

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

**THE PRACTICES OF ACTION RESEARCH IN ADDIS ABABA CITY
ADMINISTRATION PRIMARY SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF SELECTED
GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN YEKA SUB CITY**

BY: ASEFA LETA

JUNE 2014

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY,
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

<i>AAU:</i>	<i>Addis Ababa University</i>
<i>CGAAA:</i>	<i>City Government of Addis Ababa Administration</i>
<i>CGAAEB:</i>	<i>City Government of Addis Ababa Education Bureau</i>
<i>CGAAPS:</i>	<i>City Government of Addis Ababa Primary Schools</i>
<i>FDGE:</i>	<i>Federal Democratic Government of Ethiopia</i>
<i>FGD:</i>	<i>Focus Group Discussion</i>
<i>IER:</i>	<i>Institute of Education Research</i>
<i>MoE:</i>	<i>Ministry of Education</i>
<i>SEO:</i>	<i>Sub City Education Office</i>
<i>SPSS:</i>	<i>Statistical Package for Social Science</i>
<i>USAID:</i>	<i>United States of Agency for International Development</i>
<i>WEO:</i>	<i>Woreda Education Office</i>

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to explore the practice of action research in City Government of Addis Ababa Primary Schools. This study, therefore used both quantitative and qualitative research approaches for data collection and analysis. The subjects of the study were 87 teachers, 6 school principals 2Woreda Educational Officers, 2 Sub City Educational Officers, 1City Government of Addis Ababa Education Bureau Officer, and 8 Focus Group Discussion participants (who were not included in questionnaire). A Questionnaire was used to collect data from teachers. To complement the information obtained through questionnaire, Interviews were held with principals and educational officers. To analyze quantitative data, Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation), Chi-square and total grand mean were used. The result of quantitative data obtained from teachers was significantly consistent on the issues raised. Whereas, the information from school principals and educational officers shows incongruity regarding the perception of teachers towards the practice of action research. The practice of action research in City Government of Addis Ababa Primary Schools is low. Only 18.4% had conducted action research at their school. The majority of the teachers 81.6% had not involved in action research. The involvement and support of the principals and other educational officers were also low to improve the practice of action research. The major hindering factors for carrying out action research in City Government of Addis Ababa Primary Schools were: overload in teaching and other committee activities, lack of incentives, lack of research facilities, lack of financial support, lack of required knowledge and skill of action research.

CHAPTER ONE

This chapter deals with the general introduction part of the paper which focuses on the concept and base of the research thesis. It comprises the background, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, significant, delimitation, limitation, operational definition and organization of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

Educational action research is perceived as a tool that advances and encourages practitioners to be effective and analytical facilitators of teaching learning process. Through action research, practitioners are empowered to question and challenge traditional guidelines and methods of instruction, which enables them to take authoritative steps toward evolving their professional abilities. In every occupation, professional development refers to enhancing ones knowledge of the field, growing in that specific arena and progressing through a professional cycle that possibly leads to a superior status, better benefits, and greater power. In an educational context, however, teacher development manifests pedagogical, social, and historical changes in the society; hence, educators work toward creating enhanced methods and strategies to transform their skills (Best, & Kahn,1998)

Teachers are nation builders. In Educational system, teachers play a great role in improving students' achievement. Their responsibility in schools extends beyond simply implementing and delivering the curriculum: they also need to know how to recognize and solve problems that may arise within the classroom when they deliver the curriculum (Davies, 1995). Besides this, a qualified teacher should be aware of, and be able to respond to, the direction of new developments in teaching. In other words, in the modern world, effective teaching requires that teachers engage in educational research in particular in action research in order to improve the standard of their teaching (Lewis and Munn, 1997).

In Education, the main goal of action research is to determine ways to enhance the lives of children (Mills, 2011). At the same time, action research can enhance the lives of those

professionals who work within educational systems. Action research helps teachers to develop new knowledge directly related to their classrooms, promotes reflective teaching and thinking, expands teachers' pedagogical repertoire, puts teachers in charge of their craft, reinforces the link between practice and student achievement

Different scholars define action research in different ways. Mills(2000) defines action research as a systematic inquiring conducted by teacher researcher, principals, school councilors and others stake holders in the teaching and learning environment to gather information about the ways that their particular schools operate ; how they teach and how well their students learn. It allows school administrators to study their own schools or districts such as student behavior transportation concerns, specific curriculum, school improvement plans, assessments and many other educational issues.

According to McNiff and Whitehead (2010), action research can be described as a process of finding different methods and approaches to enhance a practice; thus, action research is about creating awareness and understanding, in order to improve a certain practice, and often exhibits an educational objective. Consequently, researchers who carry out action research do so in pursuit of a creating new knowledge that did not exist before. Practitioners also often require conducting research of one kind or another in the course of their work. They benefit from others' research as a means to improve their practice. (Derebsa 2000).

McNiff and Whitehead (2010) add that action research is not only about professional practice, but its' main purpose is to improve a certain existing practice while creating new knowledge. It is often carried out through collaborative work and contains questioning, examination and reconstruction of existing knowledge.

In order to get promotion from one level to the next, students will be required to have a minimum requirement of fifty percent achievement in each subject (FDGE Training policy 1994). Therefore, providing teachers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and focus to engage in meaningful inquiry about their professional practice will enhance this practice, and effect positive changes concerning the educative goals of the learning community. As a corollary to the professional growth opportunities offered to educators,

action research also facilitates teacher empowerment (Johnson, 2012). In particular, teachers are empowered when they are able to collect and use data in making informed decisions about their own schools and classrooms (Book, 1996; Fueyo & Koorland, 1997; Hensen, 1996).

One of the most important principles that make action research beneficial to communities and favorable to researchers is its attentiveness to human condition and its attention to solving community-based problems. Stringer (2007) stated that the goal of action research is to help solve complexities that people in different groups or communities face, thus helping them solve their problem and understand their situation better. Consequently, of all the research methods, action research is the most attentive to community and social issues. Stringer (2007) believes that action research is a constructive method of research since it is democratic and allows people to participate in the research process and promotes equality among individuals. Furthermore, action research is liberating since it offers humans, independence and autonomy from harsh situations and empowers them by allowing them to express their voice (Stringer, 2007).

Henson, (1996) argues that professional development in teaching is not merely about demanding transformations to meet the society's educational needs or tackling the problems within the educational system, but professional development among teachers means taking authoritative steps toward changing their own lives and their professional capabilities. Therefore, by examining their own lives, circumstances and practices, teachers enter a dialogue with themselves which results in encouragement, inquiry, and self-discovery. Therefore, this practice creates teachers who are *active knowers* and are responsible for enhancing their professional skills, as well as making them *critical agents* who are able to use acquired understanding to change their practices

Within the classroom, empowered teachers can implement practices that best meet the needs of their students, and complement their particular teaching philosophy and instructional style (Johnson, 2012). In exercising their individual talents, experiences and creative ideas within the classroom, teachers are empowered to make changes related to teaching and learning. By doing so, student achievement is enhanced (Marks & Louis,

1997; Sweetland & Hoy, 2002), and schools become more effective learning communities (Detert, Louis & Schroeder, 2001)

Johnson (2012) asserts that action research bridges the gap between research and practice. For instance, the theoretical components underpinning action research practice are used to help practitioners understand and observe what is happening in a classroom setting. At the same time, and with the interests of best practice in mind, these collected data “are used to understand or inform theories and research related to best practice. In a similar vein to the enhancement of the professional disposition of teachers, action research encourages teachers to become continuous learners within their classrooms and schools (Mills, 2011). Because of the professional, reflective stance required by practitioners engaged in the action research sequence, teachers are further encouraged to “examine the dynamics of their classrooms, ponder the actions and interactions of students, validate and challenge existing practices, and take risks in the process” (Mills, p. 46). These specific actions are similar to those regularly exercised by teachers on a daily basis; using a systematic, strategic action research plan provides those daily actions with increased structure, focus, and methodological rigour.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The teachers’ primary role is to teach. In addition to teaching, teachers are expected to conduct action research in their school in order to solve the day-to-day problems of education. At the present time, and especially in developed countries, teachers are expected to follow and implement educational research findings in order to increase the quality of their teaching, and to solve problems that come up in their schools (Mortimore, 2000; Everton, Galton and Pell, 2000; Brown and Sharp, 2003). This is a professional requirement for all teachers at all levels.

Abiy et al. (2009) put that action research is a methodology that combines action and research to examine specific phenomena through observation, reflection and deliberate intervention to improve practice. MoE (2008) noted that action research is directly improving practice through development. This obliges teachers to conduct action

research for their professional growth and development, and the promotion to the next professional career is based on teaching and action research conducted out comes.

At primary schools, it is believed that school principals and teachers can do action research to solve educational problems that faces today. However, there is no evidence that indicates the extent to which teachers and principals are conducting action research to solve real educational problems in City Government of Addis Ababa Yeka subcity. Most researchers conducted on action research indicate at secondary school and at higher institution.

Moreover, USAID conducted action research at Primary Schools in Ethiopia in2006.And found that, most teachers have no relevant training on action research while few have got training, the extent to which action research was carried out in primary schools was low, almost all action researches conducted by teachers followed traditional descriptive research methods and they were not also collaborative by design.

Obviously; teachers are expected to conduct action research, but doing action research requires adequate knowledge and skills that are to be acquired through training and practice. It is believed that the school provide necessary support for teachers who do action research; therefore, evidence is required to the extent to which such support is given to teachers. There are identified gaps (knowledge gaps) that initiated the researcher to engage in the present study.

These are:

1. Extended work in the area by using different population and setting
2. The research done on action research in primary school in Ethiopia by USAID was before eight years. Therefore, in changing world, current practices of action research in CGAAPS is necessary.
3. To know the extent to which action research findings are used in supplementing the curriculum and solve educational problems.

4. The researcher initiated to know whether there is an improvement in the practices of action research in primary schools in City Government of Addis Ababa particularly in Yeka Sub City.

1.3. Basic Research Questions

The basic research questions to be answered in this study are the following.

1. What are the attitudes of primary school teachers toward action research?
2. Do teachers and school principals have the required knowledge and skill to conduct action research
3. To what extent action research findings are used to improve the teachers' professional competency and solve educational problems?
4. Do the schools provide necessary resources for teachers to conduct action research?
5. What are the hindering factors to conduct action research at primary a school?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. General Objectives

The main objective of the study is to explore the attitudes of teachers and school principals toward action research and how action research is carried out in the City Government of Addis Ababa Primary Schools. It is also to investigate how well these primary school teachers practice action research for the purpose of improving their own professional competence and the students' achievement.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are the following:

1. To assess the attitudes of teachers and school principals of CGAAA primary schools in action research activities.
2. To find out the extent to which primary school teachers have enough knowledge and skills to conduct action research.
3. To examine the trends of utilizing action research methods and the strength and weakness of research procedures done by CGAAA Primary Schools of in Yeka SubCity.
4. To assess if important support is given by the schools for teachers while conducting action research.
5. To identify the hindering factors in conducting action research.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The findings of the study are significant for the different levels of stakeholders specifically it:-

- i. Can initiate the interests of those who have an intention for further study in this area.
- ii. Benefits teachers and school principals to improve their skills and knowledge to conduct action research.
- iii. Provide some feed back to concerned educational officials at all levels in sub city on major issues related to action research under taken in the selected primary schools.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

It is important to study the practices of action research in the whole primary school in City Government of Addis Ababa. However, a large scale study requires much resources, time, and human power. Therefore, the scope of this study is limited at ten randomly selected Government primary schools in Yeka Sub city Administration; in order to make the study manageable and complete it within a given time.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

Gay and Airasian (2000) defined a limitation as some aspect of the study that the researcher knows may negatively impact the study, but over which they have no control. Accordingly, the limitations of the study were:

Since the researcher was self sponsor, there was financial constraints. Most of the time the educational officers of Woreda ,SCEO, CGAAEB and principals were not available for necessary information in their offices due to several meetings. The researcher overcame this kind of limitations with continuous follow up and negotiation.

1.8. Definition of Terms

Action Research: is a any systematic inquiry that is conducted by teacher researchers.

Technical action research: is based on experience and observation, and is positivist, also predictive, and tries to control human situations through rules based on empirical laws.

Practical action research: It is type of action research is associated with the historical and hermeneutical sciences, and so presumes that the meaning-making in a given situation is interpretative and deliberative

Validity: refers to the extent to which a question or variable accurately reflects the concept the researcher is actually looking for

Reliability: refers to consistency. This means that the same results would be achieved when repeated at a different time, situation or place

Triangulation: Triangulation involves the use of multiple and different sources, methods and perspectives to support, elaborate, or illuminate the research problem and its outcomes

Investigation is the substantiation of the research question or issue in the practical situation and begins with the initial collection of data to endorse, or not, the original conception of the research question or issue

Planning is constructed action and by definition it must be forward looking and based on the evidence already collected

Action refers to deliberate and controlled changes in the activities in practice
conclusions and recommendations.

Reflection Takes place throughout the action research process. It is reconsideration and reframing of the activities recorded in the initial investigation and the subsequent monitoring and observation of planned action.

Ontology the way people view themselves, a theory of being

Epistemology how people understand knowledge, including how knowledge is acquired

Methodology how people do things

1.9. Organization of the Study

This study has five chapters. The first chapter of the study is introduction: containing the background, statement of the problems, objectives, research questions, significance, limitation and delimitation of the study. The second chapter of the study is the reviewed of related literature contains: Origins and Concept of Action Research, The Decline and Rediscovery of Action Research, The Concepts of Action Research, The Principles of Action Research, Action Research in Education, Characteristics of Action Research, Aspects of Action Research, Types of Action Research, Action Research Process, Benefits of Action Research in School, The Role of Teachers in Action Research, The Role of Administrators in Action Research, Validity and Reliability in Action Research , Triangulation, Factors Affecting Teachers' Involvement in Action Research and Ethical Issues in Action Research the third chapter is theoretical framework of the research methodology, research design, instruments of data collection and data analysis, while the fourth chapter deals with presentation and analysis. The fifth chapter contains summary, conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

This chapter concerns review of related literature which mainly focuses on the origins and concept of action research, the decline and rediscovery of action research, the principles of action research, types of action research, benefits of action research in school, the role of teachers in action research, the role of administrators in action research and ethical issues in action research were presented respectively.

2.1. Origins and Concept of Action Research

Educational action research was created in the 1940s through the works of Kurt Lewin and John Collier. Between 1933 and 1945, Collier served as a Commissioner of Indian Affairs and is often perceived as one of the first founders of action research. He dedicated most of his research to creating community, in connection to educational and social framework among Native Americans (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010). Kurt Lewin, an American psychologist and an educator, first introduced that research can be conducted in a natural environment in order to modify the approach or the manner in which researchers interact within their environment (Newton & Burgess, 2008; McNiff & Whitehead, 2010). Lewin's research was often directly associated with the issues he encountered. His research process was conducted in a recurrent cycle which involved planning, investigating, observing, reflecting, and finally applying the changes from the results he gathered, in order to modify or improve the situation (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010).

Lewin coined the term "action research" to describe work that did not separate the investigation from the action needed to solve the problem. He promoted doing research in a natural setting in order to change the setting or actions in it. His process is reflected in today's idea of action research as an ongoing cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on change. Lewin is considered the principal founder of action research because he established the analytical approaches in action research that is immensely practiced today (Newton & Burgess, 2008; McNiff & Whitehead, 2010).

According to Kurt Lewin action research is “a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action”; this type of research uses “a spiral step,” each of which is “composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action”. He believed that a close examination of one’s teaching practices would result in appositive change in the practices. “We are convinced that the disposition to study... the consequences of our own teaching is more likely to change and improve our practices than is reading about what someone else has discovered of his teaching.” (Corey, 1953, p.70) Unfortunately, support for and the practice of action research became less popular in the 1950s.

2.2. The Decline and Rediscovery of Action Research

From the mid-1950s to 1960’s, action research was criticized for being unscientific. Because of its association with radical political activism (Stringer 2007) There were, questions concerning its rigour, and the training of those undertaking it. In some of Lewin’s earlier work on action research, there was a tension between providing a rational basis for change through action research, and the recognition that individuals are constrained in their ability to change by their cultural and social perceptions, and the systems of which they are a part. Having ‘correct knowledge’ does not of itself lead to change; attention also needs to be paid to the ‘matrix of cultural and psychic forces’ through which the subject is constituted (Winter 1987: 48).

During that time, experimental research designs and the collection of quantitative data became common practice and action research was viewed as not real research, just common sense. However, In the 1970s, action research came back into wide use as educators began to see that many research projects did not have practical application to their own classrooms. Action research focuses on issues that are specific and personal to teachers in their own classrooms and schools, with the primary goal of development of the teacher and effective teaching practices. Action research has become a valuable tool for job embedded professional development of teachers and the most appropriate method for solving the problems they faced on a daily basis in their educational settings (Newton & Burgess, 2008; McNiff & Whitehead, 2010).

Action research continues to develop as a research method and, since its foundation in the 1940s, it has developed significantly. Some of the developments in action research have been linked to Progressive Education movement, specifically to the ideas of scholars such as John Dewey, and Stephen Corey

Today, action research is an important instrument for educators who are in pursuit of improving their educational practices and developing their profession. The current revival of interest in action research reflects contemporary trends and issues not unlike those of the mid-1940s. Firstly, there is a strong interest among educational researchers in helping practitioners deal with problems of practice. Secondly, a broad methodological interest has developed in recent years in interpretive methods which indicates a growing interest among researchers in defining the problems of the field in ways which represent the understanding of practitioners.

Thirdly, there is a growth of collaborative curriculum development and evaluation work. At least one of the aims of collaboration is to build practitioner commitment to the research enterprise. Fourthly, there is an explicit ideological commitment to address social and political problems of education through participatory research carried out by practitioners on problems of immediate and more general public concern, for example, in school level evaluation as an aspect of local general public accountability or in research on the use of language in classroom learning (Newton & Burgess, 2008).

2.3. The Concepts of Action Research

The idea of action research was absorbed into educational most as soon as it was originated. Lewin himself worked in action research programs with teachers and teacher educators. Also discussing about action research, Carr and Kemmis pay much attention to the purposes of action research when they define it as “a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out”. (Winkler, 2001)

On the other hand, looking at the nature of action research, Carr and Kemmis assert that although action research has been referred to by different names such as participatory research, collaborative inquiry, emancipatory research, action learning or contextual action research, it is truly understood as “learning by doing” namely, a group of people encounter a problem; they do something to resolve it; they then see how successful their efforts are and if they are not satisfied with the result they can try it again. O’Brien’s view is shared by Dick when he states that “action research is a natural way of acting and researching at the same time” in (Carr and Kemmis 1986). To make it clearer, Dick affirms that action research is a true reflection of its names as it is intended to achieve both action and research at the same time. It is critically suitable for educational situations where teachers wish to bring about action in the form of change or improvement in their teaching and at the same time develop an understanding which informs the change and is an addition to what is known.

Carr and Kemmis put their general definition of action research into education setting as “action research is a form of self-reflective inquiry that can be utilized by teachers in order to improve the rationality and justice of, their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out.

Obviously, the role of action research in education has been acknowledged for a longtime when Hutchinson and Whitehouse Lomax claim that action research is a research that “concerns with broader curriculum issues, and often with the administration and management of school and institutional change.” action research in education setting is a study conducted by teacher researchers to improve problems in their classrooms. In addition, Stenhouse (1975) explains action research as a fancy research when she says that “let’s study what’s happening in our school and decide how to make it a better place”. In short, it is possible to say that action research can be looked at as a professional development tool since it tries to enhance the capacity of teachers as generator of professional knowledge in contrast to enhancing their capacity to apply someone else’s knowledge. (Stenhouse, 1975)

The word *action* in action research is significant. Practitioner-researchers are involved in making or implementing change rather than just researching or investigating an issue. Action research projects put their research into action by implementing a new initiative or improving current practice. Cardno supports this by writing, “action implies that the researcher will not accept the status quo but will interfere – take action - to change it” and proceeds to concisely describe the word *research* as the “systematic investigation into a subject in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions” (2003, p. 1). The word *research* is also important as practitioner-researchers must make informed decisions about what and how they are going to implement change by working through the cyclical process of action research (Piggot-Irvine, 2002).

“Teaching is highly complex, and most teachers have scant opportunity to explore common problems and possible solutions, or share new pedagogical approaches with their colleagues” (Danielson & McGreal, 2000, p. 24). The action research process is collaborative and investigative where practitioners work together to design and follow through with research on practical problems in their classrooms. Educational practitioners are involved in the process of inquiry to improve educational practice by studying the literature and research related to their questions and then choosing an approach or designing an alternative that might result in refining current practice.

According to Kemmis and McTaggart, (1990:5): “Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework.” In action research definitions there are four basic themes: empowerment of participants, collaboration through participation; acquisition of knowledge; and social change. Both cited in Cohen et al. (2005, p. 229) noted that “action research is an approach to improving education by changing it and learning from the consequences of changes.

Dawson (2009) also claimed that in action research the researcher works in close collaboration with a group of people to improve a situation in a particular settings. While Abiy et al. (2009) stated that action research is a methodology that combines action and research to examine specific phenomena through observation, reflection and deliberate

intervention to improve practice. This collaborative strategy is tended to reduce the anxiety level and consequent defensiveness of teachers.

For Berg (2001), action research is a collaborative approach that provides people to take systematic action to resolve specific problems. This approach endorses consensual, democratic, and participatory strategies to encourage people and to examine their problems. Patton (2002) advocated that action research aims at solving a specific problem. Purposefully, it becomes part of the change process by engaging the people in the program or organization in studying their own problems in order to solve those problems.

McKay (1992) describes action research as a six-step cyclical process: (1) identifying an issue or problem to study; (2) gathering and reviewing related information; (3) developing a plan of action; (4) implementing the plan; (5) evaluating results; and (6) repeating the cycle with a revised problem or strategy derived from what was learned in the first cycle, until the question is answered. As McCutcheon and Jung (1990:148) define action research: “A form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out.”

In an Educational context, action research can be about anything from whole school improvement to gaining a deeper understanding of a particular element of classroom behavior. This version of action research also requires the collaboration and participation of the researched community in order to gain a better understanding of the issue and create and implement improvements. Again, it can be used in a diagnostic way and can give voice to different groups within a school, such as teaching assistants, pupils and parents. Perhaps it does not set out to be quite so political or liberating but can still lead to meaningful social change and educational development within a school or classroom.

Action research can also be used as a means of personal reflection. An example of this might be a teacher wanting to understand an element of their practice better so as to improve performance.(Lawson2009) MoE (2008) noted that action research is directly

improving practice through self development. Most educators realized that action research is as the educational base as self-reflective approach to share common features, and developing flexible and participatory decision-making. In its nature action research is to empower the participants and develop collaboration through participation to acquire knowledge for change (Firdissa, 2009).

2.4. The Principles of Action Research

Action research is a practical way of looking at teachers 'practice in order to check whether it is as they feel it should be. If they feel that their practice is satisfactory, teachers be can explain how and why they believe this is the case; they can produce evidence to support their claims. If they feel that their practice needs attention in some way they have to take action to improve it, and then produce evidence to show in what way the practice has improved.

Because action research is done by the practitioner, it is often referred to as practitioner research, or a similar name such as practitioner-led or practitioner based research. It is a form of research which can be undertaken by people in any context, regardless of their status or position. It involves teachers thinking carefully about what they are doing, so it can also be called a kind of self-reflective practice.

The idea of self-reflection is central. In traditional (empirical) forms of research researchers do research on other people. In action research researchers do research on themselves in company with other people, and those others are doing the same. No distinction is made between who is a researcher and who is a practitioner. Practitioners are potential researchers, and researchers are practitioners (some people who like to maintain their status as 'pure' researchers do not always see it this way, though).

Traditional researchers enquire into other people's lives and speak about other people as data. Action researchers enquire into their own lives and speak with other people as colleagues. Action research is an enquiry by the self into the self, undertaken in company with others acting as research participants and critical learning partners. Action

researchers share certain sets of beliefs, commitments and hopes. What they do (action research) is a set of practices which demonstrates those beliefs, commitments and hopes in practice. They undertake research to help them learn how to create social hope (Rorty, 1999) and to take action to try to realise the hope in terms of social evolution.

2.5. Action Research in Education

Action research is an attractive option for teacher researchers, school administrative staff, and other stakeholders in the teaching and learning environment. Specifically, action research in education can be defined as the process of studying a school situation to understand and improve the quality of the educative process (Johnson, 2012; McTaggart, 1997). It provides practitioners with new knowledge and understanding about how to improve educational practices or resolve significant problems in classrooms and schools (Mills, 2011). Action research uses a systematic process, is participatory in nature and offers multiple, beneficial opportunities for those professionals working within the teaching profession.

These opportunities include facilitating the professional development of educators increasing teacher empowerment and bridging the gap between research and practices (Johnson, 2012; Mills, 2011). Within education, the main goal of action research is to determine ways to enhance the lives of children (Mills, 2011). At the same time, action research can enhance the lives of those professionals who work within educational systems. To illustrate, action research has been directly linked to the professional growth and development of teachers.

According to Hensen, action research ,helps teachers develop new knowledge directly related to their classrooms, promotes reflective teaching and thinking, expands teachers' pedagogical repertoire, puts teachers in charge of their craft, reinforces the link between practice and student achievement, fosters an openness toward new ideas and learning new things, and gives teachers ownership of effective practices. Moreover, action research workshops can be used to replace traditional, ineffective teacher in service training as a means for professional development activities (Johnson, 2012). To be effective, teacher in service training needs to be extended over multiple sessions, contain active learning to

allow teachers to manipulate the ideas and enhance their assimilation of the information, and align the concepts presented with the current curriculum, goals, or teaching concerns (Johnson, p. 22). Therefore, providing teachers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and focus to engage in meaningful inquiry about their professional practice will enhance this practice, and effect positive changes concerning the educative goals of the learning community.

2.6. Characteristics of Action Research

Many scholars have attempted to characterize action research in terms of a school-based research. McDonough (1997) proposes some characteristics of action research as follows:

- It is participant-driven and reflective;
- It is collaborative and participatory
- A systematic, cyclic process
- Action oriented
- Improvement oriented
- It leads to change and the improvement of practice and it is context-specific

This is because action research is usually implemented in a specific classroom by a particular teacher or group of teachers who work together (and in collaboration with students) to pursue a change or improvement in their teaching and learning issues. Kemmis, & McTaggart, (1982) argue that the three defining characteristics of action research are:

- It is carried out by practitioners (classroom teachers) rather than outside researchers;
- It is collaborative; and
- It aims at changing things.

Especially, they stress that the momentum for carrying out an action research is to change the system. Action research depends on interaction between individuals and groups for flowing ideas and application of solving problems. The participants as part of research team come up with idea that concerns with practical problems. It generalizes the

educational problems for only specific situation vertically. The researcher makes generalization only for a particular classroom, for that teaching situation, for students similar to those involved in the study not for all the students, at all times (Courtney,1965).

Through systematic, investigation, teachers can become more professional, more interested in pedagogical and other aspects of the school and more motivated to integrate their research and teaching interests in a holistic way. This can lead to greater job satisfaction, better academic programmes, improvement of student learning and practitioners' insights and contributions to the advancement of knowledge in education.

Creswell (2005) asserts that understanding the above characteristics will help teachers' better design their own study to read, evaluate and use an action research study published in literature. Particularly, action research aims at addressing an actual problem in a specific education setting namely the teacher researchers are studying a practical issue that will benefit education. Besides, teacher researchers engage in action research first and foremost because of their own situation rather than someone else's practice. In this sense, they engage in "participatory" or "self-reflective teaching"; namely, they reflect on what they have learnt and what they can do to improve their own educational situation.

Moreover, in the research development, researchers collaborate with one another and all co-participants in an action research is referred to as collaborative team including teachers, students, administrators and even parents and stakeholders. All of them involve in a dynamic process or exactly a "spiral of activities" in which they go back and forth between reflection about a problem, data collection and action. Creswell also maintains that at a certain stage of the process, in order to respond to the problem studied, action researchers will formulate an either formal or informal action plan which will engage few individual or the entire community into research. Especially, action research is different from other type of research in terms of sharing the results. Traditionally, researchers report their investigation in journals or book publications but action researchers usually first present their research to teachers and other educational officials. Creswell (2005)

In short, during their studies, scholars may provide different opinions about action research; some of them say that collaboration is the defining characteristic of action research while others insist that publication is an important one. However, although the above characteristics may slightly differ from one another, they all acknowledge action research as a powerful tool for teachers to find solutions for problems in their own education settings, or to change or improve some of their educational issues. Therefore, change is a key feature of action research since action research is used in real educational situations focusing on solving real problems in education and at the end of each study; change must take place quickly or holistically. On the other hand, Elliott (1991, 1988) describes ten characteristics of action research as a certain kind of curriculum-reform process.

1. The aim of action research is to deepen teacher's understanding of her/his problem.
2. Action research espouses a theoretical stance in which action intended to change the situation is temporarily suspended until a deeper understanding of the practical problem has been achieved.
3. In explaining what is going on, action research tells a story about the event.
4. Action research interprets what is going on by relating it to a context of mutually interdependent contingency.
5. It is a process which is initiated by practicing teachers in response to a Particular practical situation they confront.
6. The practical situation is one in which their traditional curriculum practices have been destabilized and rendered problematic by the development of student resistance or refusal to learn.
7. The innovations proposed arouse controversy within the staff group, because they challenge the fundamental beliefs embodied in existing practices about the nature of learning, teaching and evaluation.
8. Issues are clarified and resolved in free and open collegial discourse, characterized by mutual respect and tolerance for others; views, in the absence of power constraints on the discussion's outcomes.
9. Change proposals are treated as provisional hypotheses to be tested in practice with in a context of collegial accountability to the whole staff group.

10. The management facilitates a “bottom up” rather than a top-down’ approach to the development of curriculum policies and strategies.

2.7. Aspects of Action Research

Action research (for that matter all kinds of research) is more than just doing activities. It is a form of practice which involves data gathering, reflection on the action as it is presented through the data, generating evidence from the data, and making claims to knowledge based on conclusions drawn from validated evidence. Therefore It is helpful to be familiar with some key ideas and terms used in educational action research.

- *ontology* – the way we view ourselves, a theory of being
- *epistemology* – how we understand knowledge, including how knowledge is acquired
- *methodology* – how we do things. (Anderson, G. L. and Herr, K. 1999)

Action research has as a main purpose the generation of knowledge which leads to improvement of understanding and experience for social benefit.

2.7.1. Ontological Issues

Action researchers believe that people are able to create their own identities and allow other people to create theirs. Action researchers accept the responsibility of ensuring that their own lives are in order before they make judgments about other people’s. This means honestly critiquing their practice, recognising what is good and building on strengths, as well as understanding what needs attention and taking action to improve it. It involves commitment to the idea that learning will transform into purposeful personal action for social benefit. They often express these ontological assumptions in the language of values. Action research rests on ideas to do with truth, social justice, compassionate ways of living, respect for pluralistic forms. Often action researchers live in social contexts where these values are prized in principle but denied in practice. The realities of their contexts often show preference for privileged elites rather than the underprivileged and marginalised. Action researchers aim to understand these issues in order to change

present realities into futures which are more in tune with their values. (Anderson, G. L. and Herr, K. 1999)

2.7.2. Epistemological Issues

Traditional views of scientific enquiry tend to see knowledge as a free-standing unit, with an existence of its own, residing 'out there' in books and databases. In this view knowledge is divorced from the people who create it. Action researchers see knowledge as something they do, a living process. People can generate their own knowledge from their experience of living and learning. Knowledge is never static or complete; it is in a constant process of development as new understandings emerge. This view of knowledge regards reality as a process of evolution, surprising and unpredictable. There are no fixed answers, because answers would immediately become obsolete in a constantly changing future. The very idea of answer becomes meaningless; answers transform into new questions. Life is a process of asking questions to reveal new potentialities. Action researchers ask questions of the kind, 'I wonder what would happen if . . .?' They aim to disturb fixed systems of knowing rather than maintain them. (Atkinson, E. 2000)

Learning in this view is rooted in experience. It involves reflecting on the experience of practice (a process of critical discernment), deciding whether the practice was in line with your espoused values base, and then deciding on future action as a result of the reflection. If you consider practice good, how can you develop it to deal with an uncertain future? If you consider it less than good, how can you improve it? Some theorists believe that learning happens only in critical episodes. Certainly it does, but learning also happens all the time, in our moment-to-moment living. We learn how to walk, to catch a ball, to avoid trouble, to respond to our feelings. Learning, says Mary Catherine Bateson (1994), often happens peripherally; we learn a good deal without effort and without conscious intent. Learning can be accelerated and intensified through critical awareness, and reinforced through intellectual study. Learning mainly involves making new connections and reconfiguring present knowledge in terms of its potential use value, and this process is often carried out at a level not accessible to conscious awareness.

2.7.3. Methodological Issues

Action researchers regard learning and experience as processes which enable individuals to make choices about who they are and how they are together. However, people's choices often conflict, so they have to be negotiated and accommodated. This can be very difficult, but it can be done if people try to see one another's point of view. The methodology of action research is that people ask questions such as 'How do I do this better? How do we understand?' They do not aim for consensus or harmony, but they do try to create spaces of tolerance to negotiate differences. This can happen because reflection on action is an inherent part of an action research methodology. The idea of reflective practice was originally popularized by Donald Schön (1983).

Reflection on action makes sense, however, only when practice is seen as in relation with others, a process of dialogue and encounter (Bryk *et al.*, 1993). For some, myself included, the ideas of encounter, connectedness and relationship can be understood as a form of spirituality. (Capra *et al.* 1992), for example, believe that relation should be understood as belonging. We are all connected in deep ways, and, because we are made of the same stuff as stars (Feynman, 1999), we are also connected to the whole of creation. We belong to one another and ultimately to the universe.

These views have implications for how people understand their practice. In traditional epistemologies, practice tends to be seen as something separate from practitioners. People might imagine work as in a building or an office, for example. I used to think like this; I regarded work as a thing I did. On a relational view, work and practice are how we are in relationship with other people. The focus of the work is how to nurture creative and life-giving encounters. Action researchers regard their work as ensuring that encounters with others are opportunities for learning and growth. When they reflect on practice they are reflecting on their relationships with others, and whether those others have benefited from the encounter. This can be a major test for judging the quality of the practice: has the other person benefited from the encounter? The implications are awesome.

Furthermore, the common characteristics of action research are:-

2.8. Types of Action Research

Different scholars discuss on the type of action research and give different modes Zuber-Skerritt, (1996) lays out this acumen concerning three modes of action research as follows:

2.8.1. Technical Action Research

Technical action research is based on experience and observation, and is positivist, also predictive, and tries to control human situations through rules based on empirical laws. The purpose of this research is to discover the laws underlying reality (Grundy, 1982) and to improve the effectiveness of educational and managerial practice (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996a). In this type of action research the problem is defined in advance, and attempts are then made to solve it through experience. Events are explained in terms of real causes and simultaneous effects. The nature of the collaboration between the researcher and the practitioner is technical and facilitator. It is associated more with the natural sciences (Grundy, 1982).

2.8.2. Practical Action Research

The aim of Practical action research is to understand teaching practice and solve immediate problems. This type of action research is associated with the historical and hermeneutical sciences, and so presumes that the meaning-making in a given situation is interpretative and deliberative (Grundy, 1987) Besides this, it aims to facilitate the practitioners' understanding and professional development (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996a). It aims towards generating understanding, and focuses on human interpretation, interactive communication, deliberation, negotiation and detailed description (McKernan, 1991).

2.8.3. Emancipatory or Critical Action Research

Critical action research is also called 'emancipatory', because of its goal to achieve liberation through knowledge gathering .The name itself comes from critical theory and

the critical sciences (Mills, 2003). The central purpose of critical theory is emancipation, which enables people to take control and direction over their own lives (Hopkins, 1996). Furthermore, according to Zuber-Scerritt (1996b: 84-85): More precisely, action research is emancipatory when it aims not only at technical and political improvement, the participants' transformed consciousness, and change within their organization's existing boundaries and conditions, but when it also aims at changing system itself or those conditions which impede desired improvement in the organization.

Emancipatory action research also provides important benefits to Educational Research. According to the tenets of this type of action research, Educational Research should aim to be socially responsive, democratic, equitable, liberating and enhancing (Mills, 2003).

As mentioned above, teachers ought to know about educational research, because high quality new ideas to enhance teaching and learning come from disciplined educational research. Besides this, it can be said that learning is an individual issue, and each student has his or her own particular learning style. For this reason, as teachers are expected to implement the same curriculum programme in all classrooms, they may encounter problems that arise because of the different learning styles of their students, and teachers should know how to recognise and solve them through Educational action research. Finally, teachers who know the latest Educational action research can understand and implement the results of such research, which will have been determined by professional researchers. In sum, teachers who are competent in Educational action research can easily recognise teaching problems that arise in their classrooms, can solve these problems once they have detected them, and can successfully implement the results of Educational action research carried out.

2.9. Action Research Process

The action research process can generally be described as a series of four steps: **Investigation, Planning, Action and Reflection** on the results of the action.

Investigation is the substantiation of the research question or issue in the practical situation and begins with the initial collection of data to endorse, or not, the original

conception of the research question or issue. Investigation through the observation of the situation may confirm the need to continue to look more deeply into the focus of the enquiry. For example for the teacher, the issues may relate to how reading progress is measured, why the progress is considered as slow, what methods are currently being employed and why, or, does the particular background and age of the pupils demand special consideration? If the data confirms that the research question or issue originally identified does deserve deeper investigation, then the professional can continue to interpret the original evidence from the initial observation and redefine the question or issue more specifically in light of the new data. If however the initial data collection does not support the need to continue the investigation focused on the original issue, then the professional has the opportunity to reframe the research question or refocus the enquiry e.g., to the investigation of teaching methods related to the pupils of a particular minority or gender group. (Altrichter H 1993)

Planning is constructed action and by definition it must be forward looking and based on the evidence already collected. It must be flexible in relation to unforeseen circumstances and constraints. It should be chosen to allow the professional to act in a more educationally effective way, over a greater range of circumstances and with more understanding and wisdom. Intended outcomes should be identified as the rationale for the changes. As part of the planning, the discussion of possible courses of action with others is essential, as too is reflection on the earlier observational data collected.

Action refers to deliberate and controlled changes in the activities in practice. The professionals thoughtfully and constructively put their ideas into action in the real situation and monitor their effects in order to judge their success. (Altrichter H 1993) Action must be intentional rather than definitive because of the nature of the changing circumstances in dynamic educational situations. Exercising practical judgments in the implementation of the plan may require skilful negotiation and an element of risk-taking. Discussion with colleagues and participants is important to fully understand the appropriate possibilities.

Reflection Takes place throughout the action research process. It is reconsideration and reframing of the activities recorded in the initial investigation and the subsequent monitoring and observation of planned action. It has an evaluative aim to judge whether practice confirms the planned direction for further action and monitoring, or indicates a need for new ideas and redirection.

According to (Loughran J, 1996), Reflection may take place on three levels: on the *technical* level where the professional considers the best way to reach an accepted but unexamined goal: on the *practical* level where the professional examines the means of achieving the goals as well as the goal itself and its implications, by asking questions about what should be happening in the best interests of the pupils: and on the *critical* level where the moral and ethical issues concerned with social justice, equality, power and control are considered along with the methods and the intentions of the research plan.

In the process of reflection each professional reviews, reconstructs, and critically analyses their own practices through grounding their explanations in their evidence. The aim in reflective teaching is to produce professionals who are able to apply educational principles and techniques within a framework of their own experience, contextual factors, and social and philosophical values. The critical reflective practitioner addresses the 'why' of the situation before the 'how', and makes decisions about practice on a sound pedagogical basis validated in the enquiry process.

Reflection on practice in an action research process leads to a willingness to examine and re-examine teaching or professional practice from a variety of perspectives and theoretical viewpoints. It challenges accepted orthodoxies, which are unexamined and repeated in contexts that are differentiated and complex. The action research process requires professionals to differentiate their methods and activities in contextually appropriate ways. (O'Hanlon 1994)

Depending on the research question, purpose of the study and number of researchers involved, each of these steps can be expanded. A single teacher researcher studying a classroom issue may work through the steps of the process in a relatively short time. In contrast, a collaborative group of researchers focusing on a school improvement initiative may engage in an in-depth study taking the entire school year to complete. plan, act, observe and reflect is a simple model of the cyclical nature of the typical action research process.(Kemmis ,(1988)

Steps in action research vary from different points of view as Creswell(2005) asserts that “action research is a dynamic, flexible process” and there is “no blueprint exists for how to proceed.” Hence, it is really impossible to assert this or that researcher is right with exact four, five, six, seven or eight steps in their action research. Sometimes, it is hard to define a clear cut between the steps and the number of steps in action research may vary depending on different points of view held by researchers.

According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) teacher research is “systematic and intentional inquiry carried out by teachers” (p. 7). Teachers conduct inquiry by collecting data within the classroom through qualitative (e.g., observations, interviews, document analysis) and quantitative (e.g., surveys, questionnaires, comparison of test data) means. The action research cycle includes data collection, analysis, conclusions, and planning for change. The cycle continues when teachers implement changes and study their outcomes.

According to Glesne (1999), “During the reflection phase [of action research], the data are interpreted and the multiple viewpoints are communicated and discussed among those with a stake (the stakeholders) in the process. This is followed by the action phase which involves planning, implementation, and evaluation” (p. 13). In each phase the aim is to change and improve some aspect of teaching. Regarding this Johnston (2005), said “Taking action and studying its consequences for student learning is the hallmark of action research. The action is intended to create change for the better and the study is intended to find out if it does” (p. 60). Action research promotes classroom change, initiated by careful self-examination and planning.

2.10. Benefits of Action Research in School

It is often heard that many practicing classroom teachers are too busy to read research studies, let alone conduct research. For many practitioners, research appears to be a complex set of steps too difficult and time-consuming for classroom teachers to participate in. In schools, action research activities are mainly focused on improving teaching and involving students' learning. Action research works to support improvements in three main areas: improvements in practice; improvements in understanding that practice by its practitioners; and improvements in the environment in which the practice takes place (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Problems can be easily detected through action research activities, and the quality of teaching and learning can be increased in the light of that research. Through action research, teacher-researchers can examine their teaching environments and respond to teaching problems in a scientific way. This situation provides them with many advantages. First, teachers become aware of the problems in their schools, and can easily identify these problems themselves. Second, teachers do not suffer anxiety if their colleagues monitor their teaching as a part of a research project. Third, teachers will readily collaborate with their colleagues as part of an ongoing research project (Watts, 1985).

Teachers as researcher and students as change-receiver profit much from action research. When looking at educational dimension of action research, Gay and Airasian prove benefits resulted from the application of action research to education as follows:

- Teachers investigate their own practice in new ways, looking deeper in what they and their students actually do and fail to do.
- Teachers develop a deeper understanding of students, the teacher learning process and their role in the education of both teachers and students.
- Teachers are viewed as equal partners in deciding what works best and what needs improvement in their classroom or classrooms.
- In most cases, solutions for identified problems are arrived cooperatively among teachers.
- Teachers are often more committed to action research because they identify the areas they view as problematical and in need of change.

- Action research is an ongoing process and its strategies can be widely applied.
- Professional development and school improvement are core aspects for any teacher who engages in action research.
- Teacher reflection can be conducted individually or in a school-based team composed of students, teachers and administrators.

Action research gives teachers a voice in the field. It allows teachers to depend on themselves to know what is happening and what needs to happen in their own classrooms. Instead of teachers relying on administrators or teacher educators to tell them what to do, Action researchers have command of their own knowledge and information to support decisions they make about their teaching practices. Stenhouse has strongly supported this point of view:

Good teachers are necessarily autonomous in professional judgment. They do not need to be told what to do. They are not professionally the dependents of researchers superior in talent, or innovators or supervisors. This does not mean that they do not welcome access to ideas created by other people at other places or in other times. Nor do they reject advice, consultancy, or support. But they do know that ideas and people are not of much real use until they are digested to the point where they are subject of teachers' own judgment p105.(Stenhouse, 1984)

2.11. The Role of Teachers in Action Research

Teachers are one of the most important elements in the education system, and their responsibilities in schools extend beyond simply implementing and delivering the curriculum: they also need to know how to recognize and solve problems that may arise within the classroom and at school wide when they deliver the curriculum (Davies, 1995). Besides this, a qualified teacher should be aware of, and be able to respond to, the direction of new developments in teaching (Lewis and Munn, 1997). In other words, in the modern world, effective teaching requires that teachers engage in educational research in order to improve the standard of their teaching. At the present time, and especially in developed countries, teachers are expected to follow and implement educational research findings in order to increase the quality of their teaching, and to

solve problems that come up in their schools (Mortimore, 2000; Everton, Galton and Pell, 2000)

Teachers are supposed to be researchers, and also contributors for curriculum development by participating in action research. But according to Hammond (1985), Many teachers have misinterpreted the role of teachers as researchers. She states that many schoolteachers are confused of their role as researchers of education. Teachers believe that research is the work of experts in education, and that their work is to implement the results of research work in teaching. These beliefs will generate situations where teaching is solely based on textbooks.

Through action research activities, participants aim to examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully. Besides this, Action Research is about the nature of the learning process and the link between practice and reflection (Winter, 1996, cited in Zuberand Skerritt, 1996), and aims to improve practice rather than to produce knowledge (Elliot, 1996). In addition, this type of research “is concerned with diagnosing a problem in a specific context and attempting to solve it in that context” (Cohen and Manion, 1997: 186). In other words, through action research teachers investigate their own practices and work places in order to make beneficial changes, and systematically analyses their own teaching and their students’ performance (Capel, Leask and Turner, 1997; Bassey, 1999).

According to Zuber-Skerritt (1991), academicians especially teachers must apply and translate theories, which are developed by educational researchers into their own practice. Action research will enable teachers to integrate theories and practices. Hence, action research by practitioners (teachers) themselves on their own teaching are more relevant, meaningful, and appropriate than educational research carried out by those theorists to be applied by teachers.

In conducting action research, teachers bring the values and theories of their practice which is the totality of their former experiences that shape the present experience with everyday practice and decision making. The teacher’s teaching experience and students’ experiences are essential key elements of teaching learning process to improve educational problems. Hence, it is important for the teacher to conduct research and

having access information that provides a more accurate picture of the situation (Macdonalds, 2002).

Teachers can then share the information with students in order to gain their ideas and internal commitment to specified learning activities and procedures. Action Research is used in real situations, rather than in contrived, experimental studies since its primary focus is on solving real problems. For educational quality implementation, qualified and committed teachers are needed. Without competent and academically intent teacher the curriculum cannot be effectively implemented, and quality of education will not be attained. Group based-service training will generally focus on dynamic learning methodology, continuous assessment, action research etc. (MOE, 2005).

To conduct a successful action research, teachers should have a reasonable degree of competence and possess the appropriate skills. First, teachers should have enough knowledge, competence and experience in action research itself. Second, they should possess listening skills, language skills and management skills, and collaborative work. Besides this, teachers should bring everyone who is implicated in the research into the action research project (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996). Teachers are no longer just a technician within the class room, the action researcher evolves into a “decision maker, consultant, curriculum developer, analyst, activist and school leader.” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 17).

2.12. The Role of Administrators in Action Research

It is important for everyone to know that educational reform is not the sole responsibility of teachers, but a shared process between administrators, teachers, students, and their parents. Administrators can provide a model of learning and action research for their schools by becoming learners and researchers themselves and critically reviewing and attempting to improve their instructional leadership styles. Partnering for Action Research between teachers and administrators will support and enhance the role of the school administrator as an instructional leader, not just a building manager.

By actively engaging with teachers in action research, the school administrator sends the message that instruction is the primary concern of the school, and that teachers who are seeking better instructional solutions are engaged in an accepted and honored role in the school.(Glenda , Sakil ,and Sandra 2012)

Action Research is a means of improving student achievement through more effective teaching and administration of schools(Kemmis,1981cited in Glenda , Sakil ,and Sandra 2012 p.15)

School administrators must be student and teacher centered, and willing to tackle issues for which there are no easy answers. The shift in educational leadership has gone from instructional leader to the more appropriate term of “learning leader” (Schmoker, 2006). In the past, a principal or school administrator worked in isolation and was predominantly concerned with personal autonomy and the top down approach. This type of leadership practice will no longer work if schools are to create an effective environment for student learning and achievement. Schmoker (2006) asserts that schools will not improve until the building leader begins to work cooperatively with teachers. The role of the school administrator encompasses teamwork, exploration, creation, and the ability to “lead by doing the right things” (Lindley, 2009, p. 4).

The school administrators may face a number of problems daily; and these problems cannot only be solved by traditional ways it needs the knowledge and application of action research Sagor (2000) believes that leaders who engage in action research find the process to be an empowering experience. He states that relevance is guaranteed because the focus of the research is determined by the researcher, who utilizes the findings to enhance professional practice (2000). Carl Rogers” quote, with which this article opened, is significant because educators at all levels: teachers, principals and superintendents must embrace the necessity to be lifelong learners and not be in fear of change. Individuals get comfortable with what they are used to doing and put up roadblocks when change is necessary. The roadblocks are based out of fear of change and fear of failure; lack of understanding the need for change, uncertainty, and having to learn something new. Fullan (2001) points out that the school administrators” role has become

more overwhelming, more multifaceted, and more fulfilling for those who learn to guide change.

School administrators must be the driving force and role models that begin the movement for change or facilitate the movement within their schools. By using the process of action research the school administrator not only models the importance of learning and assessing personal practice, but as Ferrance (2000) states, they help their teachers by working collaboratively and it helps in their professional development. One way to begin modeling the realities of change within professional practice is to utilize action Research.

2.13. Validity and Reliability in Action Research

The results of action research need to be measured for validity and reliability. Validity is an important consideration in action research. Davidson and Tolich (2003) put forward the following definition of validity: “*Validity* refers to the extent to which a question or variable accurately reflects the concept the researcher is actually looking for” (p. 32). McTaggart also suggests that validity can be improved by ensuring there is detailed transparency of method, data, including interpretation, reporting and triangulation of data. Davidson and Tolich again espouse that “reliability refers to consistency” (2003, p. 32). This means that the same results would be achieved when repeated at a different time, situation or place (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). Action research in educational settings however are often small scale projects and specific to the research site or stakeholders rather than applicable to a wider audience. This is why in qualitative research the term “reliability” has been contested (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992) reliability in qualitative research: “can be regarded as a fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched, i.e. a degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage” (p. 48).

2.14. Triangulation

Triangulation involves the use of multiple and different sources, methods and perspectives to support, elaborate, or illuminate the research problem and its outcomes. It enables the inquirer to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is

being perceived (Bryman, 2008). In action research, we include all stakeholders relevant to the issue investigated, observe multiple sites and events relevant to the stakeholders and issue investigated, and review all relevant materials, including resources, reports, records, research literature, and so on. These multiple sources and methods provide a rich resource for building adequate and appropriate accounts and understandings that form the base for working toward the resolution of research problems. If action research is to be considered as rigorous as other research approaches Piggot-Irvine (2009) believes that action research needs to focus “on a strong evidence base, triangulation of data and high accountability” (p. 22).

2.15. Factors Affecting Teachers' Involvement in Action Research

According to Burns, (1999), lack of time, lack of resources, school organizational features, and inadequacies of research skills are the most frequently ranked research constraints among participants. Obtaining consent, language of research, pressure of student examinations, and disapproval of the principals are the second serious problems which seem to hamper teachers' undertaking of action research. Then, human factors such as disapproval of the colleagues, misconception of the role of the teacher, professional factors and students' disapproval are the third set of factors which are followed by heavy work-load, limited support, anxiety in sharing classroom practices, anxiety about research skills, suspicious of the usefulness of action research, and timetable pressures are also found to hamper teachers' involvement in action research.

Elliott (1999:79) also says most prevailing research constraints which teacher-researchers encounter in further education:

Barriers to research... include: under-funding of staff development ,Inflexible staff contracts, high staff work-load, an absence of Research contracts,... the active discouragement of the academic drift in... colleges, prioritization by managers of course development and teaching over research, limited access to library and internet, funding methodologies that do not reward research,...,a competitive... culture that discourages collaborative research.

According to Elliot (1999), mentioned above, personal barriers, institutional barriers and resource barriers are the three major barriers to conduct action research.

Also Yusuf (1972 E.C, cited in Seyoum, 1998:1-18) many reasons given for not conducting research which can be also true for action research:

1. Absence of conducive research environment in schools;
2. Inadequacy of research skill;
3. Lack of financial and material resources in schools;
4. Bureaucratic red-tape;
5. Lack of interest in research; and
6. Absence of government policy with regard to academic freedom

Furthermore, many other scholars also identify the other barriers which teacher researchers possibly encounter in doing action research such as lack of motivation, training and problem of dissemination of research findings (Brumfit and Mitchell, 1993); and problem of work-load, lack of collaboration and turn-over of teachers from school to school (Roberts, 1988).

2.16. Ethical Issues in Action Research

Action research requires a high level of ethical behavior. Action researchers must not act in a way that causes either physical or psychological injury to a child. Usually, this means taking a very sensitive approach to sharing information collected from test scores, interviews, surveys, videotaped observations or other sources of data. The degree to which practitioners have to be concerned about protecting their students' confidentiality is determined by their purpose for doing action research. For example, if the intent of project is simply to inform his/her own instruction, and he/she do not plan to use his/her data outside of their school, then the researcher do not need to be concerned about taking additional precautions to protect his/her students' privacy. In this case, the ethical obligations as a teacher are sufficient. As a rule, teachers are expected to exhibit great care in protecting their students' confidentiality (Corey, S. (1953).

Ethics in action research is based on the same principles as ethics in other research. The first principle is that participants should not be wronged in the name of research. It is just as important to abide by ethical guidelines in action research as it is in other forms of research. However, action researchers may have some unique challenges to overcome in ensuring ethical principles are upheld. Action research is often more open ended and may change as the researcher focuses differently on the problems in the context. In action research, there is little distance between the researcher (e.g., the teacher in the school setting) and the subjects (the students in the teacher's classroom).

There is some argument in the field of action research about the need for informed consent. The case made is that the subjects are actually the researchers (the teachers) when the purpose of action research is to improve one's own performance. Proponents argue that students in classes, for example, are simply and naturally living through the teacher researcher's instruction the same instruction they would have been receiving without action research. However, most experts in the field believe it is wise to obtain permission, particularly if the researcher wishes to present or even publish the findings to others outside of the local context.(Donald AryLucy Cheser JacobsChristine K. Sorensen).

Action researchers in schools would be prudent to obtain parental consent. Sagor (2000) recommends a generic letter to parents that conveys four key points: (1) The teacher is conducting research for him- or herself that is intended to benefit the children in the class; (2) the research will not mean different things will happen to some of the children, and nothing will be granted or denied due to the research; (3) the teacher might use the child's work, words, or ideas in reporting on the research; and (4) there will be no negative consequences if permission is denied. Data about that child will then not be used in the study.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

In this section, design of the study, participants of the study, instruments used, and procedures of the study and methods of data analysis are presented.

3.1. Design of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the current practices and attitudes of action research in CGAAPS. The study therefore, used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In order to draw conclusion about the research problem raised in chapter one of the study, triangulation procedures were also used to validate the qualitative data.

3.2. Participants of the Study (Population, Sample Size, & Sampling Techniques)

The participants of the study were primary school teachers, principals, from the ten sample primary schools with their respective woreda Educational officers (Cluster supervisors), Sub City Educational officers and City Government of Addis Ababa Education Bureau officer. Random sampling was used to select ten primary schools from twenty six Government primary schools in Yeka Sub city. About 100 teachers from ten sample schools, six principals, two Woreda Educational officers(Cluster super visors) , two SCEO, one CGAAEB officers were selected as participants for the study through purposive sampling technique because they are directly connected to the educational activities of the study.

3.3. Data Gathering Instruments

In order to get adequate and complementary information for the study, diverse set of data gathering instruments were employed. These were: questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussion were major data gathering instruments.

3.3.1. Questionnaire

Since it is the most proper means to gather the necessary information from larger sample size within short time, it was used to collect data from teachers. The questionnaire was composed of five parts. The first part of the questionnaire was personal data (biodata) of the respondents. The second, the third, the fourth and the fifth part were contained closed-ended, open- ended questions, and items in a Likert scale.

Moreover, the use of the questionnaire is found to be important to draw out information on teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards action research. It seemed also vital to get data on the research constraints which CGAAPS teachers possibly came across in conducting action research and to generate data on the possible solutions to these research constraints as well.

The researcher distributed the questionnaire by himself in order to provide the necessary clarification. From 100 copies of questionnaire distributed, 89 were filled and returned. The return rate was 89 %. However, two copies of the returned questionnaire were incomplete and they were excluded.

3.3.2. Interview

Interviews were conducted to see the quality and implementation level of action researches in solving educational problems of CGAAPS. It was made with six principals, two Woreda educational Officers (WEO), two Sub city educational Officers (SEO) and City Government of Addis Ababa Education Bureau (CGAAEB) Officer with face to face basis. Because of the respondents' different background, the interviews were

prepared in English and translated into Amharic to avoid language barrier during discussion. Each interviews took place by the respondents' permission. Probing questions were also asked to the interviewees to capture in depth and detail information.

3.3.3. Focus Group Discussion

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with Birhan Guzo primary school teachers concerning the action research practices, the quality and value of action researches in improving teachers' professional development and solving educational problems in the CGAAPS. It was used to collect qualitative data from participants' perceptions, opinions and experiences.

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

First, the researcher had a letter of cooperation from IER, AAU and introduced himself to the CEO and CGAAEB Officer to make the data collection smooth. This gave the researcher conducive atmosphere for the study. Then the researcher contacted the educational officers and principals with the cooperative letter from IER, AAU. Because this, the researcher was collected data from the participants without any problem.

3.5. Methods of Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques were employed. Based on the nature of the research questions, different statistical methods were employed. All the close-ended questionnaires were first collected, organized, tabulated, coded and entered in to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer Program and quantitatively analyzed, interpreted and reported using Descriptive statistics (Frequency, percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation), the Chi-square and the total (Grand) mean.

The data obtained from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and from all the other tools were qualitatively analyzed and discussed under each pertinent basic research questions.

3.6. The Pilot Study

After the questionnaire had been developed, the first draft was given to the advisor and one PhD student, and one graduate colleague student for its clarity and simplicity. Based on the feedback obtained, some items of the instrument were changed and some were reshuffled and modified. Then, the instrument was tried out for its suitability, reliability and validity in Slayish primary school before it was distributed to the main respondents.

Eight teachers were selected using random sampling technique as participants of the pilot study. After the questionnaire was collected, modification was made on the items based on the hints obtained from the pilot study. The pilot results found to be reliable between 0.544 and 0.78alphas. The pilot protocol of the interview was also practiced with two principals about the procedures, clarity and validity of the questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and discussion of the data gathered from teachers, Principals, Sub city Education officers and Addis Ababa Education Officers. Questionnaire, focus group discussion and interview guide questions were used to gather the data.

4.1.2. Bio Data of the Participants

Table 1 below indicates bio data of teachers, principals and educational officers included in the study

Table 1: Characteristics of the Teachers Respondents

No	Characteristics		N	%
1	Sex	Male	55	63.2
		Female	32	36.8
		Total	87	100
2	Age	<30	52	59.8
		30-35	20	23.0
		36-41	9	10.3
		42-47	3	3.4
		48-53	1	1.1
		>=54	2	2.3
		Total	87	100
3	Qualification	Diploma	55	63.2
		Degree	32	36.8
		Total	87	100
4	Field of study	Natural science	39	44.8
		social science	48	55.2
		Total	87	100.
5	Workload per week	<=10	5	5.7
		11-15	28	32.2
		16-20	50	57.5
		21-25	2	2.3
		>=26	2	2.3
		Total	87	100
6	Working experience	<=5	33	37.9
		6-10	38	43.7
		11-15	3	3.4
		16-20	5	5.7
		21-25	5	5.7
		26-30	1	1.1
		>=31	2	2.3
7	Current position in the career structure	beginner	9	10.3
		Junior	25	28.7
		Teacher	24	27.6
		higher teacher	22	25.3
		associative teach	4	4.6
		lead teacher	1	1.1
		higher lead teacher	2	2.3
		Total	87	100.0

As can be seen from the above table, 55(63.2%) of the teachers were male while 32 (36.8%) were female. The majority of teacher respondents, about 79(93.11%) were in the age range of 30-41years, while 6 (6.8) were at age level of 41 years and above. This also implies that most of the respondents who were involved in this study were found in the productive age group. With respect to academic qualification, 55 (63.2%) of the teachers were diploma holder, whereas, 32 (36.8%) had their first degree. From the interview held with school principals, Woreda Educational officers and Subcity Educational officers all were degree holders while the City Government of Addis Ababa Education Bureau officer participants have Master degree.

Concerning the respondents' field of study, 39(44.8 %) were graduated of natural science while 48(55.2%) were by social science. As indicated in the table above about teaching load of the respondent teachers, 6 (4.6%) carried more than 20 periods per week. Whereas 50(57.5%) teach 16-20 periods per week and 33 (37.9%) had 10-15 periods respectively. This indicates that teachers may have no enough time to conduct action research in their school.

As illustrated in Table 1, 71(81.6%) of the respondents have 5-10 working experience. Whereas 10(11.4%) have 16-25 working experiences in teaching and 3(3.4%) have more than 26 years working experiences.

In accordance with data in Table 1 above, 9 (10.3%) reported that they were beginner,25(28.7%)junior,24(27.6%)teacher,22(25.3%)highteacher,4(4.6%)associativeteacher,1(1.1)lead teacher and 2(2.3%) of the respondents were higher lead teacher respectively. This shows that most of the teacher respondents were found between junior to higher teacher in their career structure.

4.2. Teachers Attitude towards Action Research

Attitudes are a complex combination of things that tend to call personality, beliefs, values, behaviors, and motivations. Thus, to identify the perception of CGAAPS teachers towards the practice of action research in making the schools more effective; respondents were asked to show their reaction to statements by choosing one among the given five points Likert scale alternatives ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1).

Table 2: Teachers Attitude towards Action Research

No	Items	Responses										Mean	SD
		5		4		3		2		1			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
8	I have knowledge for doing action research	15	17.2	38	43.7	1	1.1	27	31	6	6.9	3.33	1.273
9	Action research can increase my professional competency.	51	58.6	34	39.1	-	-	2	2.3	-	-	4.54	.625
10	Action research is valuable to the teaching and learning process for my students	46	52.9	40	46	1	1.1	-	-	-	-	4.52	.525
11	Action research has the potential to increase teamwork	47	54.0	37	42.5	-	-	3	3.4	-	-	4.47	.679
12	I can solve my class room problems by using action research	36	41.4	46	52.9	3	3.4	1	1.1	1	1.1	4.32	.707
13	I do action research to improve my profession	28	32.2	46	52.9	5	5.7	8	9.2	-	-	4.08	.866
14	I have no time to do action research	5	5.7	37	42.5	8	9.2	27	31	15	17.2	3	1.285
15	My school environment is not comfort to do action research	27	31	39	44.8	7	8.0	9	10.3	5	5.7	3.85	1.147
16	Action research is helpful for planning and decision making	49	56.3	33	37.9	1	1.1	3	3.4	1	1.1	4.45	.789
17	The contribution of School administrators is very high to increase action research practices in school.	31	35.6	47	54.0	5	5.7	1	1.1	3	3.4	4.17	.865
18	Conducting action research must be taken as on criteria in career structure of teachers	22	25.3	54	62.1	5	5.7	3	3.4	3	3.4	4.02	.876
19	I view myself as a teacher researcher	43	49.4	37	42.5	3	3.4	3	3.4	1	1.1	4.36	.807

As it is shown in Table2, 43.7% of the respondents reported their agreement as they have knowledge for doing action research. Whereas 31% of the teachers disagree about having knowledge of action research. Similarly, the data obtained from the focus group discussion and interview with principals shows; as there is a gap of knowledge in action research at primary schools. About 55.45% of the respondents also showed their strong agreement for items such as action research can increase teachers' professional competency, action research is valuable for the effective teaching learning process, action research has the potential of increasing team work in the school, daily educational problems specially class room problems can be solved by using action research and it is also helpful for planning and decision making taking place in the school. Similarly, more than 40% of the respondents also showed agreement on the above items. This shows most teachers have positive attitude to conduct action research. Whereas the data obtained by interview from principals and woreda educational officers indicate as most teachers have negative attitude to conduct action research.

On the other hand, 42.5% of the respondents agree that they have no time to do action research. While 31.1% of teachers reflected as there is enough time to conduct action research in the school. With respect to the school environment to do action research, 44.8% of the respondents reported that the school environment is not comfort to conduct action research and 31% disagree on the same item above.

Concerning the contribution of the school administrators to increase the practice of action research in primary school, 54% of the respondents agree that the role of the school leaders is high to increase the practices of action research. As woreda educational officers and Subcity educational officers mentioned on the interview held on 03/09/06 and 09/09/06 respectively, there is a clear policy about conducting action research. Therefore, as interviewees' opinion, school administrators must do action research by themselves and must also give necessary support for teachers. On the other hand 62.1% of the teacher respondent reflected that conducting action research must be taken as one criteria in career structure of teachers. As indicated in the table 2 above, 49.4% and 42.5% of the teachers respondents strongly agree and agree to view themselves as a teacher researcher respectively where as,3.4% disagree.

As observed from Table 2, the mean rating of almost all items was more than agreed (4). These items were: Action research can increase teachers' professional competency, action research is valuable to the teaching and learning process for students achievement, action research has the potential to increase teamwork, class room problems can be solved by using action research, teachers do action research to improve their profession, action research is helpful for planning and decision making, the contribution of school administrators is very high to increase practices of action research in school, Conducting action research must be taken as one criteria in career structure of teachers and teachers view themselves as a teacher researcher. This implies most primary school teachers have positive attitude for the practices of action research.

However, the mean rating of the knowledge of teachers in action research, the environment of school and the time required for teachers to conduct action research at school indicates (3). Therefore, it seems that half of the respondents had theoretical knowledge of action research, half of the school environment was also not comfort to conduct action research and half of the respondents had no enough time to conduct action research. The overall Grand Mean score of the respondents in Table 2 was equal to the rating value of agree ($M=4.22$). This implies that most teachers had positive attitude towards the practices of action research. The standard deviations for all most all items were relatively small. This indicates that most teacher respondents were similar to one another in terms of their perception towards the practices of action research

Overall, teachers' perception had a significant contribution to the teachers 'involvement in action research to enhance the professional competency of teachers and to improve students' achievement. It seems that teachers who had positive perception towards action research were found to be more committed than those who had negative ideas towards action research.

4.3. The Status of Teachers in Action Research

In order to involve in action research, teachers should have basic knowledge about action research. Accordingly, a question was posed to teacher respondents whether they had taken action research course/training during their university/college study and after they started teaching.

Table 3: Teachers Attendance in Action Research Course / Training

No	Items	Responses			
			N	%	Chi-square (X^2)
20	Have you ever taken action research training?	Yes	82	94.3	68.149
		No	5	5.7	
21	If your answer to question number "20" is yes, during	Responses			
			Pre service	in-service	Both in-service and pre-service
		N	20	22	45
		%	23	25.3	51.7
22	Have you attained any training on action research after you started teaching?		N	%	
		Yes	61	70.1	
		No	26	29.9	

* $p < 0.05$; CV=3.84

Table 3 shows that 82(94.3%) of the respondents confirmed that they had taken action research course /training .Where as the remaining 5(5.7%) admitted that they had not taken such course/ training. Out of 94.3% who had taken the trainings, 51.7% were in both pre service and in service and specifically, 70.1% of the respondents had taken the

training after they started teaching. Whereas 29.9% had not taken action research trainings after they started teaching.

The Chi-square test for significance indicated the presence of significant difference between two groups. Since the calculated Chi-square ($X^2 = 68.149$) is greater than the critical value ($CV = 3.84$) at 0.05 Alpha level. This implies that the proportion of the respondents who had taken action research course/training was greater than who did not take the course

Based on the above findings, it is possible to sum up that significant percentage of teachers in City Government of Addis Ababa Primary Schools had taken action research trainings. This implies at least the respondents had the basic research knowledge to be engaged in action research activities.

4.4. Teachers Effort in Reading Action Research Materials

It is expected that teachers have to read different research books to update their action research knowledge. For this reason, question was posed to teachers whether they read the research books, action research documents and research reports or not.

Table 4: Teachers' Effort for Updating their Action Research Knowledge

No	Item	Responses				
			Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
23	How often have you read action research books, documents as well as research reports?	N	8	43	28	8
		%	9.2	49.4	32.2	9.2

As can be seen from the Table 4, 8(9.2%) frequently,43(49.4%) sometimes and 28(32.2%) rarely of the respondents read action research books, action research documents as well as research reports respectively. Whereas 8(9.2%) never read research materials. This shows most teacher respondents read action research materials sometimes only which cannot effectively increase the knowledge of action research.

4.5. Respondents’ Theoretical Knowledge and Skills of Action Research

In order to conduct action research, teachers must have knowledge and skill of action research. To assess the respondents’ the theoretical knowledge and skill of action research, question was posed to CGAAPS Teacher.

Table 5: The Rate of Theoretical Knowledge and Skill of Teachers to Conduct Action Research

No	Item	Responses				
		N	%	Mean	SD	
24	How do you rate your theoretical knowledge and skill to conduct action research?	Very low	7	8.0	2.52	.975
		Low	51	58.6		
		Undecided	6	6.9		
		High	23	26.5		
		Very High	-	-		

Table 5 shows that 58.6% and 26.4 5 of the teacher respondents indicated that their theoretical knowledge and skill of action research was low and high respectively. Whereas 8.0% of the respondents’ research knowledge and skill was very low. The data obtained from the focus group discussion also supports this one. Most focus group

participants raised as there is a knowledge gap in action research. As indicated in the table 5, the mean value is 2.52 this implies the respondents' knowledge and skill of action research was below the average.

4.6. The Involvement of Teacher in Action Research

Table 6: The Involvement of CGAAPS Teachers in Action Research

No	Items	Responses		
			N	%
25	Have you ever conducted action research at your school?	Yes	16	18.4
		No	71	81.6
26	If your answer to question number '25' is YES ,. Who did initiate you to conduct action research at your school? (possible to select more than one choices)	School leaders	1	6.25
		Your understanding and initiation for action research	6	37.5
		Educational problems observed at your school.	7	43.75
		To gain career promotion	2	12.5
		other	-	-

As can be seen from the table 6, 71(81.6%) of the respondents have never conducted action research where as 16(18.4%) conducted. Different questions were posed to those who conducted action research in the table above. Accordingly 6.25%, of the teacher respondents were conducted action research by the influence of school leaders, 37.5% have done by the understanding and initiation for action research, others 43.75% of the teacher respondents have conducted action research because of Educational problems

observed at their school and 12.5 % to gain career structure .As discussed above, this shows that most teachers have done action research to solve educational problems observed at their school.

4.7. Quality of Action Research

Quality action research may involves three phases such as planning, acting and reflecting. Table 7 below assesses the quality of action research conducted in CGAAPS.

Table 7: The Quality of Action Research Conducted at CGAAPS

No	Items	Responses		
			N	%
27	Does your research work indicate the major priority areas of your school problems?	Yes	12	75
		No	4	25
28	Did you use action research methodologies when you were conducting action research at your school?	Yes	14	87.5
		No	2	12.5

As it is discussed earlier in table 6, out of 87 teacher respondents only 16 teachers have conducted action research. From these 16 conducted action research, and shown in Table 7 above, 75% of action research done only indicates the major priority areas of the school problems. This shows that when teachers conduct action research, school leaders must follow and give technical support. Concerning the methodology of action research 87.5% of the respondents reported that they follow necessary methodologies in doing action research.

Table 8: Dissemination of the Research Findings in CGAAPS

No	Item	Responses		
			N	%
29	Did you share the result of your research with other colleagues or staff members?	Yes	8	50
		No	8	50

Accordingly, only 8 (50%) of the respondents confirmed that the result of their research work was disseminated to the targeted audience, while 8 (50) replied that their research findings were not disseminated. Disseminating the results of the research is part of the problem. It is essential to share the best practices with schools in the region. As utilization process, dissemination of the findings to the intended audience seems neglected. There was no trend of disseminating best research works to the targeted audience through seminar, written reports, etc. at Sub-Citylevels and Woreda level.

The interviewees of Woreda Education Officers and Subcity Educational Officers accepted that there was negligence to utilize the result of the research. The reasons they provided were associated with shortage of human resource and shortage of budget from the interview held on (10/05.2014).Most school principals also raised the same thing about the dissemination of research result. Except two primary schools Abiot primary school and Tesfa Birhan Primary schools, all other primary schools didn't disseminate the research result.

4.8. Documenting Research Results

Teachers who conducted action research were asked whether they document or not the research result.

Table 9: The Documentation of Research Results

No	Item	Responses		
			N	%
30	Did you document your research result as a reference for others in the library?	Yes	5	31.25
		No	11	68.75

As can be seen on the Table 9 above, from 16, 11(68.75%) teacher respondents replied that they didn't document their research result as a reference. While 5(31.25%) only document the research result. This implies that novices teacher researcher couldn't get research documents to refer.

4.9. The use of Action Research

Action research can improve teachers' performance, students' achievement and the all quality of an organization. Even today, the idea of action research remains a powerful tool for improving the practice of any given educational setting. The process allows the practitioners to experience problem-solving and to model it for their learners.

Table 10: Teachers Performance/Professional Competency and Students' Achievement Because of Action Research Conducted in CGAAPS.

No	Items	Responses							
		Very High		High		No change			
		N	%	N	%	N	%		
31	How do you evaluate your performance/ professional competency after you conducted action research	2	12.5	12	75	2	12.5	2.00	.516
32	How do you see the difference on students' achievement because of action research conducted	2	12.5	11	68.75	3	18.75	2.06	.574

Table 10 above shows the performance of teachers after they have conducted action research .As it was indicated 12(75%) of teacher respondents reported that their performance were high after they have conducted action research and 2(12.5%) of respondents' professional competency were very high due to action research. It is believed that if teachers have high professional competency, the students' achievement can be improved easily. As it is shown in table 10,11 (68.75 respondents replied that their students achievement was high after they have conducted action research. From the data, it is possible to understand conducting action research can increase teachers' professional competency: as a result can improve students' achievement.

4.10. Necessary Resources to Conduct Action Research at Primary School

In the school there must be necessary resources to support practitioners when they conduct action research. For this reason, questions were posed to CGAAPS Teachers and school principals to know the availability of this resources.

Table 11: School Resources to Conduct Action research

No	Items	Responses				
		Very High	High	Not decided	Low	Very low
		N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
33	How do you rate the technical support of the school administrators for you when you conduct action research?	10(11.5%)	10 (10%)	8 (9.2%)	31(35%)	-
34	Is there reference books about action research at your school	Responses				
		Yes		NO		
		N	%	N	%	
		20	23.0	67	77.0	

As can be seen from the Table 11 above, 31(35%) of the teacher respondents reported that the technical support given by school administrators were low for those teachers who have conducted action research. While 10(10.5%) of the respondents' report was very high. This implies that most teachers who have done action research were only by their effort. From the interview held with SEO and CGAAE Officer on 10/05/2014 and 20/05/2014 respectively, The interviewees raised as there is knowledge and skill gap about action research in primary school directors. On the other hand, 67(77%) of the respondents replied that there was no action research reference books at their school. Whereas 20(23%) reported there was action reference books. Results from focus group

discussions of teachers are not also very far from what has been obtained from questionnaires.

4.11. Factors Negatively Affecting CGAAPS Teachers' Engagement in Action Research

In general, the result from open ended questions, interview with principals and educational officers confirmed, personal and institutional factors impeded teachers from involvement in action research even though variations were observed on the degree of impact. The results from principals' interview, teachers' explanation showed overlapping in institutional factors like school research culture, overload in teaching and other activities, and lack of financial support had more negative impact than personal factors on sample school teachers. This was, however, difficult for educational officers (interviewees,) to agree. For example, principals and educational officer interviewees, believed that most CGAAPS teachers have mainly lacked of action research competence, awareness and attitude towards action research that belong to personal factors. They further expressed that teachers had seen their involvement in action research as tiresome and tedious activity that could not bring any comparative advantage for the practitioners. Some teachers have little knowledge and skill to conduct action research for professional competency and educational improvement. Even some teachers do not have positive attitude about action research (10/05/2014, 11/05/2014&14/05/2014).

Among the factors which were listed out as hindrance for teachers to conduct action research at school on open ended question were: overload in teaching and in other committee activities, lack of knowledge and experience of action research, lack of incentive, perceiving action research as a complex research, lack of financial support, lack of technical support and lack of reference were mainly identified by the respondents as the most serious factors that discourage them from engaging in action research activities.

Moreover, the factors such as lack of financial support, lack of awareness about the contribution of action research for professional improvement, for quality of education, and due to little recognition and motivation for previous research works by the local educational authorities were a serious factors that made the teachers refrain from involvement in action research activities.

Based on the above data, one can easily conclude that overload in teaching and in other committee activities, lack of research facilities, limited research environment, and lack of financial support, lack of technical support were the most serious impediments for most CGAAPS teachers to involve in action research.

The result of interview with principals and educational officers confirmed, attitude, research knowledge and skill were factors that impeded teachers from involvement in action research even though variations were observed on the degree of impact. The interviewee of CGAAEB officer also felt that most CGAAPS teachers' awareness was not that much encouraging. According to her opinion, teachers have perceived that involving in action research as a huge task that demands special knowledge and extra time (14/04/2014).

The teacher respondents were also asked an open ended questions to give their opinions on what they think about the practice of action research and those who didn't participate in questionnaires where participated into Focus Group Discussions (FGD) in order to share their ideas about to overcome the challenges seen in the practices of action research and to promote action research among teachers in CGAAPS Teachers.

- Doing action research has to be regarded as part and parcel of teaching activity.
- The schools must discuss thoroughly with teachers about how to solve educational problems through action research.
- The reports must be utilized by teachers themselves and schools.
- Schools, Woreda and SCEO/CGAAEB should initiate and encourage teachers to involve in action research.

- Incentives should be given to those strived in resolving educational problems through action research.
- School libraries should be well organized and equipped with adequate and relevant research materials and current research journals.
- Workshops and in-service trainings should be given to all levels consistently to update their understanding on research activities.
- Skills in doing action research can developed through repeated practices of doing it and, experience exchange. Therefore, there should be a mechanism through which researchers and schools experience it.
- Teacher researchers should present their research works to stakeholders and /or send a copy of their findings to AAEB.
- Teachers should strive to` update themselves by frequently reading research books, journals and share research related materials with their colleagues.
- School principals should have the necessary knowledge and skills about the relevance of action research and how to conduct. In order to give technical support for teachers.

Over all, the above suggestion from teachers, principals and educational officers implies that all concerned bodies should involve actively in a struggle to improve the practice of action research at a primary school.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary

The aim of this study was to explore the current practices of action research in CGAAPS. To achieve this aim, the study has attempted to make clear the issues, prospects and challenges of the action research practice with the intention of recommending possible solutions. This study may provides valuable information for decision makers including teachers and other stakeholders. The basic questions formulated to facilitate the study were:

- ❖ The attitude of primary school teachers to ward action research
- ❖ The knowledge and skill of primary school teachers to conduct action research
- ❖ Action research findings used to improve teachers' professional competency and solve educational problems.
- ❖ School resources to conduct action research.
- ❖ Hindering factors to conduct action research in CGAAPS.

In order to find out answers to the basic research questions, a variety of data gathering instruments, such as, questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions were employed. Interviews were held with six school directors, two Woreda educational officers (WEO), two SCEO Officers and one CGAAEB Officer. One focus group discussion were held with eight participants. Questionnaires and structured interview schedules were used to collect data with the research questions.

Before beginning the data collection from teachers, the questionnaire was piloted with eight randomly selected teachers in one of the CGAAPS, Salayish primary school which was not included in the main study. The pilot results found to be reliable between 0.544 and 0.78alphas. The pilot protocol of the interview was also practiced with two principals

about the procedures, clarity and validity of the questions. The collected data from the questionnaire was organized, and analyzed using statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the data obtained through interview were analyzed qualitatively.

The main findings of the study are the following.

1. The majority of teacher respondents had shown positive perception towards the practice of action research for professional development and quality of education. For example, About 55.45% of the respondents has indicated as action research can increase teachers' professional competency, valuable for the effective teaching learning process, has the potential of increasing team work in the school, daily educational problems specially class room problems can be solved by using action research and as it is also helpful for planning and decision making taking place in the school.
2. Regarding the teachers' training in action research, the study revealed that majority of teacher respondents (94.3%) had confirmed that they had taken action research training during their in pre service/in service.
3. The results of the study have shown that sometimes (49.4%) of the teacher respondents read action research books, action research documents as well as research reports to update their research knowledge and skill.
4. Regarding teachers' knowledge and skill about action research, teachers, directors and other educational officers revealed that the required knowledge and skill of teachers and school directors to conduct action research is low.
5. It was also observed that only 18.4 % of the teacher respondents replied that they had conducted action research in their schools. The majority of the respondents about 81.6% had not involved in action research. Some of the reasons, which hinder the teachers from involvement in action research, were: overload in teaching and other committee activities, lack incentives, lack of research facilities, lack of financial

support and perceiving action research as a huge task that demands special knowledge.

6. As it was indicated on the Table 7 of the study, the majority of the teacher respondents who conducted action research were because of educational problems observed at their school.
7. Out of the teacher respondents who conducted action research, half /50% reported that their research works were disseminated to the staff. And 68.75% of the research done was not documented as a reference for other novice researchers.
8. From those who have conducted action research at the school, 75% of the respondents reported that their professional competency was high because of the practices of action research /action research conducted.
9. The findings of this study demonstrated that the facilitating conditions that helped teachers to conduct action research were not available at school. For example 77% of the respondents reported that there were no action research books, journals and research reports.

The findings of this study depicted that the involvement of teachers and principals in doing action research was minimal. Based on the above findings, one can conclude that the practices of action research in CGAAPS are at undeveloped stage.

5.2. Conclusions

From the above major findings the following conclusions are made.

- ❖ Most teachers in CGAAPS had positive perception towards action research. Even though the majority of the respondents had taken action research training, during pre service/ in service, most of the teachers and principals had not updated their action research knowledge and skills by further reading relevant research books or journals and research reports. As a result the required knowledge and skill of teachers in action research is low. Which implies the extent to which action research carried out was also low in CGAAPS.
- ❖ The majority of the teacher respondents who conducted action research was because of educational problems observed at their schools. Not by school leaders influence or other educational officers.
- ❖ Teachers were not get appropriate support and recognition from different stakeholders to involve in action research.

Most of the research work was not disseminated to the staff or beneficiaries and also not documented.

- ❖ The findings of this study confirmed that conducting action research can improve teachers' professional competency and as well as students' achievement. The main problems for carrying out action research in CGAAPS include overload in teaching and other committee activities, lack of incentives, lack of research facilities, lack of financial support, lack of required knowledge and skill of action research, lack of reading materials in schools.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the research findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations have been forwarded to educational authorities and other concerned stakeholders to practice action research in primary schools for the sake of teachers' professional competency and students' achievement.

1. The school leaders should give technical support for the practitioners to make the practices of action research more effective at primary schools. Concerning the knowledge and skill gap observed on action research, short trainings must be designed and given to teachers and school directors. All teachers and principals should update their action research knowledge and skills by further reading relevant research books or journals and research reports. It is better also if research professionals are at School, WEO and SEO who can give technical support and evaluate research done.
2. It might be difficult for those teachers, who are overloaded in teaching and committee activities to engage in action research properly. Therefore, it is recommended that there should be a systematic and wise use of time allocation by school leaders and by the teachers themselves.
3. It is recommended that the schools, WEO and SEO to use the research results in their planning and decision making.
4. Policy makers must give due attention to improve barriers of action research practice to promote teachers' participation and make schools as centers for knowledge.
5. The study was delimited to some aspects of the practices of action research to improve teachers' and school principals' professional quality and students' achievement in CGAAPS which did not revealed the picture of all problems. Therefore, the problems require further investigation by other researchers.

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Questionnaire: - To be filled by City Government of Addis Ababa primary School Teachers.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect relevant information from teachers about the practices of action research in primary schools. For this reason, your cooperation in completing this questionnaire is undoubtedly valuable for the study. Since your response will be kept confidentially, please feel free to answer all questions genuinely as much as possible.

Thank you!

General direction: Please answer each question by **circling** your choice(s) from the alternatives given. Some questions allow you to write your views, opinions and beliefs about the practices of action research in primary schools. Dear respondents do not forget to read the instruction given in each section of the questionnaire.

No need of writing your name

PART ONE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Sex: 1) male 2) female
2. Age: 1) below 30 2) 30-35 3) 36-41 4) 42-47 5) 48-53 6) ≥ 54
3. Qualification: 1) Diploma 2) BA/BSc/Bed 3) MA/MSC/Med 4) If any other
4. Field of study: -----
5. Work load per week-----
6. Working experience in teaching in primary school. -----
7. Your current position in the career structure
 - 1) Beginner teacher 2) Junior teacher 3) Teacher 4) Higher teacher 5) Associate teacher 6) lead teacher 7) Higher lead teacher

PART TWO

ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARD ACTION RESEARCH

The following statements need your opinion about the importance of action research and its implementation at primary schools. For each statement, please indicate your agreement or disagreement by circling from 1to5: meaning 5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Not decided

2 = Disagree 1= Strongly disagree

<u>N</u>	<u>Q</u> Statements	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
8	I have knowledge for doing action research	5	4	3	2	1
9	Action research can increase my professional competency.	5	4	3	2	1
10	Action research is valuable to the teaching and learning process for my students	5	4	3	2	1
11	Action research has the potential to increase teamwork	5	4	3	2	1
12	I can solve my class room problems by using action research	5	4	3	2	1
13	I do action research to improve my profession	5	4	3	2	1
14	I have no time to do action research	5	4	3	2	1
15	My school environment is not comfort to do action research	5	4	3	2	1
16	Action research is helpful for planning and decision making	5	4	3	2	1
17	The contribution of School administrators is very high to increase action research practices in school.	5	4	3	2	1

18	Conducting action research must be taken as on criteria in career structure of teachers	5	4	3	2	1
19	I view myself as a teacher researcher	5	4	3	2	1

PART THREE

THE KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHERS ABOUT ACTION RESEARCH AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH ACTION RESEARCH FINDINGS USED TO IMPROVE TEACHERS PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY AND SOLVE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS.

20. Have you ever taken action research training? 1) yes 2) NO
21. If your answer to question number “20” is yes, during:-
 1) Pre-service 2) in-service 3) both in-service and pre-service
22. How often have you read action research books, documents as well as research reports?
 1) Frequently 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never
23. Have you attained any training on action research after you started teaching?
 1) Yes 2) No
24. How do you rate your theoretical knowledge and skill to conduct action research?
 1) Very low 2) Low 3) Undecided 4) High 5) Very High
25. Have you ever conducted action research at your school? 1) Yes 2) No
26. If your answer to question number ‘25’ is **YES**,. Who did initiate you to conduct action research at your school? (**possible to select more than one choices**)
 1) School leaders 2) Your understanding and initiation for action research 3) Educational problems observed at your school. 4) To gain career promotion 5) If there is other factor please specify-----

27. Is your research work indicates the major priority areas of your school problems?
 1) Yes 2) No
28. Did you use action research methodologies when you were conducting action research at your school?
 1) Yes 2) No

29. Did you share the result of your research with other colleagues or staff members?
 1) Yes 2) No
30. Did you document your research result as a reference for others in the library?
 1) Yes 2) No
31. How do you evaluate your performance/ professional competency after you conducted action research?
 1)Very High 2) High 3) No change
32. How do you see the difference on students' achievement because of action research conducted?
 1) Very High 2) High 3) No change

PART FOUR

ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT ACTION RESEARCH

33. Is there reference books about action research at your school?
 1) Yes 2) No
34. How do you rate the technical support of the school administrators for you when you conduct action research?
 1) Very High 2) High 3) Not decided 4) Low 4) Very low
35. Please list resources that are not found at your school but necessary to conduct action research
- 35.1. -----
- 35.2-----
- 35.3-----

PART FIVE

Please, feel free to add below any comment or views what you think that have not been covered. in this questionnaire about the practices of action research.

36. If you do not do action research, please list the main factors that challenged you or hindered you and suggest the likely solution.

No	Challenges or hindering factors to do action research	Suggestions for solutions
36.1		
36.2		
36.3		
36.4		
36.5		
36.7		
36.8		

37. Do you believe as action research may one criteria for teachers professional development and can improve students' achievement? If **Yes**, in what way? If **No**, why? -----

38. What did you benefit from conducting action research; if you have done it at your school? -----

39. What measures need to be taken to increase the knowledge and skill of teachers in action research? -----

40. If there are other reasons which can hinder you to conduct action research please specify -----

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Interview Guide

An interview guide to CGAAPS principals

The main purpose of this interview is to gather information from primary school principals in CGGAAEB particularly YEKA SUB CITY about the practices of action research in primary schools. You have been selected to answer the questions as a part of the participant of the study. Therefore, your cooperation to answer questions, share your experience and opinion is very important for the study.

Thank you!

1. .Sex-----Educational level----- Position-----
2. .What is your opinion about the use of action research in primary school?
 - How do you see your teacher's perception to ward action research?
 - Do you believe that action research can increase team work in the school?
 - Do you believe that action research can solve daily educational problems in the school?
 - Do you use action research results for planning and decision making?
3. Have you ever taken action research training?
 - ❖ Do you believe that you have enough knowledge and skill to conduct action research?
 - ❖ Do you believe that teachers have enough knowledge about action research?
 - ❖ How do you evaluate theoretical and practices of action research of primary school teachers
 - ❖ What did/do you do to update your action research knowledge and skill?
 - ❖ Is there action research references materials at your school library?
4. Have you ever conducted action research at your school?
 - ❖ If your answer is yes, what did you observe after you conducted it?

- ❖ Did you share your research result for the staff?
 - ❖ How many teachers have conducted action research from 2006GC/1994E.C to 2014GC/2006E.C to day
5. To what extent action research findings are used in your school?
- ❖ Is there any change observed at your school, because of action research?
 - ❖ If there is a change, please would mention some change?
6. What are the hindering factors to conduct action research at primary school?
Please list out the factors with their possible solutions.
7. What measures need to be taken to improve the practices of action research at primary schools?

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Interview Guide

An interview guide to CGAAEB Officer, SCE Officers and WE Officers

The main purpose of this interview is to gather information from cluster Supervisors at Woreda level, Sub City Educational officers and CGAAEB officers about the practices of action research in primary schools. You have been selected to answer the questions as a part of the participant of the study. Therefore, your cooperation to answer questions, share your experience and opinion is very important for the study.

Thank you!

1. Do you believe that primary school teachers and principals have enough knowledge and skills to conduct action research?
 - ❖ How can you describe it?
2. How do you evaluate the trend of action research practices of teachers in primary schools since 2006GC/1994EC?
3. Did you evaluate the quality of action research under taken at primary schools?
 - ❖ If you did it, is it according to the action research process?
 - ❖ If not, what measures you took to correct it?
 - ❖ Have you observed some improvements after you have suggested recommended?
4. How can you describe the attitude primary school teachers to ward action research?
5. What type of support did you give for primary school teachers to encourage their participation in action research?
6. Do you believe that using action research can solve educational problems face today?
7. Do you use research findings for your educational decisions?

8. What factors motivate or de motivates primary school teachers to undertake action research at their school?
 - ❖ Motivating factors
 - ❖ De motivating factors
9. What did you do to increase the amount of practitioners or teacher researcher in primary schools?
10. What measures need to be taken to improve the practices of action research at primary schools?

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Focus Group Discussion

General guideline questions for Primary School Teachers

The main purpose of this Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is to gather information from department head teachers about the practices of action research in primary schools. You have been selected to answer the questions as a part of the participant of the study. Therefore, your cooperation to answer questions, share your experience and opinion is very important for the study.

Thank you!

1. Could you explain the attitude of teachers to ward action research in your school?
2. What do you think the need of action research to improve teachers professional knowledge and students' achievement?
3. Do you know that teachers who conducted action research since 2006 GC/1994EC?
 - ❖ Did they do or are they doing collaboratively or individually?
4. Do you think that the research findings/recommendations are practicable/ at classroom?
 - ❖ Do the administrators use the findings in their educational planning and decision making?
5. Do you believe that all teachers have enough knowledge and skills to conduct action research?
6. What kind of incentive (reward) has been given to teacher researchers in your school, from Woreda, SC and regional level? How do you evaluate?
7. In your opinion, what is the main role of school administrators, in all educational officers to produce qualified practitioners in school?
8. How do you evaluate your school research facilities (research guide and model, reference books etc)?
9. What factors determine or hinder teachers to conduct action research?

10. What measures need to be taken to overcome the determinant or hindering factors of the practices of action research?