

The action research environment in Sri Lanka: A meta analysis

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The paper is on preliminary findings of an ongoing survey on the present Action Research (AR) practice and its historical bases. The objectives were to identify trends in the historical development of AR in Sri Lanka, identify the true nature of its existing situation, identify its strong and weak points, and to make development oriented suggestions. The sample included all the Education Departments of Sri Lankan Universities, National Institute of Education and its Postgraduate Diploma and B Ed regional centers, National Colleges of Education and Teacher Centres. All academic staff members were included in the sample. Through the research, it was expected that a database would be developed to be used for future research activities. Data were collected administering a questionnaire, and interview technique was employed to gather data from the heads of the institutions. Content of a sample of AR reports were also analysed to collect data. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistical methods and qualitative data were coded to identify patterns.

Preliminary findings of the study are: AR tradition in Sri Lanka seems to be an institutionally driven collaborative effort, its initial prompt being given either by the Ministry of Education or National Institute of Education. AR based on the professional concern of teacher educators, school principals, education officers and teachers seems to be very rare. Most of the Action Researches undertaken by trainees in educational institutes of Sri Lanka are of project type. Since most of the advisers are trained under the quantitative research paradigm, there seems to be a tendency to train their students within that framework giving priority to methodology rather than professional role. Collaborative action is not sufficiently manifested in collaborative AR, and AR reports illustrate a low level of reflection by practitioners. It was suggested to develop a forum for professionals to present their AR work. Since the departmental regulations with regard to AR are favourable for AR, there is room for its further development.

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