Problems Faced by Master Trainers in Sign Language Skills Acquisition During In-service Training of Special Education Teachers at District Level Punjab

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ARTICLE DETAILS

ABSTRACT

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Effectiveness of these in-service training ensure the productivity of special education teachers and ultimately betterment of teaching-learning environment in the special education institutes. The research titled; issues encountered by master trainers using sign language skills in Punjab, acquisition occurred during in-service training for special education teachers at the district level. The study investigated the obstacles encountered by master trainers when providing special education teacher training, as well as the administrative issues encountered by master trainers during imparting training to special education teachers. The current investigation was descriptive in nature. The data was collected from Special Educators (HI) serving in special education institutes of Punjab through a self-constructed questionnaire which comprises of 32 statements. Instrument was validated through expert opinion and through cronbach Alpha test. The sample of the study was comprised on 100 teachers of students with hearing impairment of which 69 females and 31 were males teachers serving in special education institutes of Punjab. Sample was taken from 5 division of Punjab Lahore, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Sahiwal, Multan and 20 teachers from each division. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to code the data and analyse it. The major findings revealed that it takes time to establish such techniques and materials to fulfil the demands of special education teachers throughout training. This research was very helpful in bringing new inclinations in the Department of special education for providing a balanced approach towards the professional and personal needs of teachers and trainers. It also helps to understand that teacher training is a difficult, multi-layered undertaking that must be carefully planned, implemented, and critically evaluated against the desired goals. Conclusions were reached, and recommendations were made to the department of special education’s management (in-service teacher training college).

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1. Introduction

Many hearing and deaf persons use sign language as their primary language. It has distinct rules, grammar, and structure. Many nations now consider sign languages to be the first language for the deaf (Krausneker, 2008). There are various arguments against sign languages that contend that they are not true languages from a linguistic standpoint since they lack certain spoken language characteristics, such as arbitrariness, morphology, and colors.

In response to these claims, several linguistic studies have demonstrated that sign languages are natural languages with sophisticated structures and their own grammar in addition to having linguistic status (Dotter and Okorn, 2002). (Emmorey, 2001). In Pakistan, as well as other countries throughout the world, sign language plays a pivotal part in education of hearing-impaired students. As a means of communication between professors and students, sign language mediates the entire teaching and learning process.

Due to the significance of learning sign language, a teacher's effectiveness directly affects both a student's academic achievement and the process of integrating them into society, which starts in school at a young age. From the perspective of those who educate people to learn sign language, there are still certain things that need to be done to ensure that students with hearing impairments learn well in the educational setting. In this regard, the work of instructors who help students learn sign language should be better acknowledged as being crucial to the teaching and learning processes for those students who have hearing impairments. This will improve the teaching and learning processes and produce more effective outcomes. These experts also mentioned how crucial it is for professors to become sign language proficient in order to enhance the psychological well-being of these pupils and their view of the institution's acceptance.

2. Literature Review

The terms "deaf" and "hearing impaired" are used to describe those who cannot hear or who hear very poorly. Physical disabilities like deafness might be present from birth or develop later in life. Pre-lingual deafness refers to hearing loss that occurs before a kid learns to speak or is present from birth. Due to the rarity of deafness as a handicap, instructors sometimes lack a thorough knowledge of pupils who are deaf or hearing impaired. As a result, these pupils frequently do not receive the quality of education they ought to. Teachers must accurately comprehend the unique educational demands of this demographic if they want to guarantee that these pupils will receive high-quality instruction and education. To give these pupils with high-quality education, a variety of elements can be at play. However, as it is crucial to their learning of literacy, language development is the most significant one. This essay discusses the difficulties that deaf or hearing-impaired children who were born to hearing parents have when it comes to language and literacy development, emphasizing the fact that these children have a delayed start to communication. The suggestions for successful teaching methods that can help to tackle this problem are given in the next section.

The decision to install cochlear implants in youngsters has been up for debate ever since they were originally introduced. We also avoid talking about the complicated ethical issues related to cochlear implants. Instead, we examine the negative effects of the implant operation, the dangers of having hopes for outcomes not achieved and resulting in sadness, the economic effects on society, damaging ideological disagreements, and other issues related to undergoing cochlear implantation surgery. Where feasible, we provide recommendations for solutions.
2.1 Sign Language Communities

For a number of reasons, several research has concentrated on language advancement within the setting of limited language exposure. It provides a unique opportunity to comprehend the connections between stimulus and the growth of language, to start with. It enables researchers to evaluate the notion that language development has a touchy period and carefully look at the issues relating to potential linkages between the language advancement and other cognitive forms. But delayed language exposure in young infants has long-term consequences. Agreeing to formative clinician psychologist Marie Coppola, language deprivation is good for study but bad for people. where we look at the political and instructive troubles with learning a first language in situations where instructional institutions, main language input from outside the home, by and large postponed access are more frequent.

A lot of sign language research has been done recently on common sign languages including American Sign Language (ASL) and British Sign Language (BSL) (see Annual Review articles by Fischer, Sandler). These sign dialects have two vital characteristics: (a) these are largely used in urban areas by deaf people and those who engage with the deaf; and (b) they are used by people who are privileged and powerful in their communities. Most of the investigations on the study of sign language acquisition is centered in such environments and centers on the so-called "standard" form of these metropolitan sign languages.

However, sociolinguists have been drawn to the variety of sign language dialects from the beginning of sign language research. In 1973, sign linguists started looking at how spoken and sign languages are related. (1973 Woodward). Due to weightage from the corpus, lexicon institutionalization, and appraisal movement forms in sign language studies, researchers had to consider colloquial variety inside sign dialects and even sign languages that were in contact with one another (like ASL/LSM; Quinto-Pozos 2008). (Johnston 2003). In the United States, researchers and community activists began to discuss hearing dialects in 2010 as well as racial and ethnic community-based dialectal variations like Black ASL and Chicanx ASL to better understand the differences between deaf and hearing communities of signers (Hill 2017; McCaskill et al. 2011). (McDermid 2014).

Unfortunately, no study has been done on how to acquire these varieties, thus we are unable to include them in our evaluation.

2.2 Language Handicap

Children who are not exposed to a sign language may be in a condition of language deprivation since they are unable to access spoken language owing to hearing loss. The practice of placing children in situations that limit their exposure to direct and indirect language is referred to in this article as "language handicap." Children who are deaf or hard of hearing are particularly at risk of language deprivation due to the disability itself and societal stigmas associated with learning sign languages.

Children who really are deaf or hard of hearing were especially vulnerable to language loss., yet any kid might experience it. For instance, if they have a handicap that affects their motor abilities (see Walle& Campos 2014). Many individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing relate traumatic experiences to language impairment, which is responsible blame for a range of issues including diminished social and intellectual efficiency. (Hall 2017; Hall et al. 2019).

In the past 10 years, advocacy organizations that favor providing accessible language settings for all deaf children have assisted numerous states in passing legislation that keeps track of deaf children's language learning milestones in both spoken and sign languages. These organizations took these actions
because they understand the harm that language loss can inflict. LEAD-K, or Language Equality and Acquisition for hearing impaired students, is the acronym for these guidelines. The understanding that language deprivation, rather than deafness alone, damages cognition and language has improved the search for LEAD-K legislation (Hall et al. 2017a).

According to LEAD-K regulations, a committee of professionals is required to track the language progress of deaf children from years 0 to 5 using the most recent assessments. The committee's mission is to avoid language deprivation by ensuring that children who are not completing language milestones in spoken or sign languages receive proper mentorship and intervention services.

2.3 Linguistic isolation for the individuals

Language deprivation goes beyond simply not having a strong basis in any language and not being able to speak it fluently and naturally. The effects of linguistic deprivation extend beyond just linguistic diseases. Mathematical tasks (because symbol manipulation is required) and memory structure, which depend on a strong first language basis, become fragmented or interrupted. Lack of linguistic exposure also reduces one's chances for success in school and in the workforce because literacy is correlated most closely to cognitive capacity in first languages, and without literacy, one's job options are severely constrained. Additionally, language deprivation causes psychological issues because of the loneliness and frustration that come with having weaker verbal and cognitive abilities. As a result, many people find it hard to properly comprehend others and express themselves. It is obvious that language deprivation causes a person a variety of problems.

2.4 Language handicap and the society

Epidemiological studies of the deaf have uncovered some unfavorable and disturbing figures since many deaf persons have experienced some degree of language deprivation. A larger percentage of deaf persons are illiterate, incarcerated, and unemployed. High unemployment, poverty, and ill health are all highly correlated with illiteracy (often due to lack of access to information about good health choices and risky behavior). Much if poverty has negative consequences on hearing children, those effects are amplified in linguistically challenged children, making it even less likely that they would be able to contribute positively to society. Additionally, we discover that abuse occurs more frequently to deaf children and people who are unable to interact with those around them.

Maltreatment victims, particularly those who experienced it as children, are more likely to exhibit mental illness and dangerous conduct, which imposes additional costs on society. Given these facts, it is expected that linguistically impaired deaf persons will have a greater rate of incarceration, either because they participate in criminal conduct, sometimes under duress, or because they are unable to participate in self-defense when they are accused of such action. These are all problems for society. The potential output of each of these persons also represents a huge loss to society. It is obvious that language deprivation is bad for society as well as the afflicted individuals. Next, we talk about how contemporary medical acts and procedures contain this harm.

2.5 Rationale of the Study

I took part in some program to help me learn sign language while working in the special education department, and in 2021 I was chosen to become a master trainer. I have encountered some issues with administration, environmental settings, financial limitations, and behavioral issues during my trainings as a trainee and trainer. So, I have decided to work on research topic entitled “issues encountered by master trainers using sign language skills acquired during special education teachers' in-service training at the district level in Punjab”
3. Objectives of the Study

- To explore the issues encountered by master trainers while delivering training of special education teachers.
- To comprehend the administrative challenges encountered by master trainers when providing training to special education instructors.
- To identify training resource issues encountered by master trainers during imparting training of special education teachers.

4. Significance of the Study

This study will be important for upholding trainees' rights to high-quality instruction and for ensuring that everyone has access to chances for quality education regardless of racial, ethnic, or cultural background. The significance of language in and for academic performance will also be emphasized, and the linguistic component of all disciplines will be considered. Of particular importance will be the development of sign language proficiency, which is frequently a need for deaf students.

Additionally, it will support the development of cultural awareness and sign language proficiency as relevant, important, and engaging phenomena for each trainee. Through wiser administrative choices and an emphasis on the worth of each trainee's individual resources, this research will help to stimulate trainees' and trainers' interest in language and cultural activities. Considering the language and cultural resources of the trainer and trainees as well as the educational requirements of students with hearing impairment (socio-cultural linguistic needs).

This study will guide researchers and stakeholders in the development of trainees' autonomy and necessary awareness and enable the trainees to take responsibility for their own learning. Additionally, it will make it easier to comprehend the importance and depth of linguistic and cultural variety in both society and education. The pursuit of trainees' achievement will also be included. In terms of enabling others to speak, listening to them, encouraging a spirit of interaction, discussion, and debate, as well as shared decision-making, it will also be useful in developing a democratic culture, including mutual respect and equality of opportunity.

5. Methodology of the Study

The purpose of current research was to reveal the clear picture about the issues encountered by master trainers in the development of sign language skills throughout professional development of special education teachers at the district level in Punjab. It was descriptive research. As it pointed out and described the factors which contribute the most in social identity issues in students with hearing impairment.

5.1 Research Population

The population of this study was teachers of students with hearing impairment serving at special education institutions of Punjab.

5.2 Sample of the Study

A good sample is one that statistically represents the relevant population and is big enough to provide an answer to the research topic. The researcher used convenient sampling technique to conduct this research. The sample of the study was consisted of 100 teachers of students with hearing impairment serving at special education institutions of Punjab from five divisions (Lahore, Gujranwala Rawalpindi, Sahiwal, and Multan).
5.3 Research Instrument

The research instrument was a self-constructed questionnaire of 5 points Likert-Scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Instrument consisted of 32 statements. Instrument was found valid in the opinion of the experts. Further the reliability of the instrument was calculated through Cronbach's Alpha and it was 0.81 which is healthy value for an instrument.

5.4 Data Collection

A questionnaire is a self-report data-collection instrument that each research participant completes as part of a research study. Researchers use questionnaires to obtain information about the problems faced by master trainers in sign language skills acquisition during in-service training of special education teachers at District level in Punjab in terms of administration, resources, conduction to run an effective sign language skills acquisition training program.

6. Data Analysis

Quantitative descriptive analysis characterises the universe or a phenomena by discovering patterns in data that answer what, where, when, and to what extent questions. Data is determined using descriptive analysis. In practically every research, a good description offers what we know about capacities, needs, methodologies, practises, policies, populations, and settings in a way that is relevant to a given research or policy topic. SPSS (Computer Software) was used to analyse the data, which included both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Major Findings

Findings of the study are as follows

Table1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement 1: Provision of consent form in advance to join the sign language skills acquisition training program may be helpful for efficacy.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 indicates that 19% of the participants responded on option “SDA”, 14% on option “DA.”, 11% on option “N”, 23% on option “A.” and 33% on “SA” that provision of consent form in advance to join the sign language skills acquisition training program may be helpful for efficacy.

Table1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement 2: Voluntarily participation in sign language skills acquisition training program always helpful for better outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2 reveals that 12% of the participants responded on option “SDA”, 9% on option “DA.”, 11% on option “N”, 28% on option “A.” and 40% on “SA” that voluntarily participation in sign language skills acquisition training program may be more helpful for better outcomes.
Table 1.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement 3: You must be mentally prepared to participate in the sign language skills acquisition training program.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.3 reveals that 5% of the participants responded on option “SDA”, 10% on option “DA.”, 2% on option “N”, 36% on option “A.” and 47% on “SA” that they must be mentally prepared to participate in the sign language skills acquisition training program.

Table 1.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement 4: Most of the allocated time for an sign language skills acquisition training program is sometimes spent on management.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.4 indicates that 19% of the participants responded on option “SDA”, 14% on option “DA.”, 11% on option “N”, 23% on option “A.” and 33% on “SA” that most of the allocated time for sign language skills acquisition training program is sometimes spent on management.

Table 1.5

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
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<th>DA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement 5: Late arriving due to inadequate transportation to join the sign language skills acquisition training program at the district level affects the training.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.5 describes that 4% of the participants responded on option “SDA”, 22% on option “DA.”, 5% on option “N”, 30% on option “A.” and 39% on “SA” that late arrival due to inadequate transportation to join the sign language skills acquisition training program at the district level affects the training.

Table 1.6

<table>
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<th>Responses</th>
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<th>SA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement 6: Due to the short duration of practical activities for sign language skills acquisition training, it is difficult to achieve the objectives of the training program.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1.6 reveals that 9% of the participants responded on option “SDA”, 8% on option “DA.”, 10% on option “N”, 31% on option “A.” and 42% on “SA” that due to the short duration of practical activities for sign language skills acquisition training, it is difficult to achieve the objectives of the training program.

Table 1.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
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<th>DA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement 7: Lack of proper training material for sign language skills acquisition training program affects training objectives.</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.7 indicates that 11% of the participants responded on option “SDA”, 14% on option “DA.”, 11% on option “N”, 31% on option “A.” and 33% on “SA” that lack of proper training material for sign language skills acquisition training program affects training objectives.

Table 1.8

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
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<th>DA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement 8: To make the sign language skills acquisition training program effective, providing the training module in booklet form helps in achieving the training objectives.</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.8 indicates that 4% of the participants responded on option “SDA”, 9% on option “DA.”, 6% on option “N”, 23% on option “A.” and 58% on “SA” that to make the sign language skills acquisition training program effective, providing the training module in booklet form helps in achieving the training objectives.

Table 1.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement 9: It is very important for the sign language skills acquisition training program to take into account the physical environment such as lighting, temperature, hygiene, etc.</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.9 reveals that 5% of the participants responded on option “SDA”, 9% on option “DA.”, 6% on option “N”, 23% on option “A.” and 57% on “SA” that it is very important for the sign language skills acquisition training program to take into account the physical environment such as lighting, temperature, hygiene, etc.
Table 1.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
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<th>DA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement 10: The presence of technical and supportive staff is essential to the effectiveness of the sign language skills acquisition training program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.10 Shows that 8% of the participants responded on option “SDA”, 13% on option “DA.”, 6% on option “N”, 22% on option “A.” and 51% on “SA” that the presence of technical and supportive staff is essential to the effectiveness of the sign language skills acquisition training program.

T-tests

1. p value (0.122) which is greater than 0.05 indicates there is no significance difference between the opinion of male and female in response to the statement “Late arriving due to inadequate transportation to join the sign language skills acquisition training program at the district level affects the training.”

2. p Value (0.261) which was greater than 0.05 indicates there is no significance difference between the opinion of male and female in response to the statement “Lack of summative assessment at the end of the training program does not guide the effectiveness of the training program. As a result, planning for the next training program becomes difficult.”

3. p Value (0.657) which was greater than 0.05 indicates there is no significance difference between the opinion of male and female in response to the statement “The attitude of trainers plays an important role in achieving the goals of the SLSA training program.”

7. Discussion

Numerous studies have shown that to achieve academic success, it is mandatory to provide required classroom adjustments as well as the proper language and intellectual ones. As a result, it is crucial for educators and other professionals who interact with children who have hearing impairments to consider the effects of language and culture as well as how this affects how a hearing-impaired person constructs their experience and sense of self. The development of sign language skills must be addressed if special education kids are to benefit as much as possible from their learning process and receive the finest education possible (Cawthon, 2006). A teacher who is not proficient in sign language may find it difficult to successfully convey academic information. As a senior special education teacher, I have been employed by the Punjab special education department since 2019. (Hearing Impairment). In terms of providing services for teacher training, curriculum development, adjustments, etc., the department is performing well. In my opinion, there are some consequences and more has to be done in terms of sign language skills acquisition training program for instructors who are trainees, as a master trainer of sign language skills acquisition training. In order to establish successful communication, I have thus chosen to undertake research on the challenge’s taster trainers encounter while helping special education teachers learn sign language during in-service training.

8. Recommendations

Following recommendations can be made to Trainees and Trainers:

1. Teacher’s training has to be made available in a broader range of formats, taking into account feedback from target populations in both planning and delivery, and taking into account results on successful teacher training.
2. Special education Teachers and trainers must be mindful of a growing expectation that these individuals will assume greater accountability for maintaining their academic fluency and pedagogical knowledge, as well as the requirement to be educated and vocal about current changes in the special education field.

3. Educators' development is a difficult, multi-layered undertaking that must be meticulously scheduled, carried out, and critically assessed against the desired goals.

4. Teachers training planning needs to Analyse the growing diverse composition of the workers, paying particular focus to the proportional level of engagement of employees in various kinds of labour.

5. instructors' orientation has to take a balanced strategy that acknowledges the genuine requirement for compliance, the provider's departmental demands, and the specialised as well as individual requirements of instructors and educators.

6. The role of District administration and school administration / special education is crucial in making the SLSA training program effective and must be take into consideration.

7. Activities based session should the essential part of part SLSA training which will be vital to achieve the objectives of the training program.

9. Recommendations for Further Studies
In the light of above discussion, the researcher can give the following recommendations:
   1. Qualitative research may be conducted across Govt. Special Education Institutions of Punjab to explore the problem on a deeper level.
   2. Sample size may be increased to see the generalization of the results.
   3. Mixed method research on this topic can provide more evidence of the major factors contributing to social identity issues in the govt. special education institutions of Punjab.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
All praises be to Allah SWT as for Whose will I was able to complete my work diligently and in dignified way. I am always thankful to my parents. As after Allah I am the most indebted to my parents, may Allah SWT have mercy on them and always keep them on the right path and forgive any wrong done by them. After my parents I am most indebted to my respected supervisor Dr. Ghulam Fatima as she is a great mentor to me, and I am always thankful for everything she has done for me. May Allah grant her mercy and health and better life in this world and the hereafter.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS
Ethical Approval:
All methods involving human participation in this study were carried out in compliance with the ethical standards of the institutional or national research committee. This article does not include any studies with animals conducted by any of the author.

Informed Consent:
All study participants were given the opportunity to give their informed consent.

Conflict of Interest:
No conflict of interest was reported in the study.

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