



Correspondence

Action research on education in Ayurveda



One of great challenges faced by the Ayurveda sector today is education [1–6]. Action research can be used as a tool to bring out practical solutions to combat the problems faced by Ayurveda in teaching and training.

Action research in education is interventions made in teaching methods and analysis of whether these methods are making any difference in the students' learning. Today, quantification of the differences observed is easier due to the availability of a variety of measurements to assess classroom performance and student's understanding.

The documentation of teaching methods in Ayurveda is as important as clinical documentation. Certain teachers develop outstanding teaching skills in Ayurveda in spite of its completely different epistemology from that of the basic sciences which is the background of most undergraduates. Some ways of teaching which are successful than conventional ways need to be documented.

Quoting from the literature, "Action Research is an activity referring to systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers for the purpose of improving their own practice" [11–13] and "Action research studies lead to concrete decisions that improve teaching and learning in particular educational contexts" [7,8].

Action Research involves the following basic 5 steps:

1. Identify a problem that faced in the classroom,
2. Learn about alternative approaches to tackle that problem,
3. Apply the new approaches, (Intervention)
4. Record the results
5. Modify the approaches further based on the final results.

This ultimately leads to better professionalism among teachers and higher standards in their teaching stimulating new thinking and new responses among students [14,15].

The stages of Action Research are explained as follows in literature [7,10]:

"Planning Stage", which involves:

1. Identifying a problem and developing it into a researchable question.
2. Reviewing the related literature.
3. Developing a research plan including what kind of data should be used to measure the difference after an intervention (for example, test scores or observing one or more students) and when it should be recorded.

"Acting stage" – stage of implementation.

"Communicating Stage" – sharing the results through journals or in conferences. Hence, it is important for teachers to take care that they document their actions and results on such parameters that can be effectively communicated to others.

"Reflecting Stage" – leads to a new cycle of research.

Variety of ways to measure the differences brought about by an intervention could be:

- Assessing students' assignments
- Interviewing students
- Videotaping classroom discussions
- Writing experiences in a Journal Diary
- Looking for common strengths and problems with research cited on assignments.

One such brilliant work done in Ayurveda, without the knowledge of it being an Action Research is by Joshi et al [16]. However, more such works and probably even better could be done, after a systematic knowledge of this form of research.

Education in Ayurveda sector has undergone tremendous changes starting from the 'Gurukul system' to 'Modern classrooms', moving onto technology-based learning. Hence, it is obvious that our teachers must have been doing Action Research unknowingly, but, its complete systematic knowledge will bridge the gap between lack of documentation and communication of these researches and communication.

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None.

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