

Natural Resources Management (NRM)
Professor Sudip Mitra PhD
Centre for Disaster Management & Research (CDMR)
Head, School of Agro & Rural Technology (SART)
Discipline - Agriculture Engineering
Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, Assam, India
Week – 02
Lecture -13
Participatory Rural Appraisal & Rapid Rural Appraisal Part 3

Welcome back to the course of Natural Resources Management, so today we will continue from the last class where we were discussing about the fundamentals of participatory rural appraisal and rapid rural appraisal.

(Refer Slide Time: 0:46)

Principles for carrying out PRA

There are five key principles for carrying out PRA:

1. *Participation*
2. *Flexibility*
3. *Teamwork*
4. *Optimal ignorance*
5. *Systematic*

Navigation icons: back, forward, search, list, and a small number 2 in the bottom right corner.

Today we will look into the various principles of carrying out participatory rural appraisal and there are five key principles for carrying out this PRA exercise at the ground level, the first one is participation then flexibility, good teamwork and as I mentioned in the previous class about optimal ignorance which is also quite important, systematic follow-ups or systematic carrying out various exercise, I will discuss each one of these five principle in detail.

(Refer Slide Time: 1:22)

Principles for carrying out PRA

- 1. Participation:**
PRA relies heavily on the participation of the communities, as the methods are so designed to enable the local people to be involved in every decision making steps.
- 2. Flexibility:**
The combination of techniques and strategies are specific, depending on variables such as size and skill mix of PRA team, time and resource available, location etc.
- 3. Teamwork:**
A PRA is best conducted by a local team (speaking the local dialect), with a few outsiders, significant representation of women and topic specific experts.
- 4. Optimal ignorance**
To be efficient in terms of time and capital, PRA work needs to gather just enough information relevant and sufficient for decision making.
- 5. Systematic**
Data collection should be based on appropriate stratification relevant to the study; eg geographic location or relative wealth with follow up cross checking.

Navigation icons: back, forward, search, etc.

So first to start with participation. So PRA exercise relies heavily on the participation of communities. In the previous class we discussed about the importance of the involvement or ownership of the participants means the communities, the farmers the people that with whom actually will carry out the PRA exercise, so the design itself has to be like that that it should enable the local people to get involved in every making step.

Flexibility, second principle, the combination of all the techniques we will be discussing today and in the last class also we have discussed couple of them. The combination of all techniques and strategies are specific depending upon the different variables such as size or mix of the PRA team, the time, resources available and location etcetera. So, your flexibility will be the key for the success of PRA exercise.

Teamwork needless to say that without a good teamwork you cannot carry out such an exercise which involve human being in the central theme of this PRA exercise. So PRA as it says that is best conducted by local team with local language respecting the local culture with few outsiders like us if you go as a trainer or as a person who will actually coordinate that entire exercise. Significant representation of women and topic specific experts are critical for a successful PRA exercise.

Then fourth principle is optimal ignorance in the previous class I discussed about the importance of ignorance. So to be efficient in terms of time or your resources, money, PRA work needs to

gather just enough information which are relevant, which is sufficient for your decision making. So little bit of ignorance is okay because unnecessarily to collect too much of information probably will lead you nowhere but you will end up spending your time, energy and money.

Systematic, yes we have to be systematic; data collection should be done in a very systematic manner, its recording, then the places that you are going to visit its geographic locations, relative information to those coordinates has to be very systematic manner all right.

(Refer Slide Time: 4:04)

Steps for carrying out PRA

Four steps are essential for doing PRA:

- 1. Choice and sequencing of methods**
 - An extensive range of PRA methods are available (module 5a). To express farmers' reality in all its complexity, they may combine different dimensions (spatial, nominal, temporal, ordinal, numerical, relational).
 - PRA methods can be used in conjunction with traditional research methods in such a way that each complements the other.
 - Methods should be developed and evolved to meet specific circumstances.
 - Mistakes in method selection should not be seen as a failure; rather a trial and error learning opportunity.
 - No blueprint exists for the order in which PRA exercises should be done. While it is useful to start with a plan, it is important to be flexible to enable methods to flow from one to another to keep the information coming at every stage.

Navigation icons: back, forward, search, list, refresh, and a small icon with the number 4.

Now, let us see the steps that we need to follow for carrying out this important exercise. So first choice and the sequencing of the methods that we are going to follow, what we do is we need to have a range of PRA methods that are available which we discussed in the previous module, if you recall that to express the farmers real situation in all its complexity they may combine different dimension while interacting with you. It could be spatial, nominal, temporal, ordinal, numerical and different types of thing.

So, your choice of methods and sequencing is going to be very critical for a successful PRA exercise. PRA methods can be used in conjunction with the traditional research method so that has to be in such a way that each complements each other. Methods should be developed and evolved to meet specific circumstances, so that you can you have to have some pre project assessment which we discussed in module A in the previous classes. So mistakes in in any method selection should not be seen as a failure rather we should learn from that mistake and

that actually give us a chance to be much better for the next exercise that we will be going to carry out. No blueprint as such exist for the order in which the PRA has to be carried out so do not be too much what you call dependent on certain protocol for carrying out PRA it has to be relatively open ended in that sense.

(Refer Slide Time: 5:56)

Steps for carrying out PRA

2. Which farmers:

- Farmers' perceptions, daily realities, needs, priorities, opportunities and social status all vary from one another. So, it is important to know which farmers are to be involved in the study.
- The differences that affect people's livelihoods in the communities in question are the one that should be examined. Methods such as wealth and well being rankings can help identify these categories.
- Male female ratio should be balanced to get a clear perspective. (inclusive)
- Some exercises are best conducted in groups and some with individuals. Groups are useful in exploring general issues that are often useful at the start of the research process. PRA conducted at individual or household level may be appropriate for exploring specific, or those of sensitive nature

5

Next step, farmers. Which farmers? Now for a successful PRA to take place you need to be little bit smart also in choosing your respondent, farmer's perception, their reality, their priority, opportunities, their struggle. It could vary from one to the other, so it is important for us to know that which farmer we need to get involved. That is a very critical exercise. Now the difference is that the affected people's livelihood in the community that you are interacting with are the one that should be examined. Methods you can use like such as wealth, well-being ranking which can identify their categories in the sense of economic status. We will be discussing this thing in great detail in the following classes about various method of ranking.

Now male female ratio should be balanced to get a clear perspective so this is again a point that we discussed in module 5a. So means it has to be inclusive in nature. Some exercise are best conducted in groups, some may not be, so groups are useful in exploring the general issues that they are facing day to day and those are useful for to initiate some new research. Now PRA which are conducted at the individual or at the household level those may be appropriate for exploring specific problem or specific solution so these actually we need to keep in mind.

(Refer Slide Time: 7:40)

Steps for carrying out PRA

3. *Triangulation of data:*

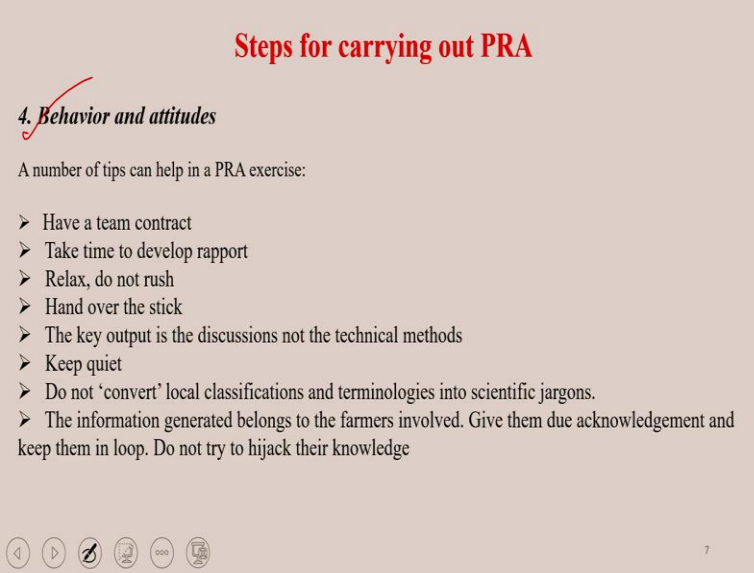
- Information gathered should not be accepted at face value. Prior experiences with researchers, prevailing development rhetoric, government policy all influence local people's perceptions.
- There may also be researchers' bias.
- Hence, triangulation or cross checking of data is an important component. Using same methods with different informants and investigating the same issue with different research methods can help in validation of the data obtained.

5

Now, next step is triangulation of data. In 5A we discussed about triangulation how important it is for PRA. So information gathered should not be accepted on face value, suppose in your group exercise you know one farmer personally and so you should not be biased to his information and just because suppose that farmer is relatively better educated than rest of us you should not just accept on the face value the information that he is providing. So prior experiences with researchers, prevailing developmental rhetoric, government policy all those things influence local people perception that we need to keep in mind while carrying out the PRA exercise.

There may be some biases from our end, from the researchers end also because we also go with some expectation we also go with some predetermined thought process. So these also need to be under control. Hence triangulation or cross checking of data is a very important component or steps in carrying out a successful PRA.

(Refer Slide Time: 8:57)



Steps for carrying out PRA

4. Behavior and attitudes

A number of tips can help in a PRA exercise:

- Have a team contract
- Take time to develop rapport
- Relax, do not rush
- Hand over the stick
- The key output is the discussions not the technical methods
- Keep quiet
- Do not 'convert' local classifications and terminologies into scientific jargons.
- The information generated belongs to the farmers involved. Give them due acknowledgement and keep them in loop. Do not try to hijack their knowledge

Navigation icons: back, forward, search, list, refresh, and a small icon with the number 7.

The next step is behavior or attitude, attitudes or behavior. Few tips I would like to share with you while carrying out PRA exercise at the field level, we should always have a contact with your team members and also with your audience or the participants. We should not hurry up any steps especially developing the rapport of friendship or relation with the community it has to be a slow process because if you do it in a very hurried manner there will be a sense of what you call insecurity or doubts in the mind of the people that why actually these people are coming to our area and trying to do everything very fast. So relax, do not push, do not rush, hand over sometime the control to the people that you are talking with so that they also feel that they are involved but with a very watchful eye.

The key output is the discussion not the technical method that we always keep in mind and that is what I said just couple of minutes back that we need not to be very much dependent on protocol. So next sometime it is better to be a quiet listener in such kind of exercise. So do not convert the local classification and terminologies into scientific jargons not only that that your participants or community will not appreciate that but they will not also understand at times okay so they may lose the track that what you are actually discussing there.

The information generated in this exercise; remember it belongs to the farmers that are involved in this exercise. We must give them due acknowledgement and keep them in the loop; we should not try to hijack their knowledge and that is what is one of the most sensitive thing that I would

like to convey to you that we must not try to hijack because otherwise what will happen there will be a lack of trust between you and your participant that is the community.