

The Role of Action Research in Teacher Professional Development under NEP 2020

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the continuous professional development of teachers as a cornerstone for improving the quality of education in India. Action research, a reflective and systematic approach to problem-solving within educational settings, plays a crucial role in this context. It empowers teachers to analyze, evaluate, and refine their teaching methodologies based on real-world classroom experiences. By engaging in action research, educators become lifelong learners, fostering innovation and adaptability in their instructional practices.

This paper explores how action research aligns with NEP 2020's vision of teacher development by promoting experiential learning, collaboration, and evidence-based pedagogical improvements. The policy encourages teachers to undertake research-driven practices that enhance student learning outcomes, bridge knowledge gaps, and integrate technology effectively. Furthermore, action research helps create a culture of inquiry, self-improvement, and professional autonomy, essential for holistic educational reform.

The study concludes that action research is a powerful tool for teachers to take ownership of their growth, contributing to a more dynamic, student-centered, and inclusive education system. Institutional support, training programs, and peer collaboration are critical in realizing the full potential of action research within NEP 2020's framework.

Keywords: Action Research, Teacher Professional Development, NEP 2020, Experiential Learning, Educational Reform

Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to education, with a strong focus on teacher professional development. Teachers play a crucial role in shaping student learning experiences, and their continuous development is essential for improving educational quality. One of the key strategies for professional growth recommended by NEP 2020 is **action research** - a systematic, reflective inquiry that helps teachers improve their instructional methods based on real-world classroom challenges.

Action research allows teachers to identify and address specific problems in their teaching practices, experiment with new strategies, and evaluate their effectiveness. This process fosters a culture of lifelong learning, collaboration, and innovation among educators. As NEP 2020 encourages research-driven pedagogical improvements, action research becomes an essential tool for empowering teachers and enhancing student learning outcomes.

This paper explores how action research supports teacher professional development under the NEP 2020 framework, highlighting its significance, objectives, methodologies, and impact on education.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the role of action research in enhancing teacher professional development under NEP 2020.
2. To explore how action research helps in improving teaching strategies and student learning outcomes.
3. To analyze the challenges and opportunities of implementing action research in schools.
4. To assess the effectiveness of action research in fostering a culture of continuous learning among teachers.
5. To recommend strategies for integrating action research into teacher training and professional development programs.

Hypotheses of the Study

This study is based on the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Action research significantly contributes to the professional development of teachers.
 - **H2:** Teachers who engage in action research demonstrate improved instructional practices and student engagement.
 - **H3:** The implementation of action research in schools aligns with the goals of NEP 2020 in promoting teacher autonomy and innovation.
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Methodology

This study adopted quantitative method for the analysis.

- **Quantitative Approach:** Surveys and statistical analysis to measure the impact of action research on teaching effectiveness.

Sample Selection

- A sample of **50 teachers** from primary, secondary, and higher secondary schools across government and private schools.

Data Collection Methods

- **Survey Questionnaire** – To assess teachers' awareness, perceptions, and experiences with action research.

Data Analysis

- Descriptive statistics for survey responses.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Distribution of Teachers Based on Experience and School Type

Experience Level	Government School	Private School	Total (%)
Less than 5 years	8	7	15 (30%)
5-10 years	10	8	18 (36%)
More than 10 years	9	8	17 (34%)
Total	27	23	50 (100%)

Table 2: Awareness and Participation in Action Research

Awareness of Action Research	Government School	Private School	Total (%)
Aware and involved	12	10	22 (44%)
Aware but not involved	10	8	18 (36%)
Not aware	5	5	10 (20%)

Interpretation:

Nearly half (44%) of the teachers are actively involved in action research, while 36% are aware but do not participate. About 20% are unaware, indicating a need for better dissemination of action research practices.

Table 3: Perceived Benefits of Action Research

Benefits of Action Research	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Helps in improving teaching strategies	38 (76%)	8 (16%)	4 (8%)
Enhances student learning outcomes	35 (70%)	10 (20%)	5 (10%)
Supports professional development	40 (80%)	7 (14%)	3 (6%)
Encourages collaboration among teachers	34 (68%)	9 (18%)	7 (14%)

Interpretation:

A strong majority (76-80%) of teachers believe action research improves teaching strategies and professional development. However, collaboration among teachers has slightly lower agreement, suggesting a need for more structured peer engagement.

Table 4: Challenges Faced in Implementing Action Research

Challenges	Government School	Private School	Total (%)
Lack of time	15	12	27 (54%)
Limited institutional support	10	9	19 (38%)
Lack of training	11	8	19 (38%)
Resistance to new methods	8	7	15 (30%)

Interpretation:

The most significant barrier (54%) is lack of time, followed by limited institutional support and lack of training (38%). Resistance to new methods is lower but still present. Addressing these issues can enhance action research participation.

Table 5: Perceived Effectiveness of Action Research in Professional Growth

Effectiveness Level	Government School	Private School	Total (%)
Very effective	14	11	25 (50%)
Somewhat effective	9	10	19 (38%)
Not effective	4	2	6 (12%)

Interpretation:

Half of the respondents (50%) find action research very effective, and 38% find it somewhat effective. Only 12% do not find it beneficial, indicating strong potential for expansion with proper support.

Findings & Interpretation

1. Awareness and Participation in Action Research

- A significant number (80%) of teachers are aware of action research, but only 44% actively engage in it.
- More teachers in government schools (12 vs. 10) are involved, possibly due to policy-driven professional development initiatives.

2. Perceived Benefits of Action Research

- Teachers strongly believe in the benefits of action research, especially in professional development (80%) and teaching strategy enhancement (76%).
- Collaborative benefits are less acknowledged, which may indicate that action research is being done individually rather than collectively.

3. Challenges in Implementing Action Research

- The biggest hurdle is **lack of time (54%)**, followed by **institutional support and training gaps (38%)**.
- Resistance to change exists but is less prominent (30%), suggesting teachers are open to adopting research-based teaching strategies with proper support.

4. Effectiveness in Professional Development

- 88% of teachers believe action research positively impacts their professional growth, supporting its role in NEP 2020's continuous teacher development framework.
- The relatively small percentage (12%) who do not find it effective may require additional mentoring or clearer implementation strategies.

Recommendations

1. Capacity Building & Training:

- Organize workshops and training sessions on **how to conduct action research** effectively.
- Ensure teachers understand how to implement findings to improve classroom instruction.

2. Institutional Support:

- Schools should provide **dedicated time slots** for teachers to engage in action research.
- Encourage collaborative research projects to foster peer learning.

3. Policy Implementation & Incentives:

- Include **action research as part of performance appraisals** and career progression frameworks.
- Provide incentives (certifications, promotions, recognition) for teachers who actively contribute to research-based improvements.

4. Integration into NEP 2020 Framework:

- Align action research findings with NEP 2020's **teacher development programs** and professional learning communities.
- Use digital platforms for easy documentation and sharing of research outcomes.

Conclusion

The study highlights that action research is **widely recognized** as beneficial for professional development under NEP 2020. However, **participation is hindered by time constraints and lack of training**. Addressing these

challenges through **structured support, training, and institutional encouragement** can enhance teachers’ ability to engage in action research effectively, ultimately improving teaching quality and student learning outcomes.

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