

Toolkit Series - 8

# Village Adhyan

## PRA for Rural Development Planning

Empowering Communities through  
Participatory Rural Appraisal



National Institute of  
Rural Development  
and Panchayati Raj



Unnat Bharat  
Abhiyan

## Preface

I would like to open this prefatory note with an amusing fable of Sherlock Holms, which I am not tired of repeating in my training programmes on PRA over and over again.

Sherlock Holms and Dr Watson went on a camping trip. After a long day's travel, they had dinner, pitched their tent in a beach, and went to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes wakes up and nudges his knowledgeable friend. "Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see".

"I see plenty of stars" replies Watson.

"And what do you deduce from that?"

Watson ponders for a minute.

"Well, astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets.

Meteorologically, I think we will have a beautiful day tomorrow.

Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful and that we are a small and insignificant part of the universe".

Watson asks back. "What does it tell you, Holmes?"

Holmes is silent for a moment.

Watson, you idiot! he says. "Someone has stolen our tent!"

Moral of the story: *'Life is very simple. We insist on making it complicated'*. Depending on our level of education and personality type, our tendency to complicate things is incredible. We analyse things astronomically, meteorologically, theologically, philosophically and so on, so that we are able to put to use all acquisitions we got through our classroom algebra, calculus, factor analysis, predictions, assumptions etc. We arrive at a conclusion that fits into 'our reality' – a reality that satisfies our assumptions, predictions, and academic-ego.

It's possible - and often it turns out to be so - the reality we constructed could be miles away from the reality of a poor man, whose entire asset could be a small piece of land,

or a flock of sheep. I don't care to listen to him because he is illiterate....he has not learnt the modern prediction models in statistics that I am proficient in. He cannot juggle around with numbers applying Advanced Excel formulas. What we fail to recognise is *he does not have to 'predict'*. Someone who knows the reality does not have to predict.

For instance when it comes to understanding about the situations and conditions in a village, the simplest way to learn about it is *listen to the villagers*. Our basic premise should be *a person who has lived in that village for over 40 years certainly knows about that village much better than a research scientist who visits that village for a few hours*. All that is required is respect him, listen to him - or rather listen to them - if you want to learn about rural life – livelihoods, agriculture, seasons, crops, plants, insects, technology use and so on. This is the starting point for mutuality of learning, sharing of knowledge, skills and expertise. Such a discussion shall open up trust, recognising and acknowledging what is in store for mutual sharing – between the insiders [villagers] and outsiders [Higher Education Institutions].

How to learn from the villagers is what this handbook is all about? And that is what PRA [Participatory Rural Appraisal] is all about. In this handbook, for the benefit of those who have scarce understanding of rural development in Indian context, functioning of Gram Panchayats, and why working with Gram Panchayats is strategic and beneficial has also been presented in boxes all through. Let's begin the journey of exploration and learning. This handbook is written bearing in view that the readers of this handbook are very new to the concept, methods and tools of PRA.

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June, 2020  
Hyderabad

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## Abbreviations

BDO	- Block Development Office
FFC	- Fifteenth Finance Commission
GP	- Gram Panchayat
GPDP	- Gram Panchayat Development Plan
HEI	- Higher Education Institution
MHRD	- Ministry of Human Resource Development
MoRD	- Ministry of Rural Development
MoPR	- Ministry of Panchayati Raj
NGO	- Non-Governmental Organisation
NSL	- Now, Soon, Later
PI	- Participating Institution
PRA	- Participatory Rural Appraisal
RCI	- Regional Coordinating Institution
SEG	- Subject Expert Group
SSI	- Semi-structured Interview / Inquiry
UBA	- Unnat Bharat Abhiyan
XV-FC	- 15 <sup>th</sup> Finance Commission

### Note:

**Gender:**For ease of reading, I have chosen to use ‘he / him / his’ to refer to male as well as female.

Where I use pronouns such as we, our,ours,or you, your, yours the reference is to ‘outsiders’ meaning the ‘PRA Team from outside’ like a Participating Institution (PI) of UBA. Where I use pronouns such as they, them, their, theirs the reference is to ‘insiders’ meaning the ‘villagers’ in the context of UBA adopted village.

## SECTION - 1

### Planning for Village Development

#### Data and Information

Imagine you are assigned the task of planning for village development. Where do you begin? How do you get started? In order to plan, you need data and information about the village in question. You need the details of population, households; various occupations people are involved in, common infrastructure facilities available such as school, *anganwadi*, conditions of drinking water supply, sanitation, primary health care, conditions of road, electricity, and physical / electronic connectivity and so on. So, you need data and information so that you can identify the shortfall / gaps and plan for fulfilling the gaps.

#### Sources of Data

How do we get data & information? Who can give data? What is our source of data for undertaking this planning exercise?

***Gram Panchayat Office:*** There are many ways to collect data about Gram Panchayats. We refer to Gram Panchayat here because that is the institution officially (and constitutionally) recognised as local body, which is supposed to maintain data pertaining to demographics and socio-economic development etc. This is one source of data. We need to approach the Gram Panchayat Office with a check-list of what data we need. Let us consider that this is one source of data.

**Box – 1:What is a Gram Panchayat?**In Indian conditions, generally a group of habitations / villages make up a Gram Panchayat. Gram Panchayats are an elected body, which is expected to take up development works pertaining to 29 subjects covered in the 11<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution. See Annexure – 1 List of subjects covered in the 11th Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Gram Panchayats (GPs) play a pivotal role in rural development in India. GPs have powers to raise local revenue by levying taxes such as house tax, and service charges for delivery of essential services such as rural water supply, sanitation including street cleaning etc. GPs are eligible to get government funds from various Ministries / Departments for rural development purposes. Many government programmes get implemented through GPs only. This is called local self-governance.

**Block Development Office:** A cluster of Gram Panchayats make up a Development Block. Each Development Block has a Block Development Office (BDO), who should maintain grassroots level data, and keep track of various development schemes being implemented in every Gram Panchayat. This can be another source of data.

**Government Web portals:** There are web portals of the government that maintain data sets Gram Panchayats in the entire country. For example, [egramswaraj.gov.in](http://egramswaraj.gov.in) and [www.missionantyodaya.nic.in](http://www.missionantyodaya.nic.in) are databases of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. This web portal is supposed to be dynamic, and provide updated data of all the 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats in the country. By and large, this data is dependable. Yet, we need to bear in mind that Mission Antyodaya is a massive data collection expedition, covering about 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats – almost every year.

**Household Survey:** Alternatively, we can also go for a household survey. This is a popular way of collecting grassroots level data that mostly NGOs, social science institutions, and social researchers

**Participatory Rural Appraisal:** Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA for short) is an approach to collect data or to learn about situations and conditions in rural areas. This has a menu (or basket of) methods and tools. Depending on the type / nature of data required for our purpose, we can choose appropriate PRA methods and tools for data collection in a given village. We shall see more about PRA tools, methods, principles and applications as we go.

**Why PRA?** At this moment, it might occur to us now that why do we go for fresh data collection if Gram Panchayat or the BDO office or Mission Antyodaya can provide the data we need. Why do we talk about PRA, when household survey is a popular

method of data collection, familiar to many of us?The reasons are: first of all, we do not know how old is the secondary data available in the records of GP Office or BDO office. These offices maintain data but we do not know *how updated they are* for our purpose. It happens, often that they refer to household data of Census 2011, when you are in 2020.

Mission Antyodaya / eGramSwaraj data are, by and large, updated and dependable. Yet, we need to bear in mind that Mission Antyodaya is a massive data collection expedition, covering about 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats – almost every year. It is possible errors can creep in. However, this web portal can serve as a good starting point, or can serve for the purpose of cross-checking the data we collect from other sources.

This does not in any way provide face to face contact with the villagers. You are still facing your computer screen only. A cat with gloves does not catch mice. To do village work, you need to get away from your computer screen, and face the villagers. Household surveys take time - going door to door - collecting data - then computer aided data entry back in the office - data cleaning - data analysis using Excel spread sheets –and draw inferences as to get to know the findings etc. It's time taking.

The concept of PRA tells you to go to the village – away from your comfort zone: Go to them. Discuss with them. Ask them. Listen to them. Learn from them. Unlearn. Relearn. Feel uncomfortable. Learn to listen. Make direct observation. They say: *what the eyes do not see, the heart does not grieve about*. The problem you identify in this process, most likely is going to be the real and the most pressing problem of the villagers. Seek local solutions. As how they have been dealing with it in the past – for so many years? Facilitate local solutions. Resist the temptation to instantly offer your advice or expertise.

Do your homework, and go back to them in order to present how you think your technical expertise can solve the problem that was identified. Check and weigh the social acceptability, technical feasibility, financial viability, and what scheme of the government can help resolve the problem in hand. Find out: how villagers can participate / contribute? Determine your role in the project. By now, you have got the data / information you needed. You have also got closer to the community members you are dealing with. Now, prepare your UBA project proposal for support by the UBA. This is the approach PRA proposes. In this process you may have to use a battery of PRA methods and techniques, which we shall learn in the upcoming section in this handbook.

The following diagram shows the attitude change required for a PRA practitioner. It puts across attitude that does not favour community participation, and those that encourage participation. It's wrong to assume that rural people know less because they are less literate compared to you. Recognise that they have abilities that have enabled them to survive and contribute to agriculture, animal husbandry, natural resource management, and so on. S/he cultivates his own rice, vegetables and fruits. And possibly, you are dependent on him/her to remain hunger-free. They have earnestness to give momentum to the pace of progress they make in life. They have their right to decide, and self-respect.

### Attitude Change Required

#### **Wrong Attitude**

- Mud-headed
- Orthodox
- Unchanging
- Traditional
- Hesitant

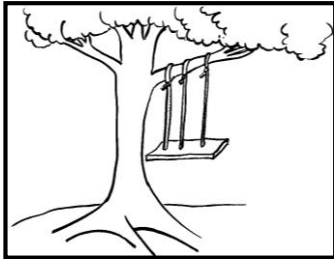
#### **Right Attitude**

- Earnestness
- Ability
- Right
- Self-Respect

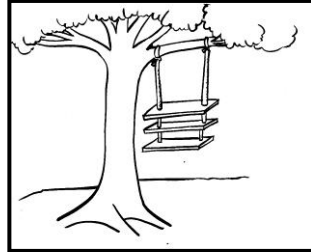
## A project Proposal

A rural development agency visited a village. After studying the village, floated the following project to a sponsor. It is pictorially presented for easy understanding.

**Picture - 1 Picture - 2**

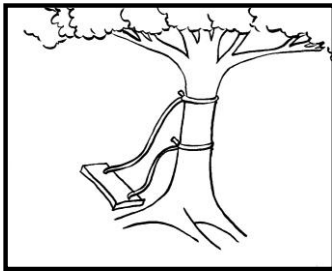


as specified in the Project request



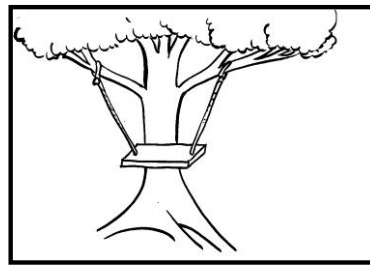
as understood by the Project sponsor

**Picture –3**



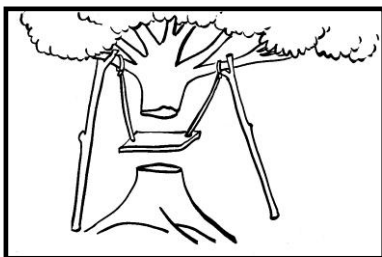
as designed by the senior analyst

**Picture - 4**



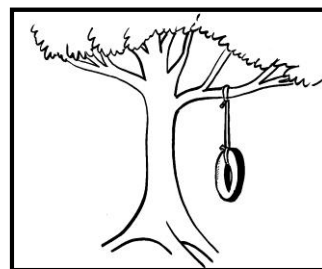
as understood by the Project Staff

**Picture – 5**



as installed by the contractor at the user's site

**Picture - 6**



What the user wanted

Source: D+C, 2004

## SECTION - 2

### Introduction to PRA

#### What is PRA?

PRA is a set of methods and techniques that development practitioners use in the field to be able to collect data and information. It is fairly quick. Easy to collect any data / information you need in a rural or tribal village. The PRA process enables you to get closer to the rural community, which makes way for you to plan – ‘*plan in a participatory mode*’, using the data the villagers gave you.

PRA is a sort of semi-structured inquiry carried out in a village, by development practitioners in order to acquire data and information about rural life – fairly quickly’. PRA is a favourite tool with many NGOs, and it is part of planning exercise in many government programmes over 2 decades now not only in India, but also in many developing countries.

#### Box – 2: What is a semi-structured Inquiry (Interview)?

If PRA uses *semi-structured* Inquiry, does it imply that there is something called *fully-structured* and something else called: *unstructured Inquiry*? The questionnaires used in household surveys are, often *fully structured* – meaning all the questions are pre-determined and it is presumed to be complete. One demerit in using such *fully structured questionnaires* is that anything that is not pre-determined obviously gets omitted. There is no way the Inquiry can accommodate such unanticipated responses. Therefore, we remain ignorant about it. On the other hand if we are *unstructured*, meaning going with no questionnaire at all, we may fail in sequencing our line of questioning, and consequently we may miss collecting some data / information that did not occur during the [jumbled]course of our inquiry. In the case of semi-structured interviews we have a check-list of, often open ended questions, which are in a sequence. Since what aids the inquiry process is only a check-list, anything that we may have failed to pre-determine in our checklist can be accommodated during the inquiry. The inquiry often progresses like a seamless conversation, where the next question we ask is determined partly by what we have in the check-list, and partly by what the response was to the previous question.

#### PRA Methods

PRA has a menu of methods, which are often called ‘tools / techniques or methods of PRA’. There are certain principles that PRA facilitators need to bear in mind and practice during the course of inquiry / interviewing (see Section – 4).

## Menu of PRA Methods / Tools

- Transect Walk
- Social Mapping
- Seasonality Analysis
- Ranking Exercises
  - Wealth / well-being ranking
  - Direct Matrix Ranking
  - Pair-wise Ranking
  - Preference Ranking
  - Ranking Criteria Matrix
- Institutional Diagram / Venn Diagram
- Livelihoods Analysis
- Focus Group Discussion
- Chain of Interviews
- Case Studies
- Linkage / Mobility Map
- Problem Analysis / Problem Inventory
- Causal Diagram / Problem Tree
- NSL Chart (Now – Soon – Later Chart)
- Future Visioning
- Do it Yourself

The menu of PRA methods and tools presented above is only an indicative list. PRA practitioners world over have come out with / innovated methods and tools depending that type / nature of data they are trying to elicit. The concept of PRA renders the flexibility to adapt, improvise and innovate methods and tools depending on what data / information we are trying to elicit from the community in question. What it cannot compromise is only of the *principles and the basic premise* of PRA such as respecting the villagers, listening to them, and learning from them. We shall see more about the methods and techniques in the subsequent sections, and a suggest battery of PRA tools that Participating Institutions of UBA can put to use.

By now, we have understood that PRA is a set of methods and techniques to collect data and information about a situation relatively rapidly. And that it is ‘an approach’ which has certain principles, when put to work: (i) brings reliable data within a short span of time; and (ii) enables getting closer to the community. Before we learn about the principles of PRA, we’d better learn the PRA methods and techniques that are appropriate to the PIs of UBA. The PRA for UBA is presented in the subsequent section.

## **General PRAs Vs Thematic PRAs**

### **General PRAs**

This is going to a village in the vicinity with an open mind, forgetting what subject you have specialized in. Maybe, you are professionally trained in Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, Agricultural Economics, or Corporate Management. But, we keep all that in the backburner, and conduct a general PRA allowing any issue to emerge during the discussion with the villagers. It means we go to the village with open mind so as to understand the *situations and conditions* as presented. It can also be called ‘Situation Analysis’. We conduct all the PRA exercises explained above, and record whatever priority the community members expressed. Turn their needs and priorities into a workable proposal, and submit to UBA for support.

The point is, in General PRA, you do not restrict your discussion / focus into one area such as Agriculture, or Animal Husbandry or Computer Science or Electrical Engineering etc. Instead, the focus is on *overall development*, as prioritized by the community you are working with. NGOs working for *overall village development* generally follow this approach. This is fighting the war as it presents itself. You refrain from choosing (your war) what you think should be the focus.

As a Higher Education Institution with specific areas of specialization, and you as a specialist in a given subject, may not feel comfortable to work on any problem that the community members throw at you. But, that is what general PRA is. On the contrary, if you believe working within your professional competence would be meaningful to initiate action, you’d better choose Thematic PRAs.

## **Thematic PRAs**

Thematic PRAs put to use your area of expertise. In other words, you can explore how your knowledge and expertise can be beneficially used in solving specific problems posed by villagers.

If your institution is specializing in a given theme, for instance you could be from an Engineering College, or Management School, or Agricultural College or Veterinary University, or from Arts and Science College / University, you can choose to work in what you are specializing in. Please refer to UBA compendium on ‘Capacity Building for Community Engagement’. You shall find in this compendium various modes of working with rural people. In such situations you may go for Thematic PRA exercises.

**Agriculture College:** A PRA team from an Agriculture College would set the focus of all his PRA exercise to revolve around agriculture, seeds, fertilizers, pests, pesticides, irrigation, agricultural credit, agricultural marketing, post-harvest processing of activities, technologies to convert biomass / agricultural residues into usable products and bio-energy etc. This can be demonstrated in a village or in a cluster of 2 - 3 villages, which can become a model for scaling up. Stubble burning is a serious problem in Western India. The UBA Institutions can take up such issues.

**Veterinary University:** A PRA team from Veterinary University shall focus all his PRA exercise on animal husbandry related activities such as types of animals, breed, animal feed, yield, diseases, income through milk and other milk products, veterinary services, local practices in feed production and animal health care, marketing and earnings etc.

**Management School:** A PRA team from a Management School may focus on banking habits and practices, financial inclusion, insurance, credit, sources of borrowings, interest rates, repayment terms, financial institutions involved – formal / informal, savings, household economy etc. Or they can focus on local products, how many households are involved, source of raw materials, quality, design, target consumers,

demand, transport, marketability, profits, individual enterprises, collective enterprises, government support, network etc.

**Engineering College:** A PRA Team from an Engineering College may focus on water sources, water table, rain water flow, water conservation / storage structures, water quality, water for various uses, waste wastage, water budgeting etc. Or They may focus on technical structures / infrastructure available for drinking water supply, Over Head Tank, Sump, distribution pipe lines, tap connections at household level, common water collection points, drainage system, wastewater disposal system, storm water disposal / storage structures, rainwater harvesting structures, pump room, source of power to pump water, how much is the monthly electricity bill, possibilities for solar application etc.

**Arts and Science College:** A PRA Team from an Arts and Science College can go into the areas of how social support / social assistance programmes of the government reach the needy such as aged people, destitute widows, and disabled people and so on. Identify the number of people who are eligible but are not getting old age pension, disability pension etc. Guide and handhold them, so that they get those benefits. Other possible areas are: improving the functioning of anganwadi, local school, child nutrition, organizing health camps, Animal health camps, studying and improving SHG accounting system; help the Panchayat to set up e-panchayat system; setting up citizen service centre, if absence of it came up in the problem analysis exercise (see Annexure 2 for more examples).

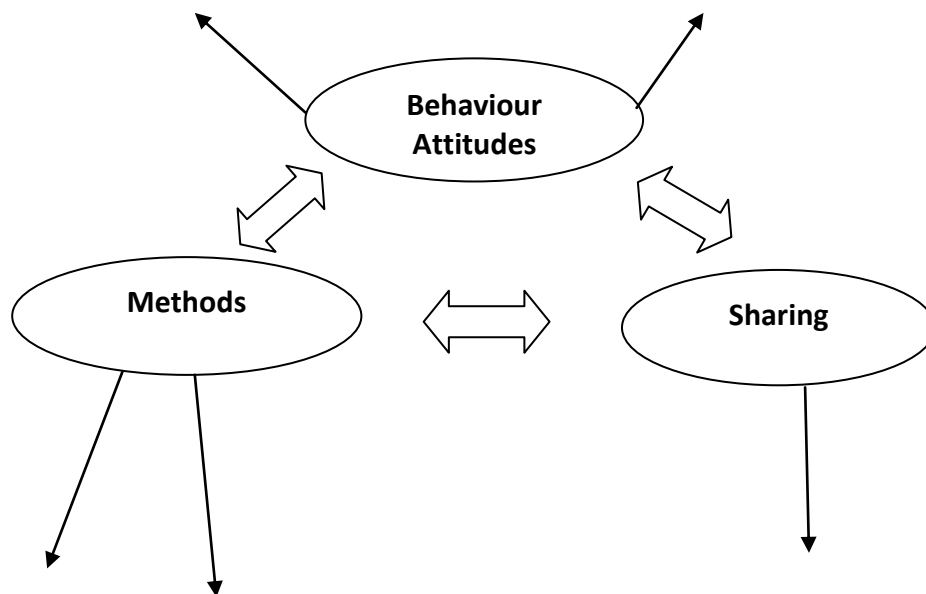
**Computer Science:** Those working in computer science field should go into a web portal of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) called 'eGramSwaraj'. This web portal that aims at bringing in better transparency in planning at the village level, progress reporting of works being carried out in those villages, and a work-based accounting. It includes village profiling, action plan creation, activity output, financing and accounting, and a Public Fund Management System (PFMS) Dash Board, which is an on-line payment system. This is a marvelous initiative of the Government of India from the perspective of good governance (such as transparency, accountability,

and faster reporting of development works taking place in a village). However, Panchayats might find it difficult to work with such portals. If you, as a technical institution, can familiarize yourself with such web portals, you would be in a position to build the capacity of your adopted Panchayats as 'e-panchayats'. This e-panchayat can become a school of practice for other Panchayats to learn from.

### Three Pillars of PRA

- Hand over the stick
- 'They can do it'
- 'Use your own best judgement at all times'
- Sit down, listen, learn, respect
- Unlearn
- Relax

- Facilitate
- Don't rush
- Ask them
- Have fun
- Be nice to people
- Embrace error



#### They

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview</li> <li>• Map</li> <li>• Model</li> <li>• Rank</li> <li>• Score</li> <li>• Analyse</li> <li>• Diagram</li> <li>• Present</li> <li>• Plan</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe</li> <li>• List</li> <li>• Compare</li> <li>• Count</li> <li>• Estimate</li> <li>• Act</li> <li>• Monitor</li> <li>• Evaluate</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They share their knowledge and analysis with each other and with us</li> <li>• All share experiences of living, food...</li> <li>• Organisations, trainers share their training camps, experiences with others NGOs, Government, Universities, Donors..</li> <li>• Partnership</li> </ul> |
|---|---|--|

Source: Robert Chambers, *Whose Reality Counts: Putting the First Last*, Intermediate Technology Publications, 1997, London, P.105

## SECTION - 3

### PRA Methods and Techniques for UBA

The Participating Institutions (PIs) of UBA adopt villages with a view to addressing the development challenges in the vicinity of the Institution applying appropriate technologies / management models and so on. How relevant are our interventions in the village? Are we really addressing the real pressing problems of the villagers? Or, we are trying to develop a solution to a non-existent problem in the village? Imagine how hilarious it would be to the villagers, when we go with a solution to a problem that does not exist in that village.

PRA helps identify real problems of the villagers. It throws open the magnitude of the problem, and how important it is for the villagers to address it. The PRA process brings to light facts, which in our language we call ‘data and information’ that we can put to use for writing meaningful proposal seeking support from UBA for implementation. We come to know the importance and urgency associated with each problem the villagers put across, along with their priority in terms of urgency. This helps prepare a three-year perspective plan for the village we adopted, and take up problems –preferably one at a time.

**Box- 3 What is GPDP?** Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP for short) is a development plan of the Gram Panchayat. It is prepared through a participatory process involving all the stakeholders matching people’s needs and priorities with available resources. This is a comprehensive plan. It encompasses almost all the areas of village development. Therefore, it is often prepared as a five year perspective plan, broken down into Annual Plans for the Gram Panchayat in question. Preparation of GPDP is mandatory for Gram Panchayats in India so as to obtain government funds meant for various spheres of rural development. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has issued Guidelines for Preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP, 2018). It’s available in the website of the MoPR. This document

#### PRA Battery for UBA

The following is a battery of PRA methods and tools that PIs of UBA can put to use in the adopted villages. This list is suggestive. The PI can adapt, change, and improvise methods depending on the context, and the purpose of PRA. The list of books for

‘further reading’ given at the end of this handbook shall help learn more, if someone is interested.

1. Transect Walk
2. Social Map
3. Problem Inventory / Analysis
4. Problem Prioritization (NSL Chart)
5. Solution Assessment
6. Analysis Group Discussion

Let’s try to understand each one of these exercises, briefly. Then we can see how to actually conduct these exercises in the village.

### EXERCISE – 1: Transect Walk

**What is this?** This is a guided walk that ‘outsiders’ (in our case it is the PIs or HEIs) take along with the ‘insiders’ [villagers]. Take a walk, visit and observe the village. This is not a hurried walk. Stop where required, discuss, ask and understand.

Farmers	Chinnakalai Brothers	Veluchamy Brothers	Paramiah	Veerakumar	Madasamy	Murugan	Puram Pokku	Perco-lation Pond
Variables								
Slope								
Ownership	Private	Private	Private	Private	Private	Private	Public	Public
Soil Type	Sandy loam	Sandy loam	Sandy loam	Sandy loam	Sandy loam	Sandy loam	Sandy loam	Clay
Depth of soil	3 m	3 m	3 m	3 m	3 m	3.5 m	4 m	–
Crops								
(i) Standing	Gingili Horsegram	Gingili Horsegram Other pulses	Paddy Other grains	–	Chillies Onion Brinjal			
(ii) Raised	Do	–	Paddy Other grains	Gingili Horsegram	Paddy Grains Tomato	Cotton Castor grains Groundnut		
Trees	Palm Poovarasu	Palm Neem	Coconut Vagai Poovarasu Tamarind Palm	Palm Tamarind Neem Vagai	Coconut Palm Teak	Poovarasu Palm Coconut		
Cattle	–	–	Two	–	Shed	–		
Sources of irrigation	Rain-fed	Rain-fed	Rain-fed	Rain-fed	Rain-fed and open well (energised)	Rain-fed and open well (energised)		
Water level	NA	NA	–	–	3 ft	3ft		1 ft
Problems	Water scarcity, poor rain, scarce resources	Water scarcity, poor rain, scarce resources	Water scarcity, poor rain, scarce resources	Water scarcity, poor rain, scarce resources	Water scarcity, poor rain, scarce resources	Water scarcity, poor rain, scarce resources		
Opportunities	Willing to accept the department scheme and cooperate	Willing to accept and cooperate	Willing to accept and cooperate	Willing to accept and cooperate	Willing to accept and cooperate	Willing to accept and cooperate		

Source: PRA Unit, GRI (1995b).

**Who participates?** A team of villagers walk with you – of course, upon your invitation - in all the streets, lanes, agricultural fields - visiting and observing everything, and all that is happening on the way. Depending upon what do you think should be the focus, sensibly choose your participants / know who are all coming with you. If your focus is ‘farming’ ensure that at least 2 – 3 participants are farmers.

**The purpose:** The villagers walk you through the village streets, lanes, farms, etc. where you walk along with them observing, discussing, and getting an idea of the settlement patterns, common infrastructures, institutions / facilities available, farm practices, animal husbandry and so on.

**Outcome Expected:** This helps you form a *mental overview* of the village. You can draw a map, if it can be of use / necessary. This will prepare you to get down facilitating the villagers to draw social map, which is the next important PRA exercise you shall be conducting in the village for data collection. Thirdly, by the time you complete your transect walk, you would find you know the names of all those who walked with you, their background, interests, and concerns that you need to ‘probe’ during subsequent PRA exercises such as ‘problem analysis’.

**Caution:** *Observation does not mean watching and assuming.* Remember observation always involves discussion. Observe. Ask. Discuss. Seek clarification. If you take a ‘power-walk’ watching and assuming, that’s not going to help understand the village.

**Box –4 Chance Encounters / Chain of Interviews:** During Transect Walk, it is possible we chance upon a farmer involved in dairying; or a family involved coir-thread making / basket making / mat weaving / pottery etc. Or a woman involved in floriculture; or a group of women collecting water from a common water collection point; or labourer coming back home after finishing his shifting duty in a private mill in the town and so on. This is called ‘chance encounter. Make direct observation of what they are doing, and pick up conversation about the livelihood activity they are involved in. You can request them if you can try your hands in coir-making or basket making. Have some fun. They appreciate it. You can get a feel of how hard or difficult it is. We may miss some vital information, if we ignore such chance encounters and walk blind-folded.

## EXERCISE – 2: Social Mapping / Village Mapping

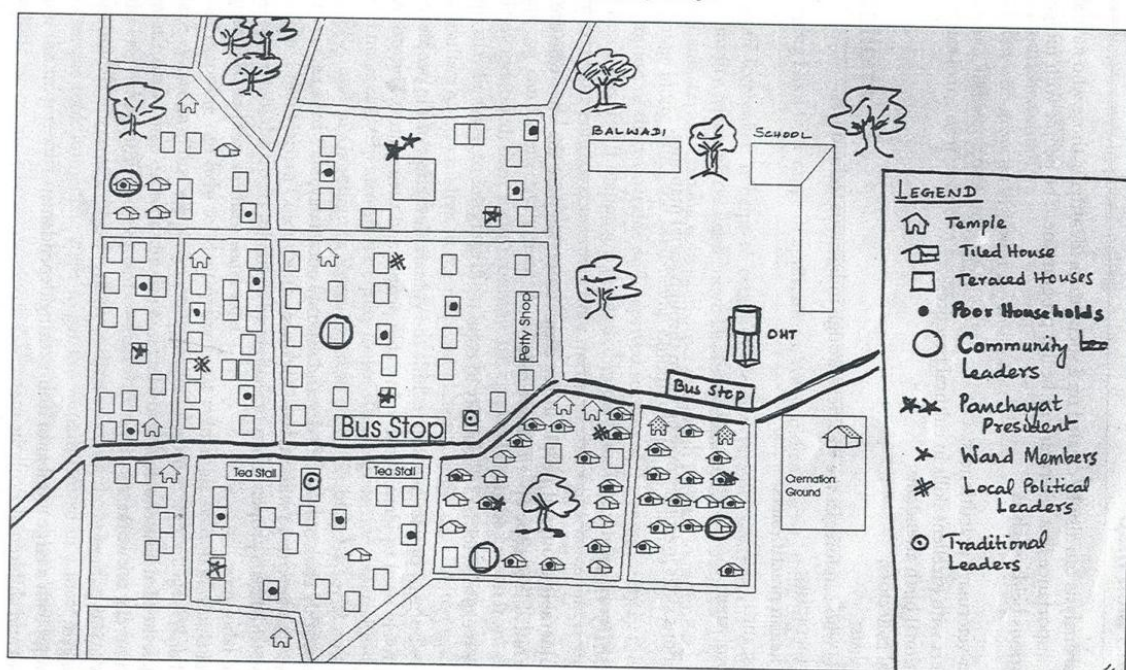
**What is this?** This is ‘village map’ as drawn by villagers on the ground (not to scale) – using *rangoli* powder or chalk piece etc. This is an Ariel view photograph of the village showing all the streets, lanes, institutions, common infrastructure, houses etc.

**What is depicted in the Map?** Village Map, first of all, depicts all the streets, and lanes in the village. This is followed by marking the locations where various institutions such as Panchayat Office, School, *Anganwadi*, Health Centre; and location of other common infrastructure in the village i.e. water tank, hand-pumps / common water collection points, street lights, community hall etc. Then, they depict all the houses street-wise. This is people’s map. We can copy the map on a chart, if we require.

If there are 240 houses, all the houses are drawn. Yes, it takes about 3 – 4 hours. If Gram Panchayat has more than one hamlet / village, you’d better do it separately with relevant participants. Each house is numbered (and a card is prepared assigning a number along with name of the Head of the Household, which makes it easy to make any further reference to that house). Once social map is ready on the ground, any information can be collected, depending on the purpose of PRA.



For instance, you want to know the hand pumps that are working / not working, the villagers can count and tell you; if you want to know houses with / without toilet, they can tell you; if you want to know houses that has water tapconnection, they can tell you; if you want to know houses that have school going children; aged persons getting / not getting Old Age Pension, they can tell you; if you want them to identify in the map houses that has cow / buffalo / sheep, they can identify; if you want households that are wage earners; households that are big farmers etc. Thus, social map can give you any information you wish to draw from it.



Source: PRA Unit, GRI (1995e).

**Who participates?** In drawing social map it is good to involve young men, women, and middle school level children also. They can actively involve in drawing the map. When it comes to collecting data from a completed social map, it is good to involve some aged persons also.

**The purpose:** Collecting data regarding population, households, caste (if required), occupation details, institutions available, common infrastructure facilities available / not available; and household details depending on the type of data we are looking for. If we are looking for 'child labourers details', we can ask the local people to identify

houses that has child labourers / school-age-children not going to school; if we are looking for households without a functional water tap connection, they can identify; if we are looking for households that have toilet, but not using, they can identify. Thus, social map can generate a wealth of information, you need.

**Outcome Expected:** Social Map that the villagers drew on the ground can be copied on a chart paper for our use, if we require. It is good to hand over a copy to the Panchayat Office for their future use. The household data and common facilities related data you needed about the village can be obtained from social map.

**Caution:** Soon after landing in a village, if you ask people to draw a map of their village, they shall get intimidated. They have to be slowly facilitated into doing this. Explain clearly - one step at a time. Do not give a bundle of instructions. First of all, get them started with main streets, followed by all the lanes, then common facilities, and finally to draw every house. Our facilitation must make it easy – without confusing the villagers. After they complete drawing the map, you can appreciate and show them that they could draw a map of the village, which perhaps, they never tried before.

**Box –5 Baseline Data / Information:** The data generated from social map could serve as a baseline data. Baseline data is about the stage a village is in, in different spheres of development, before we initiate an intervention / introduce project. For example, Social Map may show that at the time of entry of the PI, hardly 40% of the households used toilets. That means 60% of the households were not using toilet at the start of the project. This comes to light through PRA 'Baseline'. This baseline indicates that there is project intervention required to change 60% of the households to use toilet. Similarly, it might come out in PRA social map that some school-age children were not admitted in the school, and a few others 'dropped out'. We need to identify how many (count) children, and identify their houses in the Social Map. Maybe, some 13 of them were not admitted at all, and 20 of them, who got admitted, dropped out after a short while. This is our PRA baseline information. We need to take steps to make 100% school enrolment, and 'zero dropouts' in the school.

### **EXERCISE – 3: Problem Inventory / Analysis**

**What is this?** This exercise is conducted with a view to facilitating the villagers list out all the problems / issues they face with reference to lives and livelihoods. It can relate to lack of water for irrigation, or non-availability of quality seeds, quality issues

in drinking water, poor school education, or absence of primary health care facility etc. People list out all the problems.

**How is this depicted?** We initiate this exercise asking the people to tell you one or two pressing problems in the village. When one of the participants raises an issue, if others too felt that to be a serious issue, they tend to join in describing and explaining how lack of ‘that facility’ affects lives and livelihoods in that village. That issue is written down in a card (post card size card) and is kept in front of everyone. Then someone comes up with a second issue, third issue, fourth issue and so on. Have patience. Allow them to decide, analyse and judge what issues are important.



**List of problems (pasted on a wall) identified by people using postcards / sticky notes**

**Who participates?** Ensure you have relevant participants from village. When you discuss on issues related to agriculture find out how many of the ‘insiders’ are into agriculture; similarly, when you discuss about problems in *anganwadi* or primary school, take a look at the number of mothers / parents that are present, or even school going children, who can give authentic information.

**The purpose:** Through semi-structured interviewing, you need to identify the problems of the local people *from their perspective* through their lived experiences, and priority. It is their problems, they are listing. You are only facilitating – not prompting or assessing / judging.

**Outcome Expected:** Since you ask one of them to write one card for every problem, you shall have as many cards as there were problems narrated / analysed. Thus, you may end up with say, 8 – 15 cards – each card contains a problem.

**Caution:** Having participants not directly concerned with an issue may not provide quality information. Ensure you have the right participants. Let them say. Let them list out. Let them analyse. Let them explain. After all, it's their problem. Facilitate the discussion. Refrain from prompting and suggesting solutions.

**EXERCISE – 4: Problem Prioritization (NSL Chart):**

**What is this?** This is an attempt to classify (the problems identified) based on urgency and importance. All the cards (each containing a problem) are to be placed into two or three boxes as shown in the picture below.

**A Typical NSL Chart**

<b>NOW - N (3 – 6 months)</b>	<b>SOON - S (6 months – One year)</b>	<b>LATER - L (Beyond one year)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% IHHL coverage and declare ‘real ODF’.</li> <li>• The toilets in the primary school and anganwadibe rendered usable with water line facility.</li> <li>• Renovate all ponds, and water storage structures in the village.</li> <li>• Groundwater recharge pits be made in 20 strategic points in the village.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey and count HH without drinking water tap connection / those with illegal water tap connection and those who use motors for sucking water from pipeline.</li> <li>• Regularize illegal tap connection &amp; remove water taps where pumps are used for sucking water from water distribution lines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All office / school buildings and premises to have roof-water harvesting structures.</li> <li>• 1000 tree saplings be planted in common &amp; private lands.</li> <li>• Survey number of persons eligible for old age pension and disability pension and help them apply.</li> </ul>

**How to carry out this exercise?** We draw these boxes on the ground with a piece of chalk or in a chart paper. First or all, the facilitator clarifies that since all the problems cannot be addressed straight away instantaneously, we need to decide on the timelines. Therefore, he writes NOW, SOON, LATER on the top of the chart. But, it is the

community members who have to define the period that can make NOW; the period that can make SOON; and the period that can make LATER.

Once this is clear, the facilitator takes one of the ‘problem cards’ – one card at a time - reads out the problem written up there, and places it in front of the community members (local participants). Then he asks about the urgency of ‘that problem’ in relation to other serious problems they have written in other cards. The community members start discussing and giving their opinions on how serious that card [‘that problem’] in question is. After a thorough discussion the community members have to decide unanimously, which of the three boxes ‘this card’ goes in. Is it under N or S or L?

This way every card is discussed. All the cards get classified into one of the three boxes in the chart. It gives an idea to the PRA team that they have to write a project proposal that addresses ‘the top problem’ mentioned under NOW. The other problems can be taken up subsequently. This is a continuous engagement. Therefore, it may go up to 3 to 5 years to resolve all the problems written up in all the cards.

**Box – 6 Saturation Approach:** The Government of India aims at putting to use, *saturation approach* to achieving model villages in the country. Saturation simply means reaching 100% in every aspect of development. For example, the Jal Jeevan Mission of the Ministry of Jal Sakthi aims at providing Functional House Tap Connection for drinking water supply to 100% of the rural household by the year 2024. If you identify 30% of the households do not have access to piped water supply in your adopted village. Make plans and officially move to ensure that your village achieves 100% in providing piped water supply connection. To make up fund insufficiency, use the Rural Water Supply Scheme of the government. This way, you ensure, 100% of households have access to piped water supply; 100% of the households have and use toilets; 100% of school going children are in school; 100% of children of less than 4 years of age are enrolled in anganwadi; 100% immunization against seven vaccine preventable diseases; 100% institutional delivery and so on. Zero hunger. Zero malnutrition. Zero drop-out.

**Who participates?** It depends on the problem being discussed. We can have 12 – 15 local participants, who understand all these issues being discussed. You can have a mix of men, women, young, old and school going children.

**The purpose:** The PRA team gets a sense of what is urgent in the opinion of the villagers. You tend to propose a project that is in the priority of the people. When a

real pressing problem is taken up and discussed towards solution every local person tends to participate.

**Outcome Expected:** Have three lists of problems identified by local people. No.1 (NOW) is a list of problems that if resolved within 3 – 6 months people would feel relieved of ‘one pressing problem’. This problem and data related to that problem gives strength to the PRA Team (Participating Institution) to write a Project Proposal for submission to UBA. A probable list of development works / development priorities that people might come up with is presented in Annexure -

**Caution:** Problem Analysis and Problem Prioritization exercises generally raise the expectations of the people on the PI. You need to be wary of this fact, and clarify your position and intension that (i) you are trying to lend a hand in resolving one or two pressing problems in the village; (ii) you have your limitations of funds and powers, and strength of connections and technical expertise; and (iii) people should make full use of the PI’s strength as a technical institution in order to resolve issues. However, villagers should not develop unreasonable / far-fetched expectations to become dependent on the PI, which will take them nowhere. This is ethics in development transaction.

**Box – 7 Sources of fund for a Gram Panchayat:** This is called Resource Envelope in GPDP. Gram Panchayats lay out a five year perspective plan and annual plans. The GPDP preparation process identifies not only the needs and priorities of the villagers, but also government schemes that can financially and technically support implementation for resolving issues. Funds for implementation are made available by various departments of the government. An indicative list of issues / problems and relevant department of the government / scheme that can come in handy so as to resolve that issue is presented in Annexure – 4. Besides this, the Gram Panchayat also has the power to raise local revenues by levying taxes (such as house tax), and services charges on water supply, sanitation and waste management services rendered by the Gram Panchayat. To know about other sources of funds see Box – 5.

## EXERCISE – 5: Solution Assessment through Ranking Criteria Matrix

**What is this?** Problems have been analysed and priorities have been set by the people. Now, let them come out with possible solutions. Or what do they think can resolve the issue. This can be done on the ground, or on a chart paper.

**How is this exercise carried out?** We can go for a Ranking Criteria Matrix. This is a PRA method, where all the solutions are listed, and matched again certain acceptable criteria. Let the people come out with their own criteria. The PRA Facilitator (team) can add at the end, if people agreed to add your criteria to their list of criteria. You can ask if they want to consider the criteria to be not only socially acceptable but also technically sound and financially viable and manageable. How about the sustainable maintenance arrangement? What kind of management model shall fit alright? etc.

### Ranking Criteria Matrix

	Solution (Option-1)	Solution (Option-2)	Solution (Option-3)	Solution (Option-4)	Remarks
Criteria -1 (Community Acceptance)	2	3	4	1	
Criteria -2 (Technical easiness to use)	4	3	4	4	
Criteria -3 (Fund support from scheme)	1	2	2	1	
Criteria -4 (Maintenance)	1	1	2	1	
<b>Score</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>Rank</b>	<b>III</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>IV</b>	

Score: 1 = Very Poor; 2 = Poor; 3 = Good; 4 = Very Good

**Who participates?** All those who are concerned with the problem in question can be invited to participate.

**The purpose:** Selecting the most suitable solution for implementation in order to resolve a pressing problem identified through 'NSL Chart'.

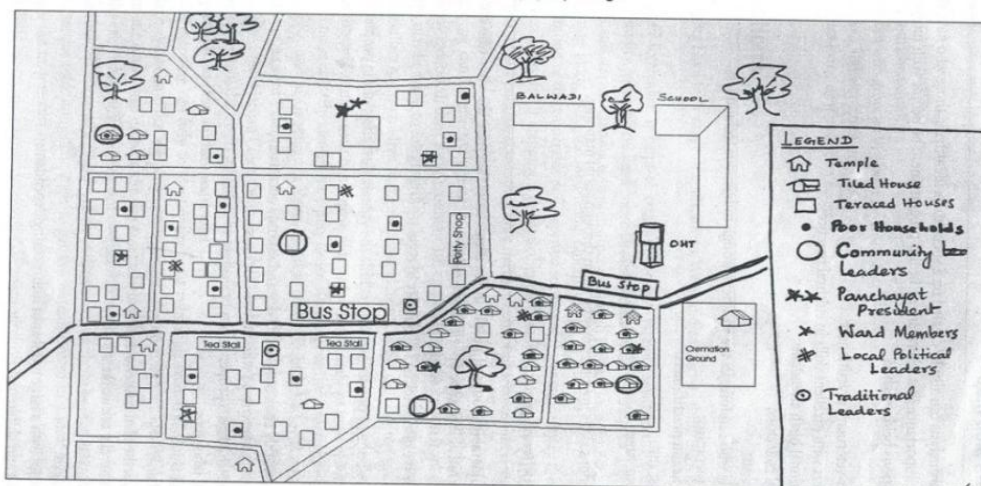
**Outcome Expected:** The most suitable solution to the problem in question emerges through people's consensus based on their scoring and ranking.

**Caution:** Clear understanding of the method is important. The PRA facilitator can start the participatory analysis of the solutions based on the criteria evolved by people, only after making sure that everyone has understood the method, and purpose of the exercise. People can suggest if there are any other more scientific way of assessing the appropriateness of the solution.

### EXERCISE – 6: Participatory Beneficiary Selection

**What is this?** This is an optional exercise, where individual beneficiaries are to be selected for the purpose of a particular project. Best examples can be (i) selection of youth for skill training; (ii) selection of progressive farmers, who are willing to try out a high-yielding seed variety for actual field experimentation; (iii) selection of artisans or crafts persons to try out an improved technology application in place of a traditional tool so as to reduce drudgery / enhance productivity or reduce cost.

**How is this exercise carried out?** If we have the cards (with names and house number) prepared during Social Mapping exercise, those cards can be used to call out the names. The community members can decide, who all deserve a given scheme/ benefit. The concerned person(s) can also express their willingness. Make sure there is no inclusion or exclusion error. In the sense, analysis must be thorough so that a person who deserves does not get excluded or vice versa.



Source: PRA Unit, GRI (1995e).

**Who participates?** Depending on the nature of project, the PRA team should make sure the relevant members / representatives of households participate. This can even be a larger group going even up to 30 – 40 local people.

**The purpose:** Selection of beneficiaries with the approval of the community members, and willingness of the prospective beneficiaries.

**Outcome Expected:** Select local people who really deserve certain assistance, and not include someone who would not participate / does not need support.

**Caution:** This is a very sensitive exercise. At times, everyone might want to get included. Use people's criteria in selecting participants / beneficiaries. The criteria must be clear and acceptable to most present. When someone slightly above the cut off of selection might challenge the list of beneficiaries as erroneous or prepared with vested interest. You need to be prepared to deal with such challenges with patience and ingenuity.

**Box – 8: XV Finance Commission Funds for Gram Panchayats:** Central and State Finance Commission Funds are other major sources of funds for Gram Panchayats to implement plans that people prepare through GPDP exercise. This is made available in addition to the scheme funds from various departments of the government. The XV-FC has worked out the total size of the grant to be Rs.60,750 crore for the period FY 2020-21 to the Rural Local Bodies (which includes also Block Panchayats and District Panchayats also). The total XV FC allocation for various states of India for the period 2020 – 2024 is given in Annexure– 4 & 5.

### **EXERCISE – 7: Analysis Group Discussion (Development Seminar)**

**What is this?** All these PRA exercises have been conducted in different locations of the Gram Panchayat. In this final sitting with the villagers, almost every one belonging to the village – irrespective their participation and non-participation in the previous PRA exercises - is invited to participate. Everyone should get to know the entire process and the outcome of the series of PRA exercises conducted in the village over a period of 2 – 3 days. In GPDP this is called Development Seminar.

**How is this exercise carried out?** The outcome of every PRA exercise – starting from Social Map, Problems listed; Priority that got into each cubicle of the N-S-L; and the problem that got to the top in the list of priority issues to be addressed.

**Who participates?**This is almost a Gram Sabha, including the school going children.

**The purpose:**The purpose is everyone should come to know the problems listed, priority arrived at, the solutions considered, and the final solution that is most likely to be taken up for implementation.

**Outcome Expected:**The data generated through all the PRA exercises get validated by larger group of people. The problem picked up for writing up in the form of a proposal for UBA support gets ready.

**Caution:**This is a larger group with people of varying interests – political, religious and other affiliations. Therefore, the crowd must be handled carefully without getting into local conflicts and political differences / controversies.

## SECTION – 4

### PRA: Principles and Process

#### Principles of PRA

PRA is flexible, adaptable, and it encourages improvisation and innovation as far as application of methods and tools are concerned. The actual practice of PRA process should follow certain principles so as to ensure quality outcome. Outcome in terms of enthused community participation, and obtaining reliable data and information, we set out searching.

In this section we shall see (i) Principles of PRA, (ii) Semi-structured interviewing and common mistakes to avoid while interacting with villagers; (iii) and Process to be adopted / avoided. There is nothing sacrosanct about all these. However, these have come about from practitioners as ‘good practice’, which helps improve community participation, strengthening trust, and enhance reliability of the data being shared by the community members with an external team like a PRA team from a Participating Institution of UBA.

The following are the principles of PRA, in brief.

- **It is a field-based appraisal undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team:** PRAs are conducted amidst community members who serve as key informants. A multi-disciplinary team of 3 - 4 subject specialists from different disciplines, depending on the topic of inquiry – can make up the outsiders’ team.
- **Flexibility and Informality:** This is about reversal of role [outsiders as learners and villagers as teachers, who know about that village]; it is about informality and having fun; it is about semi-structured interviews; it is about adapting / improvising PRA methods and tools depending on the expertise of insiders [villagers] and the data required by outsiders.
- **Right Attitude and Behaviour:** This is about Openness; Humility; Curiosity; Acceptance; and Sensitivity. This is about showing respect; being friendly;

sharing; interacting; being patient; not lecturing, listening, learning and de-learning and relearning.

- **Optimal Ignorance and Appropriate Imprecision:** This is about avoiding unnecessary details, over-collection of data nor aiming at accuracy / precision. The PRA team asks itself: ‘what kind of data / information is required, for what purpose, and how accurate does it have to be?’ Thus, we choose to be optimally ignorant, and appropriately imprecise. We’d better to be approximately correct than precisely wrong.
- **On-the Spot Analysis:** The data generated during participatory discussions, undergo analysis on-the-spot, in the presence of owners of the data – the villagers. They have all the chances to correct us, if we seem to have understood / recorded something wrong.
- **Off-setting Biases and Being Self-critical:** This is about being alert (self-critical) that we [outsiders] may inadvertently interact only with the elite and the articulate in the village, not realising that the poor, and the marginalised remain away voiceless from being heard / consulted. The PRA team needs to reflect on what is said and not said, seen and not seen, who is met and not met, and tries to identify possible sources of error and how they influence the interpretation of the data / information gathered.
- **Triangulation:** This is cross-checking the accuracy and reliability of the data being gathered. One way of doing this is cross-checking with any secondary data available with Gram Panchayat, BDO etc. Another way is making a direct observation of the places / things / people being referred to in the discussions. A third way is we use different PRA tools in different settings in the same village, where you can look for consistency of / contradiction in information. Fourthly, we use different PRA tools to gather different types of data, where there are changes of overlap. Such overlap can serve as a way of cross-checking data. Fifthly, PRA team (outsiders’ team) is a multi-disciplinary team, and so it’s possible any member of this team may point out data inaccuracy / contradiction, if any felt and seek validation before we actually use it.

**Box – 9 Six Helpers in PRA:** The PRA process constantly uses six helpers viz. What? When? Where? Why? Which? How? This is called 'probing' or 'key probes'. Thus, in a PRA exercise whatever information people share with the PRA team, all such data are subject to discussion by all the sections of the people who have assembled. Probing and on-the-spot Analysis are part of PRA process. It helps us have all our doubts clarified before we can admit a piece of information as 'true and valid'. Trust and respect are important in PRA. At the same time, it does not mean we need to take any information without adequate probing. It's possible the information being shared could be *a fact, rumour, hearsay, or false*. People might talk what they think you like listening to. If they sensed you like listening to 'negative stories', they might fabricate such stories and tell you. Use Six Helpers of PRA appropriately so as to ensure the data you gather is reliable, and not figments of imagination of people who have gathered.

### **The Practice of PRA Process**

We have been repeatedly indicting that if principles of PRA are not adhered to, the process of PRA tend to go wrong. When the process is wrong, the outcome tend to be wrong. If the outcome had come through devious or short-cut methods, it may not yield the result we desired to achieve. The quality of participation and the quality of data may become questionable. The data may become unreliable / irrelevant to the context from where it appeared to have emerged.

### **PRA Process**

Every village is different in some way or the other. People follow different cultural practices, and social mores. Therefore, it is almost impossible to prescribe the right way (process to be followed) for conducting PRA exercises, except some general prescriptions such as people in every culture like to be respected; deep inside, everyone is honest and treat people accordingly and so on. However, the following can be taken as a general protocol for generating reliable data through a PRA process.

#### **(i) Atmosphere-Based**

- Is the whole atmosphere of information generation informal, free, conductive and non-threatening?

- Is the place chosen for conducting PRA exercise a common place where all could assemble? Is there any place-specific barrier to assembling and discussing?
- How does the seating position look? Who seem to occupy superior place? (It should be either that the “villagers” take the superior position or the outsiders” and the “villagers” occupy positions of equality. The outsiders should never occupy the superior position.)

## **(ii) Team-Based**

- Is there ‘role reversal’ (outsiders as learners, villagers as teachers)?
- Is there any ‘role confusion’ and ‘role change’ among the PRA team members?
- Is there ‘rushing’? or is the learning process gradual and progressive?
- Is there coherence between successive questions or are they jumbled?
- Does the facilitator/interviewer establish proper eye contact with every participant or does he/ she focus on only one or two informants who are seemingly active?
- Do “they” do it?
- Are adequate probing and crosschecking of information done?
- Are the six helpers in PRA, viz., what, when, where, how, who, and, which; adequately and continuously used?
- Is the information generated triangulated?
- Is the facilitator really sensitive, or dramatic or pretending to be dumb? Is the discussion too lengthy?
- Is shoulder-tapping done whenever necessary, as a way of indicating to our team members that there is a digression / deviation taking place?
- Is there a natural starting and natural withdrawal? \* Are ‘chance encounters’ (during Transect) made use of or ignored?
- Does the team share the information with the villagers?
- Are the responses and answers properly judged? (Since the responses may be fact/ opinion/rumour/ false)?
- Is there any language-related barrier? You may speak the same language, but still not understand each other because of the difference in slang?
- How is the Team Mix? (Is the team multi-disciplinary?)

### **iii) People – Based**

- How is the Villagers Mix? (young? old? men? women? mixed?)
- What is the ‘outsiders’, ‘villagers’ ratio? Locals should be more, and outsiders can be a small team.
- Do the villagers, do, say, show and map with natural involvement and willingness or with reluctance and because they got caught into it?
- Are locally available materials used in the exercises?

A continuous reflection over the process would enable us to handle the PRA methods with ease, confidence and ingenuity. All these would enhance the quality of the PRA.

## **SECTION – 5**

### **Semi-Structured Interviews (SSI)**

#### **What is SSI?**

PRA uses semi-structured Interview technique. This is also known as Semi-structured Inquiry. The expression ‘*semi-structured*’ implies that there is something called *fully-structured* and something else called: *unstructured Inquiry*? The questionnaires used in household surveys are, often fully structured – meaning all the questions are pre-determined and it is presumed to be complete.

One demerit in using such fully structured questionnaires is that anything that is not pre-determined obviously gets omitted during the course of inquiry / interview. There is no way the Inquiry can accommodate such unanticipated responses. Therefore, we remain ignorant about it. On the other hand if we are unstructured, meaning going with no questionnaire at all, we may fail in sequencing our line of questioning, and consequently we may miss collecting some data / information that did not occur during the [jumbled] course of our inquiry.

In the case of semi-structured interviews we have a check-list of, often open ended questions, which are in a sequence. Since what aids the interview process is only a check-list, anything that we may have failed to pre-determine in our checklist can be accommodated during the interview. The interview often progresses like a seamless conversation, where the next question we ask is determined partly by what we have in the check-list, and partly by what the response was to the previous question.

Facilitators of PRA exercise generally use Semi-structured Interview technique. But, using SSI requires skills in setting the tone of the discussion, ingenuity to skills and

#### **How to do Semi-structured Interviewing (SSI)**

- The interviewing team consists of 2-4 people of different disciplines.
- Ensure *horse-shoe shape seating* so that eye-contact with everyone is easy.

- Begin with the traditional greeting and state that the interview team is here to learn.
- Begin the questioning by referring to someone or something visible.
- Conduct the interview informally and mix questions with discussion.
- Be open minded and objective.
- Let each team member finish their line of questioning (don't interrupt).
- Carefully lead up to sensitive questions.
- Assign one note-taker (but rotate).
- Be aware of non-verbal signals.
- Avoid leading questions and value judgments.
- Avoid questions which can be answered with 'yes or no'.
- Individual interviews should be no longer than 45 minutes.
- Group interviews should be no longer than two hours.
- Each interviewer should have a list of topics and key questions written down in his / her notebook.

### **SSI Individual Errors**

The following are some of the mistakes we generally make, that we should avoid.

- Failing to listen closely
- Repeating questions
- Helping out informants when they appear temporarily lost for word by
  - Interrupting
  - Suggesting answers
- Asking vague questions
- Failing to probe, (use Six helpers)
- Asking leading questions
- Too long an interview
- Pretending to be dumb

- Focusing on lead informant
- Appearing to be intimidating or overbearing

### **SSI Team Errors**

- Interrupting each other during the interview or long gaps
- Switching to a new topic suddenly
- Failing to close the group (meaning some people leaving half-way)
- Failing to plan and prepare fully
- Failing to give sufficient time for group discussions
- Improper place for interviewing (some people don't participate because of it)
- Too many/too less informants
- Lack of process observations (if the PRA team is following the principles)
- Methods / tools not mutually understood (e.g. when you can't explain clearly how to do map, or how to do ranking exercises people tend to leave)

## SECTION – 6

### Using PRA outcome to Write UBA Proposals

The series of PRA exercises helped you come up with a wealth of data about the village, and on the pressing problem that the people report about. You also have solution suggested by community members – of course incorporating your technical expertise with the approval of the villagers.

The concept of Village Adoption by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) entails development practice that is reflexive, and socially useful. It involves moving from ideation to action. It's about experiential-learning (i.e. experiencing and learning). It enables us to be *practical thinkers and reflexive doers*. It aims at: (i) Initiating socially useful action; and (ii) sharpening the professional competence and development facilitating skills of the Faculty members as well as the students involved in this exercise.

#### **What does a typical proposal contain?**

UBA National Coordination Team seeks proposals from Participating Institutions (PIs) to come up with proposals that the UBA can consider for financial support. The financial support helps the PIs to move out to the village, identify problems that the community feels are important, and what we, as HEIs or concerned learners, can do about it – in resolving the issues being raised. This proposal must emerge from the community in question. Social acceptability of a solution requires that you take up an issue that the people feel is urgent. Thus, it is more about social acceptability than about our having a technical solution. Unless your technical solution is workable / or exciting, it is unlikely to get accepted by the community members.

One weakness with many of us is as the saying goes, *for someone with a hammer in hand everything would look like nail*. For someone who has specialized in developing mobile applications, s/he has a tendency to think that anything can be solved through a mobile app. There is nothing wrong trying to reach a solution from the stand point of

what one thinks s/he is good at / has expertise in. Yet, this should not be limiting us from respecting the local knowledge that gets generated through PRA, and thinking of solutions that is simpler, out-of-the-box, which the villagers are likely to put to more sustainable use.

Because of this reason the UBA asks all the PIs to be familiar with PRA methods and techniques. Familiarity with PRA tools and techniques comes in handy while trying to arrive at community-based solutions, and solutions that the villagers are most likely to accept. The chances of project success become high (a) when people realize that your intervention is likely to resolve certain long-standing problems in the village; (b) when people own up the project concept and strategies; (c) and when people participate as partners in development, rather than as recipients of certain benefits that an external agency has planned offer – as charity or so.

**Box-10: UBA Proposal Format**

1. Project Title: (Give an appropriate and easily understandable title to your project)
  5. Subject Expert Group: (Please make sure it goes to the relevant SEG)
  6. (a) Name of village where is to be implemented: (This is where you shall conduct your PRA)  
(b) District and State of village:
  7. (a) Collaborating organization (if any):
  8. Objectives of the project (50 words):
  10. Brief plan of activities (100 words):
  11. Need of Customisation Development with proper assessment for viability of the outcome (50 words):
  12. Role of your Institute (50 words):
  13. Cost of facility: (Please make sure you do not exceed the ceiling fixed by UBA, unless you have own source of funds to meet the excess budget if you propose. In such cases indicate so.)
  14. Breakup of expenditure: (This is important so that a reviewer knows what expenditures are involved and if you have been realistic – underestimated or overestimated etc.)
  15. Project deliverables (product/process/improvement/ capacity building etc.)
  16. Availability of funds from other sources: (This is required, especially when the overall budget exceeds the ceiling given by UBA)
  17. Duration of the work (in terms work plan): This cannot exceed more than six months in most cases.
  18. Impact of the Project on Village: (what change you intend to bring about amongst your beneficiaries / villagers as a result of your intervention? How your work is going to correct a problem or add value to the existing conditions?)
- Note:** I have omitted Name, Contact details etc. of the PI, RCI etc. because obviously you shall provide those details.

## **Some Vital Information a Reviewer Looks for**

Please ensure while writing a proposal, who does your project benefit? How many are likely to benefit through the solution being proposed? What are the key deliverables? How is it likely to change the situations and conditions that are existing? What value does your intervention add / what problem does it resolve? It happens, often enough, a student has a solution, and he is looking for a problem village. There is nothing wrong in this approach. For instance, you have a technical solution to remove excess fluoride or arsenic from drinking water. Find villages that are suffering from fluoride / arsenic in drinking water, and help resolve. Instead, if you recommend it for any village irrespective of presence or absence of fluoride / arsenic in water it becomes the story of our proverbial ‘mobile app developer’.

## **Deliverables**

Any action project / development proposal has inputs in the form of data, funds, time, technical and other resources. All these are deployed with a commitment that, and in anticipation of certain desired ‘outcome’. This is called ‘deliverable’. These deliverables must be clearly stated in the UBA proposal. This (i) helps reviewers of your proposal to easily understand how clear you are about what you are trying to achieve; (ii) helps you to keep track of / monitoring if the activities being implemented are moving in the desired direction; and (iii) later on for an evaluation team from UBA or third party to report about your actual achievements against what you originally set out addressing.

### **Box – 11: Demonstration Mode**

Based on field-based observations, you or your students would have come out with some innovative solutions / equipment that solves a rural problem / problem in agriculture etc. If you have a specific proven model or prototype of a technology that you would like to see how it works in a village, do it. Demonstrate to the world that it works in your village. For example, you have developed an innovative water-saving technology / energy-saving technology / Micro Finance model / e-governance model etc. Mobile-based Marketing Information System; Waste management technologies; Wastewater management technologies etc. Demonstrate in the village that it works. This will (a) solve a rural problem; (b) give you credit that it works in a village, and it's possible you can scale it up with the financial assistance of relevant Ministries of the Government such as Department of Science and Technology (DST) or Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), or Ministry of Jal Sakthi etc.

## **Reporting and Documentation**

The series of PRA exercise shall give a wealth of data / information about the adopted village. This will serve as baseline data. During the course of implementation of your project in the adopted village, make it a habit to observe and write at least one-pagers every time you visit the village – along with your students’ team, of course. Use your mobile phone very liberally, with the consent of the villagers to take photos, record videos, and record discussions etc. All these will help you, when you are to write your intervention, and the outcome. Keep a Field Work Journal - a simple note book dedicated for the purpose of recording all the project interventions, and every small change that happens in the village because of, and after your intervention. Make report writing, and documentation part of your field work. Share.

**Subjects listed in Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution of India**

1. Agriculture, including agricultural extension
2. Land Improvement, Implementation of land reforms, and land conservation
3. Minor irrigation, water management and watershed development
4. Animal husbandry, dairying and poultry
5. Fisheries
6. Social Forestry and farm forestry
7. Minor forest produce
8. Small scale industries, including food processing industries
9. Khadi, village and cottage industries
10. Rural Housing
11. Drinking water and sanitation
12. Fuel and Fodder
13. Road, culverts, small bridges, ferries, waterways and other means of communication
14. Rural electrification, including distribution of electricity
15. Non-conventional sources of energy
16. Poverty alleviation programme
17. Education including primary and secondary schools
18. Technical training and vocational education
19. Adult and non-formal education
20. Village Libraries
21. Cultural activities
22. Markets and fairs
23. Health including hospitals, Primary Health Centres (PHCs), and dispensaries
24. Family Welfare
25. Women and Child Development
26. Social Welfare including welfare of the handicapped, mentally retarded and aged people
27. Welfare of the weaker sections, and in particular of SC/STs.
28. Public Distribution System
29. Maintenance of Community Assets

**The type of vision you may provide to ponder over**

- Safe drinking water available to all households / piped water supply to all
- Open-defecation-free Village
- Child-labour free village
- 100% anganwadi enrolment
- 100% school enrolment – no drop out and 100% transition
- 100% mothers and children are covered under immunization
- Malnutrition-free village
- Put in Place a Waste Management System (composting, Bio-gas options)
- Use of solar powered motor pumps for rural water supply
- Management of household waste water through appropriate simple technologies
- Making institutional / community latrines functional (at schools, anganwadi, panchayat office, local clinic, local bus stop, sanitary complexes if any)
- Help set up e-panchayats (e-governance at Panchayat level)
- E-seva centres at Panchayat
- GDPD in Plan Plus
- Labour budgeting for full utilization of funds under MGNRES for maintaining common assets
- Water saving, water conservation, and maintaining water harvesting structures
- Measures to achieve SDGs or any of the Goals of SDGs e.g. Hunger-free village.
- Electricity connection for all
- LPG for all
- Hut-less village (PMAY)
- Skilling mission for the youth
- Actions to Improve Own Source Revenue (OSR) of Panchayats
- Taking up many no-cost / low-cost activities

### **Mission Indradhanush Scheme**

- This is for children either unvaccinated or partially vaccinated against seven vaccine preventable diseases which include diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis, measles and hepatitis B. Identify and facilitate with health care workers, and hospitals.

### **BalSwachhta Mission**

- Clean school and anganwadi
- Clean Surrounding like playground
- Clean self (personal Hygiene / child health)
- Clean Food and Safe Drinking Water
- Clean and functional Toilets
- Adequate school infrastructure and sports facilities

### **PoshanAbhiyan**

- ICDS – Anganwadi
- Nutritional Status of children
- Follow-up on the progress of children with poor BMI
- Orientation to mothers on nutrition from local vegetables

### **Pension Schemes / National Social Assistance Programme of GoI**

- Atal Pension Yojana
- National Disability Pension Scheme
- National Old age Pension Scheme
- National Widow Pension Scheme

### **Enrolment Camps**

- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana
- Aadhar Card enrolment
- Rural Postal Life Insurance Scheme
- Soil Health Card

## **Camps**

- General Health Camps
- De-addiction Camps
- Eye Camps (General and in schools)
- Personal Hygiene / Menstrual Hygiene Camps
- Immunization and De-worming Camps
- Ensuring 100% toilet-use by 100% of the rural residents
- Awareness + Action Camps on Communicable Diseases and Prevention of Epidemics
- Animal Health Camp & preparing quality animal-feed, forage crop cultivation

## **Livelihoods Enhancement / Diversification**

- Backyard country chicken development (Provide them the facilities)
- Identify candidates from villages for appropriate skilling under DDU-GKY
- Agriculture development programme – Organic agricultural practices
- Introduction of high yielding seed varieties (cereals, pulses, and vegetables)
- Horticulture development
- Annual / Periodical *Krishimela* / Rural Crafts *Mela*

**Ministries / Departments and Major Deliverables (Indicative)**

<b>Sl.</b>	<b>Issues in Question</b>	<b>Ministry / Department concerned</b>
1.	<p><b><u>Drinking Water</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Piped water supply for every household</li> <li>● Pipe-line extension for covering uncovered households</li> <li>● Creation of new Over Head Tank, Pump Room</li> <li>● Renovation of water supply infrastructure</li> <li>● Drainage systems</li> <li>● Water quality surveillance / Testing Labs</li> <li>● Addressing water quality problems</li> <li>● Rain water harvesting</li> </ul>	<p>(Ministry of Jal Sakthi)</p> <p>Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) Dept Rural Water Supply Water Quality Labs. District / Block Water and Sanitation Mission</p>
2.	<p><b><u>Sanitation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Household latrines / repair / making it functional</li> <li>● Converting single pit toilet into double pits</li> <li>● School and Anganwadi toilets</li> <li>● Water supply for toilets in (village) institutions</li> <li>● Setting up solid waste management system</li> <li>● Setting up wastewater management system</li> <li>● Faecal sludge management system</li> <li>● Setting up Faecal Sludge Treatment Plants</li> <li>● Environmental sanitation</li> </ul>	<p>Swachh Bharat Mission- (Gramin)</p> <p>District SBM-G office Block SBM-G office</p>
3.	<p><b><u>School Education</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Universal Education for All (SSA)</li> <li>● School enrolment / preventing drop outs</li> <li>● Transition from class to class (including girls)</li> <li>● School infrastructure / smart school infrastructure</li> <li>● Quality of Education</li> <li>● Parent Teacher Association / Panchayat level Education Committee</li> <li>● WASH (Water, Sanitation, Hygiene) in schools</li> <li>● Noon Meal Scheme – quality / attendance.</li> </ul>	<p>Department of School Education &amp; Literacy.</p>
4.	<p><b><u>Agriculture</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Soil health card</li> <li>● Seeds, fertilizers, pesticides</li> <li>● Organic Agriculture</li> <li>● Agri. Extension Services</li> <li>● Composting and bio-manure production</li> <li>● Crop Insurance</li> <li>● Horticulture / tapping horticulture potential</li> <li>● Value chain development</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry of Agriculture &amp; Farmers Welfare</p>
5.	<p><b><u>Water Conservation</u></b></p> <p>Water conservation, water storage structure, watershed, pond renovation, rainwater drainage.</p>	<p>Department of Rural Devt. (MGNREGS)</p>

6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village Roads (MGNREGS)</li> <li>• Housing for all the poor</li> <li>• Wage Employment for all eligible and willing</li> <li>• SHGs &amp; supporting micro enterprise activities</li> <li>• Bank linkage and bank account for all</li> <li>• Pension for old, widow, and disabled</li> <li>• Placement-based and self-employment skills for all eligible youth in the villages</li> </ul>	<p>Department of Rural Development (Block Devt. Office)</p> <p>Ministry of Skill Development &amp; Entrepreneurship (State / District level Skill Development Mission) RUDSETIs</p>
7.	<p><b><u>Animal Husbandry</u></b> Dairy, sheep / goat rearing, poultry enterprises Fisheries in coastal villages / or in-land fisheries Animal health camps / immunisation services Breed improvement Animal feed / fodder</p>	<p>Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries</p>

You have Departments under various Ministries at State / District / Sub-district levels. You can go into the website of relevant Ministry to get to know the details of schemes a given ministry is implementing for rural development. The following is an indicative list.

- Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
- Ministry of Panchayati Raj
- Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
- Ministry of Human Resource Development
- Ministry of Tribal Affairs
- Ministry of Women and Child Development
- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- Ministry of Power
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Food Processing
- Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

**XV Finance Commission Grants to Gram Panchayat (2020-21)****(Rs.crore)**

<b>S.No</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Grants RLB (Rs.crore)</b>
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2625
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	231
3.	Assam	1604
4.	Bihar	5018
5.	Chhattisgarh	1454
6.	Goa	75
7.	Gujarat	3195
8.	Haryana	1264
9.	Himachal Pradesh	429
10.	Jharkhand	1689
11.	Karnataka	3217
12.	Kerala	1628
13.	Madhya Pradesh	3984
14.	Maharashtra	5827
15.	Manipur	177
16.	Meghalaya	182
17.	Mizoram	93
18.	Nagaland	125
19.	Odisha	2258
20.	Punjab	1388
21.	Rajasthan	3862
22.	Sikkim	42
23.	Tamil Nadu	3607
24.	Telangana	1847
25.	Tripura	191
26.	Uttar Pradesh	9752
27.	Uttarakhand	574
28.	West Bengal	4412
	<b>All States</b>	<b>60,750</b>

### **XV-FC: Drinking Water and Sanitation**

The recommended grants for Rural Local Bodies(i.e. Gram Panchayats) under the Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV-FC) are in two parts, viz. Basic and Tied Grants, in the ratio of 50%:50%. The Basic Grants are untied and can be used by RLBs for location-specific felt needs. The tied Grants are to be used for the basic services of (i) sanitation and maintenance of Open Defecation Free (ODF) status and (ii) supply of drinking water, rain water harvesting and water recycling. The XV-FC has worked out the total size of the grant to be Rs.60,750 crore for the period FY 2020-21 to the Rural Local Bodies. A maximum of 25% of this fund can be divided for use at Block and District Panchayats. The remaining 75 – 85% funds will be available with Gram Panchayats.

#### **The Tied Funds: Water and Sanitation**

The Swachh Bharat Mission-G has elevated its focus towards ODF-Plus with a new National Rural Sanitation Strategy 2019-2029. Besides SBM-G the Government of India has resolved to ensure that all 18 crore households across all villages will have potable water supply by 2024. To accomplish this daunting task, the GoI has launched the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), in partnership with States, to not only provide tap water connection; but the goal is that every home gets drinking water in adequate quantity of prescribed quality on a regular and long-term basis. The Govt. of India has announced a plan of spending more than Rs. 3.50 lakh crores on Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in the 5 years to come - until 2024.

The tied grants, meant for basic services are for the following purposes:

- Sanitation and maintenance of ODF status
- Drinking water supply
- Rain water harvesting and water recycling

#### **In Sanitation Front**

1. Taking up ODF completion and sustainability activities, including construction of toilets for households left out in the baseline of SBM-G, and new houses;
2. Identify households without toilets and facilitate construction of toilets
3. Taking up continuous engagement of ODF communities for ensuring ODF sustainability

4. Create facilities for Solid Waste Management
5. Create facilities for Wastewater Management
6. Sweeping of streets/ public places / Litter bins / Plastic Ban / drainage cleaning

### **In Drinking Water Front**

The Jal Jeevan Mission is a flagship scheme of the government which seeks to not only provides functional household tap connections for all, but also seeks to promote the holistic management of local water resources. For the first time, this water supply programme addresses the need to sustain water sources with conservation and reuse measures made mandatory to the scheme designs. In other words, Jeevan Mission has been designed to incorporate an integrated approach with end-to-end measures: from supply to reuse and recharge.

1. Planning and Implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission: Making arrangements for 100% coverage of Functional House Tap Connection (FHTC) so as to ensure 55 lpcd in every rural household / every village, including Schools and ICDS centres.
2. Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance for source sustainability
3. Drinking water source development and augmentation of the existing sources
4. Making arrangements to provide at least 10 lpcd safe water to the households in water quality affected areas (esp. Fluoride and arsenic affected areas)
5. O&M of piped water supply schemes and raise the service level
6. Use of Technological intervention for treatment to make water potable /Grey water management
7. Geo tag all water supply assets and linking FHTC to Aadhar.
8. Activate Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSCs)/Paanisamiti.
9. Rainwater harvesting (structures)
10. Water Safety and Security Plan

With the help of Implementation Support Agency (ISA) working at village level, model management contract may be developed so that water supply services at village level can be provided by young entrepreneurs/ Self Help Groups on either standalone or cluster-based models. The same can be used for grey-water management. This will help in bringing in newer technology, robust management practices and recovery of user charges, thus bringing in long-term sustainability.

## References and List for Further Reading

Government of India, (2018). *Guidelines for Preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)*. New Delhi: Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

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