

# Action Research in Education

Dr. Gitanjali Padhi

Associate Professor

(Department of Education, Dr. Parshuram Mishra Institute of Advanced Study in Education, Sambalpur, Odisha)

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## Abstract:

Action research is a research or investigation designed for use by teachers to identify and to attempt to solve on immediate problems and improve their school, classroom, and learning environment. It involves systematic observation, action, evaluation and critical reflection and—based on the evidence gathered—changes in practice are then implemented. This article includes the meaning, definitions, need, importance and types of action research.

*Keywords* — action research

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## INTRODUCTION

Action research can be described as a family of research methodologies which pursue **ACTION** (or Change) and **RESEARCH** (or Understanding) the same time.

Action research is “**Research in Action**”—a group of people identify a problem, do something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts were, and if not satisfied, try again.

The term “**Action Research**” was coined in the 1944 by Kurt Lewin, a professor at MIT, a German-American social psychologist. He first found that experimental methods, in many cases, were inadequate and unsatisfactory. He then tried to seek for a method that based on people’s real-world experience; from that time on, action research has entered the world researchers.

In his 1946 paper “**Action Research and Minority Problems**” he described action research as “a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action” this type of research uses “a spiral of step,” each of

which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action”.

**O’Brien states that** “action research is a natural way of acting and researching at the same time”. To make it clearer, Dick affirms that action research is a true reflection of its names as it is intended to achieve both action and research at the same time. it is critically suitable for educational situations where teachers wish to bring about action in the form of change or improvement in their teaching and at the same time develop an understanding which informs the change and is an addition to what is known.

Backingham has mentioned concept action research, first in his book **Research for Teachers** But **Stephen M. Corey** has used this concept for solving the problems of education for the first time. He has defined the term Action Research.

“The process by which practitioners attempt to study their problems scientifically in order to guide, correct and evaluate their decisions and action in what a number of people have called Action Research”.

“Action research is a process for studying problems by practitioners scientifically to take decision for improving their current practices”. (Stephen M. Corey)

#### DEFINITION

“Research concerned with school problems carried on by school personnel to improve school practice is action research”. (Sara Blackwell)

“Action Research is organized, investigative activity, aimed towards, to study and constructive change of given endeavour by individual or group concerned with change and improvement”. (Mc.Threte )

Action research is systematic inquiry done by teachers (or other individuals in an educational settings) to gather information about, and subsequently improve, the ways their particular educational setting operates, how they teach, and how well their students learn (Mills, 2000)

Action research is a form of investigation designed for use by teachers to attempt to solve problems and improve professional practices in their own classroom. It involves systematic observations and data collection which can be then used by the practitioner-researcher in reflection, decision-making and the development of more effective classroom strategies. (Parsons and Brown, 2002)

Action research is a natural part of teaching. Teachers are continually observing students, collecting data and changing practices to improve student learning and the classroom and school environment. Action research provides a frame work that guides the energies of teachers toward a better understanding of why, when, and how students become better learners. (A. Christine Miller.2007).

Action research is a fancy way of staying let’s study what’s happening at our school and decide how to make it a better place (Emily Calhoun ,1994)

Action research in education as action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry that can be utilized by teachers in order to improve the rationality and justice of (i)their own practices, (ii) their understanding of these practices, and (iii) the situations in which these practices are carried out (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 162)

#### NEED FOR ACTION RESEARCH

In ‘schools’ teachers come across some form of problem that they would like to address in their classroom. Some teachers rely on traditional ways to solve these problems. Many teachers seek out the advice of experts or colleagues to solve the challenges. Really good educators conduct their own investigations i.e., action research to identify and solve problems while analysing information about their school and the learning environment. In schools, action research refers to wide variety of evaluative, investigative, and analytical research methods designed to diagnose problems or weaknesses—whether organizational, academic or instructional, academic, or instructional—and help educators develop practical solutions to address them quickly and efficiently.

#### IMPORTANCE OF ACTION RESEARCH

As per Borgia and Schuler, the importance of action research in education are

- Encourages change in schools
- Fosters a democratic approach in education
- Empowers individuals through collaboration on projects
- Position’s teachers and other educators as learners who seek to narrow the gap between practice and their vision education
- Encourages educators to reflection their practice
- Promotes a process of testing new ideas.

## **TYPES OF ACTION RESEARCH**

The four main type of action research design are

- Individual research
- Collaborative research
- School-wide research
- District-wise research

### **Individual Research**

Individual action research is research conducted by one teacher or one staff member. This type of research is conducted to analyse a specific task. A teacher may implement group activities within a mathematics class will help improve learning. The teacher alone performs research by implementing a group activity for a certain length of time. After the action is performed, the teacher analyses the results, implement changes or discards the program if not found to be helpful.

### **Collaborative Research**

Collaborative research involves a group of people researching a specified topic. Here more than one person is involved in the implementation of the new program. A group of students are tested and the results are analysed. Many times, collaborative research involves both teachers and the principal of the school. This type of research offers the collaboration of many people working jointly on one subject.

### **School-Wide Research**

Action research programs are generally created from a problem found within an entire school. When a program is researched for an entire school, it is called school-wide action research. This research may be to increase student's performance in a certain subject. The entire staff works together through this research to study the problem, implement changes, and correct the problem or increase performance.

### **District-Wide Research**

This type of research may be used to address organizational problems within the entire district. For district-wide research, staff from each school in the district, collaborates in correcting the problem or finding ways to improve the situation.

## **MAIN FEATURES OF ACTION RESEARCH**

- A consideration of **action** (Reflection and reconnaissance).
- Implementation of an **action** for improvement to individual practice.
- The use of data collection on the **action**.
- A review of the **action** through consideration of data;

## **CONCLUSION**

Action research is an informal research since teachers are not academic researchers; even then it is extremely suitable for education as its main purpose s to help teachers as researchers, solve their teaching problem "**in action**". It allows teachers to learn about their teaching and at the same time they get an opportunity to improve their teaching. They are able to do this because action research has a cyclic process. Teachers notice what they do with what results. They learn from this. They apply their new learning to improvements their plan. They try it and notice what happens, thus repeating the cycle.

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