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Exploring the Entrepreneurship Education Landscape for Learners with Visual Impairments in Punjab: A Qualitative Study of Vocational Teachers' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

It is well known that entrepreneurship education provides a means of economic empowerment of learners with visual impairments but the extent to which it has been incorporated in special-education vocational training in Pakistan has not been well studied. This qualitative research paper reviewed on the prevailing situation of entrepreneurship related vocational training in government special education institutions in Punjab. Six vocational teachers in six districts were interviewed (Semi-structured interviews) and thematic analysis was conducted according to the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006). There were five key themes: (1) constrained facilities and infrastructural, (2) gaps in curriculum and pedagogical, (3) teacher initiative and informal efforts, (4) institutional and socio-cultural barriers and (5) opportunities to improve and include. In general, the results suggest that despite high motivation and adaptive orientation, teachers, aged resources, inadequate financing, and the lack of entrepreneurship courses in the curricula can considerably restrain the entrepreneurial preparedness of the learners. In spite of these limitations, the participants were hopeful about the modernization of curriculum, training of teachers and institutional relations. The paper shows that a paradigm shift in terms of policy is necessary, which would connect vocational education and economic empowerment of the disabled community through inclusion of the visually impaired in education



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Introduction

Entrepreneurship has also emerged as an acceptable channel of empowerment and social inclusion of the marginalized and especially the persons with disabilities (Balboni, Cosenz, & Messeni Petruzzelli, 2022). In the case of people with visual impairments, entrepreneurship is one way of changing the state of dependency into the agentic one, that is, the ability to engage in the economic activity and self-reliance achievement. There is a lack of entrepreneurship education among learners with disabilities in developing countries, however, which is usually underdeveloped, disjointed, and not connected to formal vocational systems (Elliott, Baltés, and Luciano, 2023). In Pakistan, where most of the learners with visual impairments are served by government special-education institutions,

entrepreneurship is a fairly unexplored area as it is integrated into the vocational curricula. The largest provincial special-education system operated by the Government of Punjab offers both academic and vocational training to the intellectually, physically and sensually handicapped. Though these training centers do provide training on such skills as tailoring, candle-making, and computer typing, the primary focus of most of the programs is on basic craftsmanship as opposed to entrepreneurial or market-oriented skills (Jahanzaib, Fatima, and Hanif, 2024).

This means that the learners usually leave college with little opportunities to make an income or start their own business. The global literature is becoming more welcoming to the transition to the new vocational education based on entrepreneurship learning that stimulates students to implement their competencies in a creative way in the context of real-life economy (Balboni et al., 2022; Darcy and Burke, 2018). However, this shift needs to be systemic with regard to curricula reform, training teachers, and connecting the institutions. The empirical studies in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector of Pakistan reveal that structural weak areas include an outdated curriculum, insufficient resources, and lack of communication with industry (Nayab, Chaudhry, and Fatima, 2021; Shah, Rasheed, and Muazzam, 2024).

These weaknesses are amplified due to the lack of accessibility tools, the insufficient training of instructors, and the absence of adaptive technologies in learners with disabilities, particularly among those with a visual impairment (Disability Livelihood Insights, 2021). This has led to vocational training not yielding into economic self-employment or social integration. To fill this gap, it is necessary to incorporate entrepreneurship training within special-education vocational systems so that learners can be able to transform technical knowledge into entrepreneurial skills. The disabled, who are visually impaired, are often discriminated and not expected much in the workforce. However, given fair chances and positive training, they can show great entrepreneurial potential in various areas, including, but not limited to, handicrafts and online services (Elliott et al., 2023).

Entrepreneurship brings additional financial freedom, as well as, confidence, self-esteem, and self-identification (Balboni et al., 2022). A good entrepreneurship education, though, can not only be technical, but it needs to create self-efficacy, opportunity identification, creativity, and financial literacy. Such competencies are also not well developed in the Punjab in vocational programs offered to the visually impaired, which means that a significant policy and practice gap is present (Jahanzaib et al., 2024). There is also the indication that vocational system of Punjab is marked by unequal accessibility and the outmoded content. Although the Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC) has helped to institute reforms in mainstream TVET, this has been lacking in special-educational institutions (Shah et al., 2024).

According to Nayab et al. (2021), a very small percentage of vocational institutes hire trained teachers, and even less of them incorporate the elements of entrepreneurship. Jahanzaib et al. (2024) also discovered that the majority of the centers providing visually impaired students depend on manual trades that are not highly demanded in the existing markets. Even vocational teachers do not have a professional introduction to entrepreneurship or management of small business, which does not allow them to foster entrepreneurial preparedness in students. All these shortcomings work to the detriment of the greater objective of economic empowerment via vocational education. With such challenges in place, the current study endeavored to investigate the current entrepreneurship-related vocational-education situation of learners with visual impairments in the public special education institutions in Punjab.

It also particularly sought to determine the institutional enablers and barriers according to the perceptions of vocational teachers who are directly involved in the activities of skill- development. Using qualitative descriptive design, the research involved the semi-structured interview of six vocational teachers in six districts and thematic analysis of the data in order to identify patterns related to infrastructural conditions, curriculum relevance, pedagogical strategy, and socio-cultural factors. The importance of the study is theoretical and practical. In theory, it broadens the discussion of inclusive entrepreneurship by placing it in the context which has not

been studied thoroughly in South Asia special-education systems. As a matter of fact, it provides insights that policy makers can utilize to revise vocational curricula, teacher professional development and institutional collaboration with NGOs and industries. Such a study will be a contribution to a body of evidence in planning entrepreneurship-based vocational programs that can increase self-employment opportunities and social inclusion of visually impaired students. Finally, the conclusions represent an informative strategic plan of disability enabled economic empowerment of the Punjab special-education system.

Review of the Literature

Education on entrepreneurship has become known as being a significant tool of economic empowerment and social entitlement of persons with disabilities. Entrepreneurship is another avenue of employment to people with visual challenges in situations where the employment sector frequently fails to accommodate them. The research suggests that entrepreneurship education can assist learners to acquire skills in opportunity recognition, financial literacy, creativity, and self-efficacy, which will allow them to convert professional skills into the opportunities of sustainable livelihood (Balboni, Cosenz, and Messeni Petruzzelli, 2022). Such competencies enable the learners with disabilities to shift their dependency to economic and active contributions in the society. The literature that has been published globally indicates that there is an increasing role of the vocational education systems in incorporating entrepreneurship education.

Vocational training is more successful in allowing vocational training to be combined with entrepreneurial knowledge so that learners would be ready to start self-employment or small-business ventures. Nevertheless, in most of the developing nations vocational education is still more skill-based and does not focus on entrepreneurship or market participation (Darcy and Burke, 2018). Consequently, the learner usually completes education with viable craft knowledge but lacking the knowledge on how to utilize the skills into viable business endeavors. In the framework of disability education, various studies highlight that inclusive entrepreneurship education should focus on the development of skills as well as the environmental obstacles. Other problems that learners with visual impairments often encounter include inaccessibility tools, poor learning resources, and poor institutional support (Elliott, Baltés, and Luciano, 2023). Such obstacles can seriously limit their proposition to use vocational skills on their own or engagement in entrepreneurial practices.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) has been prescribed in Pakistan as a policy towards enhancing employability and economic inclusion. However, it also has multiple structural issues, such as old curricula, lack of resources, and poor relationship with industry and market requirements (Nayab, Chaudhry, and Fatima, 2021). The problems are even more acute in special-education schools, where vocational training is frequently restricted to one of the traditional crafts, tailoring, handicrafts, or simple typing on the computer. These are basic skills and although provide some training, they usually do not have a concept of entrepreneurship like marketing, product development, or management of small businesses. The studies on special education in Pakistan further indicate that vocational training programs on learners with visual impairments do not have proper assistive technologies and trained tutors. Lack of adaptive equipment and lack of preparation of teachers on the subject of entrepreneurship limit the usefulness of vocation programs to encourage self-employment (Jahanzaib, Fatima, and Hanif, 2024).

As a result, there are high numbers of learners who graduate vocational education without being able to attain entrepreneurial skills that will enable them to participate in autonomous economic events. The role of teachers is also important in determining the entrepreneurial attitudes and motivation among students. According to the previous studies, it is possible to cultivate the entrepreneurial thinking in learners by promoting creativity, problem solving, and self-confidence among them (Elliott et al., 2023). Yet, in those situations when teachers themselves do not have any training on teaching entrepreneurship or even business development, they are visually limited in their ability to direct students to entrepreneurial careers. According to recent studies, inclusive entrepreneurship incorporates a policy coordination, institutionalization, and relationship with stakeholders in the industry and society. Inclusive entrepreneurship programs should thus consider entrepreneurship

training, financial accessibility, entrepreneurship mentorship, and enabling policies, to achieve success in empowering persons with disabilities (Balboni et al., 2022). Such integrated systems are yet to be developed in developing contexts. Vocational education programs are very common in the province of Punjab that runs the largest special-education system in Pakistan. Although this is available, there is limited empirical research that has been done on the integration of entrepreneurship education into these institutions. The majority of the available literature is dedicated to the overall delivery of vocational training instead of entrepreneurial readiness or self-employment rates (Nayab et al., 2021; Shah, Rasheed, and Muazzam, 2024). This gap shows the necessity of the context-specific study that would examine the experiences and the opinion of the vocational teacher directly engaged in the skill training. The perceptions of teachers are especially significant to understand since they are the direct agents of vocational learning and empowerment of students. Their experiences will enable to recognize institutional obstacles, curriculum loopholes and possible avenues in enhancing entrepreneurship education in the special-educational systems. Thus, a study of the views of vocational teachers offers useful information regarding enhancing entrepreneurship-oriented vocational education and various empowerment possibilities of learners with visual impairments in Punjab

Objective of the Study

This research is important in the face of this low incorporation of entrepreneurship education in vocational education in Pakistan among the learners with visual impairments in the country because it seeks to investigate the institutional realities and issues that are linked with the establishment of such programs in the institutions of higher learning in the special-education sector in Punjab. It is especially vital to learn the views of vocational instructors since they are the closest stakeholders of vocational training and influence the entrepreneurial readiness of learners significantly.

Research Design

The study used the qualitative descriptive design to investigate the institutional situation, pedagogical experiences, and perceived difficulties in integrating entrepreneurship-related vocational education to students with visual impairments in Punjab. This stage was an extension of the quantitative survey on the perception of teachers and the recorded case studies on visually impaired entrepreneurs, so as to complete the triangulated mixed-method design. The qualitative aspect provided an in-depth insight into the realities in the context that could not be described by numerical data (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2022).

Population and Sample

The sample population was a population of all vocational teachers in government special schools of the learners with visual impairments in Punjab. As there are only one or two such teachers in the province per institution in the functioning secondary level (Jahanzaib et al., 2024), purposive sampling method was used. Six educators (four males and two females) of six districts Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Sialkot, Bahawalpur, and Gujranwala were picked. They were selected based on the following criteria (a) more than three years of vocational-teaching experience and (b) direct experience in the training of skills of visually impaired learners. Table X represents the demographic statement of twelve vocational teachers that were included in the qualitative phase of the research. The sample was chosen purposively by the participants in government special-education institutions in eight districts of Punjab to have both urban and semi-urban backgrounds. There were seven men and five women teachers who represented a diversity of vocation subjects of computer applications, stitching, electrical repair, leatherwork, and craft design. The heterogeneity in gender, experience, and location of the institutions was a good piece of balance of the prevailing entrepreneurship education.

Instrument Development

To investigate the institutional situation, pedagogy, and perceived difficulties in applying entrepreneurship-related vocational education to learners with visual disabilities in Punjab, a qualitative descriptive research design was used. This step augmented the quantitative survey of the perceptions of the teachers and the reported case studies of the visually impaired entrepreneurs and hence made the triangulated mixed-method design complete. The qualitative element enabled the deep

explanation of situational facts that could not be represented by numerical data alone (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2022).

Population and Sample

The semi-structured interview guide, which the researcher had created, and two university supervisors and one expert in the field of special education had validated, was used to collect data. The guide contained open-ended questions in six areas, namely: (1) institutional resources and facilities, (2) curriculum content and pedagogy, (3) the professional preparedness of teachers, (4) perceived challenges and barriers, (5) perceived learner potential, and (6) improvement suggestions. In order to determine content validity, the items were founded on previously validated tools that supported the same studies on TVET and inclusive-education (Nayab et al., 2021; Jahanzaib et al., 2024).

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher approached the teachers individually after getting the written permission of the Directorate of Special Education and the consent of the institutional heads. The interviews were performed in Urdu and lasted between 25 to 40 minutes, and the ethical procedure was adhered to by the doctoral committee of the University. The subjects were given the assurance of confidentiality and voluntary nature of participation. All interviews were audio taped with permission and transcribed word-to-word in English.

Data Analysis

An analysis using themes was conducted in line with the six-phase model of Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization, coding, theme generation, reviewing, defining and reporting. The transcripts were read and coded several times and then they were divided into big themes and subthemes. In order to increase reliability, a subsample of codes was reviewed independently by another experienced researcher and the different discrepancies were discussed until a consensus was achieved. Patterns revealed during the quantitative and the case-study phases were compared with themes to guarantee the methodological triangulation and internal validity.

Trustworthiness

Member checking was used to establish credibility with the three participants reading over their summarized answers. The transferability was taken care of in giving institutions and participants contextual descriptions (see Table X). This was done using audit trails such as coded transcripts, reflexive notes and supervisor reviews to ensure dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The rigor of findings was also enhanced by the triangulation of data sources (survey + interviews + case studies).

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations were followed based on the ethical guidelines of the Department of Special Education, University of the Punjab. The institutional heads of the schools attending were contacted in order to give permission to hold interviews and verbal consent of each of the participants was taken before recording. The respondents were told the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw anytime, and privacy of their information. Anonymity was preserved through the use of pseudonyms (T1-T6) and all transcripts and recordings were stored and only accessed by the researcher and supervisors.

Results and Findings of the Study

Through careful analysis of the collected data, several themes and subthemes have been recognized by the researcher. The detailed overview of these themes represent the main findings and provide understanding into the perceptions of the respondents of the study.

Theme 1: Institutional Facilities and Infrastructure

This theme captures teachers' perceptions of the physical, technical, and human resources available for vocational and entrepreneurship education in government special-education institutions. Their accounts reveal how limited facilities and staff capacity restrict the effective implementation of entrepreneurship education for learners with visual impairments.

Subtheme 1.1 Inadequate Physical and Technical Resources

According to teachers, infrastructure shortage is always among the toughest barriers to quality vocational training. The majority of the centers did not have updated and functional machines, adaptive materials and technologies were accessible. Some interviewees observed that lack of assistive devices like Braille-labeled sewing machines, talking scales, computers with built-in screen readers, among others, limits the independent practice abilities of the learners.

“We do not have good machines to serve students, at times one or two machines will work, others will remain idle due to difficulties in servicing.”

“The blind students do not have a proper computer lab; they do not even have access to computers and even there, they lack screen readers.”

Special attention was paid by teachers in rural districts, and they reported inequality of resources, saying that their institutions get a low amount of budgetary allocations and have to depend on old-fashioned donations. The physical infrastructure is so limited that students and teachers have to make do with verbal teaching as opposed to experiential learning, which restricts mastery of skills.

Interpretive bridge

The lack of physical and technical facilities is indicative of an institutional lack of readiness to educate on entrepreneurship. Vocational centers are unable to provide the hands-on exposure that the entrepreneurial competence requires of the learners without available and working equipment.

Subtheme 1.2 Limited Availability of Specialized Staff

Among the infrastructural gaps, lack of trained and specialized personnel was recurrently noted by the respondents. The majority of vocational teachers were good at their basic crafts or com and untrained in the instructional techniques applicable to learners with a visual deficiency. Most of them were also not exposed to entrepreneurial knowledge or small-business management principles. Teachers revealed during the interview:

“The specialist in entrepreneurship or business does not exist; we simply do ordinary vocational work.”

“There was no training on how we should point blind students to be self-employed.”

This lack had been characterized by teachers as a pedagogical and psychological burden; they were in charge of the future livelihoods of learners, but they were not supported in their work by the institution or given professional development opportunities. To eliminate this skill gap some respondents proposed periodic training workshops or partnerships with technical institutes.

Interpretive bridge

The problem of the lack of specialized personnel highlights a systemic problem: the lack of investment in capacity-building of teachers in the Directorate. Institutions would not be able to work without competent teachers who are knowledgeable on disability pedagogy and entrepreneurship. Subtheme

Subtheme 1.3 Unequal Resource Distribution

Another question that kept on coming up was the imbalance in allocation of resources between the city and the country. Educators in the urban areas like Lahore and Faisalabad spoke of relatively superior equipment, whereas in the smaller cities, educators spoke of minimal equipment and no funds to maintain the equipment.

“There are two sewing machines in our center and one of them is not working; students alternate and lose interest at times”

“The schools in the cities receive new supplies, yet we are yet to receive proper simple tools that

were said to come last year.”

This inequality does not only impact on the quality of training, but also widens the regional differences in the willingness of learners to become entrepreneurs. Students in resource-deprived environments are kept in menial professions and are not able to participate in any meaningful form of self-employment in the future.

Interpretive bridge

The asymmetrical allocation of the resources proves that entrepreneurship education is being asymmetrical in the context of the special-education institutions of Punjab, which contributes to the geographic and socio-economic disparities.

Theme 1 Summary

All the accounts in this theme demonstrate a resource-constrained, under-staffed, and unequipped institutional environment, restricting the opportunity of the learners to have an experience-based, entrepreneurial learning. Without structurally reforming and fairly investing in entrepreneurship education, this kind of education will never be successfully integrated into special- education practice.

Theme 2: Curriculum and Pedagogical Gaps

This theme will discuss the effects of curriculum and teaching practice on entrepreneurship learning in special-education institutions. According to the teachers, the curriculum was old- fashioned, strict, and unrelated to the reality of the modern market, and not much oriented at the development of entrepreneurial skills. Subtheme.

Lack of Entrepreneurship Content

The majority of the teachers said that entrepreneurship is not a part of the formal curriculum. The education is limited to imparting simple technical skills, like sewing, handicraft or typing a computer, but in no way associated with the opportunity to make a living.

“Students are taught how to sew but not to run business; they are not made aware of how to market their products.”

We fill the syllabus and that is all we know how to begin or run a business. This exclusion according to the teachers inhibits the knowledge of the students about how their skills can be turned into livelihoods. Students come out as mere vocationally skilled individuals with no exposure to marketing, pricing and customer service.

Interpretive bridge

There is a structural disintegration, as there are no entrepreneurship modules, which are the only linkage between vocational training and economic empowerment, which is required to create an inclusion by being self-reliant. Subtopic

Stagnant and Flexible Curriculum

The teachers stressed on several occasions that the curriculum has not been drawing with the current market requirements. Some of them mentioned the crafts or trades of teaching that are not relevant to the contemporary economies.

“We even now teach crafts, which were important a decade or fifteen years ago.”

Teachers have little chance of reforming content or the addition of locally relevant skills. The decisions made about curriculum are concentrated at the Directorate level resulting in a top-down way of structuring without paying attention to the regional economies. Teachers complained that classroom level innovation is neither encouraged nor appreciated.

Interpretive bridge

A machismo curriculum encourages dependency but not empowerment. Unless there is curriculum change in line with the entrepreneurial skills and new industries, learners will always be excluded in the labor market.

Sub theme 2.3 There is no policy direction and evaluation mechanisms

Another reason cited by teachers was that there was no clear direction on policy as far as entrepreneurship education is concerned. There are no formal instructions on how entrepreneurial ideas can be incorporated into the vocational education, or the system that would control a given outcome.

“There is no formula to be followed in teaching entrepreneurship and it is solely dependent on the interest of teachers.”

Other participants indicated that inconsistency between institutions exists due to policy-level oversight, where some teachers informally use business examples, whilst others do not teach the subject at all.

Interpretive bridge

This policy gap undermines institutional responsibility and does not allow creating a single vision of entrepreneurship learning, and the development is left to the motivation of the separate teacher instead of a systematic change.

Theme 3: Teacher Motivation and Informal Efforts

Despite institutional and curricular constraints, which prevailed, vocational teachers showed high personal drive and moral dedication to assist learners with visual impairments to develop confidence and self-dependency. The inadequacy of the system is countered by individual agency as can be heard in their voices.

Subtheme 3.1 Unofficial Motivators of teachers

Teachers recurrently pointed to the fact that they have deemed it their own responsibility to prepare visually impaired students towards self-reliance. Although there is no formal program of training entrepreneurship, they bring inspirational topics, examples, and success stories to create confidence in the students.

“I always inform the students they can initiate something small like business and even they can sell products.” “When learners with visual impairments hear about blind entrepreneurs, they get motivated they can do something.”

Students get to know that there are other blind entrepreneurs and they know they can do the same. This kind of informal support creates psychological preparedness towards entrepreneurship when it is not supported by formal curriculum arrangements. Most of the teachers discussed how happy it was to see students have confidence with vocational projects, even in small ones.

Interpretive bridge

The motivation is related to teachers as a kind of hidden curriculum of entrepreneurship teaching: emotional encouragement is in part replaced by the formal competence training in business.

Subtheme 3.2 Self-Initiated Inclusion Practices

“Sometimes I ask them to make small decorative pieces and sell them to visitors — it gives them confidence.” “We held a small exhibition in the school where students displayed their work; parents were surprised to see their potential.”

In addition to motivation, other teachers came up with innovative methods of running the classroom in order to advance inclusion and entrepreneurial spirit. These were the establishment of mock stalls, encouragement of students to make and sell handcrafts, and role-playing to roleplay customer interactions.

“At times I request them to create little decorative objects and sell them to tourists, and it makes them very confident.”

“We did a small exhibition in the school and parents were shocked to see their potential.”

These attempts indicate how teachers are flexible in creativity because they do not need formal resources, but the way they arrange the learning experience resembles the creation of entrepreneurship. Their endeavors also bring about social acceptance since it shows the ability of learners to the outer world.

Interpretive bridge

The presence of informal innovations facilitated by teachers points to an internal culture of innovation, which once institutionalized would be a basis of sustainable entrepreneurship education.

Theme 3 Summary

One of the enablers that are critical in otherwise resource-constrained institutions is teacher motivation. Teachers as change agents on the ground assume the role of informal pedagogues and fill the gaps in policy and infrastructure. Their behavior is an indication that the institutional change should start with identification and magnification of the creative strategies that are already in existence in classrooms.

Theme 4: Barriers and Institutional Challenges

This theme exposes the structural, administrative, and social constraints that prevent entrepreneurship education from flourishing within Punjab’s special-education institutions. The barriers are systemic, cutting across funding, policy, gender, and societal perceptions.

Subtheme 4.1 – Funding and Administrative Constraints

Budgetary and administrative constraints were cited by teachers as significant setbacks all the time. Poor funding results in insufficiency of consumable supplies, inappropriate machineries and limited outreach services.

“Few financial resources and lack of business partnership complicate the growth of training programs.”

“We cannot even get students on exposure visits they have no budget to travel.”

Material procurement and training authorization decisions are extremely centralized, making it slow to implement and giving less autonomy to the institutions. Teachers complained that it can take months to have This even simple repair approvals, which leads to the workshop paralysis.

Interpretive bridge

Institutional responsiveness is stifled because of the existence of financial and bureaucratic bottlenecks that leads to a situation where innovation is a matter of personal and not structural initiative.

Subtheme 4.2 Lack of Policy Support and Coordination

“There is no guideline or plan for teaching entrepreneurship; everything depends on teachers’ own interest.”

There was a near unanimous agreement that entrepreneurship does not exist in any policy framework of special education. Instructors complained that there were no official guidelines or evaluation standards on entrepreneurship-related learning outcomes.

“Entrepreneurship is not taught on any guidelines or plan; it all depends on the interest of teachers.”

Moreover, the communication between the school administrators and vocational staff, as well as the Directorate, is poor. Communication gaps imply that often teachers are not informed about curriculum changes in time (or even at all). New instructions are learnt by word of mouth, not by the official circulars.

Interpretive bridge

The absence of policy guidance is a gap in governance - entrepreneurship is not institutionalized as a key area of education, and thus its implementation in different districts is inconsistent and disjointed.

Subtheme 4.3 Gender and Social Constraints

Some of the teachers, especially those in the rural districts pointed out gender and cultural constraints towards female learners. Social conservatism usually makes girls that are visually impaired engage in any market activity to be discouraged.

“Parents believe that business is not safe to girls of visual troubles; they want them to remain at home.”

According to teachers, restricted movement, safety, and stigma against learners in society isolate them further. This gender and disability intersection further marginalizes them towards entrepreneurship.

Interpretive bridge

Social perception of gender and disability limits the agency of learners outside of the school system, which means that reforming the entrepreneurship education should be focused on the involvement of families and communities, not on the institutions only.

Theme 4 Summary

The results show a system that is limited by underinvestment, ineffective policy frameworks, and limited social values. These are what make entrepreneurship education not to be institutionalized and inclusive. The experience of teachers demonstrates that reform should be based on the systemic change on the policy and community levels.

Theme 5: Prospects for Improvement and Inclusion

In spite of widespread obstacles, respondents had specific and feasible visions of how things should be done. Their proposals are optimistic, innovative and reformative.

Subtheme 5.1 Potential for Public–Private Partnerships

The teachers also considered the collaboration with local industries, NGOs, and online platforms as the keys to turning the realm of vocational training into a real education of entrepreneurship.

“Our students can have exposure to the real market in case we network with our local industries or online.”

They came up with internship schemes, shared workshops and resources between schools and private businesses. Others even contemplated partnerships with digital-learning platforms so that

Interpretive bridge

Public-privacy is one of the possible solutions that help to solve institutional constraints through the connection between education and actual economic networks.

Subtheme 5.2 Integration of Technology and Modern Skills

Respondents indicated the necessity of incorporating technology-based and computer skills into vocational education programs. The educators proposed that students can be empowered by training them in the use of screen-readers, basics of e-commerce, and entrepreneurship based on mobile apps, to work independently.

“We can train the blind students to work online as long as we train them in e-commerce or digital

marketing.”

They also suggested a revision of workshops, including availability of digital devices, inventory management software, and low-vision adaptive devices.

Interpretive bridge

Technology is a leveler; its application can transform entrepreneurship education to be dependent to empowered especially to learners with visual impairment.

Subtheme 5.3 Curriculum Reform and Early Introduction of Entrepreneurship Concepts

The suggestion of creating entrepreneurship awareness at an early stage of the schooling process, despite the fact that secondary level is still to come, was offered by many teachers in order to develop confidence and creativity at the initial stage.

“Entrepreneurship is supposed to begin at the level bottom; it is a lesson of responsibility and independency.”

It was the conviction of teachers that the inculcation of entrepreneurial ideas in main subjects could help to normalize self-reliance as a cultural fact of education and not as a cultural addition.

Interpretive bridge

The introduction of entrepreneurship at an early age also coincides with the process of inclusive education where the learners with visual impairment would develop to think of ability and not dependency.

Theme 5 Summary

Educators have a vision of a progressive blueprint of technology, collaboration, and curricular overhaul that combines to bring entrepreneurship education to everyone and sustainability. They are optimistic and give practical guidelines to the policy makers in order to make vocational centers empowerment centres to the learners with visual impairments.

Overall Interpretive Summary

Throughout the five themes, the results depict the presence of an institutional deficiency in the sector and the strength of humanity. As much as infrastructure, funding and policy inadequacies are limiting the capacity of the systems, teacher motivation and innovation remains pivotal facilitators. The overall insights support the notion that the special-education institutions in Punjab have unexploited opportunities to make vocational training entrepreneurial empowerment that is, as long as structural reforms, capacity building of the teachers, and modernization of the curriculum are the key focus of the strategic plan in future. Table X gives the demographic characteristics of the twelve vocational teachers who were involved in the qualitative part of the study. The sample size was chosen purposely because the study needed to include both urban and semi-urban settings and was chosen based on the government special-education institutions in eight districts of Punjab. Seven male and five female teachers were also present in the group and were representing various vocational disciplines like computer applications, stitching, electrical repair, leather work, and craft design. The gender, experience, and institutional location diversity gave a balanced understanding of the existing entrepreneurship education.

Table 1: Table showing summary of themes and subthemes emerged from the thematic analysis

Main Themes	Subthemes	Key Findings / Interpretations	Illustrative Evidence (Teacher Quotes)
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1. Institutional Facilities and Infrastructure	1.1 Inadequate Physical and Technical Resources	Facilities are outdated, equipment often non-functional, and adaptive tools such as Braille-labeled machines or screen-reader computers are missing, restricting hands-on learning.	<i>“We do not have good machines to serve students, at times one or two machines work, others remain idle due to difficulties in servicing.”</i>
	1.2 Limited Availability of Specialized Staff	Shortage of trained and entrepreneurship oriented teachers limits innovation and tailored instruction for learners with visual impairments.	<i>“The specialist in entrepreneurship or business does not exist; we simply do ordinary vocational work.”</i>
	1.3 Unequal Resource Distribution	Urban centers are relatively better equipped, while rural institutions lack even basic materials, deepening educational inequality.	<i>“There are two sewing machines in our center and one of them is not working; students alternate and lose interest at times”</i>
2. Curriculum and Pedagogical Gaps	2.1 Absence of Entrepreneurship Content	Entrepreneurship concepts are missing from the vocational curriculum; students receive no guidance on business setup or self-employment.	<i>“Students are taught how to sew but not to run business; they are not made aware of how to market their products.”</i>
	2.2 Stagnant and rigid Curriculum	Training content is obsolete and unresponsive to changing market demands, leaving learners unprepared for modern jobs.	<i>“We even now teach crafts, which were important a decade or fifteen years ago.”</i>
	2.3 Lack of Policy Direction and Evaluation Mechanisms	No formal guidelines or monitoring frameworks exist for entrepreneurship education, causing inconsistency among schools.	<i>“There is no formula to be followed in teaching entrepreneurship and it is solely dependent on the interest of teachers.”</i>
3. Teacher Motivation and Informal Efforts	3.1 Teachers as Informal Motivators	Teachers compensate for institutional gaps by encouraging learners through personal stories and informal mentoring.	<i>“I always inform the students they can initiate something small like business and even they can sell products.”</i>

	3.2 Self-Initiated Inclusion Practices	Teachers design creative activities exhibitions, mock stalls to link vocational work with entrepreneurial thinking.	<i>“At times I request them to create little decorative objects and sell them to tourists, and it makes them very confident.”</i>
4. Barriers and Institutional Challenges	4.1 Funding and Administrative Constraints	Chronic underfunding and centralized decision-making delay procurement and restrict innovation.	<i>“limited financial resources and lack of business partnership complicate the growth of training programs.”</i>
	4.2 Lack of Policy Support and Coordination	Absence of clear communication between Directorate, administrators, and teachers leads to inconsistent implementation.	<i>“Entrepreneurship is not taught on any guidelines or plan; it all depends on the interest of teachers.”</i>
	4.3 Gender and Social Constraints	Cultural norms and parental attitudes restrict girls with visual impairments from market participation.	<i>“Parents believe that business is not safe to girls of visual troubles; they want them to remain at home.”</i>
5. Prospects for Improvement and Inclusion	5.1 Potential for Public-Private Partnerships	Collaboration with industries, NGOs, and digital platforms can provide exposure and employment pathways.	<i>“Our students can have exposure to the real market in case we network with our local industries or online.”</i>
	5.2 Integration of Technology and Modern Skills	Incorporating e-commerce, digital marketing, and adaptive technology can empower visually impaired learners.	<i>“We can train the blind students to work online as long as we train them in e-commerce or digital marketing.”</i>
	5.3 Curriculum Reform and Early Entrepreneurship Introduction	Embedding entrepreneurship concepts from early grades can normalize self-reliance and creativity.	<i>“Entrepreneurship is supposed to begin at the level bottom; it is a lesson of responsibility and independency.”</i>

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper analyzed the actualities of the vocational education of the learners with the visual impairment in the government special-education institutions in Punjab in terms of entrepreneurship. The interviews of six vocational-teachers showed that though teachers are shown to be committed and adaptive, the institutional system is still restricted by the old infrastructure, financial limitation, and lack of entrepreneurship content in vocational programs. However, the optimism and informal mentoring of the participants by leaders represents a fresh willingness to reform, as long as there is proper structural support.

Conclusions

1. The vocational education to visually impaired students in Punjab is primarily manual and lacks any entrepreneurial or market aspects.
2. There is creativity and motivation among teachers with no formal training in entrepreneurship and business education.
3. Equal access to self-employment opportunities is also constrained by socio-cultural barriers especially on the part of female learners.

4. These approaches notwithstanding, there is a solid base to build upon the development of entrepreneurship by the strength of teacher passion and the potential exhibited by learners.

Recommendations

On-the-job: Incorporate entrepreneurship, digital literacy and financial management courses into the existing vocational courses.

- Teacher Development: Continued training of in-service in entrepreneurship teaching, marketing relationships and assistive technology.
- Infrastructure and Funding: Remodel workshops and equipments so that accessibility and practical exposure to visually impaired students is made possible.

The Partnerships at the Institution level: create links between special education centres and NGOs, microfinance organisations, and local industries to create real entrepreneurial opportunities.

Policy Direction

The Directorate of Special Education needs to embrace a province wide policy that will integrate vocational education to sustainable livelihood and disability inclusive economic empowerment. Future studies can be on the presence of pilot entrepreneurship programs in these institutions to determine their effectiveness in income-generation by learners and their social inclusiveness in the long term.

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