

## **PARTICIPATORY RESOURCE APPRAISAL/ PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL**

**Appraisal:** Conducting an initial investigation to find out information regarding the various problems, requirements and opportunities within a village. This serves as the initial step in the commencement of any project.

**Participatory:** Engaging project members actively, emphasizing effective communication skills and a positive attitude among project staff.

**Participatory Resource Appraisal (PRA)** is a systematic and collaborative approach used to gather information and insights from local communities about their natural resources, environment, and socio-economic conditions. It is a method of learning from local community about their natural resources. It is a valuable tool for understanding community perspectives, identifying resource management challenges, and developing sustainable solutions.

PRA is considered one of the most popular and effective approaches to gather information in rural areas. This approach was developed in 1990s.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) comprises a collection of methods and techniques employed by development practitioners in the field to easily collect essential data and information. This approach facilitates a more direct connection with rural communities which pave a way to plan in a participatory mode by using the data given by the villagers.

PRA is one of the most effective method or tool utilized by numerous NGOs and it has been extensively used by the government for planning developmental projects over the past two decades. PRA is an approach with certain principles when it is put to work. PRA operates on a set of guiding principles. In this approach, villagers actively contribute by sharing their insights through various means like mapping, diagramming, analysis, listing, sorting, planning, and action program development. External individuals serve as facilitators, assisting local communities in conducting their own analyses, creating plans, and taking appropriate actions accordingly.

### **Principles of PRA:**

1. Reversal of learning: To embrace reverse learning approach by gaining insights from villagers about their village situations and conditions.
2. Rapid and progressive knowledge acquisition regarding the subject matter.
3. To not collect precise information by ensuring that the data given is approximately correct, reliable and true.
4. To maintain a logical sequence in the line of questioning to gather comprehensive information.
5. To listen, learn and record the data and utilize the provided information in the planning process.

## **PRA methods:**

**Establishing rapport:** To initiate effective PRA methods, it's essential to establish a strong rapport with key informants. This can be achieved by visiting the village at least a day before the PRA exercise by introducing oneself to villagers, and requesting their cooperation and involvement of the villagers in the PRA exercise. This can be done by introducing themselves to the villagers and seeking cooperation and support from the villagers to participate in the PRA exercise. The key informants may include local panchayat officials, school and ASHA workers, progressive farmers, and others. PRA techniques such as Transect Walk, Social Mapping, Resource Mapping, Problem Inventory, and Group Discussion Analysis are then employed to gather valuable insights.

## **Significance of Participatory Rural Appraisal:**

### **1. Target group's real priorities are identified:**

In PRA, the target group i.e. local people are asked about the immediate problems, that they are facing. The outsiders do not impose their own solutions on these problems; rather they explore the solutions with the local people in which they are really interested.

### **2. Delegation of responsibilities:**

PRA encourages self-reliant development with most of the responsibilities to manage and execute the developmental activities done by local people. This creates a sense of ownership and enthusiasm among the local people and thus the efficiency to achieve the goal also increases.

### **3. Motivation of local development workers:**

The local development workers of non-governmental organizations, government or other agencies, who are involved in the developmental projects or programmes, get motivated through their participation in PRA activities, by knowing the grass-root level problems and priorities of the people. PRA helps to ensure better understanding and commitment of local workers; in return people at administrative and organizational levels also become aware about the requirements and priorities of workers and community.

### **4. Use of local resources:**

PRA encourages participation of the local people and they design the activities by keeping in mind the availability of the resources that are present in their surroundings. This makes complete use of existing local resources like manpower, time, material resources and others.

### **5. Sustainable developmental activities:**

As local people plan and execute the activities themselves and which are technically, environmentally, socially and financially appropriate to local conditions, which lead to more sustainable developmental activities.

6. **Brings desirable behavioural changes:**

PRA methods encourage participation by providing visual basis like resource map, which stimulates the thought process and encourages local people to offer their views which are appreciated and included in the activities, increasing their confidence to participate more.

7. **Use of indigenous knowledge:**

Every community has an indigenous knowledge system which it acquires through work experience and solves problems in its own specific situations. This knowledge is shared by the local people of community while participating in the activities.