

Chapter 13

TRIVENI: A Conceptual Framework for Transforming Learning Practices With Participatory Action Research

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ABSTRACT

This book chapter attempts to share the authors' understanding and experience of exploring, knowing, and doing participatory action research (PAR) for transformative learning in the context of Nepal. With more than fifteen years of teaching-learning experience, the authors have realized that participation and collaboration can transform our educational practices, school community, and society; and emphasized PAR as one such research approach that helps to bring all the stakeholders together to solve the issues related to the school community and improve their practices. Nevertheless, doing PAR also has some challenges. Hence the primary purpose of this chapter is to mitigate those challenges in PAR by proposing the framework of 'TRIVENI': engage, enact, and empower as a tool for PAR for transformative learning. Subscribing collaborative inquiry, this chapter presents the authors' conceptual understanding of PAR and its connection with transformative learning and challenges in PAR. With the help of empirical studies, the authors propose a framework for overcoming challenges in PAR.

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INTRODUCTION

This book chapter attempts to share the authors' understanding and experience of exploring, knowing, and doing Participatory Action Research (PAR) for transformative learning in the context of Nepal. With more than one decade of teaching-learning experience, we have realized that participation and collaboration can transform our school community and society. We present a triangular TRIVENI framework: engage, enact, and empower as a PAR tool for transformative learning. We also try to link it with our Eastern philosophy concept of 'TRIVENI', where the three rivers meet and create a powerful holy place (Das & Tripathi, 2020). As we all are from educational backgrounds, we propose a participatory way of transformative learning linking it with our knowledge, experience, and framework of 'TRIVENI'. A School is a community of stakeholders like learners, teachers, management, parents, local authorities, and government. It is not just a place or a building; it is a temple that holds many prayers, dreams, blessings, future and success of young people. But are we concerned with the purpose and need of a school? Why do we need schools? Parents send their children to a school hoping to get them a good education and future. On the other hand, people choose teaching as a profession to earn a respectful identity to balance work and life, some take it up as an option, and some join it to earn their living. But are we concerned about how many of them are passionate about teaching?

Similarly, in the case of learners, have we (parents, teachers, school authorities, communities, society, and government) ever bothered about the needs and interests of the learners? Also, while teachers can improve their pedagogical practices with intervention through action research, issues related to the larger community need partnership from all stakeholders to intervene and work towards transformation. So, how can we as a community address the learners' needs and prepare them for the real-world challenges of the present day and future? We present participatory action research (PAR) as designed to solve issues related to the school community and as a tool for transforming all stakeholders involved in PAR. Many researchers argue that PAR is a collaborative effort to improving practices and solving problems (Wadsworth, 1998; Reason and Bradbury 2001; Balakrishnan & Claiborne, 2017; Dudgeon et al. 2017). But we have also raised issues and challenges that empirical studies (Baum et al. 2006; Balakrishnan & Claiborne, 2017) have highlighted in PAR. So, this chapter aims to mitigate those challenges in PAR by proposing the framework of engage, enact and empower through participatory action for transformative learning. We begin with our understanding of the terms transformative education, participatory action research (PAR), connecting PAR to transformative learning, and challenges in PAR with the help of the literature and contextual examples. Then we propose a triangular framework, 'TRIVENI', for strengthening PAR with contextual examples, and experience from empirical research and literature.

EXPLORING THE GAPS IN PAR

The first author's experience as a preschool leader: The effectiveness of early childhood education and development in younger children results from the collaborative efforts of school leaders, teachers, parents, and the learners themselves. For example, three years back, during the covid-19 pandemic, schools were forced to shut down, and people were locked inside their houses. Being away from school and public spaces made the young children (early graders) less interactive, and their language and vocabulary development was getting slower, thus weakening their literacy skills (Sunar et al., 2023). As a school leader, I proposed a participatory action plan to my school teachers and asked them to take the initiative

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