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**Topic: Action Research**

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**1.1 Introduction**

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Dear students, *"Research concerned with school problems, carried on by school personnel to improve school practice, is action research"*.

*-S. Bachwell*

*"Our schools cannot keep up with the life they are supposed to sustain and improve unless teachers, pupils, supervisors, administrators and school patrons continuously examine what they are doing, singly and in groups. They must use their imaginations creatively and constructively to identify the practices that must be changed to meet the needs and demands of modern life. Courageously try out those practices that give better promise and methodically and systematically" gather evidence to test their worth"*

Stephen M. Corey

The concept of Action Research is very old, but Stephen M. Corey applied it in the field of Education for the first time.

Meaning of Research – The research process establishes new truth, finds out new facts, formulation of new theories and suggests to new applications. It is a purposeful activity which contributes to the enhancement of knowledge. According to Random Marey. "Research is systematized efforts to gain new knowledge"

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## 1.2 Objectives

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Dear students, after reading this lesson, you should be able to:

- To improve the working condition of school plant.
- To develop the democratic attitude among students and teachers for understanding and solving their problems.
- To bring excellence in school workers.
- To make the school system effective for generating a healthy environment for student learning.
- To raise the level of performance and level of aspiration of the students.

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### 1.3 Background Information

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Action research is a valuable tool in the hands of the teacher to solve day to day problems of class teaching & educational guidance. Action research provides an occasion to the teachers to use the imaginations of children creatively to change classroom practices to meet with needs and demands of pupils adequately and to try out such practices which give greater promises, confidence and worth. Action research develops scientific outlook in the teachers, inspectors, administrators, managements etc of the educational institution the progress in the field of education depends upon the development of scientific outlook in the participants. Action research helps to preserve the democratic values and eliminates and dogmatic practices in the educational institutions. Results obtained by action research are more practical worthwhile from the standpoint of their application and implementation in the field of education. Due to its flexibility it is an ideal instrument for education guidance. Action research can utilize the skills like observing, recording making hypothesis testing them reaching tentative conclusion etc.

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### 1.4 Meaning of Action Research

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Action Research is a kind of classroom research taken up by the class teacher or subject teachers with a view to find out what action can be taken to solve a certain problem in the shortest possible time. For example, a student who performs very well in written exams fails to give oral answers or a group of students constantly miss a particular subject period. There may be some reasons to all such problems, all that is required is a certain more effort on the part of the teachers to get involved and ask why, what and how. Action Research is that one way which gives an opportunity to the teachers to get involved in solving their problems. No other researcher can help a teacher solve such practical problems faced by him in his daily classroom transactions, but the teacher

himself. Action Research is not concerned merely with solving problems in a class but can also be conducted to verify the consequences of new educational decisions, teaching and leadership strategies, and many more.

It is a method for improving and modifying the working system of a classroom in a school. The teacher and principal are able to study their problems of teaching scientifically. It is problem oriented method. The action Research project improves and modifies the current practices. It functions as a supporting device of teaching in other words action research is the practical aspect of educational research. In this research efforts are made to solve the practical difficulties and problems scientifically which changes the working system and the desired objectives are achieved.

Action research is inquiry or research in the context of focused efforts to improve the quality of an organization and its performance. It typically is designed and conducted by practitioners who analyze the data to improve their own practice. Action research can be done by individuals or by teams of colleagues. The team approach is called *collaborative inquiry*. Action research has the potential to generate genuine and sustained improvements in schools. It gives educators new opportunities to reflect on and assess their teaching; to explore and test new ideas, methods, and materials; to assess how effective the new approaches were; to share feedback with fellow team members; and to make decisions about which new approaches to include in the team's curriculum, instruction, and assessment plan.

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### **1.5 Need of Action Research**

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Generally in India, a curriculum is set up and given to the teachers to follow in their teaching learning process during a year. This curriculum is based on constant researches and studies going on in the field of education. Such researches are fundamental researches which add to the existing facts in a certain field. The problems related to syllabus, teaching methods, adjustment of students, etc are few such areas which can be

taken up for fundamental researches. But, the minor problems like problems related to discipline or absenteeism or fatigue or boredom related to particular subjects like History, Science or Mathematics which faces by an individual teacher in her classroom cannot be solved by the fundamental research because these problems required immediate solution that can be found by the action research. The researchers say a teacher is an artist to mould his students into the shape he likes. So being an artist it is the utmost duty of the teacher to see and check why he is unable to shape those special category students. The action which a teacher can take up to study the probable causes of an existing problem and thereby providing suggestions to eradicate the problem is called Action Research.

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### **1.6 Effects of Action Research on Teacher**

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There is a growing body of evidence of the positive personal and professional effects that engaging in action research has on the practitioner. Action research provides teachers with the opportunity to gain knowledge and skill in research methods and applications and to become more aware of the options and possibilities for change. Teachers participating in action research become more critical and reflective about their own practice. Teachers engaging in action research attend more carefully to their methods, their perceptions and understandings, and their whole approach to the teaching process. As teachers engage in action research they are increasing their understanding of the schooling process. What they are learning will have great impact on what happens in classrooms and schools in the future. It has been said, "Teachers often leave a mark on their students, but they seldom leave a mark on their profession". Through the process and products of action research teachers will do both.

In spite of these several additional benefits of action research in teacher training program to bring quality are as follows:

1. Teacher investigates their own practice in a new way taking a closer look at what children actually do and what they themselves do.

2. Teacher develops a deeper understanding of children during teaching learning process and they play a major role in the development of children.
3. Teachers are viewed as equal partners with their collaborator in deciding what works best in their situation thus reducing the possibility for unequal power relationship that might otherwise develop among university researches, curriculum developers administrators and teacher .solutions are arrived at cooperatively.
4. Teachers are often more committed to the implementation of a project that they have been involved with in designing.
5. Action research is an ongoing process rather than a program, and its principles can be applied elsewhere.
6. Action research helps the teacher scientifically to solve the problems that occur during the classroom teaching, presentation and achieving learning objectives.
7. Action research is a systematic method of solving problems improving upon things and converting an unsatisfactory situation into a satisfactory ones
8. Action research helps a practitioner to perceive understand and assess the situation and it further facilitates a systematic analysis and working out plausible reasons for the unsatisfactory condition.
9. Action research provides teachers the opportunity to improve their teaching and make teaching learning process effective.
10. Action research offers teacher the opportunity to investigate question and concerns relates to their teaching practice and their students learning.

In the words of Stephen M. Corey it is clear that action research is an important tool for improving teaching learning process according to him our school cannot keep up with the life they are supposed to sustain and improve unless teachers.

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### **1.7 Benefits of Action Research**

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Action research can be a worthwhile pursuit for educators for a number of reasons. Foremost among these is simply the desire to know more. Good teachers are, after all, themselves students, and often look for ways to expand upon their existing knowledge.

- 1. Focus on School Issue, Problem, or Area of Collective Interest:-**Research done with the teacher's 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 circles, and weave them in to their own classroom. It is also comforting for parents, or education administrators outside of the school, to know that a teacher is not just blindly following what the latest study seems to suggest, but is transforming the knowledge into something meaningful.
- 2. Important for 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 toward the process of change. Through action research, teachers learn about themselves, their students, their colleagues, and can determine ways to continually improve.
- 3. Give Opportunities for Collegial interactions:-**Isolation is one of the downsides of teaching. Teachers are often the sole adult in a room of children, and have little or no time scheduled for professional conversations with others. Action research in pairs or

by teams 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 stronger relationships. As the practice of action research becomes part of the school culture, we see increased sharing and collaboration across departments, disciplines, grade levels, and schools.

4. **Evaluation 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. Conversations can take on a different focus from attempting to "fix" to arrive at understanding.
5. **Improved Collegiality and Communications:**-Team work 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 suggest positive changes in patterns of collegiality, communication, and networking.
6. It develops scientific attitude in the teachers.
7. By studying the interests needs & abilities of the pupils teachers can adopt a teaching method by which the teaching may become interesting and an all round development of the pupils may take place.
8. It enables the schools to organize proper programmes for the development of the pupils.
9. It can raise the achievement level of the pupils.
10. Curriculum can be developed with its help.

11. It can solve the problem of indiscipline.
12. I can remove the discrepancies among pupils & teachers which occur due to social causes.
13. It can solve the problems of delinquency and backwardness.
14. It can preserve the democratic values by eliminating traditional and mechanical environment.
15. By its help decisions can be taken regarding the day to day problems which come before the principles, supervisors, administrators and managers. They can remove them by evaluating their own working systems or working methods.

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## 1.8 Steps of Action Research

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In designing and conducting action research, project the following steps are used.

- I. Identification of the problem** – A researcher should be serious towards various activities. The problems is isolated from the broad fields An investigator must realize the seriousness of the problems.
- II. Definition and delimitation of the problem** – After identifying the problem it should be defined. So the action and goal may be specified. The delimitation means to localize the problem in terms of class, Subject, group and period in which a teacher perceives the problem.
- III. Analyzing the Causes of the problem** – The causes of the problem are analyzed with the help of some relevance. The nature of causes are also analyzed whether it is the control or beyond the control of the investigator. This helps in formulating the action hypotheses.
- IV. Design for the action hypotheses** – The design is developed for testing the most important action hypotheses. Some action may be taken and their results are observed. If the hypotheses is not accepted second design is developed for testing

the hypotheses. The design of action research is flexible and can be design a t any time according to the convenience of researcher.

**Conclusions of Action Research Project** – The accepting or rejecting action hypotheses leads to draw some conclusions. The conclusions are useful in modifying and improving the current practices of school and class – room teaching.

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## 1.9 Characteristics of Action Research

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A review of a large variety of action research projects over the years shows that action research has the following characteristics:

1. It is the process of studying practical problems of education.
2. It is a scientific procedure for finding out a practical solution of current problem.
3. It is a personal research or clinical research work.
4. The focus is to improve and modify the current practices.
5. The individual and group problems are studied by action research.
6. It does constitute in the form of knowledge.
7. Grounded in real life experience.
8. Developed in partnership.
9. Addresses significant needs.
10. Develops new ways of seeing/interpreting the world (i.e. theory)
11. Works with (rather than simply studying) people.
12. Uses methods that are appropriate to the audience and participants at hand.
13. Develops needed structures to allow for follow up or institutionalization of new practices so that the work may have a lasting, positive impact.
14. An investigator must be directly associated with the problem to be studied.
15. The form of problem should be real.
16. The project should be so planned that it should not intervene the function of school work.
17. The project should be concerned directly with qualitative improvement and level of performance of the students.

The action hypotheses should be formulated by considering the cause of the problem which is under the approach of the teacher or investigator.

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## 1.10 Let Us Sum Up

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*Research concerned with school problems, carried on by school personnel to improve school practice, is action research.* The concept of Action Research is very old, but Stephen M. Corey applied it in the field of Education for the first time. It is a method for improving and modifying the working system of a classroom in a school. The teacher and principal are able to study their problems of teaching scientifically. It is problem oriented method. It is a valuable tool in the hands of the teacher to solve day to day problems of class teaching & educational guidance. It is useful to solve the minor problems like problems related to discipline or absenteeism or fatigue or boredom related to particular subjects like History, Science or Mathematics which faces by an individual teacher in his/her classroom.

Action research provides teachers with the opportunity to gain knowledge and skill in research methods and applications and to become more aware of the options and possibilities for change. Teachers participating in action research become more critical and reflective about their own practice. It develops scientific outlook in the teachers, inspectors, administrators, managements etc for the progress of educational institution in the field of education.

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## 1.11 Check Your Progress

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1. Discuss the Nature and Scope of action Research?
2. What are the characteristics of Action Research?
3. Discuss the benefits of action research to a Teacher?
4. What are the different steps of action Research?

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## 1.12 Suggested Readings

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