



Project for Improvement of Himachal Pradesh  
Forest Ecosystems Management & Livelihoods

## **PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL MANUAL**

Himachal Pradesh Forest Department (HPFD)

## Foreword

This Participatory Rural Appraisal Manual was prepared for conducting Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) at intervention area of Project to collect basic information from the households. In this manual guidance is given on PRA Field Exercises, PRA tools, facilitation skills and the analysis of PRA results. PRA results are presented to households at Village Planning Meetings and form a foundation for the preparation of the Forest Ecosystems Management Plan and Community Development & Livelihoods Improvement Plan.

The main users of the Manual will be DMU SMS, FTU Coordinators, Ward Facilitators/ GP Mobilizers during the preparation of Micro plan for the intervention area. This manual will help them using particular too.

Participatory Rural Appraisal Manual was prepared by Project Management Consultant and Project Management Unit during the Preparatory phase of the project

I am sure this manual will be successful in meeting its objectives of comprehensive and sustainable skill development in the project.

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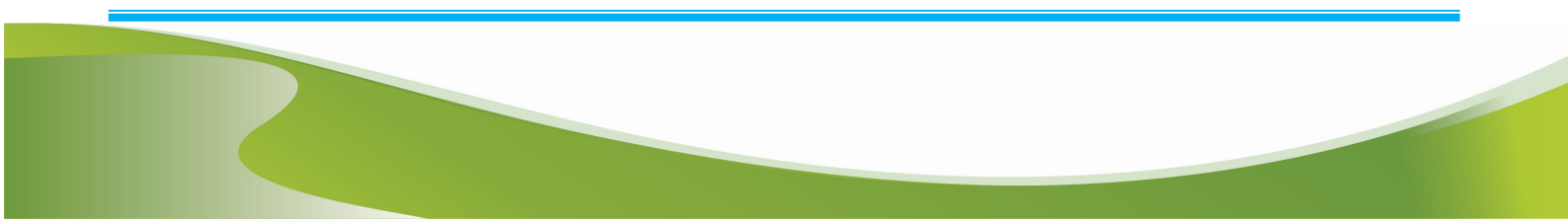


## *Abbreviation & Acronyms*

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<b>BMC</b>	<i>Biodiversity Management Committee</i>
<b>CBMP</b>	<i>Community Based Biodiversity Management Plan</i>
<b>CD&amp;LIP</b>	<i>Community Development &amp; Livelihood Improvement Plan</i>
<b>CD</b>	<i>Community Development</i>
<b>CIGs</b>	<i>Common Interest Groups</i>
<b>DMU</b>	<i>Divisional Management Unit</i>
<b>FCCU</b>	<i>Forest Circle Management Unit</i>
<b>FEMP</b>	<i>Forest Ecosystems Management Plan</i>
<b>FTU</b>	<i>Field Technical Unit</i>
<b>GP</b>	<i>Gram Panchayat</i>
<b>HP</b>	<i>Himachal Pradesh</i>
<b>HPFD</b>	<i>Himachal Pradesh Forest Department</i>
<b>JICA</b>	<i>Japan International Cooperation Agency</i>
<b>MoU</b>	<i>Memorandum of Understanding</i>
<b>NTFP</b>	<i>Non-Timber Forest Produce</i>
<b>PIHPFEM&amp;L</b>	<i>Project for Improvement of Himachal Pradesh Forest Ecosystems Management &amp; Livelihoods</i>
<b>PMU</b>	<i>Project Management Unit</i>
<b>PRA</b>	<i>Participatory Rural Appraisal</i>
<b>SHGs</b>	<i>Self Help Groups</i>
<b>VFDS</b>	<i>Village Forest Development Society</i>

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# Concept of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

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## *What is PRA?*

PRA is an approach and methods for learning about rural life and conditions from, with and by rural people that facilitates in enhancing active participation of different stakeholders in the community.

## *Why this PRA need?*

- ❖ Analyse the current situation and potential in the village and community
- ❖ Analyse their problems and causes.
- ❖ Support households to identify activities that respond to difficulties and opportunities.

## *What are PRA tools?*


PRA has many different exercises—these are called ‘PRA tools’:

- ❖ Each exercise is conducted differently and has a different purpose and outcome
- ❖ Facilitators work with the household/community groups to conduct the PRA Tools

## *How is PRA Conducted?*

- ❖ PRA is conducted with a group of households from a Village or Hamlet that work with ‘Facilitators’
- ❖ Facilitators work with groups of households
- ❖ PRA is not teaching or lecturing:
  - Households and Facilitators learn together
  - Facilitators work with and listen to households

## *Why PRA is conducted in Micro Planning Process?*

- ❖ Understand the current situation, problems and opportunities according to households
  - ❖ Analyse causes of particular issues or problems
  - ❖ As a tool to identify and design implementation activities with households and groups of households
  - ❖ PRA builds facilitation and community development skills
  - ❖ Building rapport with men and women, rich and poor, young and old and people in different ethnic or social groupings
  - ❖ Seeking the views of the weaker, less powerful people or groups
  - ❖ Checking and rechecking the validity of information using different sources
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- ❖ Frequently reflecting on what information has been gained and where the gaps are
- ❖ Identifying and testing assumptions

### *What are the Responsibilities of Facilitators?*

- ❖ Facilitators are people that guide discussion between households during PRA exercises
- ❖ Facilitators are not teachers—they guide household discussion

### *Who are Facilitators for PRA?*

- ❖ Frontline Staff: Deputy Ranger, Ranger, Forest Guard
- ❖ DMU Subject Matter Specialist
- ❖ FTU Coordinators
- ❖ Ward Facilitators / Gram Panchayat Mobilisers.
- ❖ Ward/Community People's
- ❖ Ward/Community Mass Movement Representatives
- ❖ Ward/ Village and Hamlet Leaders
- ❖ Households in that particular Ward

### *What Should Facilitators Avoid?*

- ❖ Prejudicing or possessing a negative attitude towards people
- ❖ Using complex terms with households
- ❖ Projecting one's own ideas all the time
- ❖ Lecturing or teach households

### *Do we have to use all PRA Tools at each PRA Field Exercise?*

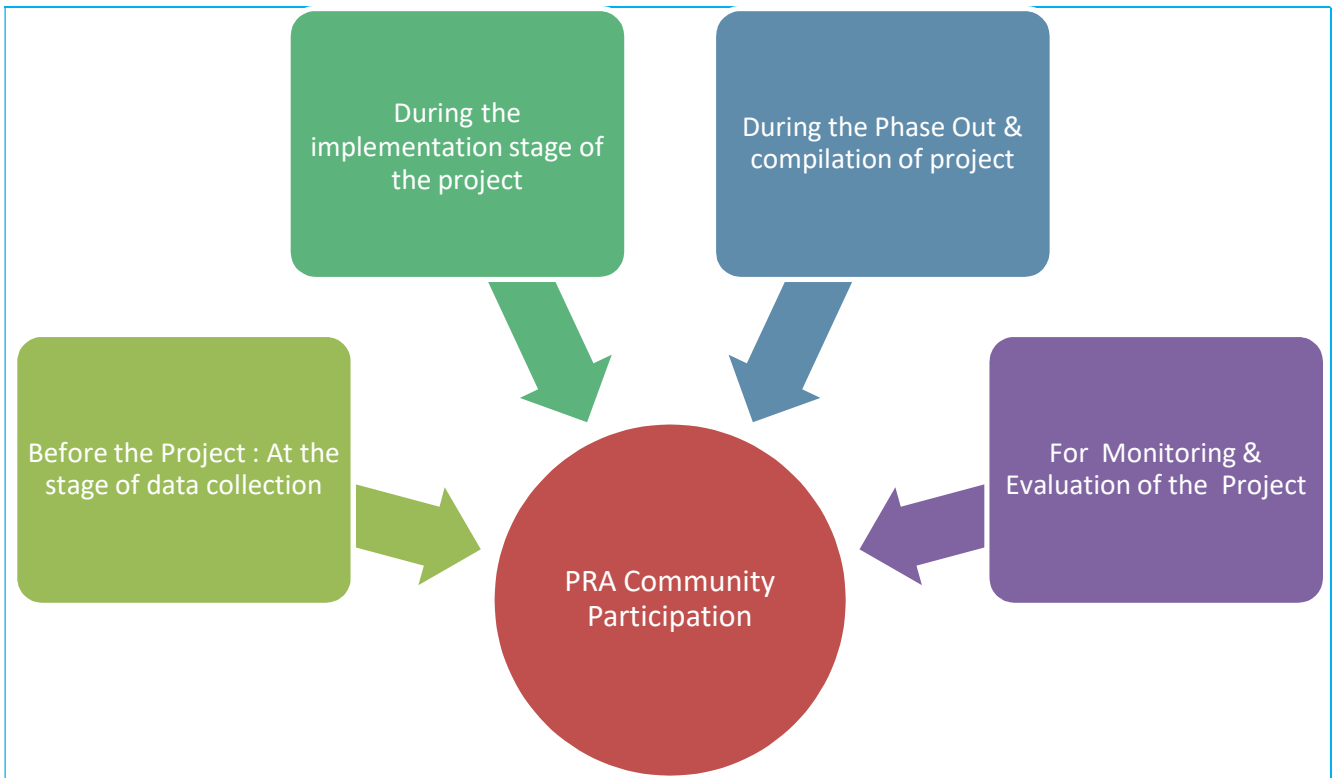
- ❖ If you only have a small number of Facilitators or small number of households, you should choose some Tools rather than conduct all Tools
- ❖ Some Tools don't need to be conducted in every Village—for example, it is often not necessary to conduct Historical Timelines in each Village
- ❖ Each group should conduct no more than 2 PRA Tools in a morning's PRA Field Exercises—remember to focus on quality rather than quantity

### *Materials and Equipment*

PRA Field Exercises don't require much equipment or materials:

- ❖ Small pieces of coloured paper ('cards') are useful—pictures can be drawn on them or they can be labeled to represent things
- ❖ Some A0 Paper and pens—these are used to record the results of exercises
- ❖ A4 folders, A4 paper and coloured pens are needed for Facilitators to record the results.

❖ Chalk can also be useful for making drawings on the ground



*PRA and Community Participations at all stages of the project*





## Principals of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

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The principles of PRA have been elicited by trying out practices and finding out what works and what does not and why? These principles may vary for different PRA practitioners based on their experiences and learning. However, the most common principles are as:

### *Reversal Learning*

There is focus on learning from rural people directly, on the site, and face-to-face, gaining from the local, physical, technical and social knowledge.

### *Learning Rapidly and Progressively*

The technique is a bit rapid as compared to the conventional approaches used in information collection process. However this implies for flexible use of methods, improvisation, and cross-checking and not following a blueprint program but being adaptable in a learning process.

### *Offsetting Biases*

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

### *Triangulation*

The information collected from different sets of village people needs to be cross-checked by using various methods such as:

- Same information by using different PRA methods
- Same information from different persons/groups (farmers, landless, graziers, etc.)
- Same information from different places (hamlet, street, outside the village, etc.)

### *Seeking Diversity*

The local situation is diversified in terms of socio-economic conditions, livelihood pattern, socio-political environment and the others. This has been expressed in terms of seeking variability rather than averages in the diversified situation.

### *Facilitation*

Handing over the stick to the village people; this means let villagers lead the process of

learning from them as they know their situation better and hence can express the same the way they want. We can just facilitate this process in investigation, analysis, presentation and learning by rural people themselves. Also they present and own the processes and outcomes. An outsider just starts a process and then sits back or walks away without interviewing or interrupting during PRA exercises.

### *Self-critical Awareness and Responsibility*

The facilitators are continuously examining their behavior, and trying to do better. This includes embracing/welcoming error as an opportunity to learn to do better. Also using one's own best judgment at all times while conducting PRA exercises.

### *Sharing*

The emphasis is laid on sharing of information and ideas between rural people and between them and the facilitators. The learning from field camps, training and experiences is also required to be shared between facilitators and between different organizations.

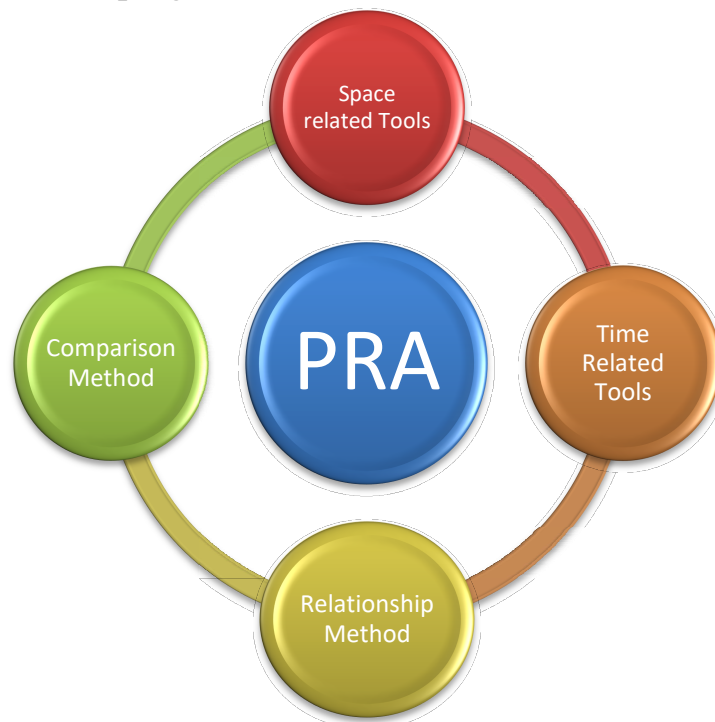
### *Optimal Ignorance*

- Need to learn as much as required for appropriate action at each stage.
- Appropriate impression: No need to know everything exactly.
- If not to be used, need not to be measured.
- We need not to know everything, which we can't use



## PRA Methods/Tools

Many different tools have been developed for use in PRA. The approach aims to incorporate the knowledge and options of rural people in planning and management of development project and programmes. This tool is also used for data collection.



**Conceptual Framework of the PRA exercise**

### *1. SPACE RELATED METHOD*

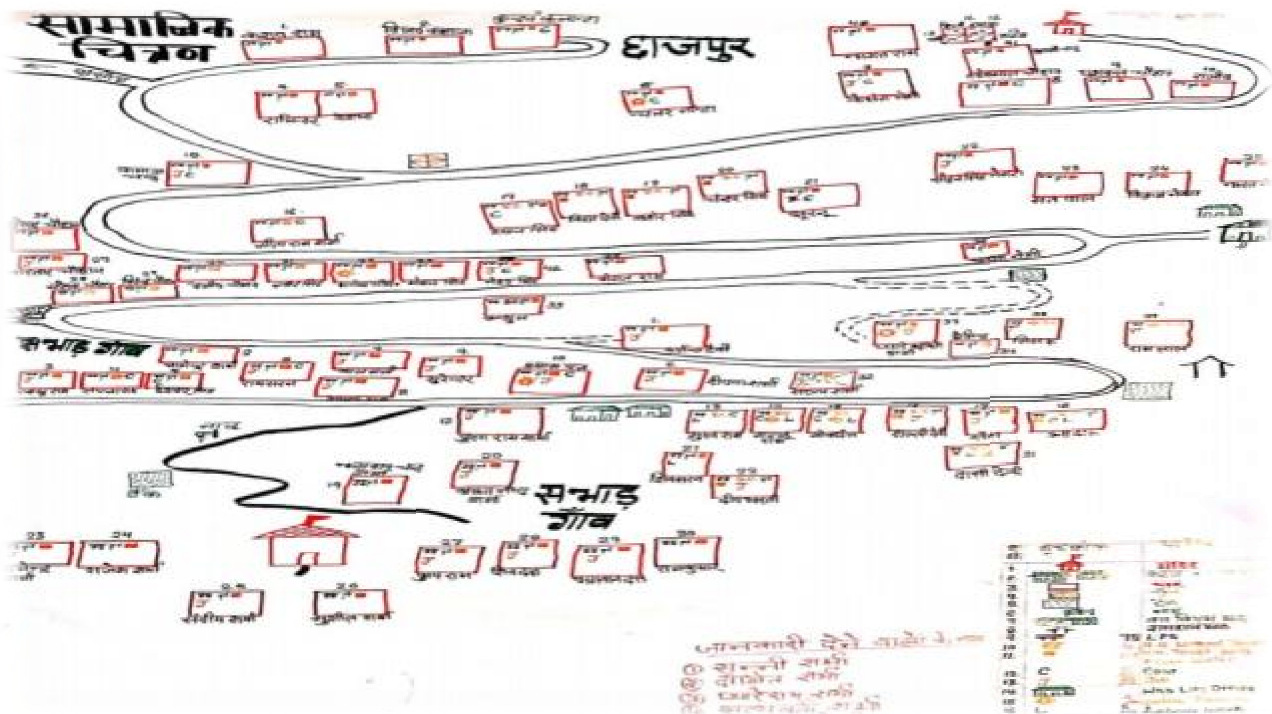
#### **Social Map**

The social map is a map of an area where people reside. The nucleus pattern of village settlement is very common in most parts of our country. However in hills and tribal areas the settlement pattern is scattered and people reside in small hamlets. The social map sometime include all the hamlets of the village provided they are small and few in numbers otherwise the separate maps are prepared for the same.

The social map covers:

- Settlement pattern of the village including houses and their locations, types of houses, streets, case/religion wise settlement, etc.
- Infrastructure available within the settlement area of the village including the services and opportunities such as temple, drinking water wells, hand pumps, water ponds, electricity, shops, floor mill, schools, health care centers, residents of village leaders, residents of Govt. employees if they stay, ration shop, etc.

- Census of any type such as list of school going children, drop outs, mortality rate, and children of different age groups, caste wise classification, forest dependent families, classification based on land holding pattern, irrigation, wealth, occupation etc.



**Social Map of VFDS Chhajpur**

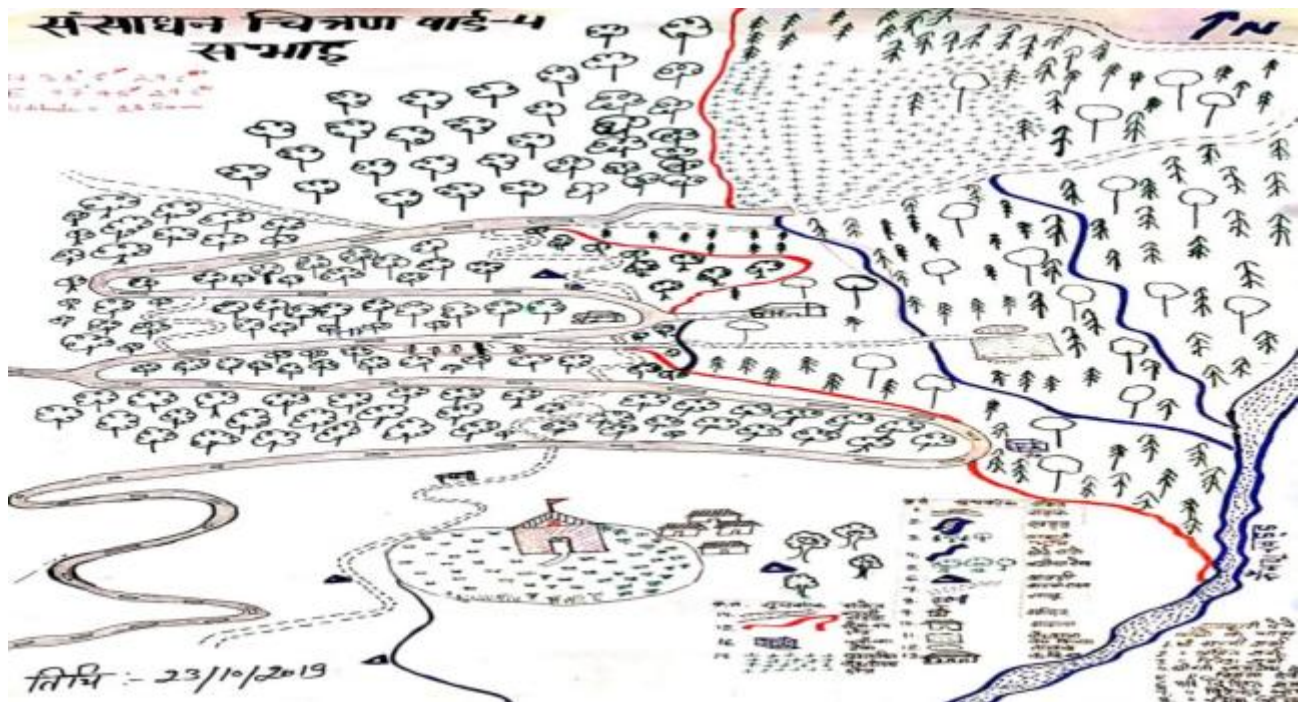
### **Resource Map**

The resource map represents the non-residential area of the village within its boundary and focuses on natural resources in the village. The process to be followed is quite similar to that of the social map.

The possible areas shown in the resource map are such as:

- Land resources including topography, slope, land classification, land use pattern, land holding pattern, soil types, soil texture and structure, water holding capacity, soil fertility etc. Identification of problems and opportunities.
- Water resources including sources of water such as river, well, ponds, springs etc, water distribution pattern, irrigation potential and coverage, water distribution system under command area, drainage pattern etc. The focus remains on problems and opportunities.
- Farming system including cropping pattern in different seasons, crop varieties, crop protection measures, land tenure, farm power, production and productivity, crop processing, storage and marketing including problems and opportunities.

- Forestry/Trees including species, coverage, uses, and minor forest produces, benefits sharing mechanism etc.
- Common property resources such as pasture development, joint forest management, irrigation management etc.



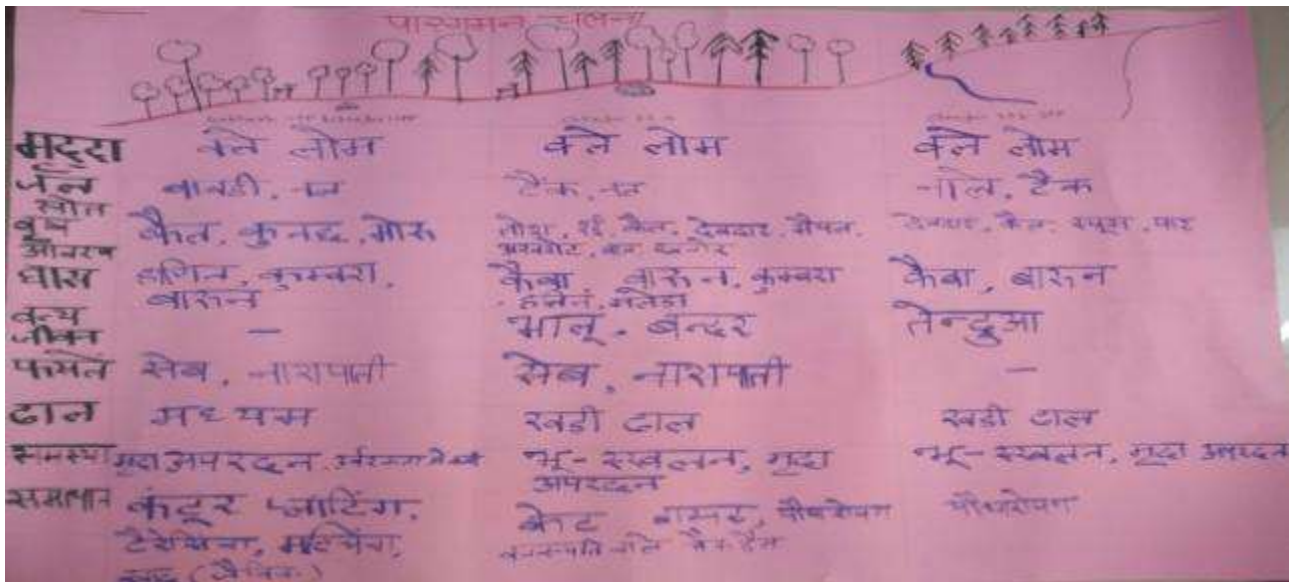
**Resource Map of VFDS Chhajpur**

#### **✚ Transect Walk**

This exercise is just a joint walk of the outsiders with the key informants i.e. the local villagers in such a way that the walk covers almost all the variations in the village. The key issues related to transect walk are such as:

- Identification of key informants who have fair understanding of the village situation. The group of key informants should include the people from diversified background and occupation. The important aspect in identification is that they should be willing to walk along and share their learning with the outsiders.
- The sequencing of transect walk is linked with resource map. Some of the professionals want to have transect-walk before going for resource mapping whereas the others prefer the reverse trend.
- The path for the walk is discussed and planned jointly with the village people using the resource map covering all the variations available in the village. The paths normally followed are in different shape such as:

- 'S' shape walk
  - '8' shape walk
  - Circular path walk
  - Road side walk
  - Along drainage line walk (Ridge to valley walk)
  - Others
- The exercise is then done in two groups. One group takes one path whereas the other group takes another one. They start from a common point and may meet again on the same point. In case the outsiders group is small then the exercise could be done as one group only.
  - The number of outsiders should not be more than the local villagers. Sometimes the 2-3 villagers join a group of 6-8 outsiders and the informants are overloaded by the questions of the outsiders.
  - The walk should be slow and the outsiders should have three-dimensional/cross sectional observation. This means the outsiders should try to look at everything even if they know about it. This may give some more ideas in the existing situation. Things seen should be discussed and probed. The outsiders need to analyze the root causes of a probe and should have strong probing with people walking with them. One group takes 10 minutes in crossing a farmer's field whereas the other group takes half an hour. This means that the other group probing more and trying to learn as much as possible from this exercise.
  - The outsiders are advised to visit the areas where others hardly go. This will provide them new dimensions of a particular situation. Don't feel tired or bored. Feel fun and walk down even the toughest or farthest areas in the village.
  - Shoulder Tapping is a well-known phrase in PRA. This means that the outsiders should not ask the leading or closed questions to the key informants. The open-ended questions would always help the informants in responding in a way they feel more comfortable.
  - The observations of transect walk are depicted on paper by the villagers.

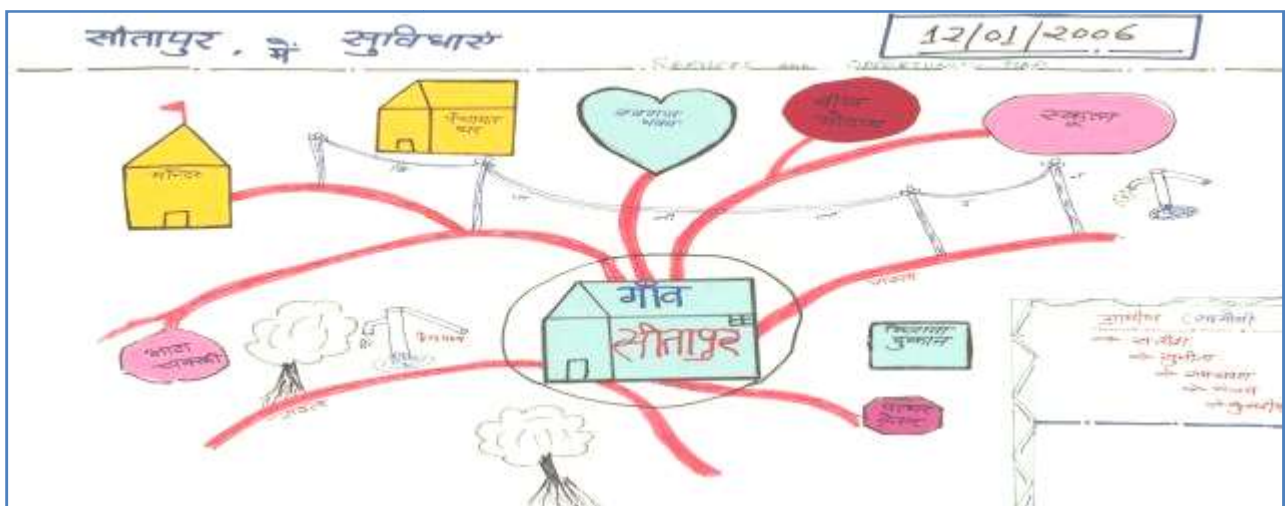


**Transect Walk Map of Chhajpur**

### Services and Opportunity Map

This map mainly represents the services and opportunities within and outside the village; the people have to depend upon. The main analysis relates to:

- What are the services and opportunities?
- Where are they located? What is the distance?
- Who access to these facilities and who not?
- How frequent these facilities are being availed by the villagers?
- What are the key problems in availing these facilities?



The areas covered under this map are mainly related to:

- Education such as anganwadi, primary school, non-formal centers, secondary, senior secondary school and colleges.
- Health such as local health practitioners, private clinics, PHC, district hospital



etc.

- Market including local haats and markets, mandi samite, etc.
- Law and order such as panchayat, tehsil, court etc.
- Transport including private taxis, bus, train etc.
- Information and Communication such as telephone, TV, Radio etc.
- Others

### **Mobility Map**

This map is mainly drawn to understand the mobility of an individual or a group. This exercise has been found very useful in understanding how far women are allowed to move in the society. This exercise is also done to for different age groups of women in the village. One of the important cases is to understand the road map of the seasonal migratory families such as shepherd community.

The main issues covered in this map are:

- Places visited by women, poor and children
- Distances covered
- Purpose of their visits
- Problems and opportunities
- Others

The main issues covered under the exercise are as in resource map:

- Land resources including topography, slope, land classification, land use pattern, land holding pattern, soil types, soil texture and structure, water holding capacity, soil fertility etc. Identification of problems and opportunities.
- Water resources including types of water resources such as river, well, ponds, springs etc, water distribution pattern, irrigation potential and coverage, water distribution system under command area, drainage pattern etc. The focus remains on problems and opportunities.
- Farming system including cropping pattern in different seasons, crop varieties, crop protection measures, land tenure, farm power, production and productivity, crop processing and marketing including problems and opportunities.
- Forestry/Trees including species, coverage, uses, minor forest produces, benefits sharing mechanism etc
- Common property resources such as pasture development, joint forest management, irrigation management etc.

## 2. TIME RELATED METHOD

### + Timeline

This exercise is related to the specific events occurred in the village in the past. In this exercise the outsiders identify and interview the oldest person/s in the village who have fair understanding of village history. The old persons many a times do not recall the exact timing of a particular event and hence the interview is always related to some landmarks. For instance a particular event occurred when he was as old the boy standing close to him. That boy may be 6 years old and hence the interviewer relates the discussion by calculating the old person's age. Some time the old person relates an event with some other important events such as the first bi-cycle came to the village after congress came into power or British rule ended etc.

वर्ष	घटनाक्रम
1856	गाँव बसा
1886	कारखाने का निर्माण
1906	अरब सड़क का निर्माण
1961	इन्दुजीव सड़क का निर्माण
1970	विद्यालय का निर्माण
1976	गाँव का विद्युतीकरण
1980	गाँव में प्राथमिक विद्यालय
1984	पहला इन्फोर्मेशन केंद्र
1988	सर्वोच्च न्यायालय का निर्माण
1988	राज्य की दुग्ध संघ
2002	इन्फोर्मेशन विद्यालय का निर्माण
2003	बाली और नगर की सी सड़क का निर्माण
2004	नवोदय सड़क का निर्माण
2008	नवोदय सड़क का निर्माण
2008	पहला गाँव का नगर
2008	आयुर्वेदिक अस्पताल

The main issues covered by this exercise are such as:

- General events
- Specific events in health, agriculture, construction, livestock development, living style etc.
- Impacts of these events

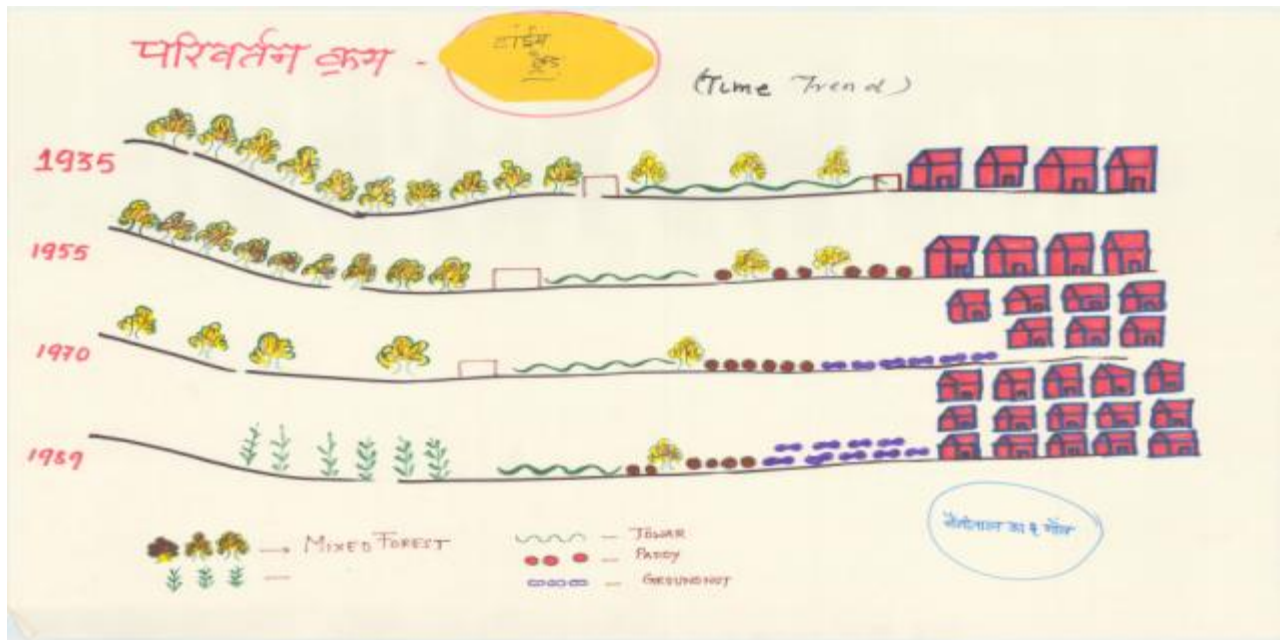
### + Time Trends

The time trend is a technique that provides changing historical trends on a particular issue. This exercise is also done with the oldest person/s in the villages who have fair understanding of the past. For instance the question is asked to the old person how the village was when s/he was a child. What was the condition of trees, crops, livestock, water resources, peoples' relations, decision making systems, diseases, population, literacy level etc when the person was a child.

How these things changed when the person got married or the person got a child. Similarly what was the condition of these things when his/her first son/daughter got

married, or when the person became grandfather/mother. What is the present status of these things?

This classification can also be done around other land marks such as when the person was a child, when Gandhiji launched non cooperation movement, when India got freedom, when the first tractor came to the village etc.



The following aspects can be covered under this method.

- Historical background of forest protection and management
- Historical status of natural resources
- Education
- Livelihood
- Agriculture
- Social system
- Others

### Seasonal Calendar

There are certain issues, which change across the year (12 months) in terms of duration and magnitude. This exercise helps in understanding the seasonal variations. The exercise is presented either in form of bar diagram or circle depending upon the situation. In case of bar diagram, the village informants use a small stick or a piece of paper to start with the highest magnitude in a particular month and then go on cutting/reducing the same in the subsequent months of the year. The villagers in many areas do not understand English months and hence they should be allowed to

use the local months of the year. In some of the remote villages particularly in tribal areas the villagers even do not divide the year in 12 months and go for different landmarks such as Diwali season, Monsoon season, sowing season etc. Sometimes the months in a year are less than 12 in their classification. The PRA practitioners must respect the analysis of the local people and should analyze the seasonal variations accordingly. The exercise can be done on the ground and then transferred on paper. The steps followed in ground mapping involves are:

- List the number of months as the villagers understand them
- Symbolize the months by putting some stone or some other material. Also put the chit-mentioning name of the month.
- Take a stick and demonstrate the first step the informants.
- Select the issue to be analyzed.
- Ask the villagers to select the month having maximum magnitude related to the selected issue. Put the stick against the symbol representing this month.
- Draw a line along the stick.
- Ask the villagers to select the months having second largest magnitude. Let the informants decide the magnitude in this month around 80% of the first one or 12 annas of a rupee.
- Let the informant cut for fold the stick showing the magnitude of the second month. Let them put the stick and draw the line along the stick.
- Repeat this exercise till the list is exhausted.



The main issues covered by this method are such as:

- Cropping pattern in different seasons

- Water availability in different months of the year
- Diseases pattern across the year
- Migration pattern
- Employment opportunities
- NTFP, fuel wood and fodder demand and supply
- Income expenditure pattern across the year
- Credit availability and requirement
- Many others

The exercise has been found very useful in understanding demand and supply of various things during different months such as labor, credit, water, NTFP fuel wood, fodder, food, etc at the household level. There is a surplus or deficit in each month. The important analysis is to understand the magnitude of the demand or supply in each month and the coping strategies the household follow in managing their resources and survival of their families.

### ***3. COMPARISION METHOD***

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#### **Preference Ranking/Scoring**

This method helps in understanding peoples' choices based on their own analysis. The choice is made in the same class or category such as one crop amongst a number of crops grown in that particular season, one fruit amongst various fruits, one variety from amongst a number of varieties of same crop etc. The exercise can be done both on paper and on the ground. The process involved in conducting this exercise is as below.

- Select the topic for preference scoring or ranking (for instance choice of a wheat variety)
- List the options in the decided topic (number of varieties grown in the area)
- Go for pair wise ranking as which of the two is a preferred by the informants
- Ask the reasons or criteria for the preference of informants
- List all the criterion generated
- Once the list is exhausted, select another pair, rank and generate criterions
- Repeat this exercise till the list of criterion is quite exhaustive
- Prepare a matrix with varieties on one axis and the criterion on the other.
- Select one criterion at a time and ask the informants how they would like to rank or score various varieties against the chosen criteria. The informants may use

local materials such as seeds, stones, and stickers or can make some sign so as to help the illiterate to participate in the process.

- This above step is repeated for the entire criterion listed in the matrix.
- At the end one question is asked as if the informant has to select only one of the lots which one s/he will choose and how will s/he give overall ranking or scoring to her/his choice.

The most important thing to remember is that no mathematical calculations are advised in the matrix as the same leads to a great confusion. This should be taken as analysis only and on the basis of which decisions can be taken. The choice varies from one person to the other and hence totaling is not allowed in this exercise. However, a group of common preference could be identified to work as a user/functional group. For instance the four wheat varieties are be chosen by individuals forming 4 groups and hence they could be considered as the user groups.



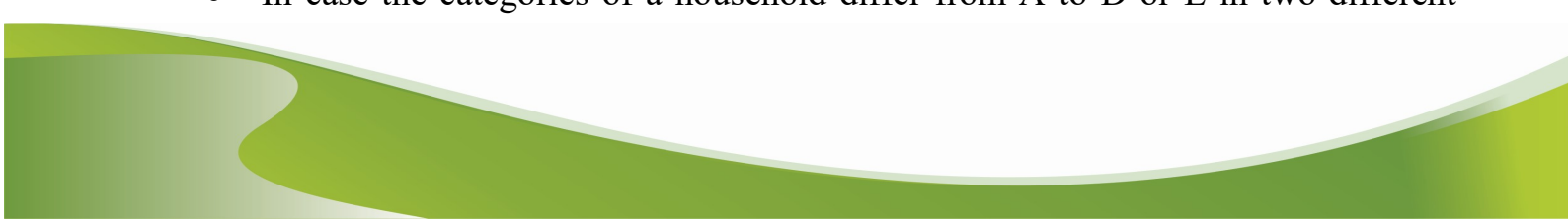
The technique is most commonly used in various fields including:

- Choice of crops, crop variety
- Choice of tress species, NTFPs
- Choice of fodder and fuel wood
- Choice of credit sources
- Choice of employment opportunity
- Choice of problems and opportunist
- Others

#### Wellbeing/Wealth Ranking

Interviewing the villagers individually is doing the wellbeing analysis or in a group to understand their analysis based on their criterion. The wellbeing/wealth ranking exercise is normally considered as a sensitive exercise and hence needs clear precautions by the outsiders while conducting the same. Sometimes it is preferred to do this exercise with one or two individuals who have fair understanding of the villagers' economic condition.

The process involves:

- Identify an individual or a group as the key informant to interact with.
  - Prepare the postcard size cards
  - Write the name of the head of the household on the card from the social map. Also give a number to each card.
  - Repeat this exercise till the name of all the households are written on the cards.
  - Mix the cards so that their sequencing is disturbed
  - Ask informants to pick up one of the cards and to place the same at some location.
  - Ask the informant to pick up another card and to place the same left, right or over the previous card. This will indicate the category of the second household whether the second person is poorer, richer or is more or less falls in the same category of the previous household.
  - Ask the reasons for placing the second card at some location. The interviewer should note the reasons down.
  - Repeat this exercise till the informants place all the cards.
  - The informant will thus place all the cards in different categories. The number of categories some time may go up to nine or ten. This provides relative ranking of various categories based on wellbeing/wealth possessed by a household.
  - The categories are marked on back of each card in terms of A, B, C, D, etc.
  - This exercise is repeated with at least 3 informant/s. Each time the categories are marked on the cards without letting know the informant.
  - The results are then compared and analyzed. In case a household has been placed in same category by all the interviewees then the situation is considered to be the best.
  - In case the categories marked by different interviewees are in neighboring categories still the situation is more or less okay.
  - In case the categories of a household differ from A to D or E in two different
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interviews, then the situation needs to cross checked.

**WEALTH RANKING WARD NO-344**

उच्च (A)	मध्यम (B)	निम्न (C)	अधिनियम
1 रत्न सिंह	1 विवेक शर्मा	1 सुनील शर्मा	1 सुनील शर्मा
2 अनी दास	2 अनी दास	2 अनी दास	2 अनी दास
3 अमर सिंह	3 अमर सिंह	3 अमर सिंह	3 अमर सिंह
4 बालदेव	4 बालदेव	4 बालदेव	4 बालदेव
5 लैखराम	5 लैखराम	5 लैखराम	5 लैखराम
6 अर्जुन सिंह	6 अर्जुन सिंह	6 अर्जुन सिंह	6 अर्जुन सिंह
7 मुख देव	7 मुख देव	7 मुख देव	7 मुख देव
8 निरंजन राव	8 निरंजन राव	8 निरंजन राव	8 निरंजन राव
9 जयदास	9 जयदास	9 जयदास	9 जयदास
10 हरिचंद्र	10 हरिचंद्र	10 हरिचंद्र	10 हरिचंद्र
11 राजा राम	11 राजा राम	11 राजा राम	11 राजा राम
12 अरुण देवी	12 अरुण देवी	12 अरुण देवी	12 अरुण देवी
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**✚ Pie Diagram**

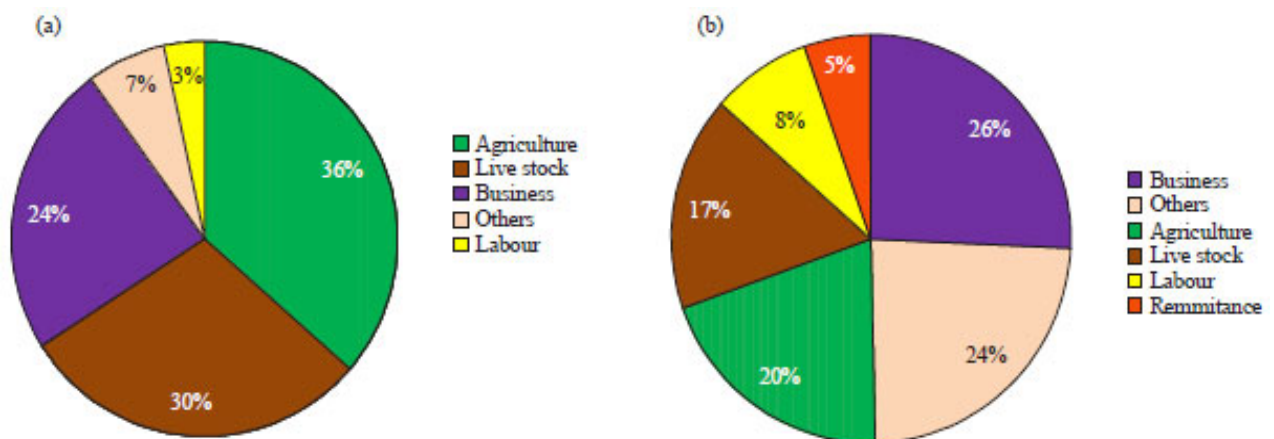
The technique of pie diagram is used to understand proportionate analysis of an issue. The diagram is prepared in a form of circle and then divided into different sections based on the percentages. In most of the cases the villagers present proportions in form of 16 Annas of a rupee. The circle is therefore is divided into 16 portions and the number of sections are colored or some material is put there to show a particular ratio. For instance the four crops of winter seasons are shown in four, seven and five annas covering the same numbers of sections.

This technique is useful in understanding proportions on various issues such as:

- Forest land use, classification, major species, NTFP, land degradation



- Land classification and Land use pattern, land ownership pattern
- Land holding pattern, soil classification, Livelihood pattern of the village/ ward
- Type of NTFP, fuel and fodder used in a particular season
- Proportion of various crops grown in a particular season
- Type of milch animals
- Variety of a particular crop shown in the village
- Cast composition
- Children going to different schools
- Employment opportunities in different areas
- Others



**Livelihood activities in the Ward**

#### 4. RELATIONSHIP RELATED METHOD

##### Venn/Chapati Diagram

The venn diagram is more commonly known as Chapati diagram. The process involved in this exercise as follows:

- Chapaties of circular shape of paper are cut in different sizes.
- The informant is explained that the size of chapati relates to influence of an individual or an institution. The bigger the size of chapati the more influential the person or the institution is.
- The informant is asked to list out the key influential individuals or most relevant institutions in the village.
- Ask the informant to identify the most influential person in the village or the most relevant organization for the village. Pick the biggest chapati and write the


name of the above person or institution on chapati.

- Select the second most influential person or most relevant organization and pick up the second biggest chapati and write the name on it as above.
- Repeat this exercise till the list of influential persons or organizations is completed.
- Ask the informant to place all chapatis on the ground in such way that some of them quite close to them whereas the others are at some distance. The principle is that the distance between two chapatis indicates the relationship between the two persons or institutions. If two chapatis are just touching each other then the relationship can be considered okay. In case they are overlapping then it shows very close relationship. Sometimes the smaller chapati falls within the bigger one that means the smaller chapati is fully controlled by the bigger one.
- As the distance between the two chapatis increases the degree of relationships goes on diluted. The farthest distance means there is a bad relationship between the two.

The outsiders need not to influence the process. Once the informants understand what they have to do, the PRA workers should provide them full authority in placing various chapatis.

The exercise is highly sensitive and hence it is recommended to conduct this exercise with one or two unbiased individuals in a lonely place.

This exercise is very useful in understanding social dynamics and village leadership. This method is also useful in understanding type of institutions operating in the area and their relevance to the day today life of the villagers. The areas covered by this exercise are:

- Identification of leadership
  - Institutional development
  - Building linkages and synergies
- 

चपाती चित्र  
(Venn Diagram)



सातापुर  
- सातापुर  
- सातापुर  
के आदि.

**Process/Flow Diagram**

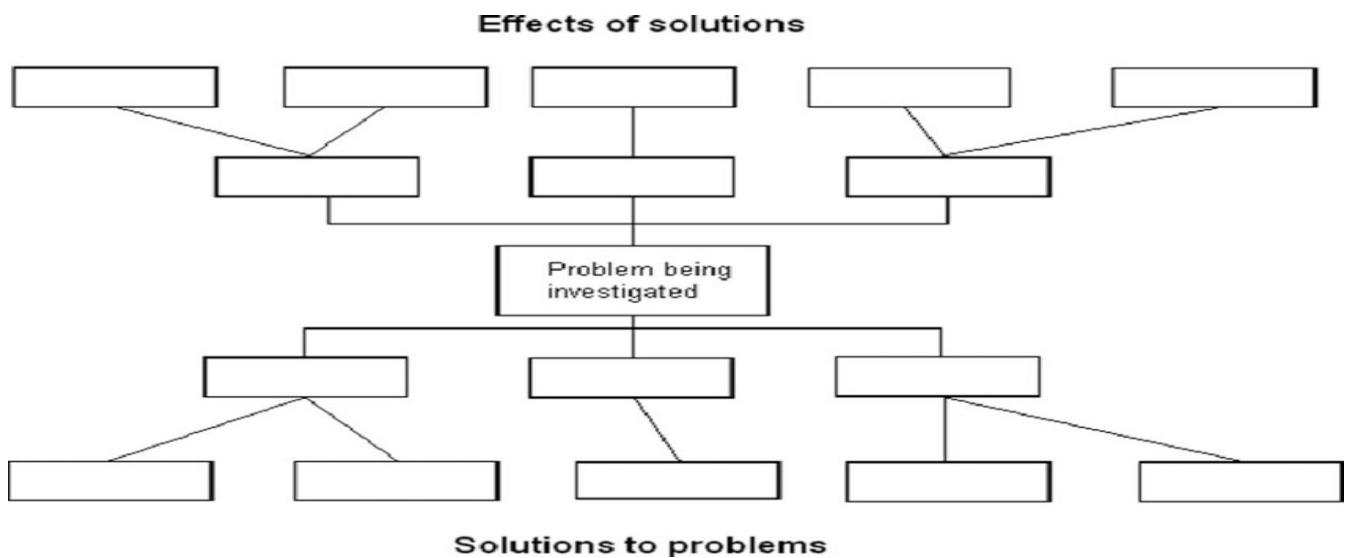
This method is a diagrammatic presentation of a process followed in any situation. The main focus remains on identification of various steps involved in the process and the input outputs at various stages. This has been widely used in understanding various processes going on in the village situation such as:

- Agricultural operations
- Use of agricultural equipment
- Crop processing and crop economics
- Food processing
- Conflict resolution
- Village level institutional development
- Others



A case to understand the women's daily routine





**However, in the present context, the micro planning team may follow a simpler approach to identify the perceived problems and solutions as mentioned below.**

- Village level meeting to be conducted after completing the primary and secondary data collection
- The purpose of the exercise to be explained to the participants
- Focus group discussions to be followed independently for different socio-economic categories of the community such as women, youth, forest dependents, landless, farmers, etc.
- The focused groups identify key problems as perceived by them
- The identified problems by all groups to be summarized as focal problems and the process to be followed in plenary involving all the participants
- Prioritization of problems to be conducted from the viewpoints of different groups
- The detailed exercise on root cause analysis and possible solution is conducted with all the participants
  - Use postcard size cards for different colours
  - Write one focal problem on one card
  - Analyse each focal problem independently
  - Put the card with a focal problem on the ground or paste on wall or board
  - Facilitate the participants to brainstorm on identification primary and secondary root causes
  - Write one primary or secondary root cause on one card
  - Present the cards with different root causes in one direction of the focal

problem

- Similarly follow the exercise for identification possible solutions to reduce the effect of the root causes.
- Choose the most appropriate perceived solutions
- Categorize the solutions that could be taken up in the project and also the ones which could be supported through convergence.
- Present the findings in the table as below

S. No	No of families affected by the problem	Key problems	Most important causes to the problem	Perceived solutions to the problem	Activities to be taken up

### **Semi-structured Interviewing /Focus Group Discussion**

The outsiders conduct interviews with individuals or the groups. The interviewers do not have a rigid questionnaire to interview the villagers but they develop a conceptual clarity on the topic to be discussed. They have certain questions at the back of their mind but follow a flexible approach in dealing with the informants.

The main focus remains on asking open-ended questions so as to permit the informants to respond the way they want. The outsiders are more interested in listening to the village people rather than bombarding the framed questionnaire.

The PRA workers are always aware of an active participation of all the villagers present during discussion. They have a close watch on the process so that the discussion is not hijacked by a few individuals only and the poor and women get marginalized. In case they do not speak, the outsiders try to motivate them to go forward and participate in discussion.

Although semi-structured interviewing is the most essential skill for participatory methods, it is also the most difficult method to master and the most difficult to train others in. Good interviewing skills will only come with plenty of practice and constructive feedback from colleagues. There are seven key components of semi-structured interviewing.

- Team preparation with clear responsibilities to each individual in the team such as interviewing, taking notes, dealing with saboteur's etc.
- Interview context should be clear and should follow a flexible approach
- Sensitive interviewing


- Sensitive questioning
- Judging and cross-checking responses
- Recording the interviews
- Self-critical review



## Do's and Don'ts in PRA

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### Do's:

- Sit at the equal level
  - Encourage participation of poor, women and children
  - Unlearn yourself to learn from the villagers
  - Cross check the collected information through triangulation techniques
  - Hand over the stick to the villagers
  - Embrace error and learn from mistakes
  - Use your own best judgments at all times
  - Share learning with others
  - Ask open-ended questions
  - Visit the villages when poor are available ie early morning or late evening
  - Encourage visual mode of communication over verbal
  - Motivate those to participate who hardly speak
  - Appreciate peoples' analysis, their comparison and criterion
  - Follow the concept of optimal ignorance.
  - Be relaxed while conducting field exercises.
  - Have patience.
  - Maintain the highest degree of transparency with villagers
  - Clarify the purpose of PRA to all
  - Remove the confusions, suspense of the villagers
  - Show humility, respect, patience, and interest in what villagers have to say and show.
  - Wander around and not rushing
  - Pay attention, listening, watching and not interrupting.
  - Remove personal and professional biases
  - Encourage villagers to own the processes and outputs
  - Recognize village people's capabilities
- 



- Use communication aids
- Develop skills in active listening
- Develop skills in dealing with feelings
- Build self-esteem of the village people
- Visit the areas where others hardly visit
- Meet people who are hardly visited by outsiders

### **Don'ts:**

- Don't lecture but listen to the village people
  - Don't focus on extraction of information but facilitate the villagers to analyze and use the information for them.
  - Don't take exercises as tedium but take them as a fun and enjoy them
  - Don't measure what you can't use
  - Don't use authoritarian or manipulative style of communication
  - Don't use communication blocks such as don't advice, criticize, provide solutions, and give threats and orders or lecture.
  - Don't control or guide the process
  - Don't give suggestions in choosing the right symbol or color
  - Don't interfere or interrupt the process
  - Don't rush but be relaxed
  - Don't hold group discussion for long
- 



**Project for Improvement of Himachal Pradesh  
Forest Ecosystems Management & Livelihoods**

Himachal Pradesh Forest Department (HPFD)