the causes and characteristics of leaning difficulties, Identification and assessment of students with learning difficulties, Development and use of instructional materials, media and devices, Guidance and Counseling to the students with learning difficulties and their parents) of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to the variation in their Gender (Men / Women).

3) To find out the significant differences, if any, in the required competency on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to the variation in their Age (21-30/31-40/41-50/51 and above).
4) To find out the significant differences, if any, in the required competency on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to the variation in their Community (FC/BC/MBC/SC/ST).

5) To find out the significant differences, if any, in the required competency on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to the variation in their Education Qualification (Second Grade with B.Ed / Graduate with B.Ed / Postgraduate with B.Ed / Postgraduate with M.Ed).

6) To find out the significant differences, if any, in the required competency on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to the variation in the Training Attended (Yes / No).

7) To find out the significant differences, if any, in the required competency on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to the variation in the Type of Training Received (In service Training / APL Training / SSA Training).

8) To find out the significant differences, if any, in the required competency on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to the variation in their Years of Experience (0-5 years / 6-10 years / 11-15 years / 16 and above).

9) To find out the significant differences, if any, in the required competency on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to the variation in the Type of Schools (Government / Aided / Private).
10) To find out the significant differences, if any, in the required competency on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to the variation in the Location of Schools (Rural / Urban).

11) To find out the significant differences, if any, in the required competency on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to the variation in the Classes the Teachers Handling (6-8 standard / 9-10 standard).

12) To find out the significant differences, if any, in the required competency on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to the variation in the Subjects the Teachers Teaching (Tamil / English / Maths / Science / Social Science).

5.5. Assumptions of the Study

1) It is possible to develop a questionnaire to find out the required competencies of high school teachers to deal students with learning difficulties.

2) It is possible to list out the specific competencies required for high school teachers to deal students with learning difficulties.

3) The required competencies of high school teachers to deal students with learning difficulties may vary based on their personal and demographic variables.
5.6. Hypotheses of the Study

1) There is significant difference in the required competencies on various aspects (Nature of learning difficulties, Identifying the causes and characteristics of leaning difficulties, Identification and assessment of students with learning difficulties, Development and use of instructional materials, media and devices, Guidance and Counseling to the students with learning difficulties and their parents) of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to variation in their Gender.

2) There is significant difference in the required competencies on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to variation in their Age.

3) There is significant difference in the required competencies on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to variation in their Community.

4) There is significant difference in the required competencies on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to variation in their Educational Qualification.

5) There is significant difference in the required competencies on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to variation in their Training Attended.

6) There is significant difference in the required competencies on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to variation in their Type of Training Received.

7) There is significant difference in the required competencies on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to variation in their Years of Experience.
8) There is significant difference in the required competencies on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to variation in their Type of Schools.

9) There is significant difference in the required competencies on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to variation in their Location of Schools.

10) There is significant difference in the required competencies on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to variation in their Classes the Teachers Handling.

11) There is significant difference in the required competencies on various aspects of learning difficulties in students by the high school teachers due to variation in their Subjects the Teachers Teaching.

5.7. Scope of the Study

In most populous countries like India, one cannot just ignore a large mass of disabled people. As per the statistics, one tenth of our entire population suffers from a disabling condition of one kind or the other. Learning difficulties is high in all categories of disability. This group requires immediate attention and care to have education and lead a better life like the other people.

In India, special education is an emerging discipline and an essential part of the modern education system. It includes all aspects of education, which are necessary to successfully run the courses and training programmes for students with diverse needs. The stream of special education requires specially designed courses and a particular type of instruction to be used for teaching the students, to be adopted for a successful exercise.

Special education is not a separate system; it is an integral part of the total programme of education only. The teachers and trainees in the field of special education are supposed to be apt in normal teaching first and further require special acumen for students who are not ordinary. Identification and
assessment procedures of students with learning difficulties are of paramount importance in educational system particularly at school stage. Teaching and training strategies, guidance and counseling activities should be planned based on the assessed needs of these students. In fact, the teacher plays a vital role in the identification and assessment, teaching and training and guidance and counseling activities. In this context, he/she has to perform various roles in complex situations. In other sense, the complexity of the roles to be performed by the teachers demands specific competencies to deal students with learning difficulties.

The prime focus of the study is to listout the competencies required for high school teachers to deal students with learning difficulties. The study also aimed at development of a questionnaire to identify the required competencies of high school teachers to deal students with learning difficulties. It also focuses its attention to find out the effects of the variables such as gender, age, community, educational qualification, type of training received, and years of experience, type of school they are working and location of school, teaching subjects on the required competencies of high school teachers.

5.8. Methodology

After selecting and defining the problem, methodology layout is an important task that has to be carried out to construct suitable tools for data collection. The various steps followed in the methodology of the study are discussed under different headings namely, construction of tools, validity and reliability of the tools, sampling procedures, method of data collection and statistical techniques used in the study.

5.9. Construction of Tools

To find out the required competencies of high school teachers to deal students with learning difficulties a questionnaire with ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ type is developed. The competencies statements are grouped under five major
headings such as (Nature of learning difficulties, Identifying the causes and characteristics of leaning difficulties, Identification and assessment of students with learning difficulties, Development and use of instructional materials, media and devices, Guidance and Counseling to the students with learning difficulties and their parents). Against each competency statement ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ has been given. The teachers are asked to say ‘Yes’ if they need competency on that competency statement and say ‘No’ if they do not require that particular competency. The scoring for ‘Yes’ is ‘one’ and for ‘No’ is ‘Zero’.

**Pilot Study**

A pilot study has been conducted to find out the suitability of the test items for the investigation. 50 high school teachers from the study area are taken for pilot study. The questionnaires have been administered to them with a request to point out the suitability of the tools for the investigation. Based on their responses, certain items have been modified, rewarded, included and deleted. The final form of the English and Tamil version of competencies assessment questionnaire consists of fifty statements following under five dimensions.

**Reliability of the Research Tools**

In this study, the investigator has used split half method to estimate the reliability of the competencies assessment questionnaire. 50 teachers from the Salem District have been selected. From the obtained data, the odd numbered and even numbered item scores are pooled out separately and half test correlation between these two sets of test scores have been computed by using Karl Pearson’s formula. Then by using sparmens browns formula, the whole test correlation has been worked out. The obtained value is (8.1) indicating the reliability of the tool used in the study.
Validity

Validity is the quality of the research tool or procedure that measures what it intends to measure. The investigator here assured that, by the opinion of the experts, who are familiar with test development, the competencies assessment questionnaire used in this study has content validity. Similarly construct validity, face validity and intrinsic validity has been established appropriately.

5.10. Sample of the Study

The investigator selected Salem District of Tamil Nadu, South India as the locale of the study. There are two educational districts namely Salem and Sankagiri in Salem revenue district. Salem and Sankagiri educational district comprised as the area of study. The researcher selected the 15% of the schools in Salem and Sankagiri educational districts by using simple random sampling technique. The teachers working in these 15% of the high schools (545 in number) form the sample of the study. For the purpose of the study, the investigator randomly selected 292 teachers in government schools, 88 teachers in government aided schools and 165 teachers in private matriculation schools.

The characteristics of the selected samples are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Variable</th>
<th>No.of Teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>g) Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>337</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 30 years</td>
<td>139</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 – 40 years</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 – 50 years</td>
<td>146</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 – 60 years</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### i) Community
- Forward Community – OC: 46
- Backward Community – BC: 205
- Most Backward Community – MBC: 166
- Scheduled / Scheduled Tribal – SC/ST: 128

### j) Educational Qualifications
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Grade with B.Ed.</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate with B.Ed.</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate with B.Ed.</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate with M.Ed.</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### k) Training Attended
- Yes: 186
- No: 359

### l) Type of Training Received
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training not Attended</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Service Training</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APL Training</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA Training</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### g) Years of Experience
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience Range</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5 years</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 years</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 15 years</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 and above</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### h) Type of School
- Government Schools: 292
- Government Aided Schools: 86
- Private Schools: 165

### ii) Location of Schools
- Rural: 238
- Urban: 307

### j) Classes the Teachers Handling
- 6 to 8 std: 290
- 9 to 10 std: 255
k) Subjects the Teachers Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social science</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.11. Data Collection

After selecting the sample for the study, the investigator personally visited the schools and a good rapport has been established before administering the tools. They were explained about the purpose of the study. It was emphasized that the data will be confidential and the teachers were directed not to leave any item without rating. The investigator collected the filled up questionnaire personally.

5.12. Scoring Procedure

For purpose of statistical analysis, the collected data should be quantified. In order to facilitate quantification, the following scoring procedure was adopted. To assess the required competencies through the questionnaire for each competencies statement ‘one’ mark is given for scoring ‘yes’ and ‘zero’ for scoring ‘no’.

5.13. Statistical Techniques Used in the Study

The obtained data have been analyzed by using appropriate statistical techniques. To find out the required competencies of high school teachers, descriptive statistics like Mean and Standard Deviation and percentages have been calculated. The other statistical techniques used are t-test, F-test and Step wise Multiple Regression.
5.14. Findings and Conclusion

1. 75% of the teachers felt the need for requiring the competency in the area of nature of learning difficulties in students. Only one aspect that is reading, writing and spelling difficulties, around 45% of the teachers felt the need for enrichment, showing vast scope for organization of orientation/in service training programme to the teachers working in high level and need to incorporate and deal explicitly the concept of learning difficulties in initial/pre service teacher training programme.

2. 66% of the teacher felt the need for requiring the competency in the area identifying the causes and characteristics of learning difficulties in students. Only four aspect that around 44% of the teachers felt the need for enrichment, showing vast scope for organization of orientation/in service training programme to the teachers working in high school level and, need to incorporate and deal explicitly the identifying the causes and characteristics of learning difficulties in initial/pre service teacher training programme. Teachers are part and parcel of this study who should know about the causes and characteristics of students with learning difficulties. Genetics hereditary influences pre-natal, preinatal and post-natal problems, environmental influences and biochemical abnormalities may lead to learning difficulties in students. The knowledge in these aspects is a must for a teacher, to find out the root cause for the difficulty in learning a good knowledge about the genetics and learning difficulties, environmental factors and learning difficulties facilitates the high school teachers to deal students with learning difficulties effectively. The teacher being the gardener of the society he/she must enlighten the people about these problems there by, to present learning difficulties in students. In fact, the teacher is the right person to establish link between the community and school. In this aspect it is right to say that the teacher should sensitise the community and parent teacher associations about the different causes of
learning difficulties in students. The NCERT, NCTE, SCERT and DIET should include these aspects in the B.Ed teacher training programmes. Pre-service / in service programmes should incorporate the identifying the causes and characteristics of students with learning difficulties which in turn will facilitate identification and intervention.

3. 71% of the teacher felt the need for requiring the competency area, identification and assessment of students with learning difficulties’. Only three aspects that around 44% of the teachers felt that need for enrichment. Early identification leads to prevention before complication and timely intervention. Identification and assessment at early stage will be more feasible, fruitful and economical and will diminish wastage and stagnation to considerable extent. Further there is need to teachers should be trained to use informal and formal assessment procedures, observation and achievement of the students. This training should be provided for both pre-service and in-service teachers through refreshers course, orientation programmes and workshops.

4. 65% of the teachers felt the need for requiring the competency in the area of development and use of instructional materials, media and devices only few aspect 42% of the teachers felt the need for enrichment. Hence, the training programmes given by national, state and district level bodies should incorporate these competency aspects in their pre-service and in-service training programmes based on the priority level and shape the teachers to meet the needs of the diversified group of students in regular classrooms.

5. 69% of the teachers felt the need for requiring the competency area “guidance and counseling to the students with learning difficulties and their parents’ only three aspect around 41% of the teachers felt the need for enrichment. Showing vast scope for organization of orientation
pre-service and in-service training programme to the teachers working in high school level and need to incorporate and deal explicitly the content of learning difficulties in initial / pre service teacher training programme. There is also a need to strengthen the teacher parent association at school level.

6. Gender has significantly influenced the required competencies of high school teachers to deal students with learning difficulties. Men teachers felt that they need more competency than the women teachers.

7. Age has not significantly influenced the required competency of teachers on various aspects of learning difficulties in students. Here, the teachers 41-50 age group need more competencies followed by the teachers with age group 31-40, teacher with 51 years and above and teachers with 21-30 years.

8. Different Community groups significantly influenced the required competency for the competency area providing guidance and counseling to the students with learning difficulties and their parents and for the remaining competency area it has not influenced. Hence the above stated hypothesis is accepted with regard to this competency area only. SC/ST community teachers more competencies then their counter parts with other community teachers.

9. Educational qualification has significantly influenced the required competency for the competency area-nature of learning difficulties and in the remaining competency areas it has not influenced. The secondary grade training with B.Ed teachers have more competency than their counterparts with the Graduate with B.Ed and Post Graduate with B.Ed.

10. Training attended has significantly influenced the required competency for the competency area-providing guidance and counseling to the students with learning difficulties and their parents and for the remaining
competency areas it has not influenced. Training attended teachers possess more competency than their counterparts with the Training not attended.

11. Type of training received has not significantly influenced the required competency of teachers on various aspects of learning difficulties in students. In service training teachers do not differ from those teachers who received other training like APL, SSA training on their required competency. The reason for result is all teacher received the some sort of training like APL, SSA where some of the components of learning difficulties in some form are other are incorporated.

12. Years of experience has not influenced the required competency of teachers on various aspects of learning difficulties in students. Here, the teachers with 11-15 years of experience need more competencies followed by the teachers with 6-10 years of experience, 0-5 years of experience and 16 and above years of experience.

13. Type of school the teachers working in has not significantly influenced the required competency for the competency area – providing guidance and counseling to the students with learning difficulties and their parents and for the remaining competency areas are significantly influenced the required competencies of high school teachers to deal students with learning difficulties.

14. Location of school the teachers working has not significantly influenced the required competency for the competency area providing guidance and counseling to the students with learning difficulties and their parents and for the remaining competency areas significantly influenced the required competencies of the high school teachers to deal students with learning difficulties. Rural school teachers felt that the need more competency than the urban school teachers.
15. Classes the teachers handling has influenced the required competency for the competency area-nature of learning difficulties and for the remaining competency areas it has not influenced. 6 to 8th std classes handling teachers more competency than the 9th to 10th classes handling teachers.

16. Subjects the teachers teaching has not significantly influenced the required competencies of high school teachers to deal students with learning difficulties. Language teachers (Tamil, English) felt that the need more competency than the other subjects (Mathematics, Science, Social Science) teachers.

17. The independent variable ‘Gender’ contributes 7.1 percent to the dependent variable nature of learning difficulties, 19.0 percent to identifying the causes and characteristics of learning difficulties in students, 5.2 percent to development and use of instructional materials, media and devices, 7.5 percent to providing guidance and counseling to the students with leaning difficulties and parents, and 9.6 percent to competencies as a whole. Likewise ‘Educational Qualification’ is the significant contributor with 6.2 percent to identification and assessment of students with learning difficulties, 5.9 percent to development and use of instructional materials, media and devices and 10.6 percent competencies as a whole. Similarly, ‘Classes the Teachers Handling’ is the significant contributor with 3.1 percent to nature of learning difficulties, 18.2 percent to identification and assessment of students with learning difficulties. The variable ‘Types of school’ contribute 6.9 percent only to the dependent variable identification and assessment of students with learning difficulties. Similarly, the ‘variable ‘Community’ contributes 8.4 percent to the dependent variable providing guidance and counseling to the students with learning difficulties and their parents.
5.15. Educational Implications

- Learning difficulties awareness programs should be organized for high school teachers.
- In-service training programs should be organized 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.
- DIET, SCERT, NCERT & SSA should develop competency based modules on learning difficulties aspects and supplied to teachers.
- Seminars, Conference and Workshops should be organized inviting teachers to take part in them.
- Parent Teacher Association should be strengthened to sensitise the parents about the learning difficulties in children and students at early years.
- Media should take leading role to broadcast programs on learning difficulties.
- Self learning modules should be prepared to make the teachers aware of their competencies to deal students with learning difficulties.
- The teachers training curriculum at different levels should explicitly incorporate the concept of learning difficulties.
- Video- audio lessons should be developed and widely calculated among the teachers to develop knowledge, skills and competencies to deal students with learning difficulties.
- More focus should be given for research on learning difficulties.
This study revealed the importance of providing knowledge and skills to the teachers working in high schools, as the teachers need more knowledge in the field of learning difficulties. This study also revealed the necessity of incorporating the competencies in the teacher education curriculum. Specialized resource teachers can be trained by the NCERT and Department of Education at University level who have good expertise in this area. The government should appoint one such resource teacher for each block and he/she will assist the general high school teachers in his jurisdiction about the ways and means of overcoming learning difficulties in students. The resource teachers with the help of NCERT, SCERT, DIET and educational bodies should develop materials, models, teaching kits, audio-video assisted learning materials, handbooks etc., on learning difficulties. These should be widely used at high school level by the teachers. National, state and district level surveys can be conducted to identify the nature and types of learning difficulties and the extend of learning difficulties which in turn will help to tailor the need based training programmes for the high school teachers. Such an activity will help to avoid drop out, wastage and stagnation at high school level.

5.16. Delimitations of the Study

- The study is confined to the teachers deal students with learning difficulties only in Government, Aided and Private Schools.

- The sample consists of 545 teachers working in Salem Educational District of Tamilnadu State only.

- The competencies required for high school teachers to deal students with learning difficulties is assessed on the basis of teachers self ratings only.
5.17. Suggestions for Future Research

- Studies can be made to assess the prevalence of learning difficulties at secondary level.

- Separate studies can be attempted to assess the awareness of teachers working in high school and higher secondary schools about the learning difficulties of students.

- Attempts may be made to assess the competency of teachers in dealing students with learning difficulties considering the students achievement as the basis.

- Studies on normal students attitude towards their peers with learning difficulty may be attempted.

- Experimental studies can be undertaken to evolve a special instructional strategy to teach students with learning difficulties. The effectiveness of such strategy and its advantage over traditional lecture method can also be measured.

- Separate studies can be attempted to probe into the causes of learning difficulties and remediation can be suggested for implementation.