

B.Ed. II YR.

## PEACE EDUCATION

### ACTION RESEARCH

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According to **Best and Kahn** (1986) “Action research is focused on the immediate application, not on the development of theory, nor upon general application. It has placed its emphasis on a problem here and now, in a local setting. Its findings are to be evaluated in terms of local applicability not in terms of universal validity. Its purpose is to improve school practices and at the same time, to improve those who improve practices: to combine the research function with teacher growth in such qualities as objectivity, skill in research processes, habits of thinking, ability to work harmoniously with others, and professional spirit.”

**Cohen and Manion** stated that – ‘In action research teachers and class-room practitioners feel and solve the problems. A practitioner undertakes both the function of diagnosis and therapeutic treatment. So, the function of Action research is to remedy problem diagnosed in specific situations, to heighten self-awareness, self-criticality and

analytical abilities of teachers and teacher educators and to inject innovative approaches to teaching’.

According to **Newman (2005)** the characteristics of action research are identified as: ‘those who are being studied participate in the research process; research incorporates ordinary or popular knowledge; research focuses on power with a goal of empowerment; research seeks to raise consciousness or increase awareness; and research is tied directly to action. It is assumed that knowledge develops from experience, particularly the experience of the participants and functionaries of educational system in their day to day operation.

## **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ACTION AND OTHER KINDS OF RESEARCH IN EDUCATION**

***Nature of Problem:*** In a theoretical/fundamental research a researcher is concerned with problems which have theoretical implications and yield explanation about the relationship between different variables leading to presentation of systematic view of the educational phenomenon. The applied research deals the problems concerning application of theories and principles in development of educational system. In the case of action research, researchers deal with problems which require immediate solution at the local level. The problems encountered on day to day basis are subject to the inquiry

of action research. Such experiences obtained from solution of such problems may contribute towards formation of new knowledge.

***Goals of Research:*** As Fundamental research aims at generation of new knowledge through evolving refining theories and principles concerning educational phenomena. It leads towards generalization of theories and principles that can be verified as and when needed. Action research aims at application of theories and principles in varied situations of education to bring about improvement in educational practices at school level. Its purpose is developmental/formative in nature.

***Research Design:*** A typical research design aims to develop a suitable plan for testing of hypotheses and arriving at generalization which involves systematic steps. In action research flexible design is adopted. The initial design of action research is subject to modification keeping in view the dynamics of the situation. There is a scope for modification of hypotheses adopting flexible methods and strategies during the conduct of the study.

***Nature of Population & Sample:*** Generally scientific research deals with generalization of relationships between variables with respect to given population. It adopts nomothetic approach where sample units are studied in the context of a well defined population. Hence appropriate

sampling techniques are adopted for ensuring representativeness of population. In the case of action research, the researcher (the teacher) deals with his /her own school related problems or situations. The scope of generalization is limited to one's own workplace. The units of the study are chosen from own school. Many a time the sample and population remain same. Generalization may be made for future course of action provided similar problems appear in future.

### ***Generalizations formulated based on research:***

The problem of a scientific research is judged in the context of its wider scope. In other words, scientific research aims at generation of universal knowledge. As a result, the universe, population and sample of the study are well defined. The hypotheses are tested with the purpose of generalization of results to a specific population. This kind of generalization is lateral in nature. In the action research the aim is to solve the local specific problem and as such they do not have a bigger scope for generalization to wider populations. This type of generalization is called vertical generalization of research findings.

***Uses of Research:*** In the case of traditional research findings are used for generation of new principles and theories so that existing knowledge system gets refined. Moreover, its application through researches help in

solving crucial problems in varied situations. The findings of action research however indicate how a specific problem is solved through systematic interventions made by practitioners. Hence action research is used for bringing about qualitative improvement in one's own working situations directly.

<b>Points of Comparison</b>	<b>Action Research</b>	<b>Research</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	To bring improvement in functioning of school system at inst. level	To understand and explain the nature of educational phenomena.
	To solve problems faced by practising teachers/managers in day to day situations by systematic interventions	To generate knowledge by creation/refinement of theories concerning education
	To develop scientific temper among practising teachers and managers of school.	To apply theories and principles in solving complex problems of education.

	Research leads to action at grassroots level.	Research leads to conceptualization and refinement of knowledge concerning education & development.
<b>Nature of Problems</b>	Action research is solely concerned with the problems faced at grassroots level (i.e. teaching learning at classroom level).	The research problem is concerned with education system in the context of internal and external forces interacting with it having large scope of generalization.
	The problem in action research has a limited scope.	The research problems have larger scope.
	It is concerned with solution of day to day problems at school level.	It is concerned with solution of problem concerning the system of education

	It is oriented towards immediate action to be taken.	Problem identified are of theoretical as well as applied nature.
<b>Criteria of evaluation of Research</b>	Bringing improvement in teaching-learning practices in the context of one's own school/classroom setting.	Original contribution of the researcher to the field of knowledge or validating the existing theories.
	Brings changes in the style of functioning and thinking of practising teacher/manager after successful completion.	Success leads to award of degrees, formal recognition by universities.
<b>Population Sample</b>	The study is conducted on the section class of School.	Population is well defined. Sample size is quite large. Appropriate methodology is adopted in sample selection.
	Mostly population and sample remain same.	The nature and size of sample indicates the generalizability of the study to its population. So

		representativeness is to be ensured.
<b>Generalization</b>	Generalization of the finding of the study is not the focus	Generalization is essential feature of traditional research.
	It is only concerned with one's own school settings having its scope for improvement in practices at classroom level.	General research aims at exploring the nature of reality with universal character applicability.
	The scope of knowledge obtained is local specific.	
<b>Design of the study</b>	Flexible design is adopted	Systematic exercises are done to arrive at appropriate research design.
	Study is conducted in natural setting.	General research uses rigid designs.



	<p>Methodological rigor is not adopted in research design</p>	<p>Manipulation of independent variables is done through appropriate designs. Knowledge of research design is essential on the part of the researcher.</p>
	<p>Simple designs such as single group pre-test post test design, two groups post test or quasi experimental design are adopted.</p>	<p>Except experimental studies where appropriate design is evolved for experimental treatment, researcher's intervention is not needed in studies of exploratory type.</p>
	<p>Researchers intervention in solving the problem is basic feature of action research design.</p>	<p>Rigorous approaches are used for data collection involving</p>

		quantitative & qualitative.
	Tools & techniques like observation, interview, teacher made tests are used for data collection.	Methodological rigor is essential for analysis of qualitative and quantitative data
	Descriptive and simple non-parametric techniques are used for analysis of data.	
<b>Researcher</b>	The teachers headmasters/Supervisors plan and conduct action research studies.	The researcher need not be the part and parcel of the problem under study. Usually specialists, students at doctoral, master level conduct researches.
	The researchers are directly concerned with the school system.	The researchers are indirectly concerned with the school system
	The researchers are concerned with the problems faced by them	The researchers deal with the problems faced in

	in a day to day practices of school system and bringing improvement in one's own work style and school practices.	the context of education system in general. They aim at contributing to new findings.
	The researchers require practical training for designing and conducting action research	Rigorous study on research methodology on the part of the researcher is needed

## **PROCEDURAL DETAILS OF ACTION RESEARCH**

Even though the steps of conducting scientific research remain same in the case of action research there exists uniqueness in its procedural details. The steps are as follows:

- i. Identification of Problem
- ii. Defining and delimiting the problem
- iii. Analyzing probable reasons behind the problem
- iv. Formulating action hypotheses
- v. Developing suitable design for testing of action hypotheses
- vi. Making intervention
- vii. Collecting data with the help of suitable tools

- viii. Evaluation of the project
- ix. Reporting

### **i) Identification of concrete problems for study:**

The problems of action research are grounded in the functional elements of school system as Learner, Teacher, Teaching methods, Curriculum, Design, development, evaluation, School management etc. The problems concerning these components forms the basis of action research. The action researcher does not identify a problem just for undertaking a research project rather he is more concerned with solution of such problems existing in his /her school. Hence keeping in view, the gravity of the problem and his own capability and interest he identifies a suitable problem for action research. The guiding principles for identification of problem are felt need, objective analysis of situation, critical attitude and interaction with peers.

### **ii) Defining and delimiting the problem:**

Once a suitable problem for action research is identified it must be well defined so that its meaning shall be specific and be seen in the context of specific situations. For example the researcher identifies a problem concerning “secondary students low performance in subject of English”.

The problem is to be specified with the term “low performance”. This term can be defined as follows:

“Oral and written expression of secondary school students in English is not up to the criteria fixed by the teacher/school.”

Another problem identified by DIET teacher can be” “Ineffective supervision of Primary Schools”. He/She may define the term ‘Ineffective supervision’ as follows: Supervision not diagnosing the critical problems existing in primary schools.

### **Assessment of the problem:**

Once the problem is identified the researcher should assess the worth of the problem on following criteria:

Is the problem identified with sound factual base?

Is the action research study going to have positive impact on school system?

Is the researcher directly concerned with the problem?

Shall the participant subjects (students) get benefitted by the research?

Is it feasible to conduct the study in given circumstances of school system?

Is the researcher capable enough to conduct the study?

Whether resource support is available for conducting the study?

### **iii) Analyzing probable reasons behind the problem:**

At this stage the researcher explores probable reasons behind the problem. His experiences with the situation, interaction with the students, parents, peers, survey of literature, study of available write-ups form the base of such exercise. For example in the case of action research on the problem of “Improving Supervision of Schools” the probable reasons behind ineffective supervision may be identified as:

- i. Supervisor does not have experience of Primary school level teaching and management.
- ii. Supervisor is not trained in supervision techniques
- iii. Suggestions given in the supervision report are vague and not clear.
- iv. Supervision are not done with regular schedule.  
There may be many more reasons which are context specific.

The researcher must be careful in analyzing the logical relevance of reasons its testability, specificity, authenticity as well as intervention.

#### **iv)Formulating action Hypothesis:**

Hypothesis gives us direction to conduct research. In action research it is known as *Action Hypothesis*. It is called so because its proneness towards action.

#### ***Concept of action hypothesis***

Any action hypothesis essentially contains two components: a) action component b) purpose component.

<b>Action Component</b>	<b>Purpose Component</b>
Written assignments in English will be given to students and the same will be regularly evaluated.	Students spelling mistakes will be minimized.
Extra classes shall be taken to deal with comprehension of difficult concepts.	Students difficulties in comprehension of difficult concepts will be reduced.
Regular feedback on home work be given.	Students shall perform home work regularly.

“Low performance of Secondary students in English Subject” the action hypothesis may be stated as above. The

unique feature of action hypotheses is associated with its relevance and purposiveness. In other words action hypothesis should be so specific that if certain actions are taken then its result shall be directly concerned with solution of problems. Moreover, the action hypothesis must be clear and testable in nature.

### v) Suitable design for testing of action hypotheses

The action researcher works out a plan for operating the study. It means the conditions in which the study will be conducted, nature of interventions to be made, the subjects to be identified for the study, the nature of the data to be gathered, the tools to be used for data collection and the analysis procedures to be adopted in the study.

<b>Activities to be adopted</b>	<b>Conditions in which activities shall be adopted</b>	<b>Subjects under study</b>	<b>Tools/ materials to be used</b>	<b>Data collection analysis</b>
Students not performing well in internal assessments shall be identified subject wise on weekly basis	Subject teachers shall be asked to furnish list of poor performers on weekly basis.	All subject teachers	Proforma	Classification of data finished by teachers
Teachers and students' views shall be taken on weekly basis	On every Friday's last period group discussion shall	Subject teachers and students (who could not	Timetable format	Discussion note, summarizing viewpoints



for preparing special timetable	take place with teachers and students	perform upto criteria fixed by the teacher)		
Making special arrangement for classes and informing teachers and students	Every Saturday notice will be circulated to the teachers and students.	Concerned subject teachers and students	Timetable notice	Ensure notice is served.

### **vi) Making Intervention**

Once the design of hypotheses is finalized the researcher shall make appropriate intervention in the real situation. It may not be too much cumbersome practice as in the case of true experimental study. However, the researcher must be careful and systematic in making interventions. Usually it takes place in natural setting not disturbing the reality. The researcher may adopt flexible approach keeping in view situational constraints in conducting the study.

### **vii) Collecting data with the help of suitable tools**

Usually the tools used for data collection are self-made tools by the teacher(researcher). The tools like Interview schedule, observation schedule, check-list, teacher-made achievement tests, rating scales, diary, camera for photographing etc. are used for collection of data. The tools can be used for data collection as per action research design.

### **viii)Evaluation of the project:**

The action hypothesis are tested on the basis of empirical evidences gathered on activity wise intervention. Data gathered with the help of specific tools are subject to simple analysis techniques. Simple analysis procedure like percentages, central tendencies, graphic presentations, dispersions, correlations and chi-square test can be used for analysis of data. The researcher shall evaluate the outcome of the project in the context of criteria objective of the study i.e. solving a specific problem.

### **ix)Reporting**

Every research study needs to be reported systematically and objectively. The reporting plays a major role in indicating the validity of a study. It becomes a trend-setter for inspiring practicing teachers/functionaries to share innovative experiences of problem-solving through self-initiative of teachers.