Objectives of the Today’s Lecture:

At the end of the session, the participants should be able to:

• Describe brief history and origin of PRA.
• Describe the meaning of RRA, PRA and PLA
• Describe key features, advantages and limitations of PRA
• Explain steps for the PRA
• PRA tools and its application.
History of RRA/PRA/PLA

Conventional approaches to natural resources management
(Top-down transfer-of-technology)

Farming systems research (FSR)
(Development of alternative, improved and more participatory approaches)
 Developed in the second half of the 1970s
Farming systems research (FSR)

Farmer participatory research (FSR)
(Direct involving the ultimate beneficiaries in on-farm research; socioeconomic methods developed to consider the interactions between on-farm and off-farm resource management. Recognize the value of ITK)
Developed in the 1980s

Rapid rural appraisal (RRA)
(Rapid collection of data by outsiders to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of rural societies)
Began in the late 1970s
Rapid rural appraisal (RRA)

Participatory rural appraisal (PRA)

(Development of tools that helped farmers to collect, analyze, and present their own data and information) developed out of RRA in the early 1980s

Participatory learning and action (PLA)

(Participation should not only be limited to rural appraisals and the approach has learning for action as its basic essence)
What is RRA/PRA/PLA?

- A comprehensive and scientific research methodology developed in the late 1970s in international agencies and research institutions concerned with rural development activities in Third World countries.

- An intensive, systematic, but semi-structured mutual learning experience, carried out in a community by an interdisciplinary team that includes community members for the efficient acquisition and analysis of data on community conditions to produce useful and reliable information in a timely manner.
P?R?A?

• P is the participation, and build on what is called RRA, Rapid Rural Appraisal. The idea is that PRA is more focused on empowering communities, RRA is more focused on getting information.
  • The distinction is not hard and fast.

• R is rural, and most of the early work was rural but there is nothing necessarily rural about the methods.

• A is for appraisal, as there is some sense that it is a tool for information gathering and making decisions
  • RRA is more in line with gathering information for a development intervention and PRA is more about general community prioritizing.
Let’s Join the Video

Two approaches to consolidate, necessary information for participatory forest management are

RAPID RURAL APPRAISAL

PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL
Why do people do PRA?

• One reason is a reaction to ‘development tourism’, where you go out, ask questions, and use that to influence policy / programming.

• Another reason is that you can gather information that influences policy / programming at a lower cost than a random sample survey.

• Argument that the process is inherently empowering.
PRA/PLA can be used for:

• General analysis of a specific topic, question, or problem;
• Needs assessment;
• Feasibility studies;
• Identification and establishment of priorities for development or research activities;
• Monitoring and evaluation of development or research activities; and
• Identification of conflicting interests between groups.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RRA</th>
<th>PRA</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>Capacity building for improved decision making at community level, situational analysis, planning, seeking solutions to problems and monitoring and evaluation by community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multi-disciplinary team of project staff and specialists</td>
<td>Team composed of villagers, sometimes facilitated by project staff person, that works with the larger community</td>
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<td>Limited number of representative sites</td>
<td>Communities where project activities will take place</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discrete studies, usually lasting 5-7 days</td>
<td>Ongoing throughout the life of project. Usually begins with training and initial situational analysis (apx 10 days) leading to Community Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>The range of tools and techniques presented below (and others as appropriate)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less “active” participation; More “Top-down”</td>
<td>More “active” participation; More “Bottom-up”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive, well written report that captures the depth and complexity of information obtained in the study</td>
<td>Village Log Book with notes of principal findings, activities, and Community Action Plan</td>
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Key features of the PRA/PLA

- **Triangulation**
  (as a form of cross-checking):

![Diagram showing key features of the PRA/PLA]

- Different disciplines
- Team
- Insiders/outsiders
- Men and women
(2) Various sources of information (diversity),

Triangulation
Triangulation

(3) A mixture of techniques and tools

- Interviews/discussions
- Observation
- Tools & techniques
- Diagrams
Key features of the PRA/PLA

- **Interdisciplinary Team**

- Consists of members with different skills and professional backgrounds.
- All members of the PRA team should be involved in all aspects of the study, design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation.
- The PRA team should always include women and, whenever possible, local people. PRA is a learning experience in which the participants also learn from each other.
Key features of the PRA/PLA

- Qualitative data, diversity of information

- PRA seeks diversity and differences in a qualitative sense rather than simplifying complexity to quantitative averages and statistical figures.

- Accuracy is achieved through drawing from diversified information sources, through cross-checking of data, and other methods for reliability.
Key features of the PRA/PLA

• Mix of appropriate techniques

• Appropriate techniques are mixed to tailor to the specific requirements of the study.

• These techniques should be clear, self-evident and simple, appropriate to local conditions and open for any modification that might be suggested by the local people.
Key features of the PRA/PLA

- Rapid progressive learning, group interaction, and local knowledge

PRA is cumulative learning from, with, and by local people, eliciting and using their criteria and categories, and finding, understanding, and appreciating local people’s indigenous knowledge.
Key features of the PRA/PLA

• Flexibility and context specificity

Plan and survey methods are only structured to start with, and are revised, supplemented, detailed, adapted, and modified as the PRA fieldwork proceeds. These are to suit each new set of conditions and people involved.
Key features of the PRA/PLA

• New roles of experts

The PRA methodology is concerned with the transformation of existing activities and practices to improve the livelihoods of local people. The role of the external expert, researcher, extension agent is that of a facilitator helping people to carry out their own surveys and information gathering, thus preparing the ground for action and change.
Key features of the PRA/PLA

• Community participation

Involving local people in the PRA survey to greatly facilitate understanding, analysis, and interpretation of collected data.
Key features of the PRA/PLA

- **On-the-spot analysis/on-site presentation**

Learning takes place in the field, and the analysis of the information gathered should be an integral part of the fieldwork itself.

Results of the field study are evaluated by the entire team, whenever possible, before their departure, publicly presented, and discussed with community members.
Key features of the PRA/PLA

- Multiple perspectives

PRA recognizes that different individuals and groups make different evaluations of a situation, which leads to different action.
Key features of the PRA/PLA

• Actions for change

PRA is directed towards changes in perceptions, attitudes, and readiness to contemplate actions. The process of joint analysis and interpretation helps to define changes that would bring about improvement of livelihood conditions.
Benefits of PRA methods

• Empowerment of the local people
• Securing active involvement of the community
• Diversification and appreciation of local knowledge, encouraging/enabling the expression and utilization of local diversity while building on ITK
• Creating a culture of open learning with each other and with community members
• Setting research priorities
• Setting participatory extension program
• Policy review
Some typical dangers and limitations of PRA

- Difficulty in getting exact information
- Difficulty in finding the right questions to ask
- Not enough time to spend in the village
- Danger of ‘rural development tourism’
- Difficulty in finding the right interdisciplinary team
- Lack of experience of team members, particularly lack of skills in the field of communication, facilitation, and conflict negotiation
- Team members do not show the right attitude, fail to listen, and lack respect
Steps for PRA/PLA

• Initial selection of PRA team members;
• Making use of secondary data/information;
• Formulation of topics, subtopics, hypotheses or major questions, guidelines for investigation;
• Identification of methods, tools and techniques likely to be most appropriate for the study;
• Set the work plan to conduct a preliminary or exploratory survey
Writing results of the PRA/PLA

• The results of the PRA are usually written up, but reports are most valuable when treated as working documents.

• Presenting the results orally is also very important. It is normal that the PRA team members can not put down in writing everything they have learned during the fieldwork.

• The report should be written up and presented as soon as possible. Ideally, the first draft should be written ‘in the field’, while information is still fresh in the mind, before interruptions can occur, and while the team is still together.
Use of PRA approach and methods

PRA/PLA consists of methods that empower community members to express, share, enhance, analyze, monitor, and evaluate their knowledge. It requires, on the side of researchers and/or the development workers, an attitude flavoring:

- participation;
- respect and trust for community members;
- interest in what they know, say, show and do;
- patience, not rushing, and not interrupting;
- listening, not lecturing;
- humility, sympathy, solidarity.
SOME COMMON PRA EXERCISES

• TIME LINE
• TREND ANALYSIS
• SEASONALITY DIAGRAMS
• WEALTH (OR WELL-BEING) RANKING
• CAUSAL DIAGRAMS
• MATRIX RANKING
• CHAPPATI DIAGRAM
• PROFILE OF WOMEN’ WORK DAY
• TRANSECTS
• BODY MAPPING OF A WOMAN
• LIVELIHOOD ANALYSIS
• PATTERNS OF LAND USE
LIVELIHOOD ANALYSIS

AIM: UNDERSTAND COMMUNITY OPTIONS TO EARN A LIVING

METHOD: USE TEN-SEED METHOD TO SCORE CHOICES (SIMILAR TO MATRIX RANKING EXERCISE)

OUTPUT: PIE CHART/RANK LIST OF CHOICES
TIME HAS PROVEN
(And if we are honest we would also admit)

• That

• The community members are

• THE BEST MANAGERS OF SCARCE RESOURCES

• EXTERNAL EFFORTS JUST COMPLEMENT & ENHANCE THESE EFFORTS
PARTICIPATORY LEARNING FOR ACTION (PLA)

Is effective because it seeks to understand the SURVIVAL STRATEGY of the community, appraise it and show ways to enhance the capability of that effort to ensure sustainability.
What’s your idea?
References

• Resource Center on Urban Agriculture and Forestry (RUAF), 2004. PRA Tools for Studying
• Urban Agriculture and Gender.
• www.fao.org/docrep/003/x5996e/x5996e06.htm#6.PRAtoolbox
• www.ids.ac.uk/pra/index/html
• www.iisd.org/casl/calsguide/ParticipatoryRuralAppraisal.htm
• There are a plenty of other sources in the library.