

PRA: How it can be used in BRAC Programmes

**Rita Sen
Sabah Tarannum
Parul Lata Biswas**

Abstract

This is a documentation of a training workshop on PRA. The broad objective of the workshop was to orient the Regional Managers of Rural Development Programme (RDP). It is expected that by the end of this workshop, all the participants would have a good level of understanding of PRA tools and techniques. They also would be able to identify the relevant/specific areas where PRA could be applied and to develop working action plan with the AMs, POs and PAs using PRA in their programme activities. The workshop was organized by the Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC and held at CDM, Rajendrapur on 15-22 January, 1996. Mr. Kamal Kar, participatory development consultant from India, facilitated the workshop. Dr. G. Samdani Fakir, Head of the Training Division, also facilitated the workshop for a part of the time. Out of Twenty four participants 21 were RMs and Sector Specialists from RDP and 3 Researchers from RED were attended the workshop. For the purpose of field practical, the participants were divided into four groups and four villages were chosen where four different types of RDP activities were in operation. On the last day each group presented their field activity reports in a session which was attended by the senior BRAC management. Some useful feedback came out as a result of this workshop these can be summarized as - 1) PRA tools like Physical and social mapping, Wealth and Matrix Ranking, seasonal calander and Livelihood Analysis can be used to identify target population and programmes. Information collection can be rapid and appropriate as a result of using these techniques. 2) Time line, Impact flowchart, Livelihood Analysis and Venn Diagram can be used to monitor, evaluate and implement programmes and assess their impact. 3) Participatory planning and all the tools mentioned above can also be used for problem identification and planning.

The Workshop

Introduction

This report contains the major events and recommendations of a training workshop on PRA which was conducted for the Regional Managers (RMs) and Sector Specialists of BRAC's Rural Development Programme (RDP). The workshop was organized by the Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC and held at CDM, Rajendrapur on 15-22 January, 1996. Mr. Kamal Kar, participatory development consultant from India, facilitated the workshop. Dr. G. Samdani Fakir, Head of the Training Division, also facilitated the workshop for a part of the time.

There were 24 participants in the workshop : fifteen RMs, six sector specialists, and the rest were from RED (Annexure I). Mr. G K Roy, Programme Manager, RDP attended the workshop as a special observer.

Workshop Objectives

The broad objective of the workshop was to orient the RMs of RDP about the concept and tools of PRA and their applicability in RDP. The facilitator developed the workshop programme in consultation with the Head of Training Division, Programme Managers of RDP and Manager RED (Annexure II). Specific objectives of the workshop, as delineated through the consultation, were as follows:

By the end of this workshop, all the participants would

- a. have a good conceptual level understanding of PRA methodology and its tools (knowledge level);
- b. have developed some relevant skills of application of PRA in villages;

- c. be able to identify the relevant/specific areas where PRA could be applied (e.g., programme participant identification, area selection, IGA selection, IGA identification and intervention, process monitoring etc.); and
- d. be able to develop working action plan with the AMs, POs & PAs using PRA in their programme activities.

On the basis of these objectives, a eight day programme was prepared. Two full days were earmarked for field work. Presentations on the field experiences by the participants and their recommendations were placed in a concluding session. The participants were particularly oriented on the background and concept of PRA as itemized below:

- a. PRA principles;
- b. historical background;
- c. rationale of using PRA;
- d. different PRA tools, and
- e. their applicability in RDP operation and monitoring

Field Exercise

For the purpose of field practical, the participants were divided into four groups and four villages were chosen where four different types of RDP activities were in operation. The participants worked on application of the following PRA tools:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Physical map | 6. Changes and trends |
| 2. Social map | 7. Time line |
| 3. Transact | 8. Livelihood analysis |
| 4. Seasonal calendar | 9. Venn diagram |
| 5. Matrix scoring and ranking | 10. Participatory planning |

Group 1 worked in Digir Chala village of Gazipur where RDP just started its survey to identify the target group for VO formation. There they worked on basic appraisal by using various tools of PRA.

Group 2 worked in village Potka Botar Tak of Gazipur where the village organization has just been formed, but no other programme activities were introduced. Here, the group tried to identify the possible income generating activities for women.

Group 3 used different tools of PRA in Roghunathpur village of Mymensing to know the impact of women's income generating activities. In this village BRAC started its activities in 1993.

Group 4 worked on developing a participatory plan for the women group members who wanted to take up vegetable cultivation as an income earning activity. The village was Madhpur in Mymensing. In 1992 BRAC came here.

After the village exercise, the four groups shared their experiences among themselves. Each group prepared a report on their activities with reference to the PRA tools used and difficulties faced, if any, in applying the tools. At the end, the four groups consolidated their field experiences and came up with a set of recommendations on the use of selected PRA tools for specific activities (Annexure III).

Concluding Session : Discussions

On the last day each group presented their field activity reports in a session which was attended by senior BRAC management : Director Programs, Director Research, Director Monitoring and Internal Audit, Director Public Affairs and Communications, Programme Head of Training Division, PC Continuing Education and Manager RED. Presentations were followed by discussions, suggestions and strategy formulation in relation to future

use of PRA in programme operation. The following questions were raised and discussed in the session:

- Whether the RMs can use the PRA tools in future and apply these in their work;
- Whether PRA can be used and institutionalized in BRAC in programme operation and monitoring;
- Whether the RMs need any refresher training;
- Whether the RMs need any support of some specially trained people on PRA who, in turn, can train the POs and PAs;
- Whether RED can provide the RMs with necessary PRA materials;
- Is it possible for the RMs to share the PRA techniques with other field staff attending the regular meetings at the regional level;
- Is it be feasible to add one module on PRA in the existing staff development training;

Most of the RMs felt that they could use PRA in a limited way and use the tools particularly for two types of activities: TG identification and selection of income generating projects.

It was opined that the RMs could start the process of PRA use by sharing the newly gained training knowledge with the POs and PAs. Responding to this comment, the Programme Manager RDP pointed out that at this point it would not be wise to involve the POs and PAs in PRA because they are not acquainted with the PRA tools.

The RMs felt that the POs and PAs might be the largest users of PRA in BRAC as they are closely attached with the people at the grass roots. A suggestion was made that it would be much useful if BRAC could develop a team of PRA trainers who would move from region to region and train the AMs, POs and PAs on PRA.

Referring to one particular suggestion, the Head of Training Division opined that a specific module on PRA methods might be added in the relevant courses on staff development.

courses should be designed so that the POs and other field staff could be thoroughly acquainted with PRA.

3. BRAC has developed a team of specially trained people who can offer training to the AMs, POs and PAs in PRA.
4. BRAC's Training Division and RED could jointly develop a course on PRA for BRAC staff. This course can also be offered for other organizations interested in using PRA.
5. BRAC's Training Division can also add a specific module on PRA methods in the related courses of staff development.
6. PRA has already created a demand among various BRAC programmes. NFPE, for example, has requested for arranging training of their field managers on PRA. It is now imperative to respond to the emerging need.
7. The RMs agreed to explore the scope of using some selected PRA techniques in their work during the next six month. RED would follow up this new initiative through a study and produce a report. This would demonstrate where the RMs could use the PRA tools and what problems they faced in using it.

ANNEXURE-1

PARTICIPANTS OF THE PRA TRAINING WORKSHOP

PARTICIPANTS FROM RDP

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DESIGNATION</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
01. Shirajuddin Mandal	Sr. Area Manager	Tangail Region
02. Shahidul Islam	"	Manikganj "
03. Saydul Haque	"	Kushtia "
04. Ahmed Ali	"	Khulna "
05. Bazlur Rahman	"	Barisal "
06. Biswanath Sarkar	"	Gopalganj "
07. Shamsuddin Ahmed	Sr. Area Manager	Sylhet "
08. Amzad Hossain Bhuiyan	"	Narsingdi "
09. Pankaj Nath	"	Noagaon "
10. Rafiqul Islam	"	Rajshahi "
11. Sadaqul Islam	"	Dinajpur "
12. Prasanta Kumar Roy	Regional Manager	Bogra "
13. Rezanoor Rahman	Sr. Area Manager	Pabna "
14. Shamsul Haque	"	SDP
15. Faridur Rahman	"	SDP
16. Abdul Khaleque	Sector Specialist	Head Office
17. Hamiduzzaman	"	"
18. Abdul Motaleb	"	"
19. Ayub Hussain	"	"
21. Rakibul Bari	"	"

PARTICIPANTS : RED

1. Rita Sen	Research Sociologist	"
2. Sabah Tarannum	Staff Nutritionist	"
3. Parul Lata Biswas	Field Researcher	"

Special Observer

G K Roy Programme Manager

THE WORKSHOP SCHEDULE
CDM, Rajendrapur 15-22 January 1996

Time	Day-1 : Jan-15	Day-2 : Jan-16	Day-3 : Jan-17	Day-4 : Jan-18
Morning	* Introduction * Expectation from the workshop * Objectives * Workshop plan	PRA tools and their various uses	PRA tools their uses and applicability	PRA field exercise
Afternoon	PRA Genesis, background, rationale, application, PRA tools ↓	↓	Developing village PRA working strategy and group formation (four groups each on specific topics)	↓
Evening	PRA tools (continued)	PRA tools and it's possible application in BRAC's programme	↓	Classroom: Reflection on field experience and plan for next day
Time	Day-5 : Jan-19	Day-6 : Jan-20	Day-7 : Jan-21	Day-8 : Jan-22
Morning		PRA field exercise ↓	Sharing and presentation of field experience	Final presentation by the participants on the training experience and working action plan.
Afternoon		↓	Developing the action plan based on field PRA experience	
Evening		Reflection on field exercise	↓	

**Selected PRA Tools and their Possible use in RDP
Views of Regional Managers**

Sl. No.	Selected PRA Tools	Where PRA tools can be used	Advantages
1.	Physical Mapping Social Mapping Wealth Ranking Matrix Scoring and Ranking Seasonal Calendar Livelihood Analysis	• TG identification • Programme identification	More rapid and appropriate information
2.	Changes and Trends Time line Impact Flow Chart Livelihood Analysis Venn Diagram	• Programme monitoring and evaluation • Impact assessment • Programme implementation	In-depth understanding of the process of programme implementation
3.	Participatory planning and other tools as in I and 2 above	• Problem identification and planning	Appropriate planning from the communities and their active participation