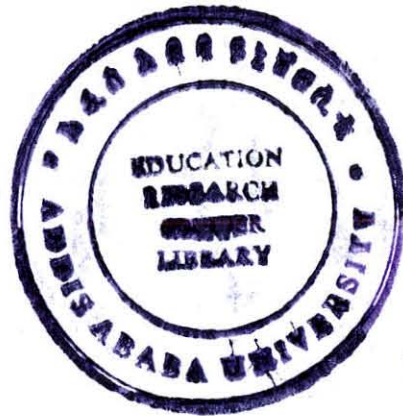


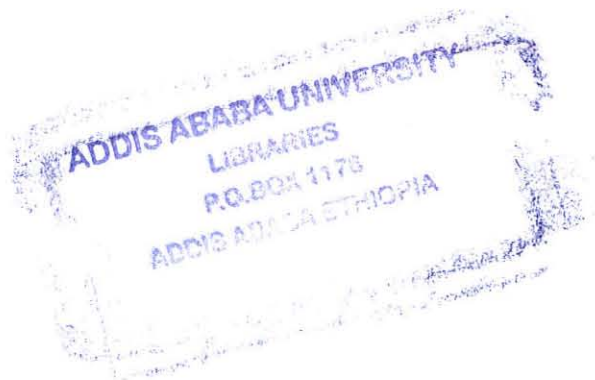
**COLLEGE TEACHERS' INVOLVEMENT IN ACTION
RESEARCH, IN AMHARA REGIONAL STATE**



BY

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

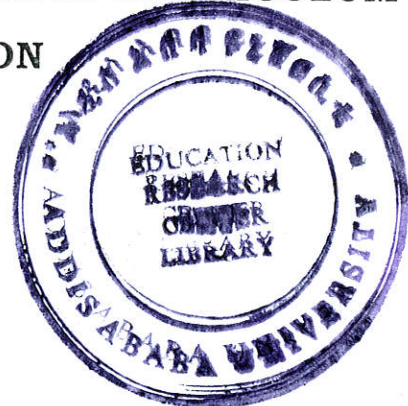


**JULY 2007
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RESEARCH, IN AMHARA REGIONAL STATE**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM
AND TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN CURRICULUM AND
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

The following abbreviations and acronyms appear in the text. Each of them is used with the meanings in front of them.

ACTE - Amhara College of Teacher Education

TGE - Transitional Government of Ethiopia

MOE - Ministry of Education

REB - Regional Education Bureau

HDP - Higher Diploma Program

CTE - College of Teacher Education

RDC - Research and Development Committee

FGD - Focus Group Discussion

B.Ed- Bachelor of Education

BA- Bachelor of Arts

B.Sc- Bachelor of Science

CP- College Principals

ADA- Amhara Development Association.

CDC- Curriculum Development Coordinator

ABSTRACT

The major intent of this study was to examine the extent to which college teachers' have been possibly involved in action research, their knowledge and skills to conduct action research, their attitudes towards action research, impediments which they have possibly encountered in carrying out action research, and some of the solutions to these impediments, in Amhara Regional State. To achieve this objective, a descriptive survey method was employed. In this study data were collected from teachers and principals through questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion. The questionnaire consisting of 50 items was administered to 104 college teachers whereas the interview was held with 16 teachers and 8 college principals. Moreover, a focus group discussion was held with 16 college principals in two CTE in the Region. From the administered questionnaire 96.2 percent of them were filled in and returned. Depending on the nature and types of the section of the questionnaire, frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and chi -square were employed. As a result, the data gained through the open - ended questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion were analyzed descriptively on the bases of common themes and issues of the respondents' responses.

Accordingly, the pictures of the analysis appeared to show that college teachers did not make considerable efforts in undertaking action research (i.e., only 6.19 percent of teachers have conducted action research), and most of the teachers also lacked knowledge and skills to conduct action research.

However, the teachers seemed to show positive attitude towards action research as one could possibly infer from the attitudes scale of mean and standard deviation computation (revealed in tables 12, 13, 14 and 15). In addition, lack of enough time, lack of action research skills, lack of encouragement, lack of action research seminars or workshops, lack of action research courses;(less practical training), lack of collaboration, and emphasizing teaching over action research were some of the most serious action research constraints (impediments) reported to hamper the involvement of teachers in action research.

To this end, summary and conclusions were made based on the insights gained from these research findings. Finally, the researcher forwarded some recommendations with the hope of alleviating these impediments and for involved more teachers to get involved in action research.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Education, like other discipline, makes use of research to a great extent to improve the quality of teaching and learning process. Regarding this Seyoum (1998) states that teaching and research in education are complementary. This can show us research, teaching and learning in education have a symbolic relationship that is the contribution of research to teaching and learning and to the quality of education on the one hand, and the opportunities that teaching creates for research activities to be undertaken on the other hand.

Derbessa (2000: 178) on his part added that research is an integral part of education in at least two ways. First practitioners often require conducting research of one kind or another in the course of their work. Secondly, practitioners benefit from others' research as a means to improve their practice.

In the educational sphere, teachers occupy a central place that affect the quality of students' learning which ultimately impinges up on the quality of education of the nation. Regarding this, Hopkins (1993: vii) stressed that the outstanding characteristics of the professional (teacher) is a capacity for autonomous professional self development through systematic self study, through the study of the work of other teachers and through the testing of ideas by classroom research procedures.

Traditionally, it was believed that research is an activity carried out by people in higher education in order to acquire a research degree, or in order to fulfill a contract made with different research organizations. But curriculum movement in 1960s and early 1970s introduced the idea that teachers could be involved in researching the issues around and in their classrooms (Mitchel, 1985). In Britain, it was in 1967-72 that teachers were encouraged to do action research

to facilitate students learning and to pinpoint the problem that emanate from the implementation of new curriculum (Elliott, 1988:79). The idea of teachers as researchers emerged as a result of the following two reasons:

- ◆ It emerged as a solution to the problem of implementing curriculum innovations in classrooms.
- ◆ It was linked with a process model of development, which posited curriculum, and teacher development as one and the same enterprise.

By the same token, in USA, teachers began to use action research in the mid 1950s (Mc Neil, 1996 in Yalaw, 2000:253).

These points reveal that through classroom researches by teachers, curriculum improvements are possible and teachers expand their own understanding of the curriculum through doing it and researching it.

Today, research has been considered as one of the key tasks of institutions of higher learning not as a matter of formality but teaching and research have been recognized as a twin broad function of higher education. Supporting this, Neumann and Lindsay (1988:85) said, "Basically the function of most higher institutions in the world are teaching and research in combination." This is because teachers in higher educations in order to provide proper help to their trainee, they themselves must be educational researchers.

Different writers also indicated that educational research is one of the basic components in higher education in general and in teacher education in particular. In line with this idea, Hummadi (1998:46) reported that University and College teachers should integrate teaching and research and thus, the expected amount of time, which must be spent on research and on teaching, must be clear in terms of employment. The Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia (TGE, 1994) stressed that higher educations need to be research oriented and the legislations of higher learning institutions consider research as one of their primary tasks. This clearly indicates that teachers in colleges are

required to carryout researches and institutions should at least have the intent of becoming teacher-and-research centers.

Of course, various types of research methodologies could be employed to study different kinds of educational problems. However, as to Hopkin (1993), one particular research methodology that has been found to be quite amenable and appropriate in order to bring about improvement in the practice of the teaching – learning process and school management is action research.

The idea of using research in a 'natural' setting to change the way that the researcher interacts with that setting can be traced back to Kurt Lewis, a social psychologist and educator whose work on action research was developed throughout the 1940s in the United States. "Lewis is credited with coining the term 'action research' to describe work that did not separate the investigation from the action needed to solve the problem "(McFarland and Stansell, 1993: 14). Topics chosen for his study related directly to the context of the issue. His process was cyclical, involving a "non- linear pattern of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on the changes in the social situations." (Ferrance, 2000:7)

Stephen Corey at Teachers college at Colombia University was among the first to use action research in the field of education. He belied that the scientific method in education could bring about change because educators would be involved in both the research and the application of information. Corey (1953:70) summed up much of the thought behind this fledgling branch of inquiry:

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 some one else has discovered of his teaching.

Currently, the growing shift of paradigm in Ethiopian education system is followed by a shift of direction in the management of education. That is the former centralized system of education is changed to decentralized system of

education. Besides, the different educational activities (curriculum development, evaluation, teaching and research) in the centralized system that were separate, hierarchical and specialized activities are now integrated at school level to improve learning process. This is with the belief that the centrally developed curriculum has some implementation problem for the reason that it does not consider the situation of individual schools in which the curriculum is going to be implemented. This requires teachers and school officials (deans, principals, etc) to develop the knowledge and skill of curriculum development and implementation at school level that is appropriate for the context. This inturn requires teachers to critically and clearly understand their school and classroom conditions. As a result of this shift, the need for developing teachers' skill in action research is fundamental truth.

Regarding the shift of paradigm, the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia (TGE, 1994: 7) advocates the need for strengthening problem solving capacity. Besides, the Ministry of Education has made the commitment to extend research activities down to the school level. Furthermore, one of the objectives of college teachers is to prepare teachers who will conduct action research to solve teaching learning programs with in the school (MOE, 2003: 37)

Based on this the Amhara College of Teacher Educations are expected to fulfill the requirements set by the Ministry of Education (MOE) by conducting action researches which is primarily applicable for the understanding of change processes in their institutions along with their teaching.

In this study therefore, an attempt was made to analyze the current level of college teachers' engagement in doing action research, the most critical factors that influence the development, survival and utilization in Amhara Colleges of Teacher Education.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Amhara Colleges of Teacher Education, teachers are frequently heard criticizing most educational research works as something irrelevant to their

lives and their findings to be very difficult to put into practice. This is because first, most research works in the colleges have been carried out by outside researchers (MOE, REB and the like) who do not conceptualize the real teaching learning environments as the teachers themselves do. They usually regard teaching from the theoretical perspective.

Therefore, most educational research findings are found to be of little use to teachers because of the differing conceptions researchers and teachers have. Second, research in education is usually conducted using the approach known as psycho-statistical research paradigm. This approach applies tightly controlled experimentation and the testing of hypothesis using randomly selected groups through the use of statistical analysis. Habtamu (2000:7) stated that the major "complaints" in Ethiopian education researchers are the quality of the research done is not as could be and most of the studies are survey, questionnaire and observation. Here we can understand that psycho-statistical research paradigm approach to educational research is problematic, particularly if its results are to be applied to classrooms. Many scholars also advocate that it is very difficult to draw random samples in educational settings since there are many contextual variables (Socio-economic, background, community culture, teacher personality, etc. . .) in schools and classrooms that would affect the results.

Therefore, mainly because of the above two reasons the traditional approach to educational research is found to be less useful to teachers particularly at classroom levels.

According to Hopkins (1993) classroom research is considered to be an act undertaken by teachers to promote their own and/or colleagues' teaching. It is further used to test the assumption of educational theory in practice. It is believed that teachers by conducting research in their own or colleagues' classrooms, they can take increased responsibility for their actions and create a more conducive teaching - learning environment.

In recent years teachers have adopted the label 'action research' to describe their particular approach to classroom research. In Dave Ebbutte' (1985) view (as cited in Hopkins, 1993: 45), action research “ . . . is about the systematic study of attempts to improve educational practice by group of participants by means of practical actions and by means of their own reflection up on the effects of these actions”.

Considering these facts, the legislation of Amhara Colleges of Teacher Education stated that college teachers should be engaged themselves in research activities to untangle the problems they encounter in the execution of their tasks. As to the legislation of Amhara College of Teacher education, the academic staff members are expected to devote 25 percent of their time and effort in research activities. For this purpose, the research and development committee has been organized and are expected to devote 75 percent of their working time and effort to the realization of research activities of the colleges (Preparing research proposals, conducting research works, organizing research seminars, workshops, establishing work procedures . . . etc). So as to encourage teachers to do research different preconditions are also fulfilled by the legislation and the colleges. In the legislation, teachers who carryout research and producing articles for publication are encouraged through promotion from one academic rank to the next. They are also encouraged by minimizing their teaching loads and different responsibilities. In their colleges teachers are encouraged to do research by being provided with higher diploma program (HDP) training so as to be equipped with appropriate action research skills. They also get incentives and honorarium for what they do.

Based on these preconditions and the researcher experience in teaching in one of teachers' training colleges in the region no one has also conducted research regarding teachers' involvement in action research in Amhara College of Teacher Education; the study is initiated to investigate the whole efforts made by college teachers and the problems that constrain in conducting action research.

Thus, the main purpose of this study was to explore teachers' action research practices in Amhara Colleges of Teacher Education. It would attempt to analyze the competence of college teachers in doing action research and how well they practice it for the purpose of improving the teaching learning process and their own professional competence. More specifically, it was designed to find out possible answers to the following basic research questions:

1. Do college teachers involve in doing research using action research methods?
2. Are college teachers knowledgeable and skillful to conduct action research?
 - Were college teachers trained in doing action research?
 - If so what kind of training did they obtain with regard to action research?
3. What are the attitudes of college teachers towards action research?
4. What are the problems teachers encounter in conducting action research?
5. What possible suggestions can be forwarded to increase teachers' involvement in conducting action research?

1.3 Significance of the Study

Investigating the involvement of college teacher in action research is hoped to have invaluable contributions to instructional process from many perspectives. Accordingly, this study is assumed to have a significant role in contributing to the quality of teaching. Then, it is hoped to have importance in raising action research awareness of professionals in Amhara Colleges of Teacher Education so that action research could be employed in teaching.

Further more, this study may be of help to all those concerned with teachings such as teachers, curriculum experts, education research institutes, and educational authorities. Finally, this study may serve as a spring board for people who are interested in conducting further study in action research.

1.4 Delimitation of the Study

Even though the researcher believes that the need of action research is paramount and may need wider coverage at the various levels of educational system, the scope of this study was delimited to investigate college teachers' involvement in action research, in Amhara Region. The Region is deliberately chosen for the study because of the fact that the researcher has been working in Debre Birhan CTE which is one of the four governmental CTEs in the Region hence access to data and communication with teachers and school officials can be easily attended. Currently, there are four governmental CTEs in the Region. Among these two colleges (Gondar CTE, which is far away from other colleges and from the researcher, and Debre Markos CTE, which was used in the pilot study) were not included in the main study. Thus, the study was conducted on the remaining two (Debre Birhan CTE and Dessie CTE).

1.5 Limitation of the Study

In this study, document analysis was planned to be used as source of data to check teachers' practical involvement in action research against their personal profiles across the two teachers' training colleges. However, it was not possible to get lists of action research results in terms of teachers' levels of qualification and levels of teaching experiences from documentary sources. As a result, the researcher could not assess teachers' action research contribution in relation to their personal profiles. Even then, all possible efforts were made while designating the questionnaire and the interview to gather relevant and adequate data. Moreover, some college principals were interviewed to check teachers' responses both to the questionnaire and the interview.

1.6 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

- **Action research** - is a type of applied or decision oriented research, but with the stipulation that the researcher is the same person as the practitioner who will make and live with the decision in Amhara Region CTE.
- **Research setting** - the chosen fixed environment in which the research is conducted in Amhara region.
- **Research and development committee (RDC)**-elected body encompassing members who are expected to mobilize research work at colleges' level.
- **Teaching load** - teaching work load which is measured by the contact hour of regular work time in a week.
- **Pilot - study** - pre- test in which tools of data gathering are examined for their consistency or appropriateness for this study.
- **Triangulation**- a procedure of using different data sources and a combination of different tools to obtain a more comprehensive data on action research issues.
- **Attitude**- refers to the perceptions, beliefs, and opinions of college teachers have towards action research. It can be positive or negative with intensity ranging against.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As stated earlier, the purpose of this study is to explore the involvement of college teachers' in action research, in Amhara Region. This section of the paper, therefore, discusses basic and relevant issues raised in the available literature.

Briefly, an attempt has been made to highlight the different definitions of action research, a brief history of action research, types of action research, approaches of action research, major characteristics of action research, comparison of action research with other forms of traditional/ formal research, steps and processes of action research, action research - a manifestation of teacher development, pros and cons of the validity of action research as well as major factors in doing action research.

2.1 Conceptual Framing

Action research is one of those terms that we hear quite often in today's educational circles. But just what does it mean? If we ask different people to define action research, we may find ourselves with different responses. As its applications vary with time, place and settings, scholars find it difficult to give action research a comprehensive definition. Most definitions are functional others are operational.

To begin with somewhat general let's see what Cohen and Manion (1994) stated and Stephen Corey (1953) considers conventional. They take action research as "a small scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and close examination of the effect of such intervention." This means that action research in education is a small-scale practice of the practitioner (the teacher). Unlike traditional research, which requires government interference for aspects of frameworks and resources, it focuses on only a particular problem (at a small

scale) that the practitioner with or without external intervention can act for immediate solution. The researcher, the teacher critically intervenes in the functioning of the real world (his practice) and closely evaluates the change brought through his intervention.

Many of the definitions given to educational action research are about the self-interventions of teachers or schools in their on going practice. Some limit the scope of action research to the classroom situation only and see it as 'classroom research'; others take it as a self-reflective enquiry. Whether it is defined this way or the other, almost all of them indicate that action research is a means of tackling practically encountered problems in a systematic way.

A functional definition given by Kemmis and Carr (1986: 162) is comprehensive and widely accepted. According to him,

Action research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants, teachers, students, parents in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices; their understanding of these practices; and the situations where these practices are carried out.

This functional definition tells us the purpose and participatory nature of action research. Almost all the direct stakeholders of the school (education) could take part in the activity. The purpose of the research is to improve educational practices through self-evaluation research means. Many people are also drawn to this understanding of action research because it is firmly located in the realm of the practitioner - it is tied to self-reflection. As a way of working it is very close to the notion of reflective practitioner coined by Donald Schön (1983).

According to Watts (1985: 118), action research is a process in which participants examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully using the techniques of research. It is based on the following assumptions:

- teachers and principals work best on problems they have identified for themselves;

- teachers and principals become more effective when encouraged to examine and assess their work and then consider way of working differently;
- teachers and principals help each other by working collaboratively;
- working with colleagues helps teachers and principals in their professional development;

This definition is supported by Sagor (2000: 78). It clearly indicates that action research is collective endeavor undertaken by teachers and practitioners themselves to be self - able or help one another in solving educational problem. Ultimate purpose is finding practical solutions to immediate problems. Thus, teachers are expected to undertake action research that helps to alleviate or bring about educational improvement, deepening understanding, evaluating, performance are also issues of action research.

Stephen Corey (1953) on his part sees action research as" a process by which practitioners attempt to study their problems scientifically in order to guide, correct and evaluate their decisions and actions. "This is also a comprehensive one in that it tells the what, how and why of the method. The practitioners here are the researchers who actually involve in the activity. The practitioners in action research are expected to approach the problems they face in a systematic way so that the findings obtained could be applied to similar problems in other working situations. Action research in Corey's beliefs tells what the practitioner should do next correcting and evaluating what he has done so far.

Action research is given both descriptive and analytical definitions by Gwynn Mettetal (2003:63) as:

It is a flexible spiral process, which allows action (changes, improvement) and research (understanding, knowledge) to be achieved at the same time. The understanding allows more informed change at the some time is informed by that change. People affected by the change are usually involved in the action research. This allows the understanding to be widely shared and the change to pursue with commitment.

Action and research do not happen at different instance: they are taken as two faces of a coin. The teacher researchers while acting (more specifically while teaching), the action leads the teacher to find a problem, which immediately has to be diagnosed. On the bases of the causes identified, the teacher suggests possible solutions which he has to act on. The process is not rigid; it is subject to flexibility which lets the practitioner approach the problem in any better way possible. In this regard, Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:72) state action research in a concise and clear way.

Action research is applied research done to answer a specific practical problem, which results in action. Unlike traditional research which aims to generalize its findings, action research is primarily concerned with relevance to the specific cite in which it occurs.

The action researcher directly uses findings (intervenes) to solve the problem he has identified. Thus, the research helps to the answer for a specific problem that the researcher (teacher) faces while working. This overcomes the shortcoming of the traditional research, which doesn't both act on practical and specific problems and take measures accordingly. In the view of this, Stephen Kemmis (1983:44) says:

. . . Action research is a study of social situation with a view to improve educational practice by groups of participants by means of their practical action and by means of their own reflection up on the effect of those action... it is trying out an idea in practice with a view to improving or changing something, trying to have the real effect on the situation.

This definition directs attention to one of the most essential motives for doing action research. It lies in the will to improve the quality of teaching and learning as well as the conditions under which teachers and students work in schools.

Generally, all the above definitions have got one point in common in that all of them take action research as a systematic (scientific) method designed either for improving or changing one's practice. Thus, in approaching a problem in a

systematic way research demands the researcher to follow the steps such as identifying a problem, developing a hypothesis, plan a research strategy, collect data, analyze and interpret data, taking action based on the results and share the findings with the actual users.

2.2 A Brief History of Action Research

Action research has no a long standing story as other formal researches. Particularly educational action research or applying action research in classroom situation is thought to be a new idea, emerged recently. Therefore, before going to the details of action research, it is definitely important to help us to have understanding on its historical overview. This understanding enables us to have an insight into when and how action research was emerged, the ground for its emergency and experience of action research in different countries.

2.2.1 The Origin and Development of Action Research

As has been attempted to show above, action research is not an idea that has evolved for a long in the history of research. It has come into existence only some decades ago. According to the available literature, the origin of action research goes back to the work of Collier (1945), Kolb (1984), Lewin (1948), Corey (1953), Skerritt (1992), Cohen and Manion (1994).

Susan Noffke (1997) tells how the work of John Collier commissioner of Indian affair from 1933 to 1945, might be seen as the first identifiable starting point for action research. Collier was committed to develop 'Community,' as it related to education and social contexts for Native Americans, and this was to be accomplished through 'the experience of responsible democracy' (Collier, 1945: 275, cited in Noffke, 1997: 4). Kurt Lewin, a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, shared the same interests as Collier but from the perspective of industrial contexts and how participants in decision-making could lead to enhanced productivity. Collier and Lewin were aware of the potential of

democratic practice for both self-determination and social engineering, the potential of 're - education' as a way of ensuring compliance and loyalty to the dominant culture (McNiff and Whitehead 2002).

Some historical accounts (for example, Mckernan, 1991) locate the development of action research alongside other contemporary developments in education and the social sciences: the widening acceptance of new approaches in ethnography; the Science in education movement of the nineteenth centuries; the progressive education movement, particularly the thinking of John Dewey and its practical implementation by people such as Hilda Taba and Stephen Corey, and the Group Dynamics movement in social psychology and human relations training. These trends had significance for the reconstruction of post-war society, in which practitioner research came to be seen as an important factor.

Mckernan (1996, as cited in Burns, 1999: 26), argues that the origin of action research dates back to the late nineteenth century as a reaction to "pure research" method which failed to give practical solutions to what happens in the actual classroom teaching situation. According to him,

The seeds of action research are to be found as early as the late nineteenth century in the Science in Education movement and a variety of other social form initiative . . . It also grew out of the moves by progressive educators, such as John Dewey, in the early part of the twentieth century to challenge the orthodoxy of scientific research methods current in the field of education.

Similarly, Best and Kahn (1993: 24) put the origin and development of action research as follows:

Since the late 1930s, the fields of social psychology and education have shown great interest in what has been called 'action research.' In education, the movement has had its goal the involvement of both research specialist and classroom teacher in the study and application of research to educational problems in particular classroom setting.

Despite these facts, as O'Brien (1998) underlines, Lewin a German social and experimental psychologist is generally considered as the 'father' of action research. O'Brien adds that Lewin focuses on social problems through participative group processes for addressing conflict, crises, and changes in organizations which were not originally meant for addressing educational problems. Besides, he had a keen interest to study human relationship scientifically and encourage people to improve their own enquires (Mc Niff, 2001: 19).

Kart Lewin was working in America before he had fled to German in 1933. According to Burns (1999: 26) the complete change surfaced politically, socially and ideologically at that time made him a good observant on social matters. At the beginning he tried to challenge the study of social science, which depends on theory in most of the cases. McTaggart (1991: 6) stated that:

Social life in post - war United States, there was abundant practical and theoretical problems for the field of social sciences. The empirical discipline of psychology found a rich vien for the articulation of theory. But for Lewin, it provided an environment for investigating practical and theoretical problems together, indeed in some respect as if they were one.

Lewin first used the term 'action research' in this 1946 paper named "Action Research and Minority Problems" (O'Brien, 1998). While writing his paper he focused more on the social practice of that time. He was attracted and deeply involved with the discrimination against the minority groups and the production in factories. At this time Lewin did formidable achievements in the way he tried to bring a commitment to democracy and justice. To Lewin (1948:Xi) without knowledge of and obedience to, the laws of human nature in-group settings, democracy can not succeed. And without freedom for research and theory as provided only in a democratic environment, social science will surely fail. In all works of Lewin, he was concerned with the integration of theory and practice (Kolb, 1984: 168). This was symbolized in his best- known question "There is nothing so practiced as good theory" (Lewin, 1948: 169).

In the meantime, he wrote on the characteristics of action research and its effects on various forms of social science. He also tried to make the role of the research clear while doing action research. According to Lewin, his role was to promote and understand the process of change.

In the late 1940's he suggested an enquiry that consists of action cycle using a process of spiral steps. As Mckernan (1991: 21) pointed out the cycles used by Lewin are planning, analysis, implementation, and evaluation mechanisms. At this time he came up with the conclusion that all social problems should be investigated within their own boundary but not with the environment outside their context to be understood.

Lewin's work was not located primarily in educational settings, and his ideas were developed in industry and social relations (Eden and Huxham, 1999). However, the relevance of his work to education was clear, and his ideas were soon applied in education in USA.

On applying action research to the field of education the first systematic attempt was made by Stephen Corey (McNiff, 2001: 19). Corey wrote and published a book named "Action Research to Improve School Practice" in 1953, which became highly influential and he led the action research movement in education in the United State of America during the World War II era. In his book, Corey advocates the importance of action research in improving the condition of teaching and learning. Besides, he also stated that action research is instrumental to curriculum reform as long as teachers have the chance to apply the results of their own inquiry (McLaren and Ciarelli, 1995: 71).

Corey believed that the systematic method in education would bring about change because educators would be involved both in the research and application of information. Corey summed up much of the thought behind this fledgling branch of inquiry.

We are convinced that the disposition to study. . . the consequence of our own teaching is more likely to change and improve our practices than is reading about what some one else has discovered of his teaching (Corey, 1953: 73, cited in Ferrance, 2000:7)

Corey believed that the value of action research is in the change that occurs in every day practice rather than of the generalization to broader audiences. He saw the need for teachers and researchers to work together.

Goodson (1992) states four factors for the emergence of action research-the irrelevance of contemporary educational research, the growing of interest among classroom teachers to participate in classroom investigation, the question of accountability to what is going on in the classroom, and the increased awareness of teachers about teaching and research solidarity.

2.2.2 The Decline and Re-discovery of Action Research

Although, Corey and his followers made unlimited attempts to spread action research in the field of education, action research did suffer a decline because of its association with radical political activism (Stringer, 1999:9). By the late 1950s, action research became the target of serious criticism. The reason why it was criticized according to Burns (1999: 27) is its "inability to test hypothesis or to establish cause and effect relationships, for its resistance to the basic techniques and procedures of research and its lack of generalizability." McFarland and Stansell (1993: 15) have also indicated the cause of action research criticism in the late 1950s as "action research was attacked as unscientific, little more than common sense and the work of amateurs". Interests in action research waned over the next few years as experiments with research designs and quantitative data collection became the norm (Ferrance, 2000: 8).

McLaren and Ciarelli (1995: 72) also put the analyst's views for the reason of its decline by the late 1950s as follow:

The decline was precipitated by the bifurcation of science and practice, which resulted from the growth of the cult of the experts. As policy makers came to rely more and more on expert educational research and development laboratories, the development of curriculum and pedagogical practice was dictated from the top down. Thus, the production of research was separated from the ambiguous and complex world of the practitioner.

However, after its decline the idea of action research in the field of education was rediscovered in the United Kingdom in the 1960s (McNiff, 2001: 21).

According to Elliott (1997: 17-20) the reason for its discovery is the dissatisfaction of so many people attending the secondary model school, especially those who were attending the "humanities" classes like religion, history and geography. Besides, there was an initiation from the teacher's side to restructure and re-conceptualize these fields of studies to make them more relevant especially to the day -to-day life of the society.

In addition to their usual tasks, teachers also took additional new tasks like teaching in teams, chairing discussions, requesting students to research the wider community and to facilitate the conditions. Moreover, sharing ideas with peers, students, head teachers, local and national government officials and school inspectors were also to be the order of the day. After all these trials, they were presenting and disseminating their work to the public through different mass media.

In the mean time, to make the subject lively, they used to conduct conferences and workshops. It was from these attempts that they were able to restructure the curriculum in the innovatory secondary schools influencing action research in the United Kingdom to emerge again (ibid: 17-21).

As far as action research's rebirth is concerned, Stenhouse contributed a lot. As a result he has got numerous followers in the United Kingdom and other parts of the world (Mc Niff, 2001: 25; Carr, W., and Stephen Kemmis, 1991: 166, Burns, 1999: 28).

Stenhouse has directed the School Council Humanities Curriculum Project from 1967 to 1972 (Mc Niff, 2001). His devotion to popularize the concept "teacher as researcher" was one step forward to the acceptability of action research and the new approach of curriculum development of his time. He requested teachers to be the best judges of their own practice and to let their students be free and active participants in the teaching learning process. McNiff (2000:25) further elaborated on the work of Stenhouse by saying that:

The Humanities project directed by Stenhouse, aimed at stabilshing a liberating atmosphere for pupils in class. It emphasized the need for discussion, for close interpersonal relationship and for the teachers to act as neutral chairman. It aimed at the liberating teachers from rigid authorities' roles).

Stenhouse believed that the development of any nation's education could thrive better whenever teacher's and people at the front line participate to the maximum level. They rank first in evaluating the shortcoming of the curriculum, the text books and other teaching materials on top of experts and researcher outside the school compound. As Elliott (1999:135) paraphrased it, Stenhouse said that:

All well founded curriculum research and development whether the work of an individual teacher, of a school, of a group working within the coordinating framework of a national project, is based on the study of classroom. It thus rests on the work of teachers.

Teachers therefore, should aim to become extended professionals (a theme developed in the work of Hoyle, 1974; Hoyle and John, 1995), and this involved.

The commitment to systematic questioning of one's own teaching as a basis for development, the commitment to and the skills to study one's own teaching; the concern to question and to test theory in practice by the use of those skills (Stenhouse, 1975: 144).

2.2.3 Action Research Experience in Ethiopia

Undertaking research by school teachers has been considered as unimaginable activity at school level. One of the major reason for this is that pursuing research on educational problems has been taken to be the duty of university

researchers and those who have adequate knowledge and skills of research. In this regard, Hussien (2000: 235) says that,

Traditionally, it has been considered that educational research is the province of the well - trained research experts. But now the approach of action research, whose nature is essentially practical and problem solving, has become attractive to practitioner- researchers.

In addition, most of the school teachers in our country have not been aware of the existence of educational action research, as it is the newly emerged idea in schools. According to USAID (2006: 43-44) study,

The development of the techniques and practice of educational action in the developing world seems at its embryonic stage that demands a great deal by facilitators and sponsoring organizations to which Ethiopia is no exception. In this regard, it is becoming an educational fashion that teachers need to undertake action research to improve teaching situations, while the practice is under question.

Most recently, there has been a growing interest in action research in schools. This interest seems to have been instituted by our educational system that demands participation of teachers in action research activities at school level in which he/she is teaching. Besides, carrying out research in school is being taken as one of the requirement for teachers' promotion in the carrier structure. Because of all this, teachers have been staggering individually or in groups to carryout research activities. However, their interest in research is limited to its instrumentality to academic promotion (Derebssa, 2000: 184).

2.3 Types of Action Research

Part of the confusion we find when we hear the term "action research" is that there are different types of action research depending on their purposes. Some scholars divide action research in to three: 'technical action research', 'practical action research', and 'emancipatory action research' (Skerritt, 1992; Scott and Usher, 1999; and McNiff, 1993). All the three types are different from one another in their purposes. For instance, Scott and Usher (1999) argue that technical action research is concerned with improving the efficiency and effectiveness of educational practice and usually carried out individually.

Furthermore, they argue that practical action research aims at the improvement and change of practitioners' understanding of classroom practices and it is carried out without collaborative means whereas the emancipatory action research is carried out through the collaboration of practitioners to improve and change educational practices. Moreover, Skerritt (1992) expresses that emancipatory action research helps practitioners to emancipate themselves from the dictates of traditions and self - deception.

According to Scott and Usher (1999), however, emancipatory action research seems to be a feasible type of action research to examine classroom practices. Primarily, it seems to incorporate the purposes of other types of action research in guiding desirable and effective classroom practices. Moreover, it is carried out through the collaboration of practitioners or teacher - researchers.

Moreover, citing Zuber - Skerritt (1996:3) Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 232) seems to capitalize on the collaborative nature of emancipatory action research as stated hereunder:

Emancipatory action research . . . is collaborative, critical and self - critical inquiry by practitioners . . . in to a major problem or issue or concern in there own practice. They own the problem and feel responsible and accountable for solving it through teamwork and through . . . a cyclical process . . .

In conclusion, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) have drawn some basic distinctions among the three types of action research. Accordingly, 'technical action research', they argue, is usually designed to examine the effectiveness of the existing educational practice. 'Practical action research', on the contrary, is designed to promote teachers' professionalism on the basis of their informed judgments. Finally, emancipatory action research, they suggest, seems to be more feasible to investigate the structural and interpersonal constraints which hamper the teachers' freedom and autonomy of educational decision - making.

On the whole, there seems to be no clear - cut difference among the three types of action research though some scholars have made efforts to draw some basic distinctions.

2.4 Approaches of Action Research

An action research appropriate to solving a problem in a classroom may not be equally convenient for a problem that similarly affects many classes and that affects a school or schools at large. Hence, practitioners could design their system of investigation using the approaches convenient to that particular situation based on the scope and nature of the problem and the participants involved.

With this understanding, practitioners are advised to improve their practice using either of the following approaches: (a) individual approach- a single teacher investigating an issue in his/her classroom; (b) collaborative approach - a group of teachers working on a common problem; or (c) whole school involvement - a teachers and others focusing on a school - or district -wide issue (Ferrance, 2000, and Seyoum, 1998).

2.4.1 Individual Action Research Approach

According to Ferrance (2000) individual teacher research (approach) focuses on a single issue in the classroom. The teacher may be seeking solutions to problems of classroom management, instructional strategies, use of materials, or students learning. Teachers may have support of their supervisor or principal, an instructor for a course they are taking, or parents. The problem is one that the teacher believes is evident in his or her classroom and one that can be addressed on an individual basis. The research may then be such that the teacher collects data or may involve looking at student participation. One of the drawbacks of individual research is that it may not be shared with others unless the teacher chooses to present findings as a faculty meeting, make a formal presentation at a conference, or submit written material to a listserv, journal, or newsletter.

2.4.2 Collaborative Action Research Approach

Collaborative action research (approach) may include as few as two teacher or a group of several teachers and others interested in addressing a classroom or department issue. This issue may involve one classroom or a common problem shared by many classrooms. These teachers may be supported by individuals out side of the school, such as a university, educational service agency, kebele or Regional education Bureau or community partner.

2.4.3 School or – District Wide Action Research Approach

In assuming school - wide research, Ferrance (2000) believes that it focuses on issues common to all. For example, a school may have a concern about the lack of parental involvement in activities, and is looking for a way to reach more parents to involve them in meaningful ways or, the school may be looking to address its organizational and decision- making structures. Teams of staff from the schoolwork together to narrow the question, gather and analyze data, and decide on a plan of action. An example of action research for a school could be to examine their state test scores to identify areas that need improvement, and then determine a plan of action to improve students' performance. Teamwork and individual contributions to the whole are very important, and it may be that problem points arise as the team strives to develop a process and make commitments to each other. When these obstacles are overcome, there will be a sense of ownership and accomplishment in the results that come from this school-wide effort.

Moreover, Ferrance (2000:5) stated, "District - wide research is far more complex and utilizes more resources, but the rewards can be great." Issues can be organizational; community based, performance-based or processes for decision- making. A district may choose to address a problem common to several schools or one of organizational management. Downsides are the documentation requirements (communication) to keep everyone in the loop, and the ability to keep the process in motion. Collecting data from all participants

needs a commitment from staff to do their fair share and to meet agreed -upon deadlines for assignments.

On the positive side, real school reform and change can take hold based on a common understanding through inquiry. The involvement of multiple constituent groups can lead energy to the process and create an environment of genuine stakeholders.

In order to give the general overview of action research approaches, it is better to consider Ferrance's idea who has presented briefly based on the topics like focus, possible support needed, potential impact and side effects.

Approaches of Action research

	Individual teacher research (approach)	Collaborative action research (approach)	School – wide action research (approach)	District wide action research (approach)
Focus	Single classroom issues	Single class room or several classrooms with common issue	School issue problem or area of collective interest	District issue organizational structures
Possible support needed	Coach/ support access to technology Assistance with data origination and analysis	Substitute teachers release time close link with administrators	School commitment leadership communication external partners	District commitment facilitator recorder communication external partner's
Potential impact	Curriculum instruction assessment	Curriculum instruction assessment policy	Potential to impact school restructuring and change policy parent involvement evaluation of programs	Allocation of resources professional development activities organizational structures policy
Side effects	Practice informed by data information not always shared	Improved collegiality Formation of partnerships	Improved collegiality, collaboration, and communication team building disagreement on process	Improved collegiality, collaboration and communication team building disagreement on process Shared vision

Source: adopted from Ferrance (2000:6)

In all the approaches, the objective is to bring a change or improvement in the educational (teaching-learning) practice and the points considered while choosing the approach depends on the purpose for the external support, the type of data, the target audience and the merits and demerits.

2.5 The Beliefs and Attitudes of Teachers towards Action Research

Scholars believe that teaching needs to be integrated with research conducted at the classroom level. This seems to be the reason why scholars like Nunan (1990, 1992), Brumfit and Mitchell (1990), Mc Niff (1988), Widdowson (1990), and Edge and Richard (1993) try to confirm the need of action research in teaching classroom contexts.

Bell (1993:2), citing Howard and Sharp (1983:6), tries to explain the existing misconception about the concept of research among many people who think that research is something which can be undertaken only by naturally gifted persons. Bell argues that:

Most people associate the word 'research' with activities which are substantially removed from day - to - day life and which are pursued by out standing gifted persons with unusual level of commitment. There is of course a good deal of truth in this view point, but we would argue that the pursuit is not restricted to this type of person and in deed can prove to be a stimulating and satisfying experience for many people with a trained and enquiring mind.

Hardley (n.d.), also suggests that teachers have perceived the term 'research' as an activity which is carried out by researchers from other fields. He adds that teachers are unwilling or unable to undertake action research due to factors such as shortage of time, lack of research background and lack of experience. Moreover, Nunan (1992) seems to support Hardley's argument by stating that most teachers who are interested in researching into their teaching and learning fail to do so because they are either unable to do so for practical reasons or unwilling for personal problems to carry out action research.

Nunan (1990) cites Beasley and Riordan (1981) to state that teachers and students rarely participate in doing action research; hence, teachers' knowledge of the classroom has been neglected and teachers themselves do not read and employ action research to shape and inform their methods of teaching. Besides, he argues that teachers are suspicious of the relevance of action research and

little has been known how teachers perceive and undertaken action research. As a result of such teachers' perception, Hardley (n.d) have revealed the existing gap between research and teaching in general, and action research in Particular. Skerritt (1993) and Elliott (1999) also seem to agree with Hardleys argument about the existing gap between classroom practices and action research. Besides, Skerritt (1992) suggests that action research in higher education is motivating; hence it helps them to develop their profession and to promote students' learning which would result in job satisfaction and sharing of knowledge among one's staff members.

The International Encyclopedia of Education (1994) argues that teachers, in general, are very much resistant to do action research due to many reasons. Moreover, Cohen and Monion (1994) argue that classroom teachers resist and misunderstand the relevance of action research because their attitudes and expectations seem to emanate form teachers' initial outlook of the inadequacies of other research types.

Despite these misconceptions of teachers about action research in teaching, Mc Niff (1988: xviii) defends the application of action research as follows: "Action research presents an opportunity for teachers to become uniquely involved in their own practice, to professionalize themselves, and to give reasoned justification for what they are doing". To familiarize this section, the investigator believes that action research may be of help to classroom teachers to examine and build up their classroom practices in justifiable grounds.

2.6 Major Characteristics of Action Research

The primary purpose it serves, the scope it is limited to, who owns the research and uses the findings are some of the issues that make action research differ from other research methods. The features that action research possesses are attributed to these points.

Many scholars in the field such as McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996); Cohen and Manion (1994); the International Encyclopedia of Education (1994), Nunan

(1992) are amongst those who have presented the detail features of action research. For instance, Cohen and Manion (1994: 186) have the following to say about the basic characteristics of action research.

Action research is situational - it is concerned with diagnosing a problem in a specific context and attempting to solve it in that context; it is usually ... collaborative - team of teachers and practitioners work together ... it is participatory-team members themselves take part directly or indirectly in implementing the research; and it is self-evaluative-modifications are continuously evaluated with in the ongoing situation, the ultimate objectives being to improve practice in some way or other.

Although many of the scholars mentioned these features in some way in their description of action research, what are given by Cohen and Manion (1994), are adopted. These include its nature of being situational, collaborative, participatory, empirical, cyclical and relaxed approach to research methods. These features are elaborated hereunder:

2.6.1 Situational (on -the - spot procedure)

This refers to the methods concern of diagnosing a problem encountered in a specific on - the - spot situation and attempting to solve it. It is this quality that enables the method to be responsive. It responds to the emergent needs of the situation. Cohen and Marion (1994) consider this feature as the first necessary condition for conducting action research. The research is conducted to solve immediate problems encountered in the process of action in a specific situation. Beside this, this is the aspect that primary differentiates the method from the traditional one.

2.6.2 Collaborative

Advocators of action research believe that little is done when the effort is made on individual basis. Teams of researchers and practitioners need to work together with their diverse experiences that are put together to bring a refined effort. Researchers from outside of the situation and other personnel

collaborate with the main actor; the teacher, in the endeavor made to improve an educational practice.

2.6.3 Cyclic

Similar steps tend to recur in similar sequences. Each cycle demands a critical reflection, which in turn helps the researcher plan for the next step. Each cycle involves a complete process or steps of the research target at tackling a specific problem. Each cycle begins with planning and ends with reflection. Every cycle has to come out with a possible solution for specific problem planning, acting, observation and reflections are the main steps that action research follows.

2.6.4 Participatory

All the people affected by the problem are made to involve in the research. In an educational setting the participants are teachers, pupils, administrators, parents and community personnel.

2.6.5 Self - evaluative (flexibility and adaptability)

All what are carried out in the research process are continuously and actively evaluated with in the on going situation which let the method have the nature of flexibility and adaptability. Changes are made if necessary both in the implementation and on the - sport process. Its cyclic nature makes action research self reflective and evaluative.

2.6.6 Chiefly Qualitative

This is the quality that makes action research more responsive and participatory. Action research chiefly relies on observation and behavioral data. In most cases it doesn't involve descriptive statistics. Researchers play with words not with numbers. Data is easily collected, shared, discussed, recorded in some way, evaluated and acted up- on - on the period of a project and this continuous sequence of events forms the basis of review of progress.

2.6.7 Relaxed view of Scientific Approach

Action research is more of interpersonal than methodological. The method doesn't follow the scientific method strictly. The researcher could possibly use agreed upon procedures they think effective. For this it is said to be relaxed for it empowers the participants to use mutually acceptable ethical frameworks rather than those imposed from the external. In relation to this trait action research is criticized for it:

- has got situational and a specific objectives rather than general ones;
- uses restricted samples rather than representatives,
- has little or no control over interdependent variables; and
- comes out with findings limited to a particular situation only.

This is true but it doesn't mean that action research is completely alienated from the scientific methods. These points mentioned above indicate to what extent the practitioners are not strongly addressed to the traditional research methods for they are not convenient to yield immediate solutions to the problem. They may not need to follow time consuming procedural frameworks, which at the sometime do not let the researcher, intervene unless the process is completed.

Similarly, the International Encyclopedia of Education (1994) summarizes the major characteristics of action research emphasizing on self-reflective, participatory and collaborative characteristics - all of which help practitioners to theorize about their classroom practices and to examine their own ideas, beliefs and assumptions.

2.7 Comparison of Action Research and other forms of Traditional/ Formal Research

Most of the time people confuse the difference between action research and other forms of research. Even if both of them have some common characteristics, some scholars like McNiff, Lomax, and Whitehead, (1996);

woods, (1991); and Cohen and Manion, (1994), draw basic distinctions between action research and "pure" or "basic" research. For example, Mc Niff, Lomax and Whitehead, (1996: 14) draw three points, which make action research different from other basic research. According to them, action research:

requires action as an integral part of the research process itself. It is focused by the researcher's professional values rather than methodological considerations. It is necessarily insider researcher in the sense of practitioners researching their own professional actions.

Woods (1991) also gives a comprehensive distinction between "the main stream educational research" and "action research" under the following four points. Accordingly, "the mainstream educational research" basis its data on the large number of samples where this is not always the case in action research. Then, in the former type of research, theory comes first and then practice where the reverse seems to hold true in the case of the latter. Further, the mainstream educational research is usually carried out by 'outsider- researchers' who are distant in time and place from classroom practices where as the later is undertaken by insider - researchers including teachers and other collaborators in the educational institutions. Finally, generalization of research findings is the main objective of "pure - research" where as this is not a necessary concern of action research.

In addition, Shipman (1985), Bryant (1996), Van Lier (1988) and Nunan (1990, 1992, n.d) seem to agree with such differences stated by Woods (1991).

Finally, in order to give general overview regarding to the comparison of action research with other types or formal research, it is better to consider Mettetal's idea who has presented in brief based on the topics like training needed, goals, methods of identifying the problem, sampling approach, research design and others they are different.

Comparison of Action Research with other forms of Traditional/ Formal Research

Topic	Formal Research	Action Research
Training needed by researcher	Extensive training	On own or with consultation
Goals of research	Knowledge that is generalizable	Knowledge to apply to the local situation
Method of identifying the problem to be studied	Review of previous research	Problems or goals currently faced
Procedures for literature review	Extensive	More cursory
Sampling approach	Random or representative sampling	Students or clients with who they work
Research design	Rigorous control, long time frame	Looser procedures, change during study, quick time frame; control through triangulation
Measurement procedures	Evaluate and pretest measures	Convenient measures or standardized tests
Data analysis	Statistical tests	Focus on practical, not statistical significance; presents raw data; graphs.
Application of results	Emphasise on theoretical significance, increased knowledge about teaching and learning in general	Emphasize on practical significance improved teaching and learning in a particular classroom
reporting out comes	Published report, journal article, professional conference	Informal sharing with colleagues brief report, ERIC document: conference

Source: adopted from Mettetal (2003:67)

Nevertheless, action research has also some communality with other research types. For example, McNiff, Lomax, and Whitehead (1996) state that action research and other research share some characteristics as both types of research contribute to the betterment of the existing knowledge, depend on empirical evidence to justify knowledge, and make a bridge between incoming knowledge and the already existing one.

2.8 Action Research-Steps and Processes

Processes, or steps, or stages in carrying out action research have been discussed by many scholars; For example, O' Brien (1998); Sharman (2000), Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), Nunan (1992); and McNiff (1988) are a few of these scholars. Despite this fact, there seems to be a variation among scholars in discussing action research processes or steps both in depth and

focus. For instance, an action researcher would follow such as imitation, preliminary investigation, hypothesis (es), intervention, evaluation, dissemination, and follow up stages (Nunan, 1992); and planning, acting, objective and reflecting processes (O' Brien, 1998).

Nevertheless, Cohen and Manion (1994) have come up with perhaps a more convincing and comprehensive action research processes which seem to be that a teacher researcher would follow as,

The first stage will involve the identification, evaluation and formulation of problem perceived as critical in an everyday teaching. The second stage involves preliminary discussion and negotiations among interested parties-teachers, researchers, advisors, sponsors. . . The third stage may. . . involve a review of the research literature to find out what can be learned form comparable studies, there objectives, procedures, and problems encountered. The fourth stage may involve a modification or redefinition of the initial statement of the problem at stage one . The fifth stage . . . concerned with the selection of research procedures - sampling, administration, choice of materials, . . . The six . . . will be concerned with the choice of the evaluation of procedures to be used. The seventh embraces the implementation of the project itself . . . The . . . final stage will involve the interpretation of data inferences to be drawing and evaluation of the project. ..

The present researcher believes that the variation of action research steps from one scholar to the other, both in depth and focus does not seem too much important to the practitioner (teacher - researcher) so long as the teacher researcher follows some systematic procedures in undertaking action research, he/she should not worry about and be a slave to any of the action research steps unless he/she wants to do so. In fact, the present researcher believes that these steps would be important for first time researchers or beginners.

2.9 Action Research: A Manifestation of Teachers' Development

The available literature reveals that teachers' professional and personal developments would be expressed in a number of ways including keeping diaries of ones teaching, reading news papers, journals, books prepared

portfolio about thing, undertaking small – scale classroom research activities, and so on (Head and Taylor, 1997; and Burns, 1999).

Citing Elliott (1991), Low and Glover (1996: 37) put the role of action research on teachers' professional development as follows: "The links between research based investigations and classroom practice are fundamental if professional development is to be of any lasting value." Beides, Bryant (1996) argues that reflective teaching which includes action research is a major ingredient of teachers' professional development that enables classroom teachers to examine their classroom practice in some systematic ways.

The present researcher therefore, believes that teachers should be engaged in some systematic classroom based research so as to develop their profession and ground their teaching on justifiable arguments.

Hopkins (2001: 42) concludes: "Action research combines a substantive act with a research product; it is action disciplined enquiry, a personal attempt at understanding while engaged in process of improvement and reform."

2.10 Benefits of Action Research

As far as the importance of action research is concerned different scholars advocate its benefits in different ways McNiff (2001), Mettetal (2003), Cohen and Manion (1994), Burns (1999), and Ferrance (2000) are few of the examples. Even though these scholars give their own view regarding to the benefit of action research, it would be easier to have a look on its rationale given by Ferrance (2000). According to him, action research can be worth while pursuit for educators for five reasons. These are: focus on school issue, form of teacher professional development, collegial interaction, potential to impact school change, reflection on own practice, and improved communication. He further tried to elaborate each of the benefits as follows:

2.10.1 Focus on school issue, Problem, or area of collective interest

Research done with the teachers' students, in a setting with which the teacher is familiar helps to confer relevance and validity to a disciplined study. Often academic research is seen as disconnected from the daily lives of educators. While this might not always be true, it can be very helpful for teachers to pick up threads suggested in academic circle, and weave them into their own classroom. It is also confronting for parents, or education administrators outside of the school, to know that a teacher is not just blindly following what the study seems to suggest, but is transforming the knowledge into something meaningful.

2.10.2 Form of Teacher Professional Development

Research and reflection allow teachers to grow and gain confidence in their work. Action research projects influence thinking, skills, sense of efficacy, willingness to share and communicate, and attitudes towards the process of change. Through action research, teachers learn about themselves, their students, their colleagues, and can determine ways to continually improve.

2.10.3 Collegial Interaction

Isolation is one of the downsides of teaching. Teachers are often the sole adult in a classroom, and have little or no time scheduled for professional conversations with others. Action research in pairs or by team of teachers allows time to talk with others about teaching and teaching strategies. By working on these teams, teachers must describe their own teaching styles and strategies and share their thoughts with others.

As a team they examine various instructional strategies, learning activities, and curricular materials used in the classroom. Through these discussions with colleagues they develop strongest relationship. As the practice of action research becomes part of the school culture, we see increased sharing and collaboration across department, disciplines, grade levels, and schools.

2.10.4 Potential to Impact School Change

As teachers get into action research, they are more apt to look at questions that address school and district concerns rather than questions that affect the individual teacher. This process creates new patterns of collegiality, communication and sharing. Contributions to the body of knowledge about teaching and learning may also result. Development of priorities for school-wide planning and assessment efforts arise from inquiry with potential to motivate change for improvement's sake.

2.10.5 Reflect on Own Practice

Opportunities for teachers to evaluate themselves in schools are often few, and usually happen only in an informal manner. Action research can serve as a chance to really take a look at one's own teaching in a structured manner. While the focus of action research is usually the students, educators can also investigate what effect their teaching is having on their students, how they could work better with other teachers, or ways of changing the whole school for the better. Conversation can take on a different focus from attempting to "fix" to arrive at understanding.

2.10.6 Improved Communication

Teamwork within the school or district brings individuals together for a shared purpose. Educators involved in action research become more flexible in their thinking and more open to new ideas. Studies by Little (1981) in Ferrance (2000:15) suggest positive changes in patterns of collegiality, communication and networking.

2.11 The Pros and Cons of Validity of Action Research

Some scholars seem to be suspicious of the validity of action research since it explains events or activities in specific solutions. For example, Scott and Usher (1999), McNiff (1988), Winter (1982) in Cohen and Manion (1994), and Burns

(1999) are also some of the afore - mentioned scholars. For instance, Scott and Usher (1999: 37) cit Cohen and Manion (1994) to raise the question of generalizability in action research by stating:

There is always a perennial questions about action research- is it really research? . . . stressing its situational and participatory features . . . because it focuses on a specific problem in a specific setting it is not rigorously specific . . . data are situationally specific they cannot be extended beyond the specific case.

A few scholars, nevertheless, suggest that educators -specifically practitioners should not worry about the validity of action research internal validity and external validity (Best and Kahn, 1993; and Wallace, 1998).

To strengthen the above view, McNiff (1998: 186) cites Lomax (1986) says the following:

As action researchers we do not find to claim to find the final answer to a question, but we do claim to improve . . . educational practice through educational development of practitioners . . . The validity of what we claim would seem to be the degree to which it was useful (relevant) in guiding practice for particular teachers and its power to inform . . . and improving practice in the insider professional community.

Thus, the validity of action research seems to lie not on its generalizability but on the extent to which it refers to how relevant its findings are in a particular situation for that particular purpose. Moreover, Wallace (1998) states that the generalizability of action research findings from one setting to another would not be taken as a primary importance, however, the important thing is the helpfulness of action research findings in the context where they have been carried out.

2.12 Major Factors in Doing Action Research

There seems to be a consensus among scholars in dividing factors which teachers possibly encounter in carrying out their action research into two: blocking or constraints and helping factors or solutions (Price, 2001).

2.12.1 Impeding Factors in Doing Action Research

Burns (1999), for example, cites Mckernan (1993) who conducted a research on action research constraints among teachers in the USA, UK, and Ireland and classified these factors into three as ranked by these teachers in the three countries. According to Burns, 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 support to research, 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 time table pressure are also found to hamper teachers' involvement in action research.

Regarding time constraints, Cannon (1945: 87) cited in Seyoum (1998) stated the following:

An investigator may be given a palace to live in, a perfect laboratory to work in, he may be surrounded by all conveniences money can provide, but if his time is taken from him, he will remain sterile. On the other hand, as the history of science abundantly shows, an investigator may be poverty - stricken, he may be ill clothed, he may be in garret and have only meager appliances for his use but given time can be productive.

Besides, Burns (1999) expresses that time is a major factor in doing action research. Wallace (1998) also seems to agree with Burn's argument by stating constraints such as time, resource, and research skills in doing action research, which are basic for teachers. In the same vein, Wondwosen (1996) in Zulfa (2000) showed that lack of research competence (skill) was the potential reason limiting research activities of teachers in colleges.

In a recent study, Elliott (1999: 79) has to say the following on the 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 internate, funding methodologies that do not reward research, . . . a competitive . . . culture that discourages collaborative research.

According to her it seems reasonable to summarize all the above research barriers into three major classifications: personal barriers, institutional barriers and resource barriers. Nunan (1989) also identifies the prominent constraints in doing action research whether or not the research is individual or collaborative as resource, time, and expertise. Later, Nunan, in his publication of (1990) puts action research constraints which have been experienced by teachers as lack of time, expertise, continuous support, and confidence in making public one's own research finding. In addition, Mann (1999) and Roberts (1988) would seem to support Nunan's and Elliott's identification of action research barriers.

Furthermore, many other scholars also identify the main barriers which teacher - researchers possibly encounter in doing action research such as organizational and resource problems, timetabling problems, school structure and attitudes of teachers (Cohen and Manion: 1994); limited time and limited resource (Crookes, 1993); lack of expertise, time, financial resources and personality traits (Wallace, 1998); 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 form school to school (Roberts, 1988).

2.12.2 Scholars' view on Possible Solutions to Barriers in Undertaking Action Research

Action research by its very nature requires the professional commitment of classroom teachers. For example, Burns (1999), Wallace (1998), Bramfit and Mitchell (1990), and Edge and Richards (1993) are amongst the noted scholars who argue that teachers should show commitment in undertaking action research.

Besides, Elliott (1991) suggests that classroom teachers need to develop an interest in investigating their classroom practices, to be equipped with basic research skills, to get assistance of those authorities who are responsible for education, to get enough time and money to undertake action research, to have the access to different relevant reading materials in research, and have to get the means to disseminate their research findings so as to make effective and up-date their method of teaching.

According to Gassner (n.d.: 3) who argue the following "One of the essential factors that defines the starting point of effective teaching seems to be . . . positives attitude towards change as it implies openness for new ideas, new ways of thinking, or welcoming undirected . . . self guided development."

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The key objective of this research was to investigate the involvement of college teachers in action research, their attitudes towards action research, the major problems which college teachers possibly encounter in conducting action research, the competence of teachers' for conducting action research (skills) and to survey the possible solutions to these problems in Amhara Regional State. To realize this, the researcher utilized the quantitative way (approach) of researching the issue, specifically a descriptive survey design was employed. This design was selected since it provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population from sample results, the researcher generalizes or makes claims about the population (Creswell, 2003: 153).

On the basis of this, the present study was carried out in four stages. The first of these was the preparatory stage that involved proposal development, review of related literature, development of tools of data collection and selection of samples. The second phase was the administration of instruments and collection of data. In third stage, data organization (i.e., editing, classifying, and tabulating the information), analysis and interpretation were accomplished. In the fourth, draft report writing, provision of feedback to the draft and finalization of the draft activities were performed.

3.1 Data Source: Population and Sampling

Currently, there are four governmental teacher-training colleges in Amhara Regional State. Among these, two colleges (Gondar CTE, which is far away from other colleges and from the researcher, and Debre Markos CTE, which was used in the pilot study) were not included in the main study. Thus, the study was conducted on the remaining two (Debre Birhan CTE and Dessie CTE).

Since teachers are expected to be engaged in action research activity besides their teaching, it is assumed that it would be quite appropriate to get relevant data directly from the sources (teachers). Due to this fact, the target population of this study was 148 college teachers (including deans, research and development committee members, department heads, and curriculum development coordinators) of Debre Birhan and Dessie Colleges of Teacher Education. Out of these 104 (70 percent) of the teachers were selected randomly as a sample of the study to ensure their representation. Since with randomization, a representative sample from a population provides the ability to generalize to a population (Creswell 2003:156).

3.2 Tools of Data Collection: Types and Construction

The intended information for this study was acquired through questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and focus group discussion.

3.2.1 Questionnaire

In order to secure pertinent information for this study, questionnaire was developed as the main instrument for collecting the needed data. Questionnaire was preferred because it is the most appropriate means to involve large sample size of the population to gather the necessary information within a given time frame.

The researcher developed this questionnaire in English based on the review of related literature since the language of instruction at colleges in Amhara Regional State is English. Hence, it was believed to be well responded.

The questionnaire consisted of items regarding teachers' background, their involvement in action research, their knowledge and skills to conduct action research, their attitude towards action research, problems teachers' encountered in conducting action research and the possible suggestions to involve more teachers in action research.

The Questionnaires comprised both close-ended and open – ended Items. The close -ended items were used for the very reason that they are easier to categorize and analyze the responses gathered. In addition, when questions are close - ended, respondents will be able to select from a list of answers provided to them (Babbie, 2001).

In order to have clearly interpretable data in some sort of quantitative sense, the researcher constructed the close - ended questionnaire items in the form of 'Yes - 'NO', with items to be chosen as their possible reasons for their responses and items having five points to be rated ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly - disagree' (likert scale) with the assigned value which run through five - to - one respectively.

The other was open-ended questionnaire and its major purpose of the items was to give opportunity to teachers to express their feeling, perceptions, problems and intentions related to action research without restriction. This enabled the researcher to get detailed information about the activities, problems and their future plans to involve themselves in action research.

The purpose of the questionnaire was explained to the respondents right from the outset. A detailed explanation supported by examples was given before it was administered. In other words, general directions and sub - instructions were included across each section of the questionnaire.

Pilot study

Piloting the instrument has paramount importance for sifting out the difficult, vague and ambiguous items and concepts and it is one of the best ways of improving the instrument for data collection and procedures. Bearing this in mind, the researcher validated the instrument that was developed for data collection as follows: before the actual data collection was started, the instrument developed was given to two of my classmates so as to get valuable comments and criticism on the strengths and weaknesses of the items. Based on the comments and criticisms gained, I made the necessary modifications.

Then I gave the modified research tools to my thesis advisor for evaluation. Then the instrument was tried out in small - scale study that was undertaken at Debre Markos College of Teacher Education.

The total number of participants in the try out study were 25 teachers. After administering the instrument, some participants were asked for feedback. Hence, refinement was made on four items of the instrument, (two of them were attitudinal questions and the other two were regarding teachers' knowledge and skills) according to suggestions and hints that were obtained from both the evaluator and the field-testing.

The reliability of the instrument was tested by cronbach alpha method and the computed reliability of the instrument was 0.83. Thus, the instrument was found valuable to collect the data for the main study and hence, it was administered as scheduled.

Procedures of data collection

The first step towards collecting the necessary data was making face to face contact with the two college vice academic deans of the respective colleges for the sake of introducing the purpose of the study and facilitating the data collection activities.

Next, the researcher with the vice academic deans of the respective colleges arranged time and place how to contact the respondents.

After the number of teachers from each college had been identified the questionnaire consisting of 50 items (both open-ended and close-ended) was distributed to the 104 College teachers of the two colleges. However, only 100(96.2 percent) teachers filled in and returned the questionnaire.

Table 1: List of Colleges and Distribution of Respondents who filled in the Questionnaire

NO	Research site (s)	total teachers in each college	subjects of the study in each college	Teachers who filled in and returned the questionnaire	%
1	Dessie CTE	73	51	48	94.1
2	D/Birhan CTE	75	53	52	98.1
	Total	148	104	100	96.2

This questionnaire was distributed by the researcher himself to provide the necessary clarification for questions raised on some of the items from individual respondents.

3.2.2 Interview

Interview was another research technique for this study. The nature of the interview was semi-structured because Bell (1993: 184) has put the strength of semi structured interview as follows: "semi -structured interview tends to be the most favored by educational researchers as it allows respondents to express themselves at some length, but offers enough shape to prevent aimless rambling".

In addition, Burns (1999:28) confirms, "Semi-structured interview can help researchers to get themes and topics which may not have been anticipated while designing the interview."

The interview was prepared for 16 teachers and 8 college principals (deans, academic vice deans, and department heads) who were thought to have information on teachers' involvement in action research in the respective colleges. It was believed that the use of the interview is to make the research finding more sustainable. In other words, it can also help to get information about the attitudes and beliefs of sample teachers, which cannot be found, through the questionnaire. It also would seem crucial to counter - check the respondents' responses to the questionnaire.

Before conducting the interview with teachers and some college principals, the interviewer explained the purpose of the present study to each interviewee. The researcher read out each item of the interview to each teacher one by one and recorded the responses of each interviewee. The audio recorded interviewees' response is transcribed and the transcription of each interview is recorded as T₁, T₂, T₃, . . . , and T₁₆.

In fact, the same procedures were employed with the college principals. They were coded as cp₁, cp₂, cp₃ . . . , and cp₈.

Based on the responses gained from the semi-structured interviews from teachers and college principals, attempts were made to assess the current status of action research in the selected colleges, the attitudes of teachers towards action research, the research constraints, and the possible solutions to these constraints as well. In other words, the semi structured interview was made to validate what the teachers filled in across the four section of the questionnaire. As a result, there were some similarities among the contents of semi -structure interview and the questionnaire.

Table 2: Teachers and College Principals who Participated in the Interview

No	Research Site (s)	Teachers		College principals (CP)			Total	
				Deans	Vice Academic Deans	Dep. Heads		
		f	%	f	f	f	f	%
1	Debre Birhan College of Teacher Education	8	100	1	1	2	4	100
2	Dessie College of Teacher Education	8	100	1	1	2	4	100
	Total	16	100	2	2	4	8	100

3.2.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Making a discussion among individuals (more than two may provoke individuals mind to generate more ideas and to make an exhaustive

argumentation among each other. Therefore, in addition to the interview (a discussion between two individuals, the interviewer and interviewee), a focus group discussion among a member of small group made up of perhaps six to ten individuals has been considered as a good instrument to capture versatile information (Wellington, 1996: 59-60).

The reason why the researcher utilized focus group discussion was that to obtain strong, well-discussed and versatile information because multi - heads are better than single - head. Moreover, focus group discussion helps to understand issues with consensus and variation among the member of the discussion. "Focus group discussion is best suited for obtaining data on group attitudes and perceptions by initiating members for active discussion" (Wamahiu and Karugu, 1995: 122)

To make a focus group discussion, the researcher identified eight informative people (1 research and development vice dean, 3 research and development committee, 1 curriculum development coordinator, and 3 department heads) from each sample colleges who are assumed to have adequate information regarding action research practice in Amhara Regional State Colleges of Teacher Education.

Table - 3 College principals who participated in FGD

No	Research sites	College Principals				Total	
		Research and Development Vice dean	RDC	Dep. head	CDC		
1	Debre Birhan CTE	1	3	3	1	8	100
2	Dessie CTE	1	3	3	1	8	100
	Total	2	6	6	2	16	100

3.3 Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from teachers and college principals. As a result, the procedure that was followed for analyzing the data was different depending on the instrument that was employed. Hence, the responses of the close-ended questions were first collected, tallied and tabulated. Therefore, the interpretation was made with the help of percentage or frequency, mean, standard deviation and chi - square test.

1. Percentage or frequency was computed to analyze each item of the frequency.
2. The chi-square (x^2) test was used to measure whether there was a significant difference between the groups or not. The existing difference was tested for statistical significance at the 0.05 alpha level in order to related errors that come due to chance, this level was conventionally used in social science research (McCall, 1975: 194)
3. Weighted mean was computed to find out the average values against each item - score.

In cases where the likert scale was applied, mean score for each statement has been computed to two significant figures by converting the categorical replied to a numerical scale, where values 5,4,3,2 and 1 were ranged for 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'undecided', disagree', and 'strongly disagree', respectively.

For statements written in such a way that agreement meant a "positive" response and disagreement meant a "negative" reply as stated in the items.

Here, any item score below an average score point of 3 was seen as negative and any item score above an average point of 3 was regarded as positive level of opinions perceptions and/or attitudes.

Furthermore, the responses of open-ended questions of the questionnaire were organized, summarized and analyzed descriptively. The teachers' opinions,

perceptions and attitudes gathered through the interview were also recorded and analyzed on the basis of the frequency of responses. Moreover, the responses of the college principals to the interview and focus group discussion were analyzed descriptively on the basis of common themes and topics of the transcribed interview and discussion, then considered in the data interpretation. The discussion and the findings are treated in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This chapter comprises two major parts. The first part presents the backgrounds of sample population involved in the study. Thus, the profile of the respondents was discussed in terms of age, sex, service years in teaching, qualification, and number of periods they were teaching per week. Part two deals with the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study. Thus, the researcher tried to analyse and discuss the data collected from teachers and principals to seek appropriate answers for the basic questions raised in the statement of the problem (section 1.2). To this end, 104 copies of questionnaire were distributed to teachers in the two Colleges of Teachers Education in Amhara Region. Out of these questionnaires 100 were filled in and returned. But only 97 were analysed. The remaining 3 copies were found to be incomplete to give the required information. The information obtained through interview and focus group discussion was also used for triangulation.

4.1 Background of the Respondents

In the background section of the questionnaire, teachers of the sample colleges were requested to provide information on their personal profiles including their sex, age, years of service in teaching, current academic qualification and average number of periods they taught per week. The details of these analyses are given in table 4 and 5 below.

Table 4 : Respondents' Profile by Sex and Age

Item No	Items	Responses	
		N	%
1	Sex		
	a. Male	93	95.88
	b. Female	4	4.12
	Total	97	100
2	Age		
	a. 25 years and below	8	8.02
	b. 26-35 years	38	39.18
	c. 36 45 years	33	34.02
	d. 46 years and above	18	18.56
	Total	97	100

As indicated on table 4, the background information of teachers under study indicated that about 93 (95.88 percent) of the respondents were males while 4 (4.12 percent) were females. That is male constitutes the overwhelming majority of teachers and females constitute a small proportion. This broad gapped number of male and female teacher respondents pointed that females' exposure and involvement in conducting action research in colleges of Amhara Regional State seems low.

Age wise, 38 (39.18 percent) teacher respondents lie in the age range between 26 to 35 years. About 33 (34.02 percent) of them are in the 36 to 45 years range. Combined together those respondents who were in the age range of 26 to 45 years are 71 in number (73.2 percent) of the total respondent. About 8 (8.02 percent) and 18 (18.56 percent) of the respondents are included in age ranges of 25 years and below, and above 46 years old, respectively.

From the description, it is possible to say that the majority of the teaching staff are at the active participant age group.

Concerning respondents teaching experience, academic qualification and teaching load, information are given below.

Table 5: Respondents' Profile by Service Year in Teaching, their Academic Qualification and the Number of Credit hours they were Teaching Per Week

Item No	Items	Responses	
		N	%
3	years of service in teaching		
	a. 5 years and below	31	31.96
	b. 6 to 10 years	21	21.65
	c. 11 to 15 years	13	13.40
	d. 16 to 20 years	17	17.53
	e. 21 and above years	15	15.46
	Total	97	100
4	Academic qualification		
	a. MA/MSc	37	38.14
	b. BA/BSc/BEEd	56	57.73
	c. Diploma	4	4.12
	Total	97	100
5	Teaching load per week		
	a. 6 to 10 credit hours	71	73.20
	b. 11 to 15 credit hours	18	18.56
	c. 16 to 20 credit hours	7	7.23
	d. 21 credit hours and above	1	1.03
	Total	97	100

As can be seen from table 5, regarding years of service in teaching, 31 (31.96 percent) of respondents have served for 5 years and below. 34 (35.05 percent) of the respondents lie in the range of 6 to 15 years of service. The 16 to 20 years range of teaching service comprises 17 (17.53 percent) and the rest 15 (15.46 percent) respondents have served for 21 years and above.

If we consider years of service in teaching ranging 1 to 5 as less experienced, sizable percent of respondents are less experienced. If we consider years 6 to 16

as high experienced, the number of respondents in this range have reasonable work experience.

With respect to academic qualification about 37 (38.14 percent) of teachers are MA/MSc holders, 56 of them (57.73 percent) are BA/BSc/BEd holders and the rest 4 (4.12 percent) are diploma holders who were offering subjects like Music and Art. In principle, the more qualified the staff, the more concern and engagement in doing quality action research is expected.

According to the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2003) teacher educators at colleges of teacher education are expected to be MA/MSc holders. However, in colleges of teacher education under study the number of MA/MSc holders is less than the BA/BSc holders even though some teachers are doing their second degree at AAU. So, the existing situation show a bit gap between what is desired and what actually exists in College of Teacher Education in Amhara Region, however, as the data revealed that most of teacher educators are below the minimum requirement.

Concerning teaching load, table 5 shows that 73 (73.20 percent) of the respondents responded that they are teaching 6 to 10 credit hours per week. About 18 (18.56 percent) and 7 (7.23 percent) of them responded that they teach 11 to 15 credit hours and 16 to 20 credit hours per week, respectively. The remaining, 1 (1.03 percent) of them was teaching 21 credit hours per week and above.

From the above data, one can conclude that most college teachers in Amhara Region are neither over loaded nor under loaded rather they are in a moderate position. Since the current regulation shows that the teaching load of a teacher at college of Teacher Education in Amhara Region is expected to be 12 credit hours per week, therefore, it is not difficult to infer that college teachers in this region have time to conduct action research even if they further noted that they have also additional tasks related to practicum, distance education, extension classes and co - curricular activities.

4.2 Teachers' Practical Involvement in Action Research

It is believed that school practice could be improved and changed through a continuous investigation of a situation that requires improvement, seeking the means of improvement and acting accordingly. This could be made possible through the engagement of teachers in action research at school level. Based on these facts, the researcher requested different questions about teachers' practical involvement in action research, and the results obtained from them are presented hereunder.

Table 6: Teachers' Practical Involvement in Action Research

Item No	Each item of the questionnaire	Responses		Chi - square
6	Have you ever done action research?			$X^2 = 74.48$
	a. Yes	6	6.19	P < 0.05
	b. No	91	93.81	
	Total	97	100	
9	Do you believe that your colleagues have been involved in undertaking action research?			$X^2 = 85.66$
	a. Yes	4	4.12	P < 0.05
	b. No	93	95.88	
	Total	97	100	
19	Do teachers in your college collaborate with one another to carryout action research?			$X^2 = 78.03$
	a. Yes	5	5.15	P < 0.05
	b. No	92	94.85	
	Total	97	100	

Table 6 gives detail information concerning the respondents' practical involvement in action research. Accordingly, the respondents were asked whether or not they carried out action research in the questionnaire item 6. As a result, 6 (6.19 percent) of the respondents said that they conducted action

research. But the remaining 91 (93.8 percent) of the respondents responded that they failed to conduct action research.

The chi - square test for significance indicated that the number of teachers who have not done action research is greater than those teachers who have done action research. (i.e., the calculated X^2 value 74.18 is greater than the critical value 3.841 and the proportional difference between the two group was found to be significant at the 0.05 alpha level).

Regarding the involvement of teachers in action research, the responses in the open - ended questionnaire Item2, 4 (4.88 percent) said that they did minor classroom research work to a very limited scale. They also said that the research work they carried out helped them to address some problems linked with their teaching though they did not get any of these research works published. However, 70 (85.36 percent) of the respondents responded that they did not carryout action research; except for their Higher Diploma Program (HDP) requirement- even if that could be considered as action research. They further noted that, the action research training that they obtained in HDP was not adequate and the leaders were not well qualified (and experienced) to provide appropriate skill. Whereas, 8 (9.76 percent) of the respondents were not sure of their involvement in action research except some rare cases that they mentioned.

Interview was also held with 16 sample teachers. Out of these, 1 (6.25 percent) of the respondents said that he carried out only 1 action research, however, 14 (87.5 percent) of the respondents replied that they did not undertake any research in their lifetime of teaching. But 1 (6.25 percent) of them responded that he usually carried out such research in his classroom.

To counter check, the colleges' principals were also interviewed about teachers' involvement in action research. Then, 7 of the respondents (87.5 percent) replied that teachers seem to have low involvement in action research. They mentioned the following points as reasons for the above point. Lack of

professional accountability, engaged in other activities such as: practicum, office works, extra curricular activities, distance education, and part time classes. Nevertheless, as 1 (12.5 percent) of respondents in a college put, it would be said that the lion's share in the area of teacher - research seemed to be played by teachers. In fact, this would seem in some degree of consistency with the responses of teachers to the questionnaire, hence, 6.97 percent of the respondents replied that they carried out action research activities. This would suggest to some extent the attempts made by a few college teachers in undertaking action research.

In fact, this finding would seem to be in contradiction with college teachers' role since one of their role is conducting action research to solve teaching learning problems with in the school (MOE, 2003).

Regarding item 9, double phrasing was used to cross - check the respondents' responses to Questionnaire Item 6. As a result, few of the respondents i.e. 4 (4.12 percent) responded that their colleagues get involved in action research, however, the majority of them 93 (95.88 percent) replied that their colleagues do not seem to participate in undertaking action research. This would suggest that when the respondents are asked using the self addressing pronoun 'you' as shown in questionnaire Item 6, they seemed inclined to the 'Yes' response options. On the other hand, when they were asked using the noun phrase 'your colleagues,' they seemed inclined to the 'No' response categories. In other words, in this crosschecking questionnaire design, the respondents do not seem to be aware of the fact that the question would address them indirectly. These mixed up and self contradictory responses of the respondents to one question of different forms appeared to be an evidence for the absence of any effort made by the respondents in undertaking action research.

Finally, the respondents were asked whether or not they carried out action research collaboratively (Item 19). Few of them (5 or 5.15 percent) responded that they did collaboratively with one another when they undertook action

research. However, most of the respondents 92 or 94.85 percent said that they were involved in action research individually no collaboratively.

The chi - square test for significant indicated that the number of teachers who did action research collaboratively is less than those teachers who did not (i.e., the calculated X^2 value 78.03 is greater than the critical value 3.841 and the preoperational difference between the two groups was found to be significant at the 0.05 alpha level). In fact, this approach of action research undertaking seems to be criticized, hence it seems to lack the sprite of sharing ideas and little will be achieved if one person only is involved in changing his/ her idea thus collaborative action search is advisable (Webb, 1996; and Kemmis and McTaggar, 1988).

4.3 Teachers' knowledge and Skills to Conduct Action Research

4.3.1 Teacher' knowledge to Conduct Action Research

Basically, not only in action research but also to engage in any activities, overall knowledge about the activities seems crucially important. Hence, the knowledge which usually develops through different exposures, such as in training, seminars or workshops, reading and the like serve as a base line to promote the quality and quantity of the activities. Based on this, the researcher tried to assess teachers' knowledge using different questions. And the results obtained from them are presented below.

Table 7: Training of Sampled Teachers in Action Research

Item No	Each item of the questionnaire	Responses		Chi - square
		f	%	
14	Have you taken relevant research courses which are pertinent to action research during your under graduate training program?			X ² = 14.11 P < 0.05
	a. Yes	30	30.93	
	b. No	67	69.07	
	Total	97	100	
15	If your response to number 14 is 'yes', do you find these courses are adequate to enable you to carryout action research?			X ² = 5.63 P < 0.05
	a. Yes	8	26.67	
	b. No	22	73.33	
	Total	30	100	
16	Have you attended workshops or seminars on how to conduct action research?			X ² = 74.48 P < 0.05
	a. Yes	6	6.19	
	b. No	91	93.81	
	Total	97	100	
17	Do you often read different journals, books and articles, on how to conduct action research?			X ² = 17.33 P < 0.05
	a. Yes	36	37.11	
	b. No	61	62.89	
	Total	97	100	

The respondents of this study were asked concerning the relevance and adequacy of research courses, which teachers possibly took when they were in colleges or universities. Then, 30 (30.93 percent) of the respondents reported that the courses were pertinent to research, and only 8 (26.67 percent) of the respondents who replied 'yes' for question number 14 said that the courses were adequate to enable themselves to undertake action research. Despite this fact, 67 (69.07 percent) (Item 14) of the total respondents and 22 of the respondents (73.33 percent) (Item 15) said that the research courses were neither geared towards research nor adequate to enable them to carryout action research in their classrooms.

The chi-square test for significance indicated that the number of teachers who took relevant research courses which were pertinent to research were less than those teachers who had not taken (i.e., the calculated X^2 value 14.11 is greater than the critical value 3.841 and the proportional difference between the two groups was found to be significant at the 0.05 alpha level. Moreover teachers who had adequate research course that enabled them undertake action research were less than those teachers who had not adequate, (i.e., the calculated X^2 value 5.63 is greater than the initial value 3.841 and the proportional difference between the two groups was found to be significant at the 0.05 alpha level).

To counter check, teachers were also asked in the open-ended questionnaire regarding the research courses. Then, half of the respondents (42) revealed that they took only one research courses which would not seem to have relevance to conduct action research because the courses has said nothing about action research. Besides, they emphasized its inadequacies hence it could not help them to get involved in action research. On the contrary, 24 (29.26 percent) of the respondents said that they took only one research course that seemed to have link to action research. In fact, they emphasized on the inadequacy of the course. Surprisingly, the remaining 16 (19.51 percent) revealed that they did not take any research course in education, in general. From the responses of teachers then it was clear that all of the respondents emphasized on the inadequacy of the research courses.

Regarding to the action research courses, similar findings was obtained by Yalew (2000) in his study conducted on primary and secondary school teachers of Bahir Dar town. As his study revealed the majority of teachers in the concerned study reported that the training they took in higher institutions was not adequate enough to enable them undertake research independently. This holds true for action research too. Furthermore, as to Hardley's (n.d) idea teachers are unable to undertake action research due to lack of research background and lack of experience.

The respondents were further asked whether or not they have attended workshops or seminars on action research issues in the questionnaire (Item 16). Accordingly, 6 (6.19 percent) of the total sample responded that they have attended workshops or seminars on action research issues. But most of the respondents (91 or 93.81 percent) answered 'No' to the question 'Have you attended workshops or seminars on action research issues'?

Responses to the interview held with the deans and department heads regarding workshops or seminars, 1 of them (i.e. 12.5 percent) revealed that workshops were rarely held and seminars on research matter were being conducted once in a year in one of the teachers' training college included in this study. However, the remaining 7 or 87.5 percent of the respondents forwarded that no workshops and discussion forum was organized on action research issues yet.

To counter check this, focus group discussion was made with department heads, research and development v/deans, research and development committee, and curriculum coordinators. Then, most of them 15 or 93.75 percent of the informants responded similarly to the above interviewees and they ascertained that teachers of the college have rare opportunity to attend seminars on action research issues. According to them few chanceful teachers may participate in seminars or workshops prepared on action research issues, which was occasionally prepared and organized by Amhara Development Association (ADA). The remaining 1 or 6.25 percent was markedly characterized by indecision.

From the above responses of the questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion, and the results of the investigation, it seems that workshops and seminars on action research issues were almost non - existent except some occasional annual forum on which only few teacher representatives attended.

As noted by many educators, the impact of lack of workshops, meetings about action research and/ or seminars or experiential exchange to improve teachers'

action research knowledge, skill and experience is not easy hence, lack of the opportunity to attend workshops or seminars made teachers to be far from current and modern ways of thinking and writing researches, which are up-to-date. This condition directly or indirectly affects action research progress. In this regard, Bennett's (1993) states that most teachers fail to undertake teacher- research due to . . . and absence of conferences and seminars.

Concerning the reading habit of teachers' questionnaire (Item 17), 36 (37.11 percent) of the respondents said that they read different books, articles, journal and some others; nevertheless, 61 (62.89 percent) of them replied that they did not read such materials. The major reasons reported by the respondents were the scarcity of relevant reading materials on action research issues.

Here the results of the chi-square test for significance of proportional differences between the two groups (teachers who had reading habit and had no reading habit on action research issues was found to be significant at the 0.05 alpha level of significant (i.e, the calculate chi- square, values $X^2 = 6.44$ is greater than the critical values, 3.841). This showed that the majority of teachers in this study did not read research journal, books, and articles privately to acquaint themselves with the necessary action research knowledge.

This result seems to contradict with (Head and Taylor, 1997, Graham and Webb, 1994; and Burns, 1999) who argued that teachers' professional and personal developments would be expressed by keeping diaries of ones teaching, reading news paper, journals, book, newspapers, portfolio about teaching, undertaking small - scale classroom research activities and so on.

4.3.2 Teachers' Skills to Conduct Action Research

In order to be effective in doing tasks, skills play a paramount role. Therefore, in order to conduct action research effectively one is expected to be equipped with the necessary skills on how to carryout it. Different literatures in the area of educational research also stress the importance of becoming familiar with skills, stages and tasks involved in the conducting of action research.

Hence, the researcher tried to assess teachers' action research skills using different questions. And the results obtained from them are presented below.

Table 8: Teachers' Skills to Conduct Action Research

Item No	Each item of the questionnaire	Responses		Chi - square
		f	%	
10	Do you feel confident in your action research skills?			X ² = 22. P < 0.05
	a. Yes	25	25.77	
	b. No	72	74.23	
	Total	97	100	
18	Do you have clear information on your research skills on how to do action research?			X ² = 17.33 P < 0.05
	a. Yes	28	28.87	
	b. No	69	71.13	
	Total	97	100	

Regarding teachers' action research skills (Items 10), only few of the respondents 25 (25.77 percent) responded that they feel confident in their action research skills where as many of the respondents 62 (74.23 percent) responded to the negative.

Here the result of the chi square test for significance of proportional difference between teachers who are confident and not confident in their action research skills was found to be significant at the 0.05 alpha level of significant. In other words, the calculated chi -square value (X²=22.77) is greater than the critical value (X² = 3.841).

In fact, this response was counter - checked against the responses gained from questionnaire Item 18 (Do you have clear information on your research skills on how to do action research?) Consequently, the respondents responses seemed to show consistency because it was only 28 of the samples (28.87 percent) who reported that they had clear information on (collecting data, analysing data, interpreting data . . .) their research skills how to undertake teacher - research when the majority of respondents (69 or 71.13 percent) reported that they had not.

Chi-square test was computed to determine whether the difference is substantial or not. The calculated chi-square value ($X^2 = 17.33$) is greater than the critical value ($X^2 = 3.841$, $P < 0.05$). Therefore, the difference examined is significant, i.e. teachers who have clear information on their action research skills were less in number than teacher who had.

In addition, in the interview held with teachers, 2 (12.5 percent) of the interviewees claimed that they had the research skills though they did not examine them practically, whereas quite a small number of the respondents (3 or 18.75 percent) felt confident in their research skills because they carried out some kind of action research work such as in Higher Diploma Program (HDP) and, according to them, the methodology they employed was appropriate. Moreover, 11 (68.75 percent) of the interviewees replied that they did not feel confident in their action research skill such as collecting data, interpreting data, analyzing data . . .

These all indicated that most of the teachers were not confident in their action research skills. Therefore, this would imply that the teachers seemed to have problems in what Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001) called action research undertaking process. To add, Elliott (1991), and Shaeffer and Nkinyangi (1983: 15) noted that it would be virtually impossible to think of carrying out research without the individual being equipped with basic research skills.

4.4 Factors Affecting Teachers' Involvement in Action Research

Several factors can have hindering impact on teachers' action research work. Some of which are interest, work environment, encouragement, and availability of timetable, budget, to mention some among others. Therefore, the researcher tried to assess some of these using related questions. And the responses gained from the respondent teachers were analyzed as follows.

4.4.1. Interest and Working environment

Table 9: Teachers' Responses regarding their Action Research Interest and Work Environment

Item No	Each Item of the questionnaire	Responses		Chi-square
		f	%	
7	Do you have interest in doing action research?			X ² = 12.63 P < 0.05
	a. Yes	66	68.04	
	b. No	31	31.96	
	Total	97	100	
12	Does your work environment create a conducive atmosphere to undertake action research?			X ² = 58.59 P < 0.05
	a. Yes	11	11.34	
	b. No	86	88.66	
	Total	97	100	

With regard to action research interest (Item 7), 66 of the respondents (that would be 68.04 percent) expressed that they have interest; however, 31 of the respondents (i.e., 31.96 percent) responded that they have no action research interest.

As indicated, the result of chi-square test for significance of proportional difference between teachers who had interest and who had not action research interest was found to be significant at the 0.05 alpha level of significant, (i.e. the calculated chi -square value $X^2 = 12.63$ is greater than the critical value $X^2 = 3.841$).

This implies that the interest of teachers to undertake action research looks promising. This idea is supported by Jone (1957), (in Seyoum, 1998: 7) stated as "interest is the major driving force behind research. It seems clear that

teachers interest towards action research has a great role to do action research positively.”

Concerning their work environment (Item 12), a small number (11 or 11.34 percent) of the respondents said that their work environment (colleges) appeared to be convenient for them in undertaking action research, however, this result seem to be contradicted by the majority of the respondents (86 or 88.66 percent) who believed that their work environment (college) did not encourage them in undertaking action research.

In the result of the chi - square test for significance proportional difference between teachers who had convenience and those who had not was found to be significant at the 0.05 alpha level of significant (i.e. the calculated chi -square value $X^2 = 58.59$ is greater than the critical value 3.841).

In the interview made with 8 college principals (college deans, a/v/deans and department heads), all 8 of them replied that their colleges had no as such conducive atmosphere for teachers to undertake any research. Of course, they believed that every research facility is opened to any teacher-research. However; the interviewees commented that teachers are not free from routine works, additional office works, part time classes, lack of incentives and the like. Here the finding appears to support the response of teachers to the questionnaire above where 88.66 percent of them said that their work environment did not encourag them to undertake action research.

This seems to contradict Burnns’s (1999) view, which emphasizes the role of good school organizational features as pre -condition for carrying out action research.

4.4.2 The Availability of enough Budget and Specific Time Table to Undertake Action Research

In connection with the allocation of enough budgets to undertake action research focus group discussion was made with college principals (research and development vice deans, research and development committee, department heads, and curriculum development coordinators). Accordingly, 15 (93.75 percent) of participants replied that their colleges have enough budgets to purchase necessary supplies for any research activities. On the contrary, 1 of them (6.25 percent) replied that his college had no budget for action research in particular. This revealed that the shortage of different stationary materials did not block up the smooth functioning of action research activities.

Regarding the presence of specific timetable to undertake action research, focus group discussion was held with college principals. Then, the respondents' responses were mixed -up and self - contradictory. As 6 of the college principals (37.5 percent) said that their college did not have time table which was allocated for carrying out action research, however, 7 of the informants (43.75 percent) said that their colleges had specific time table for every academic staff; hence, teachers' teaching load is adjusted in such a way that it should not be more than 12 credit hours per week which would imply that every teacher should engaged in carrying out action research. In fact, 3 (18.75 percent) of the college officials were markedly characterized by indecision. This might suggest the existing role confusion among some college principals; hence, in one college there were two different and contradictory responses from principals. In all the two teachers' training colleges, the researcher found that the responses of the discussants (college principals') to be different from and contradictory to one another. This indicated that the colleges had no specific timetable to undertake action research. This compliments with Cohen's and Manion's (1994) idea that one of the main barriers which teacher - researchers possibly encountered in doing action research is time tabling problem.

4.4.3 Incentives for the Researchers

According to this study, advantages such as academic promotion, cash payment as honorarium, etc, which is given after the research is finalized, are considered as incentives for researchers.

Table 10: Respondents' responses regarding Action Research for Professional Promotion

Item No	Each item of the questionnaire	Response		chi-square
		f	%	
20	Is action research counted in teachers' professional promotion? a) Yes b) No	25 72	25.77 74.23	$X^2 = 22.77$ $P < 0.05$
	Total	97	100	

With respect to the value given to teachers' action research endeavor in their professional promotion, the respondents were asked to give their responses. Accordingly, 72 (74.23 percent) of the total respondents claimed that the academic promotion system did not base action research works. On the other hand, about 25 (25.77 percent) of the respondents pointed out that action research is taken in to account in teachers' professional promotion.

Here the results of the Chi-square test for significance of proportional difference between the two groups (teachers who responded that “action research is counted in teachers professional promotion and not counted”) was found to be significant at the 0.05 alpha level of significant. In other words, the calculated Chi-square value ($X^2=22.77$) is greater than the critical value($X^2=3.841$).

To counter check, focus group discussion was made with college principals regarding this issue. Then, about 14 (87.5 percent) of the samples strengthened the responses to the questionnaire that conducting action research was not given due attention in their college especially in considering it a criterion for promotion. They confirmed that no body has got any promotion for his/her action research works so far in their respective college, small proportion of the

participants (i.e., 2 or 12.5 percent) of the participants, however, characterized markedly by in-decision.

All (16) of the participants of the focus group discussion commented that publishing research works (i.e., traditional research) on the other hand, is issued as one criteria to get promotion.

According to the participants of the discussion, teachers' action research works were being considered in semester's performance evaluation based on the administrative follow up and rappers of the stream heads. Other than this, the informants agreed that action research works of teachers had not more decisive roles in teachers' professional promotion. This is according to them needs ratification of the legislation at the regional level.

From the above discussion results and teachers' responses to the questionnaire, it is possible to say that inability to consider action research endeavor for promotions may weaken the attempts being made by few teachers to do action research.

With regard to cash payment as honorarium, all the informants uniformly mentioned that the reward given in cash is very insignificant. According to them, teachers who presented a research paper in general could get 400 to 700 Eth. Birr per a research paper. So, teachers prefer to engage in part time teaching which is far better in its payment (i.e., 2, 100 Eth. Birr per a 3 credit hour in a month). Therefore, the poor incentives given to a researcher have a strong negative influence in teachers' participation in action research.

4.4.4 Impeding Factors in Doing Action Research

As the review of different studies indicated, teachers' involvement in action research activities can be influenced by different constraints. The frequencies and percentages of action research constraints elicited from sample respondents is summarized below in table 11.

Table 11: Teachers' Action Research Constraints (in the Orders from high Levels of difficulty to low).

	Each Action Research Constraints	Total number of Respondents					
		Responded		Non - Responded		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Lack of enough time to undertake action research	81	83.51	16	16.49	97	100
2	Lack of enough action research skill	72	74.23	25	25.77	97	100
3	Lack of encouragement	68	70.10	29	29.90	97	100
4	Absence of action research conference, seminar or workshop, etc	65	67.01	32	32.99	97	100
5	Lack of enough action research course offered	63	64.95	34	35.05	97	100
6	Lack of collaboration	62	63.92	35	36.08	97	100
7	Emphasizing teaching over research	54	55.67	43	44.33	97	100
8	Lack of up - to - date action research materials	46	47.42	51	52.58	97	100
9	Lack of interest	38	39.18	59	60.82	97	100
10	Undermining the role of action research	29	29.90	68	70.10	97	100
11	Heavy teaching load	23	23.71	74	76.29	97	100
12	Lack of money	19	19.59	78	80.41	97	100
13	Others for example, lack of photocopy access, research office in ternate facilities, computer printer, etc.	16	16.49	81	83.51	97	100

The ranking of research constraints reported above is done by counting the frequencies that each constraint was ticked by the respondents.

Referring to the information given in table 11, lack of enough time, lack of enough action research skills and lack of encouragement from college principals were reported to be the most serious action research constraints with the percentage of 83.51, 74.23 and 70.10, respectively. In fact, these action research constraints were followed by 16.49, 25.77, and 29.90 percentages of the respondents who did not give responses to each action research constraint

respectively. This finding seems to contradict with Nunan's (1989) identification of serious action research constraints, which were lack of resource, lack of money and lack of expertise.

Absence of action research conferences and workshops, lack of enough action research courses offered, lack of collaboration and emphasizing teaching over research were the next serious research constraints reported with the percentage of 67.01, 64.95, 63.92, and 55.67, respectively; however, these action research constraints were not reported as serious action research constraints as it could be understood from the percentages of the non - respondents.

The third group of action research constraints responded by the respondents was shortage of up- to -date action research materials, lack of action research interest, undermining the role of action research in teaching, and heavy teaching load.

Finally, the respondents reported that lack of photocopy access, research office, internate, computers, and printers are some of the research constraints that they encountered.

From the summary of teachers' responses to the open ended questionnaire about the most serious action research constraints, the respondents mentioned a number of them; however, a small section was made on the basis of the seriousness and frequencies of the constraints responded. Consequently, 70.73 percent of them highly emphasized on time consuming tasks, in adequate research competence (skills), less support from the authorities concerned, less incentive, lack of professional accountability. 19.51 percent of them replied that they did not take research courses, absence of seminars and workshops, lack of collaboration are some of the action research constraints, which they encountered. The remaining 10.96 percent underlined those action research constraints such as suspecting the outcome of the research findings, tiresome

nature of research, the scarcity of reference materials on some field of the study.

As noted on table 11, the number of teachers who indicated insufficiency of time for action research was by far greater (almost five fold) than teachers who reported that teachers have enough time for action research undertaking. Responses to the interview held with teachers and discussion with principles (deans and department heads) at the respective colleges also complement the fact that teachers usually run short of time to conduct action research. 7 (87.5 percent) of the interviewees replied that it was not teaching load that shared teachers' time of action research work but some additional conditions such as part - time work, additional office works, co- curricular activities and practicum had hands in making teachers busy to conduct action research. Only 1 (12.5percent) of the respondents replied to the negative.

Furthermore, most of the participants of the focus group discussion commented that these days it is quite difficult to conduct action research, as the workload does not permit us to do so.

Among the above constraints, time was a prominent factor restricting teachers from doing action research. Regarding time constraints, Cannon (1945: 87) cited in Seyoum (1998: 9) states the following:

An investigator may be given a palace to live in, a perfect laboratory to work in, he may be surrounded by all conveniences money can provide, but if his time is taken from him, he will remain sterile. On the other hand, as the history of science abundantly shows, an investigator may be poverty - stricken, he may be ill-clothed, he may be in garret and have only meager appliances for his use but given time can be productive.

In all cases the result of this investigation indicated that moderate teaching load added to other workload put heavy impact on teachers' engagement in conducting action research.

Lack of enough action research skill was also found to be the major factor limiting action research activities. As can be seen from the above (table 11),

teachers' action research inability ranked second. This showed that most of the samples seemed to have low action research skills. This finding was consistent with the responses gained from the principals' interview since 7 (87.5) percent of them reported that low research skills of teachers were a barrier that limits them not to involve in action research activities. In this regard, Wondwosen's (1996) findings as cited in Zulfa (2000) showed that lack of research competence (skill) was the potential reason limiting research activities.

For the inadequate action research skills teachers have the insufficient training and relevant research methodologies might be one of the barriers for teachers not to develop action research competence.

As can be shown in table 11, lack of encouragement ranked third. This showed that encouragement was also found to be one of the major constraints: that is teacher researchers were not motivated in any form that encourages them to be engaged in action research. This finding seems to be consistent with the response obtained from questionnaire item 12 and interview item 4 of principals. In this regard Stenhouse (1975(in Kember and Gow ,1992) believed that teachers ' social climate generally offers little support to those who closely examine their own professional practice by assuming the role of research. Absence of encouragement, and less conducive environment remains to be the major problem.

In the same vein, most of the respondents of the study (65 or 67.02 percent) revealed that absence of workshops or seminars was one of the major factors limiting action research works. Whereas, 32 (i.e., 33.99 percent) of them did not give their responses to this action research constraint. In fact, this finding has some consistency with the responses of teachers to the questionnaire item 16, principals' interview item 5, and principals' focus group discussion item 7. Therefore, this implies that lack of opportunity to participate in seminars or workshops (see table 11) was the major constraints to carry out action research works in colleges in Amhara region.

In this regard Sukhia and et al (1974: vi) (in Firdisa, 2000: 66) stated that education in research is an even more need for the hour than research in education. He added that it is important therefore, that long and short term trainings, seminars and workshops regarding educational research (especially action research) need to be arranged and given to pertinent education workers at different levels.

From the data above, one can concluded that the most serious impediments to conduct action research in Amhara region were lack of enough time, lack of enough action research skills, lack of encouragement, absence of workshops or seminar, lack of action research courses, lack of collaboration and less emphasis given to action research. This, however, does not mean that the rest (which ranked from 8th to 13th) have no influence at all. As can be seen from the table 11, though it is relatively lower, all of these factors also have some degree of influence. What table 11 clearly depicts is that, those factors responded by the majority are serious impediments, which need immediate attention, if an attempt is to be made to promote action research in colleges.

4.5 Teachers' Attitude towards Action Research

As indicated in the literature part of this study, it is essential for teacher researcher to become familiar with and develop an appreciation of the nature of action research process itself and ultimately change their attitude and behaviour before conducting action research.

To assess the attitude of teachers towards action research, respondents were asked to show their reactions to statements by choosing one among alternatives in a five - point scale ranging from 'strongly- agree' to 'strongly disagree'.

In the tables 12, 13,14and15 below, one could understand that the frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of each questionnaire item. However, some items were deliberately positively worded while others were

negatively worded to cross - check and counter - check the respondents responses.

Table 12: Respondents' Attitudes towards the practicability of Action Research

Item No	Questionnaire type	Responses										mean score	Standard deviation	average mean	Average standard deviation
		5		4		3		2		1					
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%				
11	I have been engaged in investigating my teaching practice using action research	7	7.22	19	19.59	4	4.12	49	50.52	18	18.57	2.46	1.20	2.85	1.19
17	I have been using action research as one means to solve academic problems in teaching	8	8.25	20	20.62	5	5.15	53	54.64	11	11.34	2.60	1.17		
20	Action research has not yet become practical among my colleagues	44	45.36	29	20.90	4	4.12	11	11.34	9	9.28	3.91	1.36		
21	I usually depend on action research for strengthen my classroom	3	3.09	16	16.49	6	6.19	57	58.74	15	15.46	2.33	1.02		

As shown in table 12, all items were constructed to measure the samples attitudes towards the practicability of action research in teaching. Accordingly, the samples seems to disagree because the average value of these items is 2.85 which seems to be less than the average test value, that is, 3. This evidence seems to suggest the disagreement of teachers concerning the practicability of action research in teaching with a variation of 1.19 from the mean score of 2.85. This contradicts Cohen's and Manion's (1995: 192) idea that "Improvement of practice through research, in the context of school, can be achieved only if teachers are able to change their behavior and attitude."

Table 13: Respondents' Attitudes towards Decision Making, the need for Class-Room Investigation, and the Possible Gap between Teaching and Action Research

Item No	Questionnaire type	Responses										mean score	Standard deviation	Average mean	Average standard deviation
		5		4		3		2		1					
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%				
1	I believe that teachers' decision making should be supported by action research	53	54.64	39	40.21	3	3.09	-	-	2	2.06	4.45	0.75	4.46	0.75
2	Teaching is problematic and needs classroom - based investigation	54	55.67	41	42.27	2	2.06	-	-	-	-	4.54	0.54	4.54	0.54
3	In the college where I work action research is less understood	15	15.46	29	29.90	14	14.43	31	31.96	8	8.25	3.13	1.25	3.63	1.14
8	I know that there had been a gap between teaching and action research among my colleagues method of teaching	31	31.96	53	54.64	6	6.16	6	6.16	1	1.03	4.10	0.84		
18	My college teaching experience informs me that teachers do not usually get involved in action research	30	30.93	35	36.08	7	7.22	18	18.56	7	7.22	3.65	1.28		

According to table 13, item 1 was concerned with teachers' decision making. Then, the samples agree that teachers' decision making should be supported by action research because the average mean score (4.45) is significantly greater than the ideal average (mean) which is 3, with the variation of 0.75 from the mean (4.45). Supporting this idea, Crookes (1993) expressed that teaching is divorced from action research (like in our case).

Regarding the problematic nature of teaching and the need for classroom based investigation (item 2), the respondents seemed to strongly agree because the mean score of 4.54 of this item appears to be significantly higher than the ideal average which is 3. This would imply that samples seem to agree about the need for classroom-based research in classrooms.

As noted in the table 13, Item 3, 8 and 18 were concerned with the possible existing gap between teaching and action research. In relative terms, the respondents responses seem to reveal the absence of relationship between

teaching practices and action research; hence the average mean is 3.63 which is greater than the ideal average (3) with the variation of 1.14 from the mean score 3.63. This would suggest that the samples seem to agree that there is no significant relationship between teaching and action research.

Table 14: Respondent' Attitudes towards Action Research Constraints

Item No	Questionnaire type	Responses										mean score	Standard	average mean	average standard deviation
		5		4		3		2		1					
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%				
4	Lack of support from college principals is one source of problem which does not allow me to do action research	35	36.08	42	43.30	12	12.37	4	4.12	4	4.12	4.03	1.01	3.51	1.27
5	There are no relevant reading materials on action research issues in the college where I work	27	27.84	44	45.36	7	7.22	12	12.37	7	7.22	3.74	1.17		
9	I have less time to undertake action research	51	52.58	34	35.05	5	5.15	5	5.15	2	2.06	4.24	0.94		
10	I have a shortage of money to undertake action research	6	6.19	26	26.80	9	9.28	49	50.52	7	7.22	2.74	1.11		
12	I do not have the access to time y information on action research	12	12.37	45	46.39	6	6.19	23	23.71	11	11.34	3.25	1.26		
15	The college organizational environment offers good contribution to my carrying out action research	14	14.43	9	9.29	4	4.12	42	43.30	28	28.27	2.37	1.36		
19	I am not encouraged to undertake action research due to lack of incentives	53	54.64	22	22.68	7	7.22	10	10.31	5	5.15	4.11	1.23		

Table 14 above, on the other hand, is concerned with the action research constraints which teachers might encounter when they undertake action research. The average mean score (3.51) tends to be greater than that of the test value (3). This would be evidence for the presence of agreement among the samples' responses about the research constraints such as lack of time, lack of support, lack of reading material and lack of up to date information because the mean of these items (3.51) is almost closer to the agreement continuum of

the rating scale. However, the standard deviation (1.27) appears to show the greater variation among the respondents' responses from the mean which is 3.51.

Table 15: Respondents' Attitudes towards Action Research Interest, their Role, Collaboration, Teaching Load and Skills

Item No	Questionnaire type	Responses										mean score	Standard deviation	Average mean	average standard deviation
		5		4		3		2		1					
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%				
6	Teachers in my department seem not to have research interest in undertaking action research	4	4.12	22	22.68	10	10.31	57	58.76	4	4.12	2.64	0.90	2.64	0.9
7	Teachers' role in college is both to undertake action research and to teach	45	46.39	38	39.18	8	8.25	4	4.12	2	2.06	4.24	0.92	4.24	0.92
13	Among my colleagues, there is a good professional contact on action research issue	4	4.12	12	12.70	9	9.28	25	25.77	47	48.45	1.98	1.20	1.98	1.20
14	My teaching load is so high to the extent that I do not have time to do action research	9	9.28	24	24.74	6	6.19	38	39.15	20	20.68	2.63	1.30	2.63	1.30
16	I do not feel confident in my action research competence	42	43.30	30	30.91	13	13.40	2	2.06	10	10.31	3.81	1.26	3.81	1.26

With regard to their interest (Item 6), the respondents seem to suggest that they had research interest because the agreement level appears to be less than the test value that is 2.64 and 3, respectively. This, in other words, would suggest that respondents responded positively regarding their action research interest.

In relation to teachers' role (item 7), the mean score of 4.24 is significantly greater than the average test value (3), thus showing respondents' agreement about the role of teachers in undertaking action research. This would suggest that teachers are aware of their role in undertaking action research though there seems to be no practical involvement as the result of table 6 showed. In fact, this role awareness, in turn, would indicate the possibility of conducting

action research by these teachers. This is also supported by Skerritt's (1992) argument about the practicability of action research in higher institutions like teacher's training colleges.

Item 13 was meant to measure the teachers' professional contact on action research issues, if any. Then, the respondents seem to agree that their colleagues did not maintain professional contacts on action research issues. For one thing, the mean which is 1.98 seems significantly lower than the test value which is 3. This would possibly indicate that teachers do not collaborate with one another on action research issues in their college.

Regarding teachers teaching load (item 14), as one can see from the above (table, 15), high teaching load is reported as not a factor for being engaged in action research activities, even though there seems to be a variation in teachers' disagreement from the mean (2.63). In relation to this, Burns (1999) who stresses that teaching load could be one of the research constraints which seems to hamper teachers undertaking of action research.

Finally, as indicated in table 15, the respondents were asked to express their agreement and / or disagreement on how confident they felt in their research skills (item 16), regarding this, the mean of 3.81 appears to be greater than the test value 3. Therefore, this would suggest that the respondents responses are significantly higher than the ideal average test value of 3. In other words, the respondents seem to be not confident in their action research skills. In fact, this finding tends to be consistent with the teachers responses to the interview (item 3) where almost 68.75 percent of the interviewees replied that they felt not confident in their action research skills. This also has some consistency with the responses of the respondents to 'yes' or 'No' section of the questionnaire more particularly to the response of item 10.

On top of all these, the respondents tended to show a good level of agreement to the questionnaire items. Their responses seem to be inclined towards

agreement except some cases of disagreement. This would suggest that teachers have positive attitude towards action research.

Beside these, teachers were asked to express their feelings and opinions with regard to the existing relationship between teaching and action research in the open - ended questionnaire item 1. Hence, the majority of respondents (60 or 73.17 percent) said that teaching and action research should not be viewed separately, hence teacher research would help the classroom teachers to get deep insights about their method of teaching, students' learning, classroom problems and development. Mentioning their practice, however, they said that there would not be a considerable relationship between action research and teaching. 15 of them (18.29 percent), on the other hand, believed that they made their own effort to support their teaching through classroom based research though there seems to be a failure in putting in to effect the results of such research findings. Whereas, 8 (9.76 percent) of them were very skeptical about the existing relationship between action research and teaching.

Item 4 of teachers' interview section of the question was constructed to survey the beliefs of teachers' about the role (s) of action research in teaching. Accordingly, the majority of the respondents 12 (75.0 percent) stated that action research in teaching would be extremely crucial to make informed decision for every thing that teachers would practice in classrooms. But, only 2 of them (12.5 percent) said that action research could reinforce the teachers' teaching even though he/she would not be always expected to undertake this research. Nevertheless, 2 of them (12.5 percent) said that they were not certain about the role (s) of action research in teaching. According to them, if action researches were a solution for problems as could be learnt from other countries' experience. This doubt of the respondents in fact would seem to emanate from teachers' lack of awareness about the role (s) of action research in teaching.

To counter check this, the researcher interviewed principals belief about the role of action research in teaching (item 7), all of the respondents reported that

they had the awareness about the role (s) of action research by stating that action research would help classroom teachers to be informed about their method of teaching so as to run teaching and learning smoothly, and to keep teachers alert. In other words, all of the interviewees seemed to have the fuller awareness about the role (s) of action research in teaching despite their little practical involvement in action research. This would seem to suggest that principals show positive attitudes towards action research. Accordingly the interviewees mentioned some of the basic roles of action research.

To conclude, except few of the teacher respondents (i.e., 12.5 percent) it would be said that the respondents had the awareness about the roles of action research in classrooms. This would in turn, suggest the existing positive attitude of teachers and principals towards action research, thus, possibly going along the view of Grassner (n.d) who argues and emphasizes that teachers would develop positive attitude towards change in teaching.

4.6 Possible Solutions to the Problems Suggested by the Respondents

Respondents were also asked to give their possible suggestions to get involved more teachers in undertaking action research in the open-ended questionnaire and focus group discussion. In this regard their responses are summarized as follows.

- ♦ Although teachers have positive attitude and interest in undertaking action research, without sufficient time it is difficult for them to get involved in action research. So concerned bodies should do everything possible to lighten the work load of teachers.
- ♦ Concerned educational officials should support those teachers who try to conduct action research. Appropriate incentives should be provided for these teachers to encourage them for better work. According to them, if appropriate incentives are provided, it will initiate other

teachers who did not conduct action research to follow their foot steps.

- ♦ Seminars, workshops and in service training should be prepared to up grade teachers knowledge, and skills, specially, for those teachers who have not taken relevant research courses at higher institution, in-service training should be provided to acquaint them with the necessary action research knowledge and to let them have the know how in undertaking action research.
- ♦ Teachers should be committed to undertake research in their own classrooms; they should critically examine problems they face in the teaching learning activity and should find solutions by systematic studying it. (i.e, class- room investigation should be the day to day activities of teachers.).
- ♦ Instead of expecting formal training, teachers who are acquainted with action research methodology should up grade their knowledge by reading up to date action research materials and should practice to develop their skills.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter of the thesis presents the summary of the major findings, the conclusions drawn and the recommendations forwarded by the researcher, which are hoped to redress the problems revealed in the study.

5.1 Summary

As stated earlier, the major purpose of the study was to find out college teachers' involvement in action research, in Amhara Regional State. An attempt was also made to assess some major problems which college teachers possibly encountered in conducting action research with an intention of forwarding possible solutions which would help to alleviate problems, if any. To this end, the study was made to focus on answering the following basic questions.

1. Do college teachers involve in doing research using action research methods?
2. Are college teachers knowledgeable and skilful to conduct action research?
 - Were college teachers trained in doing action research?
 - If so, what kind of training did they obtain with regard to action research?
3. What are the attitudes of college teachers towards action research?
4. What are the major problems which college teachers possibly encountered in conducting action research?
5. What possible suggestions can be forwarded to increase teachers' involvement in conducting action researches?

The methodology employed was descriptive survey. To find out answers for the above basic research questions, questionnaire was employed as the main

instrument of data collection. Before the actual data collection started, the questionnaire was evaluated and tried out in small -scale study conducted on 25 teachers selected from one college of the region. The reliability of this questionnaire was found to be 0.83 at cronbach alpha level. Since the questionnaire was found valuable to collect data for the main study, it was administered in two teacher training colleges of Amhara Regional State that were included in the study (though there are four teacher training colleges in the region, two were not included in the study since one of the colleges was far to the researcher and the other was used in the pilot testing).

The total numbers of teachers in these colleges were 148. Out of these 104 (70 percent) teachers were selected using simple random sampling technique as a subject of the study and administered the questionnaire. Of which 100 teachers (96.2 percent) were filled in and returned the questionnaire. But 97 were analyzed. The remaining 3 copies were found to be incomplete to give the required information.

In addition to this, interview schedules were conducted with 16 teachers and 8 college principals. Focus group discussion was also conducted with 16 college principals from the two colleges to get additional data and for the purpose of triangulation. The data obtained were later analyzed using various statistical methods such as frequency count, percentage, chi- square, mean and standard deviation. The analysis made warrant the following major findings.

1. The finding of this study revealed that the involvement of teachers in conducting action research activities was not significant. Only 6 (6.19 percent) of teachers have conducted action research. About 91 (93.81 percent), however, did not conduct action research in Amhara Region CTE.
2. The majority of teachers seemed to have positive attitude towards action research though their practical involvement was not found to be significant (please see the mean computation of table 12).

3. The study also revealed the following factors as major constraints faced by college teachers in the region: Lack of enough time, Lack of action research skill (competence), lack of encouragement, lack of action research seminars or workshops, lack of enough action research course (less practical training), lack of collaboration, and emphasizing teaching over research. These constraints were responded by the majority of the respondents (see table 11).
4. The investigation also indicated that almost 69.07 percent of teachers' level of action research competence was found to be unsatisfactory. For the inadequate action research skills teachers have, the insufficient practical training and relevant research methodology course and the absence of workshops or seminars were the major barriers. That is, only 31 percent of teachers had taken the research methodology courses. Out of these, only 26.07 percent assured that the training was adequate enough and relevant to undertake action research (i.e., almost 8.25 percent of the total). Regarding the opportunities of participating in seminar or workshops with respect to action research issues, only 6.19 percent of teachers have got the chance. Moreover, 62.89 percent of teachers did not read books, Journals, articles and the like privately to acquaint themselves with the necessary knowledge.
5. Most of the respondents also claimed that the training they obtained from HDP was not adequate them selves to be skillful as expected. According to them, the reason was that most HDP leaders were not well qualified and experienced to provide the necessary action research skills. Since they adhered to the traditional/formal type of research.
6. The result of this study demonstrated that almost 68.04 percent of teachers have high interest towards conducting action research. In addition, the budget allocation to purchase the necessary supplies, the accessibility of services such as internet, computer, printer of the colleges was encouraging.

7. With regard to emphasis given to action research, it was found out that doing action research has no value to teachers' professional promotion from one academic rank to the next due to lack of clarity of the legislation.
8. Most of the respondents claimed that no appropriate incentives in terms of money as honorarium, material or moral encouragement was given at all for teachers who were engaged in research activities.
9. The college had no specific time table for teachers' to conduct action research.

5.2 Conclusion

From the view point of the findings obtained, the following conclusions can be drawn. Policy decisions as well as educational practices have to be based on well -conceived results. It is due to this reason that priority is given to action research in the current education and training policy of Ethiopia.

1. The majority of teachers' involvement in action research activities was not significant.
2. Most of the teachers' in this study had positive attitude towards action research.
3. Significant proportion of teachers were not confident in their action research skills due to lack of relevant and adequate action research methodology course they offered during their pre - service training, lack of practical exposure such as workshops or seminars in action research issues, some of HDP leaders (tutors) were not well qualified (and experienced) in action research activities to provide the candidates (trainees) with sound orientation and it was more of theoretical, and lack of reading related materials.
4. Lack of enough time, lack of action research skills, lack of encouragement, absence of research conference or workshops, lack of a research course offered, and lack of collaboration were the most serious

action research constraints reported as hampering teachers' involvement in action research (these constraints are presented in their orders from high levels of difficulty to low).

5. lack of encouragement - emphasis given to teachers' action research work in their professional promotion from one academic rank to the next, appropriate incentives to action research works were also affect negatively the research work. The college had no specific time table for teachers to undertake action research in their work plan.
6. The existing body of literature and research findings indicated that lack of resource (budget for research) has been found the key problem that hinder research undertakings. In this study, however, lack of budget for materials was not considered as case.

5.3 Implications of Findings to practice and Recommendations

As indicated in the findings of this study, the problems of teachers encountered while doing action research were many and diverse. To help reduce these problems and to get involved more teachers in action research, the following recommendations are suggested. These recommendations, however, are not exhaustive.

1. As a part of ensuring quality of education, action research have to be carried out within the user system (by teachers at school levels) to address school - based problems. To this effect,
 - 1.1 Unlimited effort should be exerted to introduce and develop action research culture in the colleges. In doing this, the college officials and /or the REB should make the necessary pre- requisites beginning from formulation a clear research policy/ guideline to intensive follow up teachers' engagement in action research. Other wise, simply putting attractive statements in policies and related documents may not improve action research activities by the teachers.

- 1.2. Teachers should be advised to do action research activities for the professional and personal development as well.
2. Teachers' knowledge and skills to conduct action research are the most influential factors to determine the act of teachers in action research. Hence, teachers knowledge and skills to conduct action research should be developed through direct and indirect exposure that college teachers get. Some of the ways should be:
 - 2.1. Use coaching system.(i.e., if one, two or more teachers who are relatively better oriented with action research should be selected from each college and give intensive training, then it could be possible to use them as facilitator and/or trainers) of action research in their respective colleges, with minimum cost and time.
 - 2.2. It is important that long - term and short term training, seminar or workshop and discussion forms, regarding action research need to be arranged. During training, emphasis should be given to practical activities particularly which were not covered during teachers' formal (undergraduate) training program rather than telling what the essence and characters of action research are.
 - 2.3. It is better to assess action research training given during HDP training of teachers in terms of whether or not the course (training) is in line with action research principles and free of traditional influence. Besides, when HDP is designed, care should be given selecting leaders (tutors). That is, the leaders should be well qualified and (experienced) in action research activities to provide the trainees (candidates) with sound orientation, and "learning by doing" should be adopted.
 - 2.4. The colleges should work on establishing linkage with domestic sister colleges and universities for experiential exchange, the college can do this by inviting well experienced researchers (particularly in action research) and /or should make close contact. Foreign communication at least through internate facilities regarding action research work could

be valuable so any one could utilize them without any physical movement.

- 2.5. The colleges should organize groups in the form of subject centered action research clubs such as language, social studies, science and the like so as to popularize and promote action research in the colleges. The club divided in to small groups could undertake activities like collecting of references, books, journals, communications, and liaison with similar groups and disseminate results. This could develop the spirit of team work and highly encouraged for the development of action research culture.
3. One of the constraints to conduct action research was shortage of time for teachers. It looks unsound to expect teachers to do action research while they are pre-occupied with other activities in both curricular and non-curricular. Therefore, some mechanism should be devised to unburden the teachers from over work - loads. In doing this,
 - 3.1. Teachers should be free from routine and bureaucratic works so as to get enough time for action research works.
 - 3.2. The use and application of team approach may be advised to minimize problems of time and to get wider pool of experience.
 - 3.3. The colleges should create a feasible time-schedule for teachers to get involved in action research work. Teachers should be exempted from extra work load or there should be feasible reduction in their work loads at any next semester the moment grants are made available to them.
 - 3.4. The colleges should follow the rules and regulation of the legislation that encourage teachers action research work by minimizing teachers work load and to practice 25 percent of teachers total work load for research work.

4. Encouraging/ motivating teachers using different mechanisms or incentives to do action research is required
 - 4.1. Action research endeavor by teachers should be encouraged. To this end, the REB should allocate reasonable an annual budget for incentives/ rewards and honorarium to the teachers for their effective efforts to do action research. Hence, teacher could use or allocate ever bit of their spare time for action research rather than hunting for part time job. This could be done by the REB in collaboration with the colleges to search for a research sponsoring agencies and could make communication. They should not only depend on government budget.
 - 4.2. The collages could also use some amount from their internal incomes for incentive to teachers who conduct action research works.
 - 4.3. There should be clear stand/ policy regarding incentive system for action research engagement and should also be practical.
 - 4.4. More attention should be given to the value of action research in teachers' professional promotion system. For this, the legislation of the college that has given value for research should be clearly stated to consider or include action research too.
5. Further investigation should be carried out on this issue which will consist of more colleges and large number of sample teachers; hence, it could help to re -assure the reliability and validity of this research work.

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APPENDIX - A

***Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Faculty of Education
Department of Curriculum and Teacher Professional
Development Studies***

Questionnaire for Teachers (instructors)

Dear Respondents;

This questionnaire is prepared to get some insights into the involvement of college teachers' in action research and the factors that influence teachers' action research work at your college. Thus, the data obtained would be used for research purpose at the level of Master of Arts in Curriculum and Teacher Professional Development Studies. Therefore, your genuine responses to all the items in all the sections of the questionnaire are of great importance. You do not need to write your name on any of the pages of this questionnaire. The researcher will also take to assure you of the anonymity of your responses.

To refresh your memory, dear respondent, action research is a research which is carried out in the context of classroom practices to give practical solutions - especially to the possibly manifested academic problems and developments as well. It is usually specific to particular problems and is not comprehensive like that of the "pure" or "basic research"

Thank you for your kind cooperation!

General Instructions: Tick (✓) all the items which apply to you. Some questions indicated in a stroke mark (*) allow you to tick more than one item. Some others allow you to write your views, opinions and beliefs about action research. Dear respondent, do not forget to read the instruction given in each section of the questionnaire.

Section one: Background information

Instruction: please show your response(s) by writing the necessary information as per each question:

1. Sex: 2.1 Male 2.2 Female

2. Age _____

3. How many years of teaching experience do you have _____

3.1 In elementary and junior high school? _____

3.2 In collage(s) of Teacher education? _____

4. What is your current qualification? _____

5. How many regular teaching loads per week do you have?
_____ Credit hours.

Section two: Please show your response (s) by putting a tick mark (✓) in the appropriate box (es) and write your views on the space provided.

6. Have you ever conducted action research?

A) Yes

B) No

6.1 If your answer for question number 8 is "No", would you list down the reasons? _____

6.2 If your response to question number 8 is yes, how many action research works do you have?

Total number of action research works	Published works	Unpublished works known by your department

6.3 Would you please list down the research topics you went through and /or you intended to carry out? _____

7. Do you have a high interest in doing classroom action research?

A) Yes

B) No

8. If your response to number 7 is 'No', what do you think of the possible reason (s)?

*** you can tick (✓) more than once**

A) Time constraint

B) Money constraint

C) Undermining the role (s) of research

D) Lack of enough research skills

E) Others, please specify _____

9. Do you believe that your colleagues have been involved in undertaking action research?

A) Yes

B) No

c. I don't know

10. Do you feel confident in your action research skills?

A) Yes

B) No

11. If your response to number 10 is 'No', what do you think of the possible reason (s)?

*** you can tick (✓) more than one**

A) lack of enough research courses offered

B) lack of up to date research materials in teaching

C) Absence of research conferences and workshops on research issues

D) others; please specify _____

12. Does your work environment create conducive atmosphere to undertake research?

A) Yes B) No

13. If your response to number 12 is 'No', what do you think are the basic reason (s)?

*** you can tick (✓) more than one**

A) Lack of encouragement from college principals

B) Lack of research interest

C) Absence of collaboration among colleagues

D) Emphasizing teaching over research

E) Heavy teaching load

F) Others, please specify _____

14. Have you taken relevant research courses which are pertinent to research during your college or university training years?

A) Yes B) No

15. If your response to number 14 is 'yes', do you find that these courses are adequate to enable you to carry out action research?

A) Yes B) No

16. Have you attended workshops or short term trainings on how to conduct action research
 A) Yes B) No
17. Do you often read different books, journals and articles on action research?
 A) Yes B) No
18. Do you have clear information on your research skills on how to do action research?
 A) Yes B) No
19. Do teachers in your college collaborate with one another to carry out research?
 A) Yes B) No C) I don't know
20. Is action research counted in teachers' professional promotion?
 A) Yes B) No

Section three: Degree of Agreement and/or disagreement

Instruction: Dear respondents; below are items which have been designed to assess your opinion (feeling) about action research. Read each statement carefully and show your choice that best represents your attitude by putting a tick (✓) mark in one of the five alternatives.

Use the following scoring key:

SA= Strongly Agree

A= Agree U = Undecided

D = Disagree

SD = strongly disagree

NO	Each Item of the questionnaire	Degree of Agreement and/or Disagreement				
		SA	A	U	D	SD
1	I believe that teachers' decision should be supported by action research					
2	Teaching is problematic and needs classroom-oriented investigation					
3	In the college where I work, action research is less understood in the teaching					
4	Lack of support from college principals is one source of the problem which does not allow me to do action research					
5	There are no relevant reading materials on research in the college where I work					
6	Teachers in my department seems not to have research interest in undertaking action research					

7	Teachers' role in college is both to undertake research and to teach					
8	I know that there has been a gap between teaching and research among my colleagues' method of teaching					
9	I have less time to undertake action research					
10	I have shortage of money to undertake action research					
11	I have been engaged in investigating my teaching practices.					
12	I do not have the access to timely information on research					
13	Among my colleagues, there is a good professional contact on research issues					
14	My teaching load is so high to the extent that I do not have time to do action research					
15	The college's organizational environment offers good contribution to my carrying out action research					
16	I do not feel confident in my research competence					
17	I have been using action research as one means to solve academic problems in teaching					
18	My college teaching experience informs me that teachers do not usually get involved in action research					
19	I am not encouraged to undertake action research due to lack of incentives					
20	Action research has not yet become practical among my colleagues					
21	I usually depend on action research for strengthen my classrooms					

Section four: Non Structured Questionnaire

Instruction: please show your attitudes, feelings, opinions, and beliefs by writing on the space provided for the following.

1. What do you think about the existing relationship between teaching and action research?

2. How is your practical involvement in doing action research if any?

3. What are your beliefs about the role of action research in teaching?

4. What is your opinion on research courses which you took, if any, when you were a higher institution student? (Were they adequate and relevant?)

5. What are the most revealing problems or research constraints which you have possibly encountered in carrying out action research, if any? (Would you please list them down?)

6. What possible means do you suggest to get involved more teachers in under taking action research?

Thank you once again for filling in the questionnaire!

APPENDIX - B

***Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Faculty of Education
Department of Curriculum and Teacher Professional Development
Studies. Non - Structured Interview for Instructors***

Dear Respondents;

The major purpose of this interview is to come up with possible evidence (s) on your involvement in undertaking action research as professionals.

As already indicated in the questionnaire, the data gathered will be used for research purpose at the level of Master of Arts in Curriculum and Teacher Professional Development Studies.

Therefore, your gentle participation in giving genuine responses on your attitudes, beliefs, feeling, and opinions to all the questions of the interview is hoped to be of great help in seeing the practicability of action research within the context of two teachers' training colleges: D/Birhan College of Teacher Education and Dessie college of Teacher Education

Dear interviewee; before starting the interview, the researcher wants to reassure you of the anonymity of your names and responses. As a result, you will not be asked to reveal your names during the interview.

Thank you for your kind cooperation!

1. What is your practical involvement in undertaking research
2. Do you really believe that teachers should be engaged in investigating their classroom teaching practice besides teaching?
3. Do you think that you have a good research competence (capacity in collecting data, interpreting data, analyzing data. . .) in doing action research?
4. What are your beliefs about the role of action research in teaching
5. Does your college have a specific time table for teachers?

Thank you once again for your kind participation!

APPENDIX - C

**Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate studies
Faculty of Education**

**Department of Curriculum and Teacher Professional Development
Studies**

**Semi - Structured Interview for College Principals (deans, vice
academic deans, and Department heads)**

Dear respondent;

The main purpose of this interview is to get valid information on teachers' involvement in undertaking action research in teachers training colleges.

The data generated will be used for research purpose at the level of Master of Arts in Curriculum and Teacher Professional Development Studies.

So, your genuine responses (feelings, beliefs and suggestions) to all the questions of this interview would be of great help to assess the practicability of action research among teachers in the sites in focus.

Before I start the interview, I would like to assure you of the fact that your name and responses will remain confidential. Accordingly, you will not be asked to disclose your name during the interview.

Thanks for your kind cooperation!

1. What is your role in this college?
2. Does your college have a specific time table for teachers to undertake action research?
3. Does your college have enough annual budgets for doing research?
4. Is there a conducive atmosphere in your college to do action research in terms of resources and material (Would you explain it further?)
5. Does your college have regular seminars, workshops, and conferences on research issues?
6. How is teachers' involvement in action research?
7. What are your beliefs about the roles of action research in teaching

Gebeyaw Shitie Tiruneh

Department of Curriculum and Teacher professional
Development Studies
Faculty of Education

Thank you once again for your kind participation!

APPENDIX - D

Below are questions which focus to the Amhara College of teacher education teachers' involvement in action research. Therefore, please give your explanations in relation to you college teachers' involvement in action research.

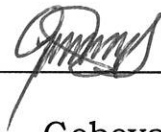
Thank you!

Questions for informants (Research and development vice deans, department heads, research and development committee, and curriculum development coordinators) who will be participated in the FGD

1. How do you evaluate teachers' action research skills to involve in it? why?
2. is there annual action research plan in the over all plan of the college?
3. What problems do you think inhibit teachers from conducting action research?
4. Are there sufficient material like books, research copies and computers that help teachers conduct action research?
5. How about teachers' time for research? What do you think the major factors that make teachers busy not to do action research at your college?
6. Do teachers have the opportunity to use
 - internate services, computers and printer for research purpose
7. Are there facilities of research meetings, workshops on action research issues?
8. Is there budget for research undertaking?
9. Is research counted in teachers' professional promotion?
10. What can you suggest to promote action research in college of Teacher Education?

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other universities and that all source of materials used for the thesis have been fully acknowledged.



Gebeyaw Shitie

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Gizaw Tasissa (Ato)