

## **Participatory Rural Appraisal**

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a method for collecting information in a participatory manner which benefits both the community and the facilitators or facilitating agency. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a set of tools and techniques used with households to gather and analyse information on community resources, problems, potential and needs.

### **Purposes of PRA**

PRA is used to understand the current situation, problems and opportunities according to the households and list out the development potentials of a Village or community. It also helps to analyse causes of particular issues or problems. PRA support households to identify activities that respond to difficulties and opportunities and helps to design implementation activities. The purpose of the exercise is to use farmers' criteria, choices and understand the local environment with clear local priorities. It also aims at achieving triangulation at the village level. PRA exercises help the facilitators to learn farmers' indigenous technologies and to develop self critical awareness and direct contact with local needs and communities.

### **Principles of PRA**

In the conduct of PRA exercises reversal of learning takes place, for example facilitators learns about the village and its resources and it also help the villagers to open up their mind and think critically on things which they have seen every day but never realised. The findings from the PRA help both the villagers and the facilitators to develop an effective village development plan. During the exercise learning takes place rapidly and progressively and counterbalance partiality may arise during the process. At the end of the process the facilitators will realised that the inputs provided by the villagers are vital.

While MGNREGS is meant for all, it'd be a sad thing if it did not provide employment and assets to the poorest and the most vulnerable section of the society. Understanding the community therefore implies an understanding the conditions of different households and groups. Are the vulnerable communities (SC/ST/PTG) able to demand and get work? Are they able to plan and get good quality and useful community assets? Are they able to get individual assets that they are eligible for? Are vulnerable Households (e.g. woman headed) and Individuals (e.g. PWD) able to get employment and assets? Understanding the community means understanding that different households and different individuals have different needs. It is important to understand their need for employment and their need for assets that can be created through MGNREGS (independently or in convergence).

### **Non-Negotiable principles for participatory planning MNREGA**

- The process with the community should begin with explanations and seeking their permission.
- Timing and place should be governed by local context of separate sections of the community.
- Recognise that different groups, as defined locally by age, gender, well-being, ethnicity, religion etc. have different perspectives.
- Any knowledge and experience of the community or villagers should be respected
- Village Planning Team should use this planning process as an opportunity of learning

- Be Open ,honest and transparent about the objectives of the MNREGA planning process with all community sections
- Do not interrupt or lecture, but be a good, active listener during the planning process
- Respect the fact that information is generated by local people and so ask their permission to document, remove, and use information. When possible, ensure that original diagrams and copies of reports remain in the community.
- Handing over the stick, i.e., passing the initiatives and responsibility to the villagers to do it themselves.
- They can do it, empowering others through confidence in their capabilities.
- Handing over the stick, i.e., passing the initiatives and responsibility to others;

The key outputs from the tools used to understand the community are therefore:

1. Vulnerable Communities
2. Vulnerable Households
3. Their current status in terms of MGNREGS Employment and Assets
4. Their current resource ownership and control (community & individual)
5. Their need for MGNREGS Employment with seasonality of need
6. Their need for Assets in terms of community and individual assets

#### **Role Descriptions of PRA Team Members (VPTs):**

PRA team members shall comprise of 3 Facilitators, 2 note taker and one team leader who will also act as the observer.

#### **Role of a PRA Team-leader**

Every PRA team has one person who serves as the team leader during the PRA field workshop.

#### **Activities:**

- Is responsible for the PRA team.
- Is responsible for all organisational and logistical matters concerning the PRA workshop in the village.
- Facilitate the PRA workshop and evaluation meetings.
- Introduces the PRA-team to the community (or organises it)
- Takes care that the events can start in time
- Co-ordinates the village workshop events and facilitates the sub-group presentations.
- Facilitates the summarising and documentation process.
- Stays in close contact with link persons and the opinion leaders during the whole workshop (e.g. in order to know who participates in the different events)

#### **PRA-Facilitator**

The PRA facilitator facilitates a focus group, the drawing of a map or any other PRA tool.

#### **Activities:**

- Introduces the PRA tool to the group
- Facilitates the event

- Moderates the process
- Acts as a channel between the individuals of the group
- Finds ways of integrating dominant and quiet people and makes sure that all group members are able to express their opinions
- Makes sure that the group keeps to the topic but is also flexible in handling additional important information
- Repeats in own words what people say in order to confirm that there is a good understanding of the discussion
- Takes care of time management
- Supports the note-taker in gathering all relevant information and assists him in filling the documentation sheet after the group work has finished

### **Role description of Note-taker**

In any of the PRA exercises, one person from the PRA team shall be the note-taker and also acts as an observer who writes down all important information and relevant observations.

#### **Activities:**

- Brings along material for copying what is drawn on the ground during an event
- white A4 paper to attach a copy to the documentation sheet
- Brings along the necessary material
- Observes the event from the background
- Writes down all important information.
- Notes who is talking. Is there an equal participation of all or do some people dominate the process? Do women talk?
- Assists the facilitator in an indirect way by giving signs, e.g. shoulder tapping.
- Supports the facilitator directly by asking questions, if the situation requires it.
- Observes and facilitates the copying, ensures that the copy resembles the original, have a legend, a date, place and names of drawers.
- Sits together with the facilitator and discusses the notes while filling the documentation sheet after the end of the event.

### **Key Activities and PRA Tools**

Key Activities and PRA tools that are employed for Intensive Participatory Planning Exercise are 1. **Social Mapping** (Social Map), 2. **Resource Mapping**( Resource Map), 3. **Seasonality Mapping**- Livelihoods and employment (Seasonal Calendar), 4. **Transect Walk** and 5. **Focus Group Discussion**.

#### **A. Social Map**

The Social Map at the Village will present information regarding the different households residing in the location with information on vulnerability category depicted through symbols and/or colours. It will plot type of house, identify vulnerable HHs (Women headed HH, PWD HH and other MGNREGS groups listed in the box below). It will also depict information relating to the MGNREGS registration, employment and individual asset creation status. The mapping process will itself have discussion regarding the status of

MGNREGS. But once the map is prepared, there can be Focus Group Discussion with vulnerable households on the possible use of MGNREGS to reduce short term as well as long term vulnerability through employment and asset creation.

The same map will also depict amenities available in the area such as roads, important institutions and landmarks. The amenities mapping process can be used to discuss the potential of MGNREGS by plotting current assets and the need and potential to develop new ones.

### **Making a social map**

A social map is a map that is drawn by the residents and which shows the layout of residential houses, institutions and amenities found in an area. It also helps us to learn about social and economic differences between the households.

### **Objectives:**

- To learn about the households and their location in the village.
- To learn about the socio-economic pattern in the village and the social, economic, gender and ability related differences among the households
- To learn about the social institutions and the different views local people might have regarding those institutions.

### **Key Questions:**

- How many households are found in the village and where are they located?
- How many HH have job cards?
- How many days of employment has each HH received in the past year?
- What are the institutions and amenities found in the village and where?
- Are there specific parts where specific social groups live?
- Which are the households that come under 'Paragraph 5' eligibility for Individual Assets?
- Which are the Landless households? Which are the small/marginal farmer households?
- Which are the wage labour dependent households? Which families migrate regularly?
- Which are the female Headed Households and other vulnerable groups like PwDs, old age, landless,
- Which are the assets that have been previously created under MNREGA?

#### **Schedule I of MGNREGA**

Works creating Individual assets shall prioritise on land or homestead owned by households belonging to the:

1. Scheduled Castes
2. Scheduled Tribes
3. Nomadic Tribes
4. Denotified Tribes
5. Other Families below the Poverty Line
6. Women Headed Households
7. Physically Handicapped Headed Household
8. Beneficiaries of Land Reforms
9. The beneficiaries under the Indira Awaas Yojana

### **How to facilitate:**

- Introduce yourself and the purpose of/ or focus of the map to all participants.
- Ask the participants to draw a map of the village, showing all households. Different types of Houses can be marked in different colours (e.g. Pucca Building, Pucca-IAY, Semi Pucca, Kutcha). For location and orientation it is good to draw roads and

significant spots of the village into the map. Different types of road (e.g. Cement Concrete, Kutcha, Black topped) should be marked in different colours. Sometimes the local community members may take time to draw a map or make errors while drawing. Even in such cases the VPT should not take it upon itself to draw the map themselves.

- Ensure that each household has a number, and name other details (demography, vulnerability etc.) are documented by the note-taker during the exercise.
- Ask the group to indicate important institutions and amenities such as Schools, AWC, places of worship and other significant landmarks.
- Encourage the group to discuss and show on the map specific areas that are inhabited by specific communities.
- Symbols & Colours can be used to mark location of vulnerable households / individuals.
- Make sure that your copy of the map has a key (legend) explaining the meaning of different colours and symbols used in the map.
- During the entire process, take care that once somebody has given a statement, you ask the others whether they agree, disagree or want to add something.
- Make sure that the objective of having all households shown on the map will be achieved.
- Once the map is drawn on the ground (preferably), VPT should copy it on to a chart paper for display and further use. Subsequently it can be copied fairly on to an A4 Sheet or A3 Sheet as available and suitable for inclusion in the village output file.
- The map must contain the name of the village, direction, legend, name of the key participants and name of the facilitators (VPT+ facilitators from the village).
- At the end of the exercise the VPT should extend thanks to the participants for their time and participation.

## **B. Resource mapping**

Resource Map is also one of the main participatory tools of APPA methodology that seeks to explore the spatial dimensions of natural resources in a particular community. It depicts two-dimensional realities of natural resources: rivers, hills, mountains, forests, vegetation, water shade, land, etc. From the perspectives of local people. This map is different from other general maps – it is not drawn by expert and may not be to the scale. The local people are considered to have an in-depth knowledge of the surroundings where they have survived for a long time. Hence, the resource map drawn by the local people is considered to be accurate than precise measurements to scale. Thus, a resource map reflects how people view their own locality in terms of natural resources. In fact, it paves the way for many other PRA tools. Participatory census and well-being ranking are able to take social mapping ahead. In brief, resource map is a visual synergy to the villagers and all the stakeholders.

The map would show land and water bodies based on their use as well as geographical features. Thus under land it would show agricultural land, orchards, forest, grazing land and other local land categories. Similarly water bodies would also be categorised as ponds, streams, canals etc. The map should also show physical formations such as ridge lines and drainage pattern and categorise land as upland, low land etc. These maps will be created for a habitation/village. The resource map can be of two levels. One could be a general resource map portraying the different resources to which the residents

of the village/hamlet have varying degrees of access and control. Thus there could be resources that come under open access to common property, to private. At a greater level of detailing, there could be resource maps depicting private land used for some form of primary production (agriculture/horticulture/pasture/pisciculture, etc.) as well as resource maps depicting common property resources such as forests, grazing land. The discussion around these resource maps can be about potential for improving productivity of these lands or reducing vulnerability of these lands through use of MGNREGS. The ongoing and other incomplete works also need to be identified and shown on the relevant maps. Such works should also be categorised between those whose completion is of value to the community and those which it is best to abandon.

### **Preparing the Map in the Village**

1. The following are the major steps:
  - a. Step 1 – Lay out village boundary
  - b. Step 2 – Mark out directions
  - c. Step 3 – Draw major rivers, existing NRM assets
  - d. Step 4 – Refine by drawing out patches of land (either by patta/community/soil/crop) with the help of the community.
2. Start the mapping with coloured powder on the floor. Indicate different land patches - its soil, different crops cultivated by villagers; water streams etc. While resource mapping being done on floor by villagers, simultaneously try to draw the same on A2 size chart paper as permanent reference.
3. Ask people to divide the entire village land into commonly termed patch names. Entire village boundary may be divided into prominent 10-12 plots. Generally villagers divide these patches by their common characteristics like type of soil/slope, crops being cultivated their etc.
4. Also try to overlap the type of patches with the lands being cultivated by poor people in the village. Take chart papers and make 10-12 pieces as per the no of patches identified by the villagers. Write down the names of patches on this piece of chart papers.
5. With the villagers sitting over there, do PRA exercises by which assembly have to classify the patches in three types; better-off, medium and inferior patches. Members of the community should mark out other common resources of the village like ponds, wells, jungle, a place of worship etc. this mapping brings important resource represented on a single page helping all including facilitators – who are generally external to village realities – take an informed choice of interventions.
6. Delineate the drainage line and slope on the village map with help of the selected villagers. Ask the community how they categorise their different kinds of lands and then accordingly denote different types of lands in different colors e.g. green colour

for low land. An index for the different colours used is provided on the lower right hand corner of the map itself.

7. Identify the local patches in the map. Circle these clusters of plots with a colour pen. Simultaneously, note down the patch name and numbers on a piece of paper.
8. Discuss how MGNREGA funds should be prioritised to improve productivity of the lands of small and marginal farmers and create common assets for the village.
9. If people prioritise investment on inferior or medium type of land then planning on such plots can be done.

### **C. Seasonality mapping**

Life and Livelihoods in villages of India vary from season to season. There are seasons when there is a lot of agricultural work and wage employment availability. There are seasons when seasonal produce are available from forests or other common property resources. These are times when the need for MGNREGS work is less. There are lean seasons when neither agricultural nor common property based livelihoods are available. These are times when MGNREGS employment can be of much more significance. But even the traditional agricultural season also has gaps and it would be wrong to assume, for instance, that the entire monsoon period is of adequate local employment availability. In many parts of India the period from early September to the middle of October is a period of hunger. Just as availability of employment and livelihood varies from season to season, the potential for MGNREGS work too varies. Thus even if there is a lot of demand for work in the month of September, it'd be difficult in large parts of India to do any excavation work. Similarly even if lots of people wanted to do plantation work in the month of May, it'd simply not be the season for it.

Seasonality Analysis of Wage Employment and other Livelihoods as well as of possibilities of undertaking MGNREGS Works is thus critical to match demand for employment to supply of MGNREGS Works. Care has to be taken that the opinions of different communities and women are included. Alternatively, especially if there is time available, separate seasonality discussions can be had with such groups. Eventually, this information would ascertain the availability of seasonal labour and will help in the planning of work. The following are examples of what Seasonality Chart could look like.

#### **How to make a seasonality map**

- Introduce the purpose of the seasonality map.
- Ask the participants how local people divide the year.
- Don't impose western calendar if this does not reflect indigenous seasonal categories.
- Take the variables such as agriculture, wage employment, migration, MGNREGA work, forest resources etc. in the left side
- Focus attention on one particular variable and encourage people to plot this on the calendar using drawing symbols or objects. Eg; Labour demand, questions like: determine the 4 least busy months, lean period, the busiest month, etc.
- If the calendar is prepared on the floor, there is plenty of space for symbols and resources.

### Key Questions:

- What are the busiest months of the year?
- At what time of the year is food scarce?
- How does income vary over the year for men and women?
- How does expenditure vary over the year for men and women?
- How does rainfall vary over the year?
- How does water availability for human consumption vary over the year?
- How does livestock forage availability vary over the year?
- When are most agricultural work carried out by women?
- When are most agricultural work carried out by men?
- When is most non-agricultural work carried out by women?
- When is most non-agricultural work carried out by men?
- Which could be the most appropriate season for additional activities for men and women? What time constraints do exist and for what reasons?

### D. Transect Walk

Resource Mapping and Social Mapping give us an idea of the layout of the habitation and the resources available to it. Transect Walk gives us an actual feel of the habitation as well as the resources. For instance a transect walk in the habitation area would give an idea of housing conditions, sanitation and nature of amenities available in the village. Similarly a transect across agricultural fields can provide an idea about land use, drainage, soil quality and so on. It is better to do transect walks after basic resource map / social map are prepared. That way it helps in triangulation. It also helps in moving forward from problem identification to natural resources management and planning as well as planning for public and household amenities.

#### Materials and time required

Two to three hours. Large sheets of paper, markers, notebooks/paper and pens are needed to make a copy of the diagram and also for the note-taker to record the discussion generated during the diagram development.

If the diagram is drawn on the ground, then a large area will be needed, as well as a range of objects such as sticks, stone, leaves, seeds, and so on that the analysts can use to represent features on the diagram. The group will include a facilitator, observer/note-taker, and selected informants from the village.

#### How is the transect walk to be conducted?

- Explain the purpose of the transect to the people. In consultation with the community members, define the list of indicators that will be analysed during

#### What kinds of transect route is most appropriate?

There are different types of transect paths. The most common one will have you walk from a high point to a low point. Another one will be a straight line from one extreme point of the area to the other. To get a more detailed view of the area, one can also choose to undertake an S-shaped transect walk. Facilitators can use available social or resource maps to select the transect path. Other regular maps of the village can also be used if necessary. While marking out the path for the transect, the guiding principle should be to capture maximum diversity and details within the limitations of time and physical access.

the walk. Involve them in the decision-making process regarding the transect path you should take.

- Identify a group of local people having some knowledge of the area and who are willing to walk with you for the exercise. Make sure that representatives from vulnerable groups are included in the exercise.
- Let the people show you their village by following the transect path that was agreed upon. Explain that the route does not have to be straight, but can meander if necessary. Also carry the list of parameters and preferably the resource map for the walk. It is a useful reference during observation and discussions while travelling.
- Observe the surroundings. Encourage people to explain things as you move. Take detailed notes.
- If necessary, stop at certain locations for detailed discussions on emerging issues. Use this opportunity to clarify issues emerging from the social map, resource map and other methods.
- After returning, draw the transect on a large sheet of paper. Let the local people take the lead in drawing the transect diagram. Use your notes and the notes of other members of the transect team while making the diagram.
- Show the transect to others in the locality and ask them to give their opinion.

### **Structured Interview:**

Participatory approach is also known for its flexibility of using various tools and techniques. Though, interview tools are more often used by rapid appraisal practitioners, it is useful in participatory methods too. Structured interview is less flexible dialogue for a particular purpose. It is also known as a guided interview – the interviewer is not allowed to make any further changes to the pre-set questionnaires during the interview. Only close ended questions are set in this type of interview. Interview tool is a crosscutting tool in a sense that in many cases it is complementary to other participatory tools.

### **Application:**

This tool is used to collect information on a predetermined topic with preset questionnaires. It is useful to elicit required information in shorter period of time. When the participatory tools such as resource or social maps require detail information, structured interview tool is helpful.

### **Process:**

- Develop a set of questionnaire based on the objectives.
- Make sure all the questions are closed types. So that the respondent can give clear cut answers.
- Start the interview at a suitable time and location.
- Write or record the responses during the interview.
- Interviewer himself/herself or an assistant should take notes during interview.

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

Section A: Survey Details	
Surveyor:	Block:
Date of Survey:	Village:
1.Name of head of household:	
2.Household number (according to social map):	
3.Type of household (1 = Nuclear family; 2 = Nuclear family with dependent(s); 3 = Joint family, 4 = Other (specify); 9 = Unclear):	
4.Job card number:	
5.Phone number (if available):	
6. Whether IAY beneficiary (1=yes, 2=no):	
7. Whether has a BPL card/BPL ration card (1=yes, 2=no):	
8.Whether MHIS beneficiary( 1=yes, 2=no):	

Section B: Household member details							
Sl.No.	Name	Sex	Age	Relationship to head of the household	Marital status	Whether any kind of disability (1=yes, 2=no)	Whether name on job card (1=yes, 2=no)

Instruction:

\*List all persons who usually live in this household and eat from the same kitchen, only list members above the age of 18

\*Relationship to head of household: 1=wife, 2=child, 3=sibling, 4=parent, 5=other

\*Marital status: 1=married, 2=unmarried, 3=widowed, 4=separated/divorced/abandoned.

Section C: Land, housing, employment and asset ownership	
1.Type of house (1-Kutcha,2-Semi-kutcha,3-Pucca)	
2.Electricity connection in the household(1=yes,2=no)	
3.Land owning status (1=owned land, 2=landless, 3=leased land)	
4. Amount of agricultural land owned (Please convert local units (e.g. pighas) into acres. )	
5. Which of the following animals does your household own? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goats and Lamb</li> <li>• Cows and buffaloes</li> <li>• Poultry</li> <li>• Any other animal( specify)</li> </ul>	

6. Do you have proper latrine? (1-yes, 2-no)	
7. Source of drinking water. (1-piped, 2-pond, 3-tanks, 4-others (specify))	
8. Which is the most important source of income for your household? (tick) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own farm activities</li> <li>• Casual labour (farm)</li> <li>• Casual labour (non-farm)</li> <li>• Salaried employment</li> <li>• Other (specify)</li> <li>• Nothing (unable to work)</li> <li>• Unclear</li> </ul>	

Section D: Demand for work											
Number of days of work desired by HH for FY 2015-16:											
Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

Section E: Type of work		
Particulars	Benefit (in terms of person days)	Livelihood benefits
Community asset desired by the family		
Individual asset desired by the family		

**Note:** Community assets or Individual assets for vulnerable sections

- Improving productivity of lands of households: dug wells, farm ponds and other water harvesting structures.
- Improving livelihoods through horticulture, sericulture, plantation, and farm forestry.
- Development of fallow/waste lands of households to bring it under cultivation;
- Unskilled wage component in construction of houses sanctioned under the Indira Awaas Yojana or such other State or Central Government scheme.
- Creating infrastructure for promotion of livestock such as- poultry shelter, goat shelter, piggery shelter, cattle shelter and fodder troughs for cattle.



## Participatory Rural Appraisal