

Application Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA) A New Tool for Rural Development (Case Study Khouzestan Province, Iran)

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Abstract: Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA) is suitable tool to identify, prioritize and analyze of needs and problems of the people, while opportunities and solutions existing in the community are discovered. PRCA specifically seeks to discover issues to resolution through the application of communication. The method of this research was qualitative research with semi structure interview. At this research 5 analytical loops organized. In each loop one facilitator person and 6 to 9 farmers as analyzer were exist. By using different PRCA techniques such as matrix, community map, cause and effect diagram, factor analysis diagram, tree diagram etc, identified educational needs, situation geographical and natural resources and cause of environmental destruction based on farmers view. Application Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA) A New Tool for Rural Development (Case Study Khouzestan Province, Iran).

[Ahmad Reza Ommani. **Application Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA) A New Tool for Rural Development (Case Study Khouzestan Province, Iran)**. Life Science Journal. 2011;8(1):352-355] (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>.

Keywords: PRCA, Rural Development, Watershed

1. Introduction

Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA) is a communication research method that use visualization techniques and interviews to create information for the design of effective communication programs, materials, media and methods for development purposes to ensure relevance and ownership by the farmers. PRCA facilitates conversation among the rural people themselves and between them and the extension agents in order for all parties to reach mutual understanding and plan for action. PRCA is therefore used to promote the participation of rural people in decision-making that affects their living (Anyaegbunam et al, 2004). PRCA and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) are tools to increase participation and communication by local people organizing for rural and agricultural development (Toness, 2001). PRA is 'a growing family of approaches and methods to enable local people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act' (Chambers, 1994: 1). In last decades Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and later Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) methods emerged. PRA and PLA recognized that there were many things that researchers and subject matter specialists did not know and the only way to know them was by listening to the rural people. Similarly rural people were lacking some of the technical knowledge that the experts had to solve some of their problems. Thus, knowledge sharing became an essential component of PRA (Noorivandi and Ommani, 2009., Anyaegbunam et al, 2004).

PRA has been used extensively in agriculture, forestry and a number of other areas. PRCA belongs to the same family as PRA, PLA and the other participatory methods, but it is unique because it focuses specifically on rural communication systems and how to improve information sharing among all rural people in a development effort. From the time it was conceptualized in 1994, PRCA has undergone changes to better adapt it to field realities. (Anyaegbunam et al, 2004).

Tools and techniques used for PRCA are mainly take on from other participatory appraisal approaches such as PRA, PLA, etc. Since most of these tools and techniques are visual in nature, they remove the need for high levels of literacy and numeracy on the part of community members. The primary purpose of PRCA tools and techniques is to enable groups in the community to express and analyze their knowledge and needs. They help the people to map and diagram their situation and environment in the most easy and non-threatening manner using materials and symbols that they are used to. The tools and techniques also assist the people to easily identify and prioritize their needs, opportunities, problems, strengths, weaknesses and threats (Anyaegbunam et al, 2004, p.64).

2. Material and Methods

The application of PRCA techniques (Case Study: rural area in Shoushtar township of Khouzestan provinces)

The research method is qualitative that carry out by 5 analytical loop in rural area of Shoushtar

township of Khouzestan province, Iran. PRCA assist the community to set their own qualitative indicators for participatory monitoring and evaluation of the situation. This set of indicators is defined by the community and often reflects measures of their satisfaction, viewpoint or perception regarding educational needs, their situation, or analyzing of programs. There is a different technique for applying PRCA based on purpose of research:

1. Techniques for identify and describe of community

1.1. Techniques for gathering data regarding geographical location: Participatory mapping allows a group of people share information regarding location. Community maps apply to visually define of farms, water resources, gardens etc.

1.2. Techniques for gathering data regarding residential and organizational location: Residential and location maps show status of home location, schools, organizations, infrastructure etc (Figure 1).

2. Techniques for educational need assessment of people.

2.1. Matrix one of techniques for identifying educational needs is classification matrices table. This matrix that has both horizontal and vertical axis. A wide range of matrices can be

constructed using local materials, giving scores for different variables, such as the productivity of particular crop varieties or methods of soil and water conservation. Labor inputs, taste preference or fertilizer use, for example, might be plotted against particular rice or millet varieties. At this research matrix used for determining educational needs of Garab farmers area in Shoushtar township of Khouzestan province, Iran. By one analytic loop with one facilitator (researcher) and farmers, determined educational needs of Garab farmers regarding watershed practices. By perception of farmers this need ranked (Figure 2).



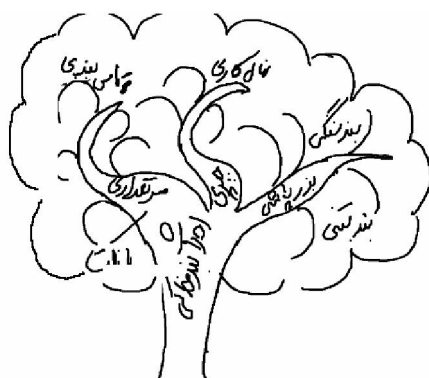
Figure 1: Examples of map community and organizations, designed by farmers of rural area in Shoushtar township of Khouzestan provinces, Iran

موضوع	بزرگوار	مردمان	باغچه	بند خالی	بند چوبی	بند سنگی	نازکای	تراشیده	نورانی
حفاظت از زمین									
افزایش درآمد									
استفاده از آب									
افزایش عملکرد									
حفاظت از آب									
کاهش مهاجرت									
جمع	۴۳	۳۹	۳۷	۴۴	۴۳	۳۳	۳۶	۳۱	۳۱

Score: Min=0,
Max=10

Sum

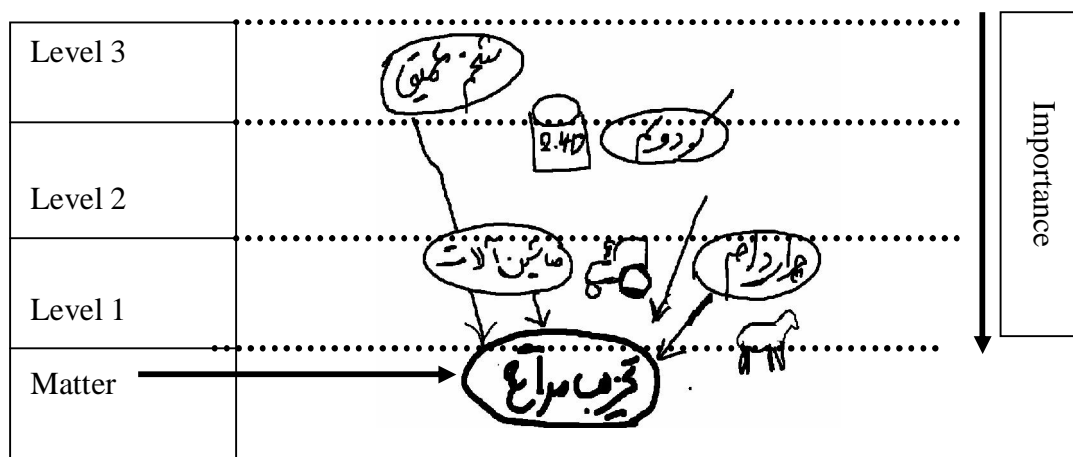
Figure 2: Example of matrix for identifying educational needs of farmers



2.2. Tree design: one of other techniques for identifying educational needs is tree design. Stem of tree was considered for main educational need. On other cluster write other need with lower important (Figure 3).

3.1 Cause and effect diagram is one of techniques for visual comprehensive regarding cause of different matters. At this research the cause of distraction and depletion of pastures and lands analyzed. Based on results, reduction of plants,

3.2 Factor analysis diagram is other techniques for determining factors that affect on other variables. At this research analyzed different variable and identified the factors that affect on conservation natural resources base on view of farmers (Figure 5). Same variable considered as one group. Based on view of farmers 3 groups categorized: people supports, governmental supports and extension activities.



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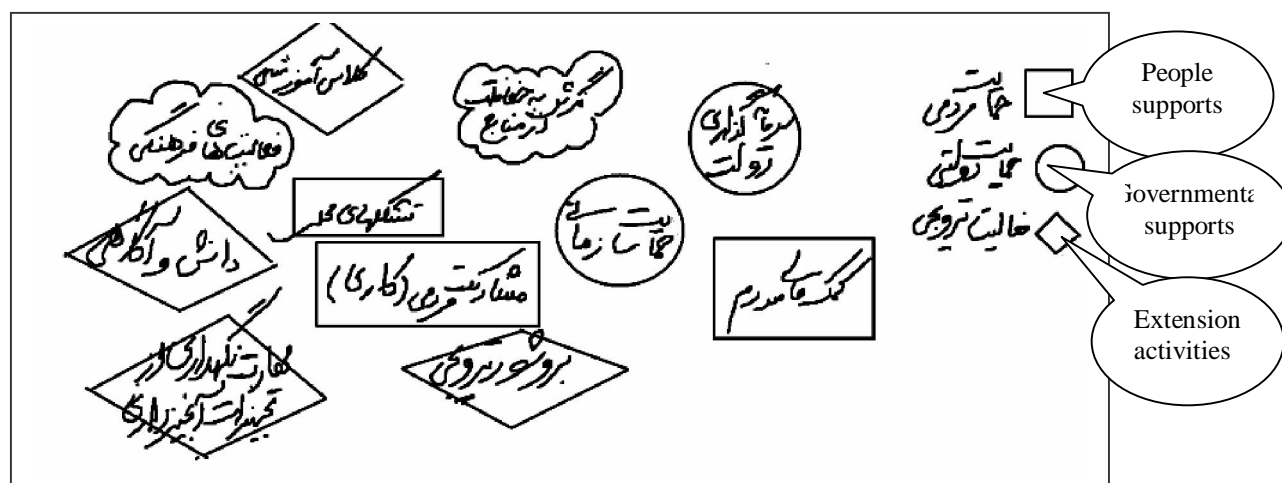


Figure 3: Example of factor analysis diagram for identifying the factors that affect on conservation natural resources

Conclusion

Through PRCA, rural people express and share what they already know, investigate and observe add to their knowledge, analyze and become more aware and reach new understanding plan and implement what they have planned take command, and further learn through the experience of action. The participatory orientation of PRCA has given new impetus to the development of methods. Based on different researcher PRCA are good for (Adebo, 2000):

- Providing basic information in situations where little is known
- Identifying and assessing problems
- Appraising, designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluation programs and projects
- Getting a better picture of needs and organizations' ability to meet them
- Developing and transferring appropriate technologies
- Appraising emergencies
- Planning projects that are more relevant, restructuring administrations, assisting in decision-making and policy formation
- Generating hypotheses, ruling out inappropriate ones
- Providing guidelines for survey designs and assessing the applicability of their results to other places.
- Fleshing – out complementing, interpreting, or giving depth and context to information obtained through other methods.

At this research described application of some PRCA techniques on empowerment of farmers. PRCA techniques used for:

- How many people living in community

- How they living and working
- Identifying educational need assessment
- Identifying situation geographical and natural resources.
- Techniques for identifying cause of matters

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1/7/2010