Social and Organizational Development Through Action Research

Neeta Baporikar, Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia and University of Pune, Pune, India

ABSTRACT

To cause change at practice level people need to translate what they know into concrete instructional policies and practices to be more productive and ensure organizations, organizational and thereby social development. Development Studies reflect that there is disconnect between knowledge acquired especially in the area of management education. This disconnect creates a gap and lessens organizational and social development. Action research and learning can fill this gap. This article addresses a simple question: does action learning and research lead to development? If so, what is it that people need to know about action learning and action research that alludes well to this crucial aspect? Adopting a grounded theory approach and in-depth literature review, the core of the study is to promote understanding of action learning and research, connection between knowledge to practice and how this makes organizational and social development more possible. Further attempts are to provide a framework to adopt action research to enhance holistic development in these societal driven economies.

KEYWORDS

Change, Development, Education, Knowledge, Management, Policy, Practice, Productivity, Society, Studies, Translation, Value

INTRODUCTION

Institutions and teachers the world over continue to paddle and operate from an eclectic, idiosyncratic knowledge base grounded almost exclusively on personal experience. It is as if the two closely related territories of research and practice are separate planets, unknown and seemingly inaccessible to one another (Baporikar, 2015b). It is of concern, that if continued to feed the interest in learning with nothing more than rhetoric, it will not flourish and neither grow into better instructional practice. Similarly, if students do not acquire research skills and move on path of self-directed learning or discovery then they will not develop lifelong learning attitude (Baporikar, 2016). Hence, there is great move towards placing the student in the driver's seat for learning and various forms of teaching methods, which are student centred, are under discussion. Brookfield (1985) argues that teachers' role is to "facilitate" the acquisition of knowledge, not "transmit" it. All these forms are a hope that it will transform learning into practice easily. Further if research remains the prerogative of the professorial and that too done in ivory towers then research will not make the impact on organizations and society worse it will not benefit the humankind at large. Then, who should build the bridges necessary to connect research and practice? Yet, most of time, those who do the research tend to be faculty who daily face passive students who are taking required courses. Worse still, they adopt research methods the base of which is collection of data and analysis, rather than real time and situation analysis.

After that experience, it made a difference in about the propriety of researchers' drawing implications from their findings. Hence, there are those few of us, who do build the bridges with no blueprints to follow and few rewards to honour our work. However, this building continues because it seems so clear to us that these territories are beneficial and will connect theory to practice. Moreover, knowledge in all of its forms is one of the most important factors for individual fulfilment and success in society. Thus, adopting a grounded theory approach and in-depth literature review, the aim of this paper is to investigate and cultivate understanding of action learning and research, establish connection between knowledge and practice and show this makes social and organisational development possible. The paper also proposes a framework for easy adoption of action research with suitable cases.

Background

Education and research play a decisive role in the creation, dissemination and use of knowledge. They form an important foundation for innovation at all levels, which in turn drives the economic, social and cultural development of a country (Baporikar, 2015b). Further, due to the economic downturn in recent years, a key strategy of most countries to meet their struggling economies has been the promotion of industrial innovation, with the result that the focus of governments has turned to research in the university sector to deliver this innovation (Baporikar, 2015a).

The paper addresses a simple question: does action learning and research lead to social and organizational development? If so, what is it that we need to know about

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