Report
On
Training on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)-Batch-I

1. Introduction

Development Alternatives (DA) has been conducting various capacity building training programs for its partner NGOs under the DFID supported PACS programme. In continuation of the earlier series, and as per the need of partner NGOs, a 5 day training programme on PRA was organized at hotel Srinath, Jhansi. The programme started on 18th and concluded on the 22nd of October 2005.

The representatives/field workers (25) belonging to various NGOs from Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharastra, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were present. The training aimed at equipping the grass root level workers with basic concepts, attitude & behavior of development professional, communication skill, methods/tools and techniques and practical application of PRA.

2. Methodology

Keeping the spirit of participatory development work, the training was organised in a manner whereby participants could have theoretical understanding as well as hands on experience of data collection using PRA. The training per se was conducted in interactive workshop mode involving all the participants and not a one-way class room process. A good mix of games, energizers and creative learning methods were used.

3. Process Adopted

Dr. KK Upadhyay of Development Alternatives gave an introduction to the programme focusing on importance of participatory approaches in appraisal, planning, monitoring & evaluation in the context of PACS programme. To introduce the participants an interactive technique of pairing two participants together on certain key questions and later introducing each other in plenary was used.

The participants were asked to share their expectations from the training programme and to write each of their expectation on one card. The cards were then displayed on the ground and were clustered using fishbowl exercise. Two monitors/observers from amongst the participants were selected. Later, they were requested to share their observations about group exercise in the plenary.

The exercise was a classic case to understand the concept of participation

- Some people took the lead to have a go at the exercise quickly. Some others who were watching joined in later. Though some of the participants tried to facilitate while others formed a clique.
- In the process of discussing and arriving at common conclusion on clustering of the cards, some people were trying to convince the other quite aggressively to the point of physically snatching the card to put it under one cluster.
- Some of the participants were just watching and observing the show (Passive Participants)
- Though at the initial stage there was conflicting situations, these were sorted out through a consultation process within the group itself. (Storming to performing stages of group formation)

An exercise was facilitated to understand the participants' level of understanding on the following:

- Have you heard about PRA?
- What are the methods/tools/techniques of PRA?
- How do you rate your knowledge on PRA?
- What is your practical experience
- Have you ever used PRA in planning, monitoring & evaluation?

Each participant was expected to rate their level of understanding on a 10-point scale. The exercise helped in understanding the existing level of the participants and designing & planning the training programme/sessions accordingly.

Most of the subject matter classroom sessions were followed by rigorous exercises in small groups to strengthen participants' participation in discussion and learning from each other. The exercise also helped in practicing the tools & techniques. The groups made presentations to the plenary that were followed by questions and answer sessions. The exercise helped the participants to understand the subject in a more analytical way.

To get a feel of participants' perceptions and understanding an innovative technique of discretely selecting one participant as an 'eye' and 'ear' of the group was used. Each of them was expected to present in the plenary what did they 'see' and what did they 'hear' from rest of the group? Also 2 rapporteurs were selected who helped in recapitulating the previous day's work. Two others were asked to take care of logistic issues on a rotation basis.

Each day was started with the recap of the previous day's learning through presentation by the rapporteurs. The development songs created conducive atmosphere to start the day. This was complimented by comments from the eye and the ear of the group.

At the end, the programme and the participants' learning level were evaluated through two sets of questionnaires. The detailed analysis of the same has been given on the following pages in the report. The programme was concluded by DA team and the certificates were distributed to the participants by the only women participant in the group.

4. Content

The content covered in the training programme included;

Participation

- Why participation?
- Whose participation is requires?
- How to achieve an active participation of all the stakeholders?

Origin and evolution of PRA

- Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) was popular in early 1980s.
- Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) became popular in 1990s.
- Participatory Learning and Action (PL&A).

From RRA to PRA

- Methods are more or less same.
- RRA focus is on extracting information from whereas PRA is encourages sharing and empowering of local people.
- Outsider's role in RRA is investigator whereas the outsider facilitates the learning process in PRA.
- Information is owned, analyzed and used by the outsiders in RRA whereas the same is done jointly with the local people in PRA.

PRINCIPLES of PRA

- A reversal of learning
- Learning rapidly and progressively
- Offsetting biases
- Triangulating

PRA emphasizes on reversal of biases such as:

- Focus on relaxed and not rushing
- Focus on listening and not lecturing
- Probing instead of passing on to the next topic
- Being unimposing instead of important

- Seeking out the poorer people and women, and learning their concerns and priorities

Reversals and reality

- From closed to open
- From individual to group
- From verbal to visual
- From counting to comparing
- From lecturing to listening and learning
- From extracting to empowering
- From tedium to fun

Pillars of PRA

- Attitude and Behavior
- Methods/Tools
- Sharing

Attitude & Behavior Change (ABC)

- Whose ABC counts?

Development Biases

- Spatial
- Project
- Personal
- Seasonal
- Professional

JOHARI WINDOW

1. We Know, They Know	2. We Know, They Don't Know

3. We Don't Know, They Know	4. We don't Know, They Don't Know

Changing Communication Styles

- Authoritarian
- Manipulative
- Needs Satisfaction

Communication blocks

- Solution or Advice
- Order or Threat
- Lecturing
- Praise/Sympathy
- Criticism
- Questioning

Communication aids

- Passive Listening
- Acknowledgements
- Door Openers
- Content Paraphrase
- Active Listening

Building self-esteem

- High Self-esteem
- Low Self-esteem
- Strong Self-esteem

Verbal and visual mode

- Why visual is preferred in PRA?
- Advantages of diagramming on paper
- Advantages of diagramming on the ground

Before practicing PRA methods

- Rapport Building
- Handing Over the Stick, Stone, Pen or Ice Breaking
- Group Functioning Process
- Dealing with Saboteurs
- Observing and Learning in Process
- Choice of Color, Material and Sign to Depict

PRA methods practiced

- Social map
- Resource map
- Services and opportunities map
- Transect walk
- Time line
- Time trends
- Seasonal calendar
- Preference ranking/scoring
- Wellbeing/wealth ranking
- Pie diagram
- Venn/chapati diagram
- Process diagram
- Semi structured interviewing

5. Participants' Evaluation

The level of participants' understanding on participatory rural appraisal was done before and after the training programme through a self-evaluation exercise. The participants were given a set of 5 questions as given in the table-1.

As per the details given in the table below, most of the participants had heard the name of PRA but above 50% of them had not heard about various tools used in PRA and their understanding on PRA was negligible. Only less than 20% of the participants had tried out 1 or 2 PRA tools earlier in the filed. The self-evaluation exercise showed a high jump in the learning of the participants and most of them rated the same above 7 against the maximum score of 10.

Table-1: Pre and post self-evaluation

SN	Name	Q-1		Q-2		Q-3		Q-4		Q-5	
		B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A
1.	Atulesh Shukla	8	10	01	10	01	10	01	8	0	7
2.	M H Singare	5	9	0	7	0	8	0	4	0	8
3.	Rahul Bhajane	8	10	0	9	4	8	0	6	01	5
4.	Deepak Solukhe	2	8	2	8	2	9	1	6	0	5
5.	Haresh Verma	5	10	0	10	0	8	0	0	0	10
6.	Balwan Shah	2	10	2	8	3	9	2	7	2	6
7.	Mahendra Rahile	1	10	0	9	0	8	0	7	0	9
8.	Prabhat Ranjan	5	8	2	9	5	8	3	6	4	7
9.	Manoj Mandal	7	10	6	10	5	9	5	10	3	8
10	Ashok Verma	5	10	5	9	2	9	2	8	2	7
11	Jitendra kumar	2	-	2	10	1	10	3	8	2	3
12	Gautam Goswami	7	10	5	10	9	10	4	10	8	10
13	Santosh Timma	5	10	0	9	0	9	6	8	0	9
14	Dharmveer Singh	10	10	3	10	4	9	4	6	3	7
15	Ghufranul Hassan	9	10	3	9	4	9	5	9	0	7
16	Ashok Singh	2	10	1	10	1	9	1	9	1	8
17	Balaji Abdhun	5	9	8	7	6	8	5	9	7	9
18	Kirtan baghel	2	8	0	8	0	8	0	6	0	5
19	M Parvej	5	8	6	8	8	9	6	9	4	9
20	Kaushal Mishra	2	10	0	10	2	5	0	10	0	8
21	Usha tamkar	10	10	2	10	3	10	1	10	1	10
22	Bishnu Singh	6	10	7	9	5	9	4	10	0	7
23	Birsen Boipaj	10	10	2	10	5	7	5	5	2	2
24	Dharmendra	0	8	0	9	0	8	0	7	0	10
25	S K Sharma	3	8	0	8	2	8	0	8	1	5

(Q-1: have you heard about PRA?, Q-2: Do you know PRA Methods? Q-3: How much do know about PRA? Q-4: Have you ever practiced PRA Methods Q-5: have you ever used PRA in your work?)

The participants were given a set of questionnaire to test their learning level and to get their feedback on various aspects of the programme. As shown in the table-2 given below, the participants rated the same in the scale of 1 to 5 representing worst to the best.

As per the details in the table, more than 80% of the participants scored their learning in 2 uppermost categories. The participants scored bit poorly for transect exercise because the same could not be practiced in the filed in lack of time availability.

Table-2: Self evaluation against the key questions

SN	Name	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Expectations met			1	9	7
2.	Clarity on principles of PRA			3	12	10
3.	Attitude & behavior in PRA			3	10	12
4.	Communication in PRA		1	4	9	11
	PRA Tools					
5.	Social map			3	8	14
6.	Venn diagram				10	15
7.	Time line/Time trend			2	7	16
8.	Matrix			4	12	9
9.	Transect		5	4	13	3
10.	Wellbeing ranking			5	13	7
11.	Resource map		1	2	6	16
12.	Seasonal calendar			1	8	16
	Training methods					
13.	Group discussion			4	8	13
14.	Games		1	1	9	14
15.	Energizer			4	10	11
16.	Field visit		1	3	7	14
17.	Educational system		1	6	7	11
18.	Practical exercises			5	12	8
19.	Presentation			6	9	10
20.	lecture		1	4	10	10
21.	Training material			3	6	12
	Lodging & boarding					
22.	Food			6	11	8
23.	Training hall		2	3	12	8
24.	Accommodation		1	3	10	11

On the question of what they liked about the training programme, the participants shared some of their experiences as below:

- They will avoid biases while interacting with the communities
- They will try their best to listen to the village people actively
- They will try to learn through visual aids
- They will analyse the problem before suggesting the solutions to the rural community
- They will improve their presentation skills
- They will participatory methods to build rapport with the community

Participants' Suggestions

The participants were asked to give suggestions for improving quality of training programme in future. Most of the participants wanted that should be given chance in the second round of PRA training so as enhance their learning level to reach a perfection level.

6. Observations

A few observations are as below;

- The trainees group was observed to be quite enthusiastic to learn from the trainers and the villagers.

- The leaders of partners NGOs should brief the participants about the subject and purpose of the training in advance before coming to Orchha. In fact some of the participants were completely unaware of the training programme.

- The duration of training programme should be designed on the basis of course content and methodology to be adopted to deliver the quality inputs to the end users through the process of training needs assessment. This would help the participants to make the best use of the capacity building inputs in their day-to-day work. The participants realized lack of time availability for practice in the field.

- The follow up mechanism will help in understanding the impact of training programme in the field.