

Chapter 14

Multiple Perspectives of Participatory Autoethnography

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the multifaceted nature of participatory autoethnographic research. The three researchers adapted two research designs: participatory action research and autoethnography making the journey, from ‘I’ to ‘we’ and vice versa, and the transformative changes that begin with self is the first step toward the participatory autoethnographic study. The informing nature of one methodological approach to another which covers the limitation of both research methodologies on the journey of human flourishing has been linked with the teaching and learning process as a form of transformative teachers’ professional development. Participatory autoethnographic inquiry helps to balance knowledge and wisdom which often are a mixed or overlooked dimension in the research process. The finding states that the different ways of knowing and their contribution to educational practices are blended for this research, which helped to acknowledge the voices of all the key stakeholders in the process of the transformative journey from conventional practitioner to transformative one.

WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY AUTOETHNOGRAPHY?

In this chapter, the three authors, Sandip, Binod, and Parbati, share their perspectives of Participatory autoethnography informed by their transformative educational research practices. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how PAR and autoethnography can be perceived by three transformative educational

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researchers in Nepal. The educational field is full of dynamism and rationalized with new ideas and concepts as per the need of current trends in the world, measuring the need of the current world, creating an innovative pedagogy that suits the 21st century's learners' need seeking to have continuous and rigorous research (National Research Council, 2002). Much educational research today can explore the problems that educators, parents, and learners face in their day-to-day life. It includes multiple perspectives while identifying issues and offering recommendations to solve the problems following scientific and systematic procedures to research. While doing so there are various types of research methodology that can help the researcher to conduct educational research, amongst them, for this study autoethnography and Participatory Action research has been plowed deeper to find the meeting point of two autonomous methodology and insights from an infusion of both methodology in educational research. In this chapter, the authors represented their PAR model as a living inquiry (Reason & Bradbury, 2008) in alignment with autoethnography.

Sandip's Participatory Autoethnography

During my development as a scholar-practitioner through the M. Phil. Studying in STEAM education, I was taking both the courses; advanced qualitative research methods and advanced quantitative methods because I was interested in blending different methodologies in a single research study. Similarly, as a practitioner teacher and an educator, I found that my existing pedagogical practices in teaching mathematics were less contextual, teacher-centric, and conventional. Such pedagogical practices were not able to address the needs and interests of 21st-century learners which promoted disengagement, less interest, and low achievement. This difficulty in our regular classroom pedagogical practice encouraged me to intervene in our practices through Participatory Action research (PAR). But at the same time, my own practices as a mathematics teacher were also demanding some space in my research study.

In the earlier days of designing this study, I was looking for a mixed method study where I would survey the first stage and later narratives of the STEAM practitioner teachers. For this, I investigated the number of schools and teachers who claimed that they were practicing STEAM pedagogy in their teaching and learning styles. In doing so, I found that very less (insufficient for the survey) schools and teachers were only familiar with this approach. On the other hand, I was unable to find enough local literature on STEAM-related research in my concerned methodology. This scenario enables me to rethink my issue and find that participatory autoethnographic study could address my mythological stance.

Likewise, I had always been mathematically minded because of my mathematical background which always encouraged me to see/observe any phenomena from both (quantitative and qualitative) perspectives. I was a convert, having had some good knowledge of mixed methods of study from my previous degree (M. Ed. in mathematics), which always encouraged me to use multiple genres of methods and paradigms in my research study. I believe that a combination of different methods and genres can contribute to a better understanding of a research problem and the essence of the study as compared to research that is based on only one methodological approach (Creswell, 2015). Because of this, I started to reflect critically on my own practices. This was not the first time that I was critically reflecting upon what I experienced; I critically observed and documented my practices in many of my earlier assignments from my earlier degree at Kathmandu University.

For instance, my autoethnographic stance showed my transformation from a conventional, teacher-centric, and positivist teacher to a progressive STEAM practitioner and a transformative teacher guided by emancipatory interest. Additionally, it showed my position to establish myself as a transformative

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