

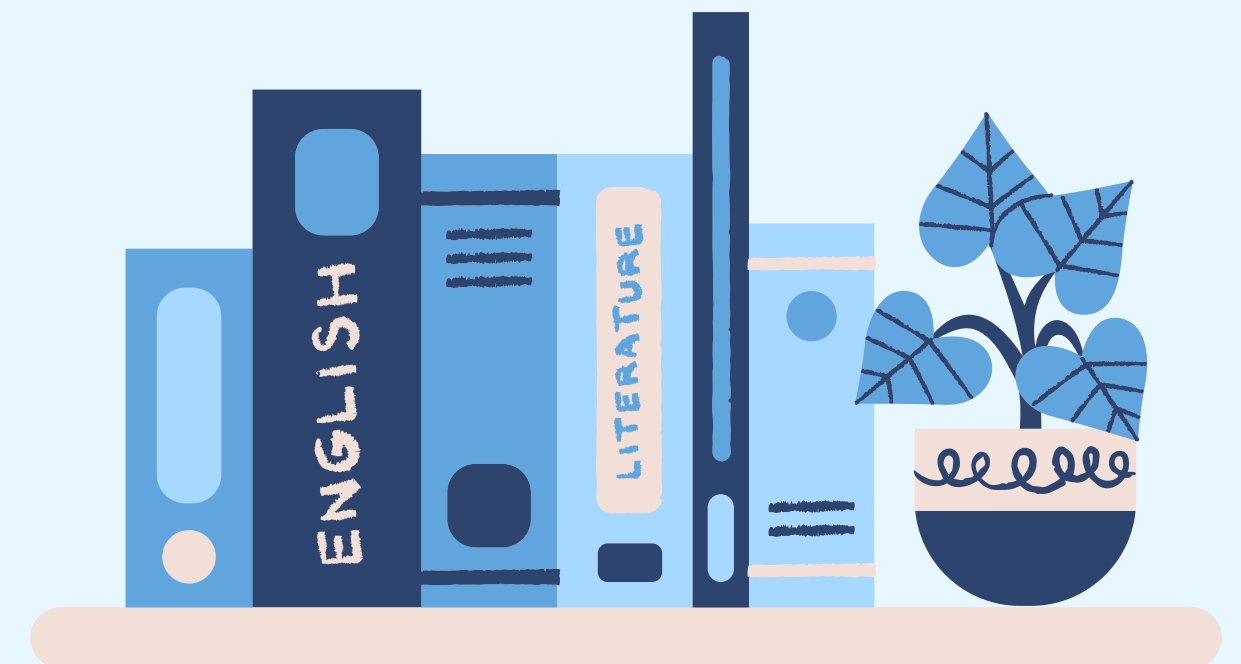
UNIT – III

SCOPE OF ACTION RESEARCH IN THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

SCOPE OF ACTION RESEARCH

- ***Classroom***
- ***School Management***
- ***Policy Implementation***

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INTRODUCTION

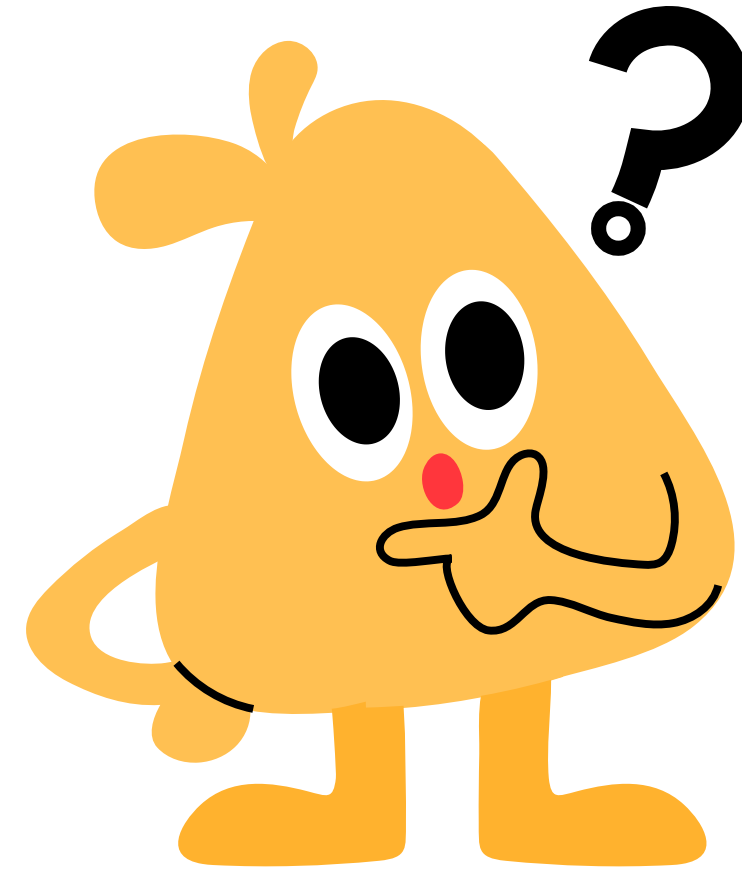


Action Research is a practical, reflective inquiry carried out by practitioners within their own working environment. Purpose: Identify a problem → Plan an action → Observe effects → Reflect for improvement. Cycle: Plan → Act → Observe → Reflect (repeats until satisfactory).



Example: A teacher notices students struggle with word problems in mathematics. She introduces visual modelling techniques, observes improved understanding, reflects on outcomes, and refines her approach in the next cycle.

Why 'Scope' Matters





Because action research is rooted in real, lived practice, it does not remain confined to one single area of the education system. It can be applied wherever a practical problem exists — inside a single classroom, across an entire school's management practices, or even at the level of evaluating and refining educational policies. This range of application is exactly what we call the 'SCOPE' of action research.





The word 'scope' refers to the range, extent, or boundary of areas within which a particular subject can be applied or is relevant. When we talk about the 'scope of action research' in the educational context, we are asking a simple but important question: WHERE, within the vast field of education, can action research be meaningfully used? Education, as a field, identifies three major, progressively wider arenas of application — the Classroom, School Management, and Policy Implementation.

ACTION RESEARCH AT THE CLASSROOM



The classroom is the most immediate, natural, and frequently used arena for action research. Here, an individual teacher, acting as a 'practitioner-researcher', studies a problem that arises directly within her own classroom — involving her own students, her own teaching methods, or her own classroom environment — with the aim of bringing about a quick, practical improvement.



CHARACTERISTICS OF CLASSROOM-LEVEL ACTION RESEARCH



- ✓ **Practitioner-driven:** It is conducted by a single teacher (or occasionally two collaborating teachers) within their own classroom.
- ✓ **Narrow and specific focus:** It focuses on a specific, narrow, and immediate problem rather than a broad theoretical issue.
- ✓ **Immediate application:** The findings are meant to improve practice quickly, not to be generalised to other schools or populations.
- ✓ **Cyclical and fast-paced:** The teacher constantly cycles through planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, often within a few weeks.
- ✓ **Low-cost, low-resource:** Data is gathered through everyday classroom tools such as observation, students' notebooks, quizzes, and informal interviews.

AREAS OF APPLICATION IN THE CLASSROOM



Academic skill-building: Improving students' reading fluency, comprehension, handwriting, or numeracy skills.

Classroom management: Handling disruptive behaviour, inattentiveness, or lack of classroom discipline.

Instructional strategy testing: Trying out new teaching strategies such as cooperative learning, flipped classroom, use of teaching aids, or activity-based learning versus the traditional lecture method.

Motivation and engagement: Finding ways to increase students' interest, participation, and engagement in a 'boring' topic such as grammar rules or algebraic formulas.

Catering to diverse learners: Designing remedial strategies for slow learners or enrichment tasks for gifted learners within the same classroom (differentiated instruction).



DETAILED EXAMPLE — Classroom-Level Action Research

Problem: A B.Ed. intern teaching Class VII English notices that most students are hesitant to speak in English during class discussions, even though they can write reasonably well.

Plan: The teacher decides to introduce short 'daily speaking circles' of five minutes at the start of each class, where students discuss a simple everyday topic in pairs.

Act: The strategy is implemented for three weeks.

Observe: The teacher keeps a simple observation checklist and notes which students are participating more and whether hesitation is reducing.

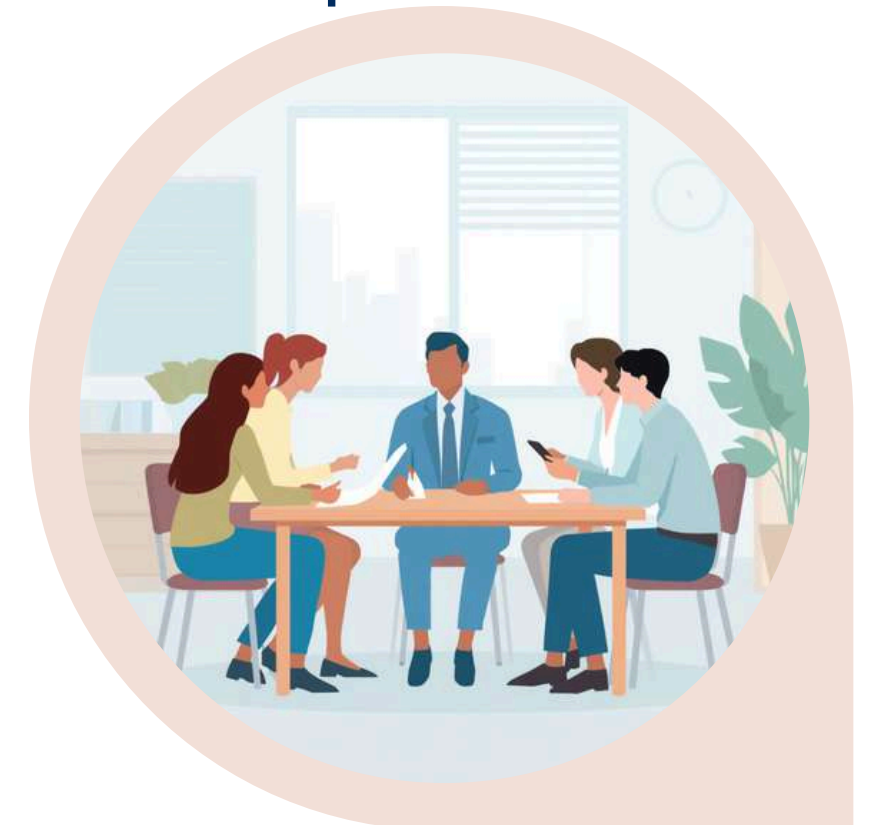
Reflect: At the end of three weeks, the teacher reflects that shy students have started speaking more but still avoid speaking in front of the whole class, so she decides to add a second cycle introducing small-group presentations.

This entire process — problem, plan, action, observation, and reflection — is a complete, self-contained example of classroom-level action research.

ACTION RESEARCH AT THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT LEVEL



At this level, the scope of action research widens beyond a single classroom to cover the school as a whole institution. Instead of one teacher working alone, action research here is usually carried out collaboratively — by a group of teachers, the head teacher/principal, non-teaching staff, and sometimes even parents or School Management Committee (SMC) members — to solve problems that affect the functioning of the entire school rather than just one classroom.



CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOL-MANAGEMENT-LEVEL ACTION RESEARCH



- ✓ **Collaborative in nature:** It usually involves multiple teachers, the school head, and sometimes parents or the School Management Committee working as a team.
- ✓ **Institution-wide focus:** It addresses issues that affect the whole institution, such as school discipline, timetable management, or resource utilisation, not just one classroom.
- ✓ **Wider timeframe:** Since more people and processes are involved, this level of action research generally takes longer and needs more coordination than classroom-level research.
- ✓ **Greater administrative impact:** Solutions often become part of official school policy or standard practice once proven successful (e.g., a new discipline code adopted school-wide).

AREAS OF APPLICATION IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT



School discipline and code of conduct: Studying the causes of indiscipline across different classes and designing a uniform, fair discipline policy.

Teacher collaboration and capacity building: Organising regular peer-observation sessions, workshops, or mentoring systems among teachers to improve teaching quality school-wide.

Resource and infrastructure management: Investigating whether the library, science laboratory, smart classrooms, or sports facilities are being used effectively, and designing a better utilisation plan.

Parent-community engagement: Studying why parents rarely attend PTA meetings and designing new strategies (e.g., flexible timing, SMS reminders) to increase turnout.

Administrative efficiency: Improving processes such as attendance recording, timetable preparation, or examination scheduling through small institutional experiments.



DETAILED EXAMPLE



School-Management-Level Action Research Problem: A secondary school notices that attendance at Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) has been steadily falling over the last two years, weakening home-school communication.

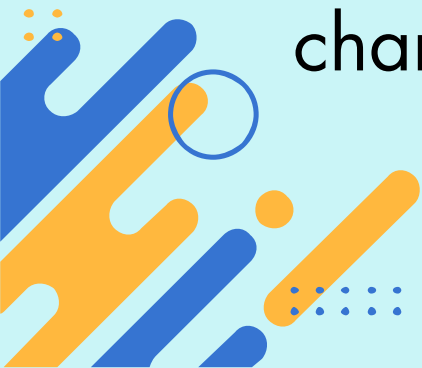
Plan: The principal forms a small team of four teachers to investigate the reasons (through a short survey of parents) and design solutions, such as holding PTMs on Saturday mornings instead of weekday afternoons and sending SMS/WhatsApp reminders 3 days in advance.

Act: The new schedule and reminder system are trialled for one full term (across two PTMs).

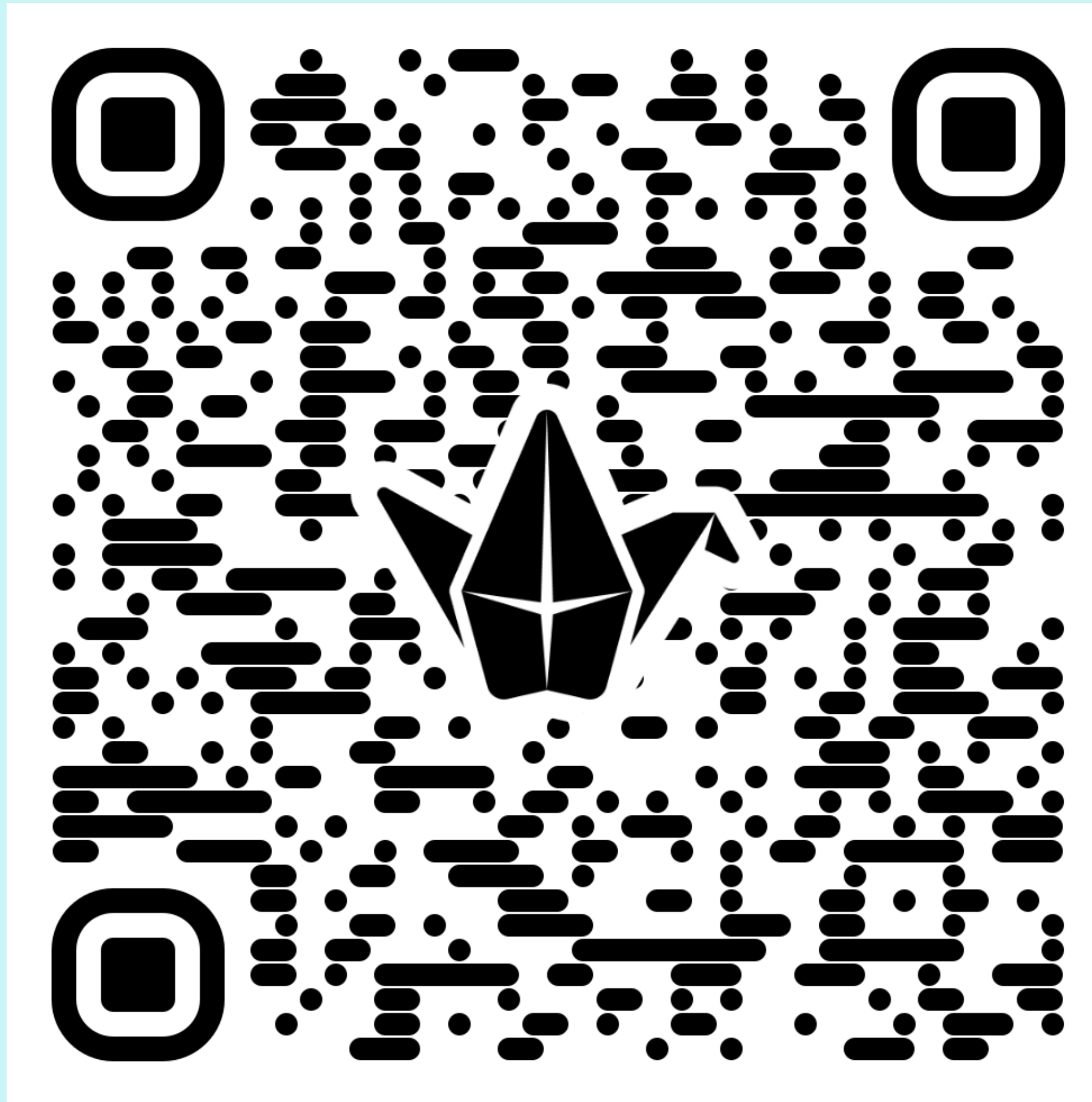
Observe: Attendance registers of the two trial PTMs are compared with the previous two PTMs; feedback forms are also collected from parents who attended.

Reflect: The team finds that attendance has improved from around 40% to 70%, and decides to make the Saturday-morning schedule and SMS reminders a permanent school practice.

Notice how this example involves a team, affects the whole school (not one class), and results in a change of institutional practice — the defining features of school-management-level action research.



**Discussion Wall
on
Action Research**



ACTION RESEARCH AT THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL



This is the broadest and most far-reaching scope of action research within education. Here, action research is used to study how well an educational policy — framed at the school, district, state, or national level — is actually being implemented on the ground, and to generate practical, evidence-based feedback that can help refine or improve that policy. Policies are usually designed by planners and administrators sitting at a distance from the classroom;

action research at this level acts as a vital bridge, carrying ground-level realities from classrooms and schools back to policymakers so that policies remain practical, relevant, and effective rather than merely existing 'on paper'.



CHARACTERISTICS OF POLICY-IMPLEMENTATION-LEVEL ACTION RESEARCH



- ✓ **Evaluates implementation, not design:** It examines whether a policy already designed by higher authorities is working as intended when applied in real schools.
- ✓ **Wider geographical and institutional spread:** Findings from many classrooms and schools are often studied together, sometimes coordinated by education departments, NGOs, or teacher-training institutions.
- ✓ **Feedback-loop function:** It creates a two-way flow of information — from ground-level practice up to policymakers, and from policy back down to practice — enabling ongoing refinement. Higher
- ✓ **Higher stakes and larger impact:** Because it deals with policy, findings may influence decisions affecting many schools, an entire district, or even a state.

AREAS OF APPLICATION IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION



Evaluating RTE-related provisions: Studying how effectively the 'No Detention Policy' or Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) under the RTE Act is being carried out in government schools, and identifying practical difficulties teachers face.

Studying NEP 2020 implementation: Investigating how NEP 2020 reforms — such as the shift to a 5+3+3+4 structure, foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) goals, or multilingual education — are being understood and applied by teachers in real classrooms.

Assessing inclusive education policy: Examining whether inclusive education policies (for children with disabilities or special needs) are genuinely being followed in terms of infrastructure, teacher attitude, and classroom practice.

Reviewing welfare and digital-learning schemes: Evaluating the actual impact of schemes such as the Mid-Day Meal Programme on student attendance and nutrition, or studying how effectively digital learning initiatives (like DIKSHA or smart classrooms) are being used by teachers and students.

DETAILED EXAMPLE



Policy-Implementation-Level Action Research Problem: The state education department wants to know whether the 'Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)' goal under NEP 2020 is being effectively achieved in rural primary schools.

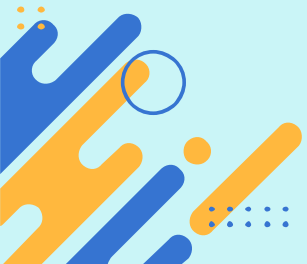
Plan: A group of teacher-educators and selected primary teachers design simple classroom-based FLN activities (such as picture-based reading games and number-story activities) to be tried out in a sample of rural schools, along with basic tools to track children's progress.

Act: Teachers implement these FLN activities in their classrooms for one academic term.

Observe: Children's reading and number-recognition levels are assessed before and after, and teachers maintain simple reflective diaries about challenges (e.g., large class size, lack of teaching-learning materials).

Reflect: The combined findings from many schools are compiled and shared with the state education department, which uses this ground-level evidence to revise teacher-training modules and provide additional FLN teaching kits.

This example shows the defining feature of policy-level action research: findings from real classrooms directly inform and improve a larger educational policy.



CONCLUSION

Action research is a practical, cyclical tool operating at multiple levels of the education system — from individual classrooms to school-wide initiatives and national policy implementation.

Teachers play a crucial role as active researchers, driving improvement from the ground up. Classroom insights can ripple outward to influence school policies and broader educational reforms — connecting practice to policy.



THANK YOU



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