

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION THROUGH PARTICIPATED RURAL APPRAISAL (PRA) TECHNIQUES

B.S. Meena

The success of achieving the goal depends upon the accurate appraisal of the intrinsic problem from all angles. Any problem loses its identity unless it is based on the real and urgent need of the users. This powerful need like string has brought the wheel of civilization from the stone age to the era of green revolution. Many attempts have been made since time immemorial to find out specific methodology to identify and solve the problem, which have been coming on the way of development of the society. All the developments could be percolated to the society, if really addressed their needs. In the diversified agro climatic regions and heterogeneously rural society like, India, the problem is highly location specific and need based. Hence, an attempt has been made to identify and prioritize the need-based problems of the farmers of Andhera-Dilwara village of Karnal district (Haryana) through PRA techniques.

PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) is an intensive and systematic learning experience carried out in a community by a multidisciplinary team, which includes the member of the rural community. PRA is a way of learning from and with the community members to investigate, analyze and evaluate the constraints and the opportunities, need assessment and priorities in the area of agriculture, small-scale enterprises and any other social developmental programme addressed to the village development.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Andhera-Dilwara village of district Karnal (Haryana) during 2000. The village is located about 13 km from NDRI, Karnal. A sample of 30 farmers was selected by using snowball technique for the purpose of investigation. Different PRA techniques like Transect walk, Social Mapping, Resource Mapping, Agro-ecology mapping, Technology Mapping Matrix Ranking, Seasonal analysis, Time Line, ITK Mapping, problem identification, etc. were applied in the study area to identify the problems of farming community in their own environment. During PRA exercises, utmost care, patient hearing and polite manners were exercised to stimulate the community members to exercise, share, enhance and analyse their knowledge. The identified problems were prioritized through the estimation of Rank Based Quotient (RBQ) and Magnitude Value (MV) for facilitating the research worker to formulate the need based project on priority basis.

Where,

| | | |
|-------|---|---|
| f_i | = | frequency of farmers for i^{th} rank of problems |
| n | = | No. of ranks |
| N | = | No. of farmers |

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Identification of the Problems and their Ranking

A total of 6 problems were identified with the help of key informants (farmers) of the study area such as high incidence of pests and disease, lack of employment avenues, low productivity of cattle and buffaloes, low yield of wheat, extensive weed infestation and low yield of sugarcane on the basis

of their need and experiences. These identified problems were ranked separately by priority basis by the farmers themselves (table 1)

Table 1 : Frequency Distribution and RBQ of the Problems ranked by the farmers N=30

| Problems | I | II | III | IV | V | VI | RBQ |
|--|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-------|
| High incidence of pest and disease | 2 | 6 | 13 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 63.89 |
| Lack of employment avenues | 5 | 12 | 6 | 7 | - | - | 75.00 |
| Low productivity of cattle and buffaloes | 20 | 7 | 3 | - | - | - | 92.78 |
| Low yield of wheat | - | - | 1 | 7 | 5 | 17 | 28.89 |
| Extensive weed infestation | 2 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 11 | 3 | 48.89 |
| Low yield of sugarcane | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 12 | 8 | 40.56 |

Prioritization of Problems Through RBQ and Magnitude Value of the Problems :

On the basis of ranks given by the farmers to each problem the values of RBQ were find out and presented in table 2. The results showed that the identified problems were prioritized on the basis of RBQ values. Highest RBQ value indicates the most severe problem in the village. Hence in the study area the most severe problem is "Low productivity of cattle and buffaloes" which is ranked first followed by, Lack of employment avenues, High incidence of pest and disease, etc. respectively.

Table 2 : Magnitude Value of the problems : N=30

| Problems | Avg. Yield Loss (%) | Area covered/ No. of animals | RBQ | Magnitude |
|--|---------------------|------------------------------|-------|------------|
| High incidence of pest and disease | 35 | 512.00 | 63.89 | 1144908.80 |
| Lack of employment avenues | 32 | 512.00 | 75.00 | 1228800.00 |
| Low productivity of cattle and buffaloes | 42 | 404.00 | 92.78 | 1574291.04 |
| Low yield of wheat | 17 | 409.60 | 28.89 | 201166.85 |
| Extensive weed infestation | 19 | 61.44 | 48.89 | 57072.23 |
| Low yield of sugarcane | 12 | 25.00 | 40.56 | 12460.0 |

Further, the results indicates that the farmers themselves found the similar trend of priorities of problem in case of magnitude value. Though, the Magnitude values were different from RBQ values but the trends of problem prioritization in the study area remain to be similar. This may be due to the fact the respondents remained to be same for identification of problem, their ranking and yield loss per cent to the problems.

CONCLUSION

Thus the most severe problem identified by the farmers through PRA technique in the study area is "low productivity of cattle and buffaloes" followed by Lack of employment avenues, High incidence of pest and disease, Low yield of wheat Extensive weed infestation and Low yield of sugarcane on the basis of their priorities. Obviously, this attempt of problems and their prioritization through PRA technique was a face-to-face interaction. As a result, the need based research projects to solve these field oriented research problems; problem specific suggestions and regulation to the extension system are re-enforced.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors are thankful to Dr.B.K.Jhosi, NDRI, Kamal, and Dr.V.E. Sabaratanm and Dr.K.M.Reddy NAARM for their constant help and valuable guidance during the course of study.