
UNIT 9 PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF PARTICIPATORY TRAINING METHODOLOGIES

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9.1 INTRODUCTION

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), as you have learned in the previous Unit, is an inter-disciplinary approach to qualitative data collection. Inter-disciplinary approaches refer to approaches which draw from several disciplines. Data may be collected, for example, based on techniques used in disciplines such as sociology, psychology, health sciences, economics and so on. As you would have understood, PRA is based on active community participation and places great value on local expertise in solving local problems. Do you remember how in the last Unit we talked about involving local people in exercises such as map drawing, wealth ranking and creating seasonal calendars which were readily understandable by illiterate people?

Though it may seem simple, conducting a PRA exercise needs considerable skill. Community workers in particular need to develop this skill. The first step consists of training the field workers in the exercises themselves but more important, it teaches them to “hand over the stick” or in other words give community members a sense of control over this process. If this is absent the exercise cannot be considered PRA. After training, the community workers can then share their experiences and encourage rural or urban women and men to participate in these exercises. At the conceptual level, community workers find themselves re-thinking their role as development workers. Usually, community workers think of themselves as key agents in informing the audience and enabling them to respond to what *they* consider the needs of communities. PRA enables them to respond to what the *community members consider their needs*. In other words, PRA enables them to gain authentic information on the actual needs of community members. It also helps in designing and implementing a development intervention responding to those needs. This is a critical difference in approach.

In this Unit we will explore the practical applications of PRA in participatory training and research. In your day-to-day experience you will find much to gain from a practical application of PRA methods in your area of work.

9.2 WHAT ARE PARTICIPATORY TRAINING AND RESEARCH?

You have earlier studied various aspects of participatory training in Block 1. Let us remind you about three key characteristics of participatory training. As the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) has listed in their Manual for Participatory Training Methodology, participatory training:

- aims at creating an experience of personal and collective change, thus strengthening people's understanding that change is possible, within one's self and at the level of the group.
- encourages people to question what they have always accepted, to critically examine their own experiences, to derive insights through analysis. This process of releasing people's critical faculties enables them to discover and exert their latent powers for autonomous constructive action.
- recognizes and validates authentic and accurate people's knowledge which is based on the experience of reality, and synthesizes it with fresh insights and restructured concepts based on the analysis of experience. The new body of knowledge thus created leads to a powerful sense of ownership and a willingness to transform reality. Learners thus become prepared for action.

As the PRIA Manual for Participatory Training Methodology rightly states: "Good training is the art not of putting ideas into people's heads, but of drawing ideas out."

In our discussion in this section we will explore various aspects of participatory training and research with the help of examples drawn from the work of some international practitioners of PRA and its earlier counterpart, RRA or rapid rural appraisal.

During the course of RRA training, community workers were encouraged to combine perspectives integrating or combining the different disciplines. This had the advantage of allowing the workers to learn from each others' skills. They began to understand properly the inter-relatedness of their work. This helped them to begin to understand development from the perspective of community members themselves. They were taught to listen, to ask non-leading questions, and to undergo role reversal, by looking upon community members as the experts for bringing about a change. In this case they became learners themselves.

Community workers were also trained to recognize that communities were not homogeneous and passive but that they had active social, economic and political structures which influenced the development process. The community workers learnt to see for themselves that those in the village who attended meetings were, in fact, normally those who expected to gain most from the assistance of project teams/NGOs or international donors. They could see that the poorest and most vulnerable did not come to the trainers/project team for help.

As you know, there are many types of differences in communities: differences based on gender, class and caste. Trainers might initially be uncertain of gender differences. After exposure to gender training, they begin to understand gender-based differences better and become able to convey this disparity or difference

to the people they train. They begin to see gender as one “axis” or dividing line among other “axes of difference”. It has been emphasized that training of development workers must emphasize gender along with caste and class differences among others such as age, economic well being and cultural differences. The development functionaries or community workers would be able to see for themselves that differences do exist within communities, according to all the factors mentioned earlier, and that to omit any one factor from the equation is to limit our understanding of that community’s needs.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) List three characteristics of participatory training.

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- 2) Explain the term “axes of difference”.

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**9.3 PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF
PARTICIPATORY TRAINING
METHODOLOGIES**

Now let us look at three examples to make these aspects clearer from the standpoint of real training settings. In the first example we describe the experience of using PRA in health training of female health workers – the issues addressed are practical gender interests rather than strategic gender interests. In the third example also you would get insights into PRA applications in training traditional birth attendants particularly focusing on triangulation and ascertaining accurate information from community groups. In the second example village mapping and gender role analysis is described conducted by village groups as well as women’s groups alone. In the fourth example we talk about women’s work and gender roles analysis using PRA methodologies. While the second and fourth examples directly address strategic gender interests, the first and second focus on practical gender interests.

Example 1: Body Mapping by Traditional Birth Attendants (Dais)

A number of participatory methods have been tried with traditional birth attendants. In a training exercise the larger group was divided into four groups. All four groups incorporated “body mapping” into discussions with local *dais*

(traditional birth attendants). As Andrea Cornwall states, “body mapping can be used to explore people’s perceptions of a range of bodily processes and the effects of medical interventions in the body”. All the traditional birth attendants worked on village mapping skills during visits to the field.

In addition to village mapping, some groups used transect walks, seasonality charts, venn diagrams, *dosa* or pie charts, time-lines, histograms and other techniques to supplement their talks with local villagers. A description of some of the group experience on body mapping follows in this example. This description is based on the work of Elizabeth Tolley and Margaret E. Bentley on “Participatory Methods for Research on Women’s Reproductive Health” based on a workshop organized in Karnataka, India

The project team adapted the technique for their interactions with *dais* to explore their perceptions of the reproductive tract, labour and delivery practices, and delivery complications.

At least two *dais* in each group worked together to draw the body maps, but in most groups the first drawings were conceptual, rather than physiological. This may have been because of the way questions were phrased or related to the *dais*’ previous experiences with pictures and diagrams. One group had wanted to ask the women birth attendants to draw a picture of how they imagined the inside of a pregnant woman’s body looked. Instead, the question asked by the translator was, “How does the baby grow inside the mother?” The question diverted attention from structures inside of the body and the position of the baby to an emphasis on uterine growth.

Foetal growth was represented in a similar manner by several *dais*. One group produced drawings of nine consecutive circles, each one slightly larger than the previous one. Another drew a long vertical rectangle with a horizontal line drawn across it about a quarter of the way from the top. This line, the drawer explained, was the pregnant woman’s waist. A series of nine dots descended from just above the line to the bottom of the rectangle. In both sets of drawings the circles or dots descended from just above the line to the bottom of the rectangle. In both sets of drawings the circles or dots were said to represent the monthly development of the foetus. The women explained that the baby was “the size of a peanut” in the first and second month, the size of a lemon during the third month, an orange in month four and a coconut in month five. Some *dais* referred to these stages when describing other markers of foetal development. One group said the baby got “life” or *jeeva* during month four, while another said that this happened in month five. A different group reported that the baby “kicked itself to turn around” with its head pointing downward in month nine. It was later learned that many of the *dais* had been taught this fruit analogy of foetal growth during a training workshop several years before. The trainer, who was present at the PRA workshop, explained that the concepts were based on traditional beliefs, which had been incorporated in other training sessions.

Some anatomically-related drawings were also done. This led to an interesting discussion of nutrition and contraception. The baby was shown in its own sac, separate but connected to the mother’s stomach. When asked how the food eaten by the mother reached the baby, one *dai* stated that there was a hole in the sac and food came in through the hole. Another disagreed, saying that

naramba (translated as tube or nerve) connected the baby's sac to the mother's stomach. Food was conducted through this tube. Another *dai* continued that the food, upon reaching the sac, entered the baby through the soft spot, or fontanelle, in its head. Another referred to the diagram saying that there were a number of nerves or veins connecting the baby's sac to the stomach, and food reached the baby through them. She then said that if the women had too many children, she could go to a doctor who would "overturn" the sac. This would stop reproduction. If the nerves were cut (between the sac and stomach), this would also stop pregnancy. One of the other women added that it was important for the right nerve to be cut.

Example 2: Village Mapping and Gender Roles Analysis

One field visit was spent on village mapping. Participants found mapping to be both fun and useful. Villagers enjoyed the festive atmosphere created as they cleared away space for the map and gathered seeds, coloured powders and other materials. In most cases, the domination of a few individuals early in the mapping exercise gave way to much greater participation as the map progressed. As local people approached the map to verify that their houses were correctly located or to answer questions regarding certain households, they often remained standing to assist those who were drawing the map.

Individuals in the groups discovered that a great deal of information could be recorded on these maps traced on the ground. General census information was usually recorded first. This included the number of households and number of families in the village, as well as population statistics – numbers of adults and children, caste groups, education levels and types of employment. In addition, some of the maps revealed a wide array of health information. Villagers marked the houses of blind or handicapped persons, people with various illnesses and malnourished children. The houses of pregnant and lactating women were marked. Later, further information on pregnant women and the age of breast-feeding children was also recorded. For example, the location of pregnant and lactating women on a village map led later to a construction of pregnancy time-lines detailing the types and quantities of food consumed during the various stages of pregnancy, as well as the amount of work women do while pregnant.

A group interested in food security issues located small holder farmers and landless labourers on their map and then asked the farmers to show cropping patterns and the amount of food available for local consumption over the various seasons.

One group collected information on family planning acceptors/non-acceptors and infertility. They also attempted to find out about abortion using the village map, but found this topic too sensitive to discuss in a large group. During this group's exercise, some of the villagers did locate couples who did not or could not have children. Two "infertile" men present during the exercise were brought forward. During a subsequent group discussion session, concern was raised that the mapping technique might not be appropriate for collecting very sensitive information. Group participants questioned whether the two infertile men might have felt ashamed by being identified and questioned in such a public way.

There was general consensus that the maps helped raise topics that could then be explored in more detail using other techniques. For example, after locating

the local resources of health care on the map, one group asked villagers to list other health care alternatives and to indicate the importance of these resources and their physical distance from the community by drawing a Venn diagram. For general treatment, the Venn diagram showed that the government primary health centre, at a distance of five kilometers and costing Rs.1 on the bus, was commonly used for general medical treatment. This centre was much less important, however, for deliveries, when the local trained *dai* was called. Once the diagram was completed, workshop participants were surprised at the number of resources available and the complex factors that influenced the choice of one over another.

Alice Welbourn in an article in the Oxfam GADU Newsletter describes the village mapping process in non-threatening gender-awareness training. The women's perception of their surroundings makes them concentrate largely on the village centre and nearby fields, whereas the man's map shows what leads where, marks the village boundaries and the trees belonging to various groups in the village. What appears in each map reflects the respective views of their place in the world. For men, who travel quite a lot, who are the land-owners in the village and who are the inheritors of their fathers' roles as leaders, such features as those they drew are important. The women have a much more restricted sphere of activity, geographically as well as in other ways. The relatively limited scope for their map depicts this. Once the basic map was drawn, each group was then asked to draw on their map changes which they would like to see in their village. The men decided that they would like to have a string of new buildings built along the side of the road which leads into their village from the main town. The one closest to the village would be an administrative hall. A school and hospital would be further away. To have such buildings lining the route to their centre would bring prestige to them as residents. The women initially responded to the requests by explaining that they had no role in such decision-making. They felt that usually the men were always the ones to decide where new things should be. So they were asked to just pretend, then resolutely drew a "hospital", nearly as big as their village centre, and right next to it. In this place, women are the ones who take their children for medical treatment. So for them convenience of access to a health centre was the first priority. This factor of convenience of access is often overlooked even in urban areas. A small town nearby bears out this assumption: the brand new health clinic is built on a hill crest on the main road from town, about a mile from the centre. Its location bears no reference to proximity or convenience of access.

In another village nearby, which was rather poorer than the first one, when women were asked to draw changes on the map they had just drawn, they replied: the changes which we need cannot be drawn. They had been talking to me about being beaten by their husbands if they stayed at home to look after sick children; about a general breakdown in support structures and about their ever-worsening economic problems.

Community workers who were being trained explained to the project team/trainers that women in that area have no problem whatever in participating in meetings. They can get up and say what they please and enjoy full access to decision-making. So the project team/trainers moved on to the next topic for discussion.

A week later, during the course of field work, the community workers emerged with a rather more analytical account of problems as they saw them in the community. The trainers/ project team had been working in three separate teams, studying the same community but each from a different perspective. Each group, the women working only with women, the older male community workers with older men, the younger with young men, could see for themselves that people's views of the same problems differed according to their own status and experience and according to whom they were talking to. They could see the big advantage in having segregated meetings, allowing villagers to speak out without fear of their views being quashed or put down or ignored by elders or by men. The community workers learnt to show respect for the information collected by their colleagues. Together they described a list of perceptions on development especially related to gender differences:

- a) Men's traditional role in society is as bread winners;
- b) Women are traditionally viewed as people who should be servants to their husbands;
- c) However the economic base is not strong enough nowadays to leave all household provision to men;
- d) Women have more room to find extra income through trade, which men would not do;
- e) The women's economic base undermines the traditional male authority structure;
- f) Men then grow to feel inadequate and translate their inadequacy into anger against women;
- g) Men then leave most responsibilities to women;
- h) Women feel let down.

Their perceptions had undergone a marked development over time.

These examples have only provided a brief view of the potential that the PRA approach can offer in changing perceptions of people. A mere three weeks instruction, of course, cannot reverse or completely change the thinking of a lifetime. This training presents just a beginning. However, there was a big change in the way in which community workers were talking about communities and the differences within them. This process began once they had seen for themselves how information varied according to the person they had approached and asked questions. Most importantly, they did not appear to feel at all threatened by their own realization that to omit women from the exercises is to limit their understanding of village needs.

The next step is to make sure that this groundwork or preparatory work is followed up by creative project planning, which incorporates this understanding. Community workers and managers alike need to learn to value their skills in recognizing different needs within any community, no matter what their basis, and should learn to pride ourselves in being able to respond to those differences effectively.

The project documented promoted systematic techniques and methods to "listen

and talk with women” and to include their voices in the design of programme interventions for women’s health. A key objective was to provide community-based data that would influence programme and policy decisions for women’s health. This description is based on the work of Elizabeth Tolley and Margaret E. Bentley on “Participatory Methods for Research on Women’s Reproductive Health” based on a workshop organized in Karnataka, India.

Example 3: Workshop Strategy in PRA

Workshops have been used as useful strategies in PRA. As an example, the objective of a planned workshop was to adopt some of the participatory methods developed within agriculture for conducting PRA exercises on women’s health. MYRADA was chosen to organize and host the workshop. The groups from the network brought vast experience in community-based health care service delivery and research, along with their recent experience in the use of qualitative research methods.

Workshop Design

The five-day workshop was conducted in a rural area of Karnataka, H.D. Kote, where MYRADA has a training centre. It was designed to achieve several goals. In keeping with its theme, the first goal was participation. Workshop members, “learned by participating” in PRA exercises in a field setting. The participants were divided into four groups and several MYRADA staff members joined each group as translators. In addition to some informal classroom sessions, each group conducted one afternoon exercise with traditional birth attendants – *dais* – and two half-day field exercises in nearby villages. In order to encourage flexibility and creativity, the groups were given more and more freedom during the workshop to design their own field exercises and activities. This allowed participants to pursue personal or organizational interests and encouraged experimentation.

An important goal of the workshop was to thoroughly document the experiences of the participating groups. After each field visit, groups were asked to write up the planning process and content of the activities and exercises, as well as any “lessons learned” and to plan the activities for the next day’s activities.

Comments on the Workshop Strategy

The workshop revealed a number of ways in which PRA methods could be applied to research and programme development for health. However, most participants felt that when applied to research rather than for community motivation or project identification, certain considerations were vital. Triangulation, or the ability to quickly cross-check information obtained, should be an important aspect of PRA. This requires the researcher to understand which groups or individuals are participating, and whose “voices” are not being heard. For a complete picture, representatives from different strata of a community must be present and actively participating. In addition, the information collected on a given day should be presented back to the community and further verified. During several of the mapping exercises, whole new sections of villages were added to maps on the second “go”; and in one case the population of a village doubled after it was explained that the individual who gave the village population count was a local politician, interested only in the votes of adult villagers. He had left out all children under 18 years of age.

Participants felt that a successful PRA exercise required planning. In use of PRA for research, information should be elicited or gathered in a logical way, with general information first, followed by more detailed or sensitive information. Attention should be given to the way in which questions were asked, taking care not to introduce biases from the researcher’s perspective. During the sessions with the *dais*, several groups asked about complications of child delivery.

Although none of the *dais* immediately listed excessive bleeding as a complication, almost all of the participant groups went on to ask if this was a problem. Perhaps because of time constraints or greater concentration on the process rather than the content of the activity, none of the groups, however, reached an understanding of how the *dais* defined “excessive” bleeding – at what point bleeding was seen as abnormal and requiring some kind of intervention.

Good research –of any kind – should pay attention to the language and terms that people use. This may require special attention and a lot of extra note taking in PRA, where activity is often fast-paced and a number of people may answer questions or comment at once. If translators are needed, they should be included in planning sessions and be attentive to shades of meaning in the words, phrases or expressions that participants use.

Example 4: Women’s Work and Gender Roles Analysis

The work of MYRADA has focused on enhancing gender sensitivity. They feel that

“to be gender-sensitive means to be sensitive to the positioning of men and women in society in relation to one another and to understand the relationships that exist between them in order to make project interventions socially relevant, useful, and targeted towards promoting greater parity in these relationships.”

The following table gives one example of gender sensitivity in looking at women’s work in the context of PRA exercises conducted by MYRADA.

Table 9.1: Topics Chosen and Methods and Tools Used in the Field in PRA Exercises

	Topics chosen	Methods and tools used in the field
1)	Activity profiles of men and women in peak and lean seasons (farming families). i.e. seasons with maximum and minimum farming activity.	Separate interviews with men and women were held and represented using the time line format, from day-break to bed-time of a typical day. No attempt was made to compare the output from the men’s group with that from the women’s group. If this had been done, it would have stimulated interesting discussions.
2)	Shifts in responsibilities/tasks between men and women over the last 10 years	Interview outputs were represented using a trend-matrix format (with stones etc.) Separate interviews with men and women were then reconciled. A consensus representation was possible, but only after much heated arguments between the men and the women.

3) Differences between men and women in the use of traditional and modern health care facilities.	Interviews with a group of women only. Diagrammatically plotted on chart (map-cum-linkage diagram type). Not triangulated through interviewing men and/or the health practitioners themselves. If done, the output would have been more informative (more correct too) particularly in discussions relating to reconciling differences in perceptions.
4) Wealth ranking of women-headed households in relation to male-headed households to analyze the reasons for differences, if any, between them.	This exercise was not actually carried out as proposed but instead obtained women's criteria for defining poverty and men's criteria for defining poverty. The exercise was conducted through interviews. Interestingly, while each group listed the criteria in general terms, their interpretation of these criteria reflected how it affected them (as men or as women) in particular. e.g. "Lack of economic opportunities" was listed by both men and women. To the men it simply meant the lack of employment options or the lack of means to utilize these options. To the women, on the other hand, it meant additionally that to utilize an opportunity or not was a decision to be approved by the men in the household.
5) Gender differences, if any, in accessibility to flow of information into the village.	Elicited mainly through interviews in a joint group of men and women, and plotted on a chart using a format similar to linkage diagrams. The output was interesting in that much information reached men – mainly through informal sources – of which only a portion was relayed to women. But on account of an active women's group in the village (promoted by MYRADA) much more occupationally relevant information reached the women, and was relayed somewhat more faithfully by them to the men. What would have been the situation if the women's group had not been formed? How does information reach the non-member women and their families? These questions should have been explored but were not.
6) Gender differences in establishing institutional linkages.	Men and women were jointly interviewed and the output represented in the linkage diagram format.
7) Relative involvement of men and women in decision-making on various issues	Men and women were jointly interviewed, and the output was presented in the form of a decision-making matrix. There was some various issues confusion with regard to "taking

a decision”, “executing the decision taken”, and “who was affected by the decision”.

One noteworthy fact was that regardless of who initiated the issue (men or women) and who took the final decision (men or women), at the intermediate stage, all discussions leading to the decision involved both men and women. Could this be taken to indicate that women do significantly influence decision-making? The participants involved in this exercise were of view that they did. It was also expressed that the final decision depended very much upon who were the income-earners of the family and who controlled the family finances.

Source: MYRADA PRA-PALM Series 7. Analysis of Societal Roles and Problems from a Gender Perspective and Development of Gender – Sensitive Tools in PRA-PALM

In terms of adding to the repertoire of methods there was one interesting innovation tried by the ‘decision-making’ group. This was role-play, and the need to use it came about because there was one man in the group who dominated the discussion and insisted that women had an equal say in decision-taking. Finally (and on the spur of the moment) one of the participants said “For the next 5 minutes, I’ll play the wife and you be my husband”, and developed a situation where the ‘wife’ had sold off a bag of grain to get herself a nose-ring that she had been asking her husband for the last two years. Within the space of 5 minutes, the situation came to an end with the ‘wife’ being beaten by the ‘husband’! The action was spontaneous; one more person in the group almost joined in, and the others who were watching agreed that such reactions were not uncommon.

At the concluding sessions, a checklist was circulated titled “proven ways to keep women invisible in your project”.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1) Read example 1 carefully. List the PRA methods mentioned.

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2) Read example 2 carefully. List any three differences in the way in which women mapped their village compared to men.

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3) Read example 4 carefully. List any three PRA techniques and tools used to gather information about women's work.

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9.4 ROLE OF TRAINERS IN THE PRA PROCESS

The attitudes and behaviour of the outsider is the key to the PRA process. True participatory work cannot be carried out without appropriate attitudes and behaviour. PRA is not just a tool, it is also an approach. The tools cannot be used in isolation. The participatory approach is as important as the methods. These are complementary skills.

In his paper on "Potential Applications to Family Planning, Health and Nutrition Programmes", Richard Heaver has given a number of practical hints for trainers based on his work in India. In this section we will try to familiarize you with the following aspects based on his paper:

- Creating a suitable training climate;
- Tips for the trainer; and
- Building self-critical awareness

Now let us try to understand how we can create a suitable training "climate". The word "climate" is being used here to describe the training environment, the surroundings for the trainees both in terms of the people facilitating the process, the relevance of the content and the facilities available.

Setting the climate

At the beginning of the training programme, a suitable climate can be created in the following ways:

- Use sticky labels on which the participants can write their preferred short names in bold marker pens and stick on their dresses;
- Use introduction games: self, paired introduction, etc.;
- Use ice-breakers;
- Use a participatory style of decision-making as well as sharing and facilitating;
- Encourage participants to define their own operational climate by:
 - building team contracts;
 - listing expectations;
 - conducting discussions on programmes; and
 - deciding on various roles.

Maintaining the climate

A suitable training climate can be maintained in PRA sessions by:

- Encouraging participants to make suggestions about the programmes and issues;
- Using energizers and games from time to time to keep the sessions interesting;
- Remembering the flexibility rule;
- Asking participants to evaluate the workshop at the end of each day;
- Letting the training team have a critical analysis of each day's events.

Setting the climate in the field

When the group is making a field visit to a village, for example, how can we set the climate? Here are a few hints:

- Discuss the 'panic factor' in advance (a group problem solving exercise and/or role plays in workshops).
- Ask each team to decide in advance the issues, methods and the local informants they have access to.
- Think about the possible sequence of methods which can be used before leaving for the field.
- Encourage the team to begin with an activity that requires group inputs, e.g. mapping. This usually proves useful in getting the community involved. Slowly these can help to shift the control away from the team of outsiders to locals.
- Organize a "Do-It-Yourself" activity to start off the field work. This will involve the team in trying their hands at day-to-day local activities. This breaks the ice and clearly establishes new roles of the local people as teachers and professionals, as learners. Tasks might include ploughing, plastering, food preparation, fetching water or fuel wood, weeding, transplanting paddy, and so on. This will require careful preparation with local people ahead of time.
- Tell the team to relax. Tell them that practice is the best way to learn and that they do not have to learn everything in the first few minutes.

Tips for the Trainer

The trainer should:

- Read more on aspects of human behaviour, group behaviour, etc.;
- Make observations and reflections on human/group behaviour including their own behaviour;
- Try to develop a full understanding of the self/personal attitude and behaviour;
- Gain training inputs from time to time such as sensitivity training,

interpersonal relations, communications and other personal growth-related programmes;

- Be aware of various development issues such as technical aspects (forestry, agriculture, etc.), community aspects (culture, customs, community organizations), institutional aspects (Government, NGOs, credit), research aspects (various issues in development such as poverty, gender, economic reforms); and
- Try to strike a balance and neither under-nor over-facilitate the process, both by style and words.

How to lecture

During PRA sessions, the trainer team may like to communicate some facts through lectures as well. You may find these tips useful in organizing lectures on PRA.

- Go for informal seating arrangements to make small group discussions easy.
- Have ready energizers, exercises, teasers, group activities to break up sequences.
- Optimal unpreparedness – having a range or variety or repertoire of things to do, not a rigid or fixed agenda.
- Do not speak for more than ten minutes. Most things that have to be said or shown can be said or shown in ten minutes.
- Talking for short periods gives trainers time to plan and get ready for the next activity.
- Before speaking, inform the participants of the activity to follow.
- Shy people speak out better and also learn and contribute more in small groups of three to four members.
- Prepare lecture notes in advance. Ask the trainees to read the materials and come with questions, if any, which can be discussed in groups.
- Exhibit or show a video on the theme of training, if available; ask the participants to view it carefully. At the end, the trainer may raise questions/ issues for discussion.
- Explain the concepts and principles of PRA through small stories.
- Encourage the participants to interact as much as possible. Use exercises/ group work/games whenever possible.
- Never tell people anything that they can experience themselves. We learn best by finding out ourselves.

Overcoming or Avoiding Biases

Participatory methods have been mainly developed to overcome biases in the conventional methods of development. They help to put people at the centre of any development intervention. A trainer should always try to avoid biases in any training situation, both on and off the field.

In order to offset biases, a trainer should:

- Be sensitive;
- Ensure participation of shy/submissive people;
- Be an active listener;
- Be humble;
- Be nice;
- Be accommodative; and
- Create mutual trust.

Ensuring participation of shy and submissive people

- Use small buzz groups for discussion.
- Give more chances to silent participants.
- Minimize eye contact with talkative, dominating participants.
- Use appropriate body language (smiling, bright face) to initiate talking.
- Occasionally group all the submissive and shy people into one group and encourage them to talk.
- Use games wherever possible.

Being sensitive

- A trainer has to be sensitive to the body language of the trainees.
- A trainer should facilitate a discussion rather than a dialogue and be sensitive to the group rather than the individual.
- A trainer should provide hand-outs in advance so that trainees who have problems in hearing and understanding the language can also follow the proceedings.

Being humble

- Use soft words while speaking. Do not speak loudly.
- Facilitate the participants and help them to feel at home.
- Be concerned more about the trainees rather than boasting about yourself.
- Be transparent and do not lie to other people.
- Be polite.
- Try to convince people rationally.
- Be neutral.
- Have as much fun as time and situation allows.

Being nice

- Be soft while speaking;

- Use positive gestures;
- Be cheerful;
- Be sensitive;
- Do not be judgmental;
- Be helpful;
- Show positive attitude to help others;
- Respect people, their culture and social traits;
- Be simple;
- Sit at the same level as community people;
- Be attentive;
- Do not assume anything;
- Acknowledge their work; and
- Express thanks.

Rule number one Be nice to people

Rule number two Repeat rule number one

Rule number three Repeat rule number two

— Raul Peresgrava

Creating mutual trust

- Be gentle;
- Be transparent;
- Explain clearly the purpose of PRA;
- Behave politely;
- Speak in their language;
- Learn from them;
- Show material available with them;
- Do not pretend;
- Do not act;
- Do not threaten;
- Do not give false promises;
- Be friendly;
- Be kind;
- Respect their customs, values and norms;

- Share your/their food;
- Stay as long as possible with them;
- Make night halts compulsory;
- Be culturally sensitive; and
- Do not lecture.

Building self-critical awareness

Self-critical awareness is the lifeline of PRA. The trainer should be willing to accept mistakes and errors and learn from them. This principle can be practised in the following ways:

- Be transparent;
- Learn and share together;
- Do not interrupt;
- Hand over the stick;
- Be an active listener;
- Avoid leading questions;
- Respect innovations;
- Learn to unlearn;
- Do not be judgmental;
- Cope with the gatekeeper;
- Be sensitive to the realities/background of persons with whom we relate;
- Keep repeatedly asking questions to yourself, e.g. Am I biased?
- Always ask the group for their opinion and follow it;
- Be open;
- Facilitate reflection at frequent intervals;
- Make extra effort not to dominate;
- Decentralize responsibility and trust people.
- Have a session with the core trainers at the end of each day and a brief discussion on your own attitudes and behaviour;
- Do not impose your ideas;
- See the photos/video of the training you facilitated critically and observe the mistakes you have made;
- Seek and encourage criticism from others;
- Ask yourself:
 - Have you used this training to fulfill your own emotional needs of recognition, acceptance, etc.?

- What was your reaction to criticism?
- List all incidents when you accepted your errors, were flexible, listened to others and respected the judgement of the participants (trainees).

Being transparent

- Say only what/how much you can do;
- Do not hide anything;
- Do not use tricky language;
- Have a smiling face;
- Avoid notebook culture;
- Avoid lip service;
- Mention aims and objectives clearly;
- Do not have hidden agendas.

Learning and sharing together

- Diagramming and use of visual aids allows mutual learning and sharing.
- Diagramming generates interest, enthusiasm and participation; allows people to illustrate their ideas.
- Respect peoples' knowledge.
- Do not criticize, evaluate or correct what they say as you are there to learn; try to understand their way of seeing and doing things.
- Always explain to the people what you are doing; do not just expect them to join in without understanding the reason.
- Be patient with people in understanding what you are doing; do not just expect them to join in without understanding the reason.
- Be patient with people and willing to explain as much as is needed.
- During the exercise be prepared to switch onto other activities if people are getting bored or finding it difficult.

Avoiding interruption

- Be an active listener.
- Be patient.
- Respect other people's views and opinions.
- Let the entire process be clear and specific.
- Play the interruptors game at the beginning of the session and draw lessons.
- Have a role play of 'outsiders and local people' and ask participants to note how many times the community is interrupted.
- Shoulder tapping can be used as a way of alerting those who interrupt repeatedly.

Handing over the stick

- Start with the stick yourself.
- Explain clearly before handing over the stick.
- Allow farmers to use their own symbols.
- Listen to farmers' perception and views.

Being an active listener

- Be open minded.
- Be flexible and keep an 'empty glass' mentality.
- Take up opportunities as they present themselves.
- Cultivate the attitude of letting the local people set the agenda.
- Respect people's knowledge.
- Understand the issue being discussed.
- Sometimes the facilitator has to moderate discussions to enable trainees to share their experiences and opinions.
- The facilitator has to be aware of all trainees, not only the active participants.

Avoiding leading questions

- Be open minded for discussion.
- Listen to people attentively.
- Pick up questions based on the discussion.
- Practise questions which are more open-ended in nature.
- Do not impose your thought process on others.

Respecting innovation

- One should know what an innovation is and how to recognize it.
- The facilitator should have a thorough knowledge of village situations.
- Give space to participants for generating their own version of internalized knowledge.
- Be appreciative of new innovations.

Learning to unlearn

The approaches listed here help to break the stereotype, bring people closer, build rapport, learn the dignity of labour, realize the fact that the villagers are skillful and intelligent in their own set up. Some of the useful points to keep in mind include:

- Living together with local people in their villages (e.g. night halt in the villages).
- Do it yourself ;

- ‘Lend a helping hand’;
- Introspection/reflection on our own behaviour;
- More of listening and less of talking.

Avoiding judgmental attitudes and behaviour

- Do not pass any judgements but present opinion as far as possible;
- Follow the formula – stop, listen and proceed;
- Believe in the collective decision – making process;
- Do not decide but facilitate participants in deciding for themselves;
- Give logic as far as possible but again let participants decide;
- Facilitate everyone in taking part in the discussion; open discussion for all but do not impose your decision;
- Speak in a soft voice, not a decisive tone;
- Always say that “this is so-and-so’s opinion” but “what do the others say?”

Coping with gatekeepers

- Be sensitive.
- Do not point a finger at the gatekeeper (this may alienate him or her).
- Play some games which have special relevance to attitudes and behaviour and allow her/him an opportunity to reflect on her/his behaviour, for example.
 - a) Master and servant
 - b) Dominating and submissive
 - c) Taking sides
 - d) Body language
- Show slides, tell stories relating to dominant behaviour and request participants to reflect upon the demerits of such behaviour. Also request them to reflect upon their own behaviour and critically review it.
- Attempt to understand the reasons for dominating behaviour yourself and then allow participants an opportunity to reflect on the same.
- Play a game like “understanding a tree”, initiate discussion on this issue.
- Use of video can also be an important way to reflect on our own behaviour.

Using appropriate body language

While conducting training on PRA, it is very important to observe body language. Without speaking verbally you are communicating with people using your body language. This is something we do not verbalize. Here are a few tips for the trainer on using appropriate body language:

- Do not be stiff and arrogant.
- Do not be snobbish.
- Do not frown.
- Body language reveals and expresses curiosity, confusion, frustration, happiness or sadness. So check yourself and try to understand what you are communicating.
- Be sensitive to cultural variations in body language and non-verbal communication.
- Watch the expression on your face. It is a mirror one can read easily.
- Use video recordings, photographs, etc. to reflect on your body language, etc.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

1) In organizing sessions on PRA, how would you develop a lecture session? List any ten points you will keep in mind to make a lecture session participatory and interactive.

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2) What do you understand by “setting the climate”?

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9.5 LET US SUM UP

The major points that emerged from this Unit include:

- PRA draws from different disciplines.
- PRA is useful mainly to collect qualitative data.
- PRA helps to document the needs and perceptions of communities and influences their feeling of self worth.
- Methodologies which are part of PRA enable community members to participate in understanding their own reality.
- Freedom to participants to design their own training exercises enables them to pursue their own interests and that of their organizations.
- Successful PRA requires detailed planning and uses local materials such as stones, leaves, sticks.

- Creating an appropriate climate is very important for successful PRA. If the atmosphere is not relaxed, people do not open up and provide information. Mutual trust and respect is the key.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the trainer (the outsider) is the key to the PRA process. PRA is not just a tool, it is also an approach.

We leave you with this ancient proverb.

IF I HEAR, I FORGET
IF I SEE, I REMEMBER
IF I DO, I KNOW.
— a Chinese Proverb

9.6 GLOSSARY

Birth Attendant	: A person who assists the pregnant women during child birth.
Field	: In a real life setting such as a village, slum, community centre etc. Work in such a setting is called field work.
Matrix	: A type of table where the column headings move from less to more in a series of steps e.g. in a decision making matrix the column headings may be “who took the decision?” “Who executed the decision?” “Who was affected by the decision?”
Non-leading	: Questions without hints on what the answer should be in the opinion of the interviewer. A trainer might ask “Wasn’t the session interesting?” This is a leading question. A non-leading question would be “How did you find the session? Interesting, moderately interesting or boring?”
Qualitative	: Descriptive type of data not data in the form of quantities or numbers.
Role Reversal	: Reversing existing roles e.g. allowing women to become group leaders rather than men. In the existing roles men would always be leaders. Or suppose women take on more of the activities related to earning a wage and men take on more responsibilities related to the home. This would be a role reversal.
Segregated	: Different groups are separated e.g. dividing on basis of age- (groups of young and old) or gender – (groups of men only and women only).

9.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) The key characteristics are:
 - Participatory training aims at creating an experience of personal and collective change, thus strengthening people's understanding that change is possible, within one's self and at the level of the group.
 - Participatory training encourages people to question what they have always accepted, to critically examine their own experiences, to derive insights through analysis. This process of releasing people's critical faculties enables them to discover and exert their latent powers for autonomous constructive action.
 - Participatory training recognizes and validates authentic and accurate people's knowledge which is based on the experience of reality, and synthesizes it with fresh insights and restructured concepts based on the analysis of experience. The new body of knowledge thus created leads to a powerful sense of ownership and a willingness to transform the reality. Learners thus become prepared for action.
- 2) Axes of differences basically refer to a continuum of difference e.g. a gender axes of difference could range from high to low i.e lot of difference to very little difference. Usually there is a lot of difference in gender roles, responsibilities. Similarly an axis of difference based on caste could range from high to low. Usually higher castes are better educated, more wealthy than lower castes.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Body mapping, village mapping, transect walks, seasonality charts, venn diagrams, *dosa* or pie charts, time-lines, histograms.
- 2) Women's maps limited in scope and geographical spread; more emphasis on easy access to health centre when asked about future plans for village; more concentration in women's maps on village centre and nearby fields.
- 3) Activity profiles through interviews; trend matrix; maps; linkage diagrams; decision making matrix.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) The tips for trainers on how to lecture include:
 - i) Go for informal seating arrangements to make small group discussions easy.
 - ii) Have ready energizers, exercises, teasers, group activities to break up sequences.
 - iii) Optimal unpreparedness – have a range or variety or repertoire of things to do, not a rigid or fixed agenda.

- iv) Do not speak for more than ten minutes. Most things that have to be said or shown can be said or shown in ten minutes.
 - v) Talking for short periods gives trainers time to plan and get ready for the next activity.
 - vi) Before speaking, inform the participants of the activity to follow.
 - vii) Shy people speak out better and also learn and contribute more in small groups of three to four members.
 - viii) Prepare lecture notes in advance. Ask the trainees to read the materials and come with questions, if any, which can be discussed in groups.
 - ix) Exhibit or show a video on the theme of training, if available; ask the participants to view it carefully. At the end the trainer may raise questions/issues for discussion.
 - x) Explain the concepts and principles of PRA through small stories.
- 2) Setting the climate includes: creating a friendly, open atmosphere; enabling effective learning and meaningful interaction; encouraging collective and individual reflection; managing facilities; enabling each person to participate in training activities and contribute to discussions; encouraging feedback even if negative points are raised.

MAHILA KRISHI PRAYOG PARIWAR

(Self Help Group of Farm Women)

Prof. Surya Gunjal

In the global arena of development, the status and the role of women has to be emphasized. The women in developing countries are the principal providers of basic needs for the family and also the immediate sufferers of any kind of loss or damage to the society. Though they are a part of the solution in attaining sustainable development and preserving the resource base for future generations, not enough has happened to integrate them at the decision making and policy making levels.

Before women are fully recognized as viable producers and decision makers in the economy, they must first have equal access to the tools to do so. Therefore, it is necessary to allow their access to capital. Encouraging saving programmes will enable them to take entrepreneurial initiatives as well as improve the living conditions of the family and environment.

Planning Commission, Family Welfare Scheme, Education and Health Departments and many National and International NGOs are studying, planning and trying their best to bring the appropriate situation of women in developing the family and the nation. This development has to be a time bound programme. To achieve this target we have to confront many factors. Few of them are :

- 1) Geographic area of our country;
- 2) The status of road and railway for the communication;
- 3) Literacy percentage and quality of education in the rural India;
- 4) Traditional and orthodox mentality of the people;
- 5) Male dominating system and acceptance of it by the females;
- 6) The system of educating the rural womanhood;
- 7) Poor financial status in general; and
- 8) The attitude of the bureaucrats, village workers and politicians towards this vital issue.

The number of such factors can be increased. Now this has been proved that the speed of the development is very poor.

While working in rural area of Nashik district (Maharashtra State), we have observed another discrepancy. The status of women is different depending on the religion, caste and creed. Few observations can be made. The financial status of the family is poor and all women have to put in equal labour. We are disturbed and after a lot of brain storming, we have evolved a concept "**Help Your Self to Change**". Form your own experimenters' group. That is "**Mahila Krishi Prayog Parivar.**" A Parivar without entrance fee, no registration, no book-keeping and no help of any political or social leader of the village.

About 10 to 15 women from the village come together and they form a group and name the group of their own, say “Rohile Mahila Krishi Prayog Parivar”. This group as per their convenience gathers together at a suitable place (mostly the veranda of the member’s house) and talk amongst themselves, plan programmes.

The extension worker of our Krishi Vigyan Kendra remains present as an observer only. It was found that the discussion covers subjects such as:

- 1) Poor financial status
- 2) Work load
- 3) Poor yield of crops
- 4) No employment
- 5) Poor health

From hereafter, the role of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra person begins. Informally she/he joins the discussion and mostly the solutions are suggested by the member of the group.

As per the mandates of the ICAR and KVK, we proceed with the action. The solutions suggested by the group are refined, modified, corrected and finalized. The beauty of final solutions lies in the feeling that, it is the “decision of the group alone”.

As per the demand and necessity all the technical guidance and other support is given by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra e.g. in Western part of Nashik, Nagli is a main crop, followed by paddy. Nagli papad making is a traditional household activity. Nagli Papad has a good demand in cities and thus Nagli Papad making and marketing is one of the activities of income generation or use of soybean (own farm product) mixed with wheat for chapattis for protein-rich diet. Exposure visits to the cold storage and pre-cooling plant of grapes are conducted to adopt the post-harvest technology of the grapes, to get employment in grape orchards.