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PRA camp at Mahilong, Bihar, 27-30 November, 1990: Krishi Gram Vikas Kendra

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The KGVK experience

KGVK is an NGO sponsored and supported by the Usha Martin Group of Industries. It has conducted a series of PRA training exercises for government officers of watershed and forestry programmes, for voluntary agencies, for NGOs and for research institutions. The strategy for PRA is as follows:

- adopt PRA as part of KGVK's operational strategy;
- provide training for those requesting it (to train them into trainers);
- organise exposure workshops in Ranchi and neighbouring areas to create an interest in PRA;
- train sufficient number of people in other organisations to form a network;
- find, locate, train and develop at least 6 to 7 persons in the central and North Eastern zone of India who will then be available to train others; and,
- prepare and make available relevant PRA literature to particularly influence government officers.

We have faced several important problems:

- if we are going to be able to meet some of the demands for conducting PRA then we will have to start thinking in terms of getting additional persons so that ongoing programmes don't suffer. This will mean we have to start charging for conducting workshops (which may again dissuade people from asking for them);

- preparing and printing literature is expensive. Earlier we had been sending copies of reports to people asking them to return us a photocopy for passing on (but no one sends back the photocopy!); and,
- preparing a handbook on PRA to get government officers interested in PRA. Once feedback is received on the draft circulated to various persons, funds will be required to print this and circulate it to different senior government officers.

Our dream is:

- to see PRA become a 'way of life' among the voluntary agencies in this region; and,
- to see more government officers interested in and adopting PRA.

This report is of one of our first PRA training exercises, held in Mahilong to train XISS staff.

• PRA camp, Mahilong

The first PRA camp was held in Gerebir, Ranchi, with Robert Chambers and James Mascarenhas providing the basic introduction to the concept. Krishi Gram Vikas Kendra (KGVK) thereafter had its own PRA camp at village Chaitra from 5-8 September with Dr R I Jayakaran acting as the principal resource person as none of the others who had been trained could give time. The Chaitra camp was organised with a view not only to obtain relevant information regarding project suitability but also to train up more resource persons from within KGVK itself to facilitate more widespread use of the system. Accordingly, several persons from KGVK attended the camp and were trained as resource persons. A considerable amount of information was obtained at this camp and the rest of the KGVK team that was initially a

little sceptical about the utility and application of PRA suddenly discovered that here was a system that seemed to be a real answer to prayer, able to bypass the cumbersome and largely futile exercise of the traditional questionnaire survey system.

On reassessing the system KGVK feels that besides its other advantages PRA restores to farmers their rightful dignity, in recognising them as intelligent beings, environmentally conscious and hard working. It recognises and appreciates their efforts to survive in their environment, seeks to learn what that effort is and how it came about thus paving the way to understand best what type of programme will be suitable and enjoy the farmer's hearty participation. KGVK has thus been talking to various people about this concept and sharing the experience with others in the rural development field. Opportunities have also come to make slide and overhead projector presentations to senior government officers of the State at the State level National Watershed Development Workshops. Several senior government officers in Ranchi have also shown keen interest in the use of PRA and have attended talks on introduction to the concept of PRA.

Father L Francen sj, Director of Xavier Institute of Social Services, requested KGVK to organise a PRA camp for the training of some XISS field project officers in PRA. Unfortunately the only time available was between 27-30 November, a time not entirely suitable for the PRA camp because it was the busiest time in the year for agricultural operations. However, despite this KGVK went ahead with organising the camp with two main objectives. One, to be able to make the project officers of XISS familiar with PRA and two, to get relevant information about Mahilong village for making development efforts more participatory. Both these objectives were fulfilled to a large extent during the field exercises of meeting farmers at their threshing grounds. However, since the final concluding programme of the Village Resource Development Plan (VRDP) was brought forward from 1 Dec to 30 Nov, as the XISS team had to return on the 30th itself, the spontaneity of the participation of villagers in this could not be seen as farmers were not free at that time. It was felt that farmers, though

willing to spare some time for discussion at their threshing ground ('Khaliyan'), were not willing to come away to another spot for discussion.

All said and done a considerable amount of information was obtained about the village and their priority needs were identified. Several new and interesting studies emerged from this camp as can be seen from the group reports contained in the report of the camp (available from KGVK). The villagers were informed in advance about the camp and participants moved into camp on 27 November 1990.

The sequence

The sequence followed was that of introducing the topics using examples on types of studies that could be made, followed by grouping into multi-disciplinary teams for visiting the village to conduct the field exercises.

Each group was given a specific topic to work on, and on returning, they made presentations of their observations at the camp site to the rest of the group. Ideally this would have been best done at the village itself, but since, as has already been mentioned earlier, farmers were busy with their threshing operations it had to be done at the camp site. Each group made efforts while carrying out field exercises to carry out TRIANGULATION of the information locally. The exercises conducted were as follows:

- Time-line;
- Family Line;
- Seasonality: rainfall, agricultural operations, labour opportunities, crops and vegetables, festivals, migrations, etc;
- Trends: health, agriculture, livelihood, land-use, social, etc;
- Patterns of land use: house, orchard, agriculture;
- Participatory resource mapping;
- Conflict resolving and causes;
- Livelihood analysis;
- Produce marketing outlets/patterns;
- Transects;
- Matrix ranking for preferences (plants, trees, vegetables, crop varieties, etc);
- Relationship with persons;
- Relationship with institutions;

- Wealth ranking; and,
- Village Resource Development Plan (VRDP):
 - priorities for development;
 - who does what;
 - who does what by when: no cost, low cost, medium cost, high cost; and,
 - specific area where outside help is required.

Special features

Some very major and significant observations came out of the various studies conducted at this camp. Some of these were as follows:

- That there is major trend in inclination towards service employment rather than self employment.
- That there is a trend even among the relatively better off families to even send their grown up daughters for casual labour jobs with the practical approach of preparing them for difficult days ahead as well as arrange for their own dowries.
- That as far back as 40-50 years ago efforts to develop the nullah that transverses the village were made. Soil and water harvesting structure were very strategically made.
- That as one moves away from the main road towards the most difficult to reach tolas (like Jayatoli) there is a greater interest in agriculture, and also more poverty, with one whole tola not having even a reliable source of drinking water.
- That though some very competent and reliable local paddy varieties like Kalamdani and Anjani exist in the village; the agricultural interest dwindles after the Kharif seasons. However, there are a total of 20 varieties of rice cultivated. We conducted a ranking and a selection of the results are contained in Figures 50a and b. We also learned why the modern variety, IR36, is not favoured in this village. In May, fathers go round the fields in search for possible husbands for their daughters. They are looking for good farmers and the key indicator is the size of the strawstack in the field following the rice harvest. IR36 gives a small pile, even though the grain yield might be good, so is not favoured by farmers wishing to show themselves in good light!
- That during the Rabi season a major interest (almost 75%) is on potato production and the rest in other vegetables. We conducted a matrix ranking of 6 potato varieties (see Figure 51).
- That piggery development is a matter of interest and several farmers are keen to take it up.
- That a fairly good primary school has been in operation in the village for over 50 years and consequently several of the older persons are literate.

Figure 50a. Preferences for paddy varieties in Mahilong village. Selection of 20 varieties

PREFERENCE OF VARIOUS PADDY VARIETIES, PURPOSE OF LANDS/SPECIALITY KEVK/HRD/PRA-Mahilong
(पान की स्थानीय किस्म, फसल के कारण एक विशेषताएँ)

S.N. क्र. संख्या	PADDY VARIETY धान की किस्म	LAND TYPE भूमि का प्रकार	DURATION OF CROPS फसल की अवधि (दिनों का)	PERIOD OF CROPS फसल का अवधि (माहों का)	SEED SOURCE बीज का स्रोत	Yield उत्पन्न	SPECIALITY OF THE VARIETY किस्म की विशेषता (धना, रस, लंबाई, आदि)
1	KALAMDAN कलमदान	NO-2 LOW LAND NO-3 उचा	140 approx 146 दिन	Asadh-Kankh अषाढ - कार्तिक	1-1-5	18-20 app	Gives much straw धुआल ज्यादा होता है।
2	BACCHA KALAMDANI बच्छा कलमदान	NO-1 LOW LAND NO-3 उचा	150-160	Asadh-Kankh अषाढ - कार्तिक	1-1-5	20-25 app	Yield is more फसल ज्यादा होता है।
3	RICE राइस	NO-2 CHAURA NO-3 उचा	130-140	Asadh-Kankh अषाढ - कार्तिक	1-1-5	18 app	Grain is thick & white धान मोटा और सफेद होता है।
4	RATNA रतना	NO-3 CHAURA NO-3 उचा	70-75	Asadh-Kankh अषाढ - कार्तिक	1-1-5	20 app	Grows on less water, dries fast कम पानी में होता है, जल्दी सूखता है।
5	GARUWATHOR गुरुवाथोर	NO-1 CHAURA NO-3 उचा	130 app	Jeth-Ashwin जैठ - अश्विन	1-1-5	12-15	Looks like kind mouth, Grain is thick & white जैठ के अरसे का होता है। धान मोटा, सफेद होता है।
6	CHAURA LAL चौरा लाल	NO-3 CHAURA NO-3 उचा	"	"	"	10	Grain is good & clean white धान अच्छा होता है, सफेद होता है।
7	ANJANAL OR RAGAL अंजनाल या रागल	NO-2 CHAURA NO-3 उचा	140	Jeth-Kankh जैठ - कार्तिक	"	18-20	Straw thick & strong, plants not lodge धुआल मोटा होता है। पौधा गिरना नहीं है।
8	BHOJANI भोजनी	NO-1 LOW LAND NO-3 उचा	150-160	Jeth-Kankh जैठ - कार्तिक	"	20-25	Grain narrow, long, Yield good धान पतला लम्बा, उपज अच्छी
9	KARANJAL करजाल	"	"	"	"	20	Straw thick & धुआल मोटा एवं लंबा होता है।
10	HANJAL OR HALDI PUJI हंजाल या हल्दी पूजा	"	"	"	"	20-22	Straw yellow like Genger (Haldi), thick धुआल पीला जैंगल (हल्दी) जैसा होता है, मोटा होता है।
11	KARHANI करहनी	SMALL TYPES सबसे छोटी	75-80	Jeth-Kankh जैठ - कार्तिक	1-1-5	8-10	In dry land, grain does not lodge सूखे पानी में धान गिरना नहीं है।
12	KALAGORA काला गोरा	TALL TYPES उंचा	75-80	Jeth-Kankh जैठ - कार्तिक	"	"	Paddy is black, matures 10 days after धान काला होता है, 10 दिनों बाद पकता है।
13	RED GORA लाल गोरा	"	70-75	"	"	"	Colour similar to black रंग जैसा है, जैसे काला होता है।
14	Safed Gora सफेद गोरा	"	75-80	Asadh-Kankh अषाढ - कार्तिक	"	"	Straw is less, yield is less, more problems धुआल कम, उपज कम, बीजबन्दी ज्यादा
15	Karaw कराव	Tall types उंचा	"	"	"	8	Not decay even in more water (sowing) अधिक पानी में खाने से भी नहीं खराब होता है।
16	Sita सीता	NO-2 NO-2	90-100	Asadh-Kankh अषाढ - कार्तिक	"	20	Yield is more, उपज ज्यादा होता है।
17	Rice Lal राइस लाल	"	130	Jeth-Kankh जैठ - कार्तिक	"	15-18	Grain light red धान हल्का लाल है।
18	ANJANORA अंजानोरा	NO-1 NO-1	140	Jeth-Kankh जैठ - कार्तिक	"	"	Thin grains at a place but on the other तीन-तीन धान किचकता है पर दूसरे किचकता से
19	CHOTAKI BHOTAKI छोटकी भोटकी	NO-2 NO-2	120-130	Jeth-Kankh जैठ - कार्तिक	"	"	Grain not clear but white, grain does not धान साफ नहीं होता है, धान गिरना नहीं है।
20	I.R.-96 आई.आर.-96	NO-2 NO-2	100-110	Asadh-Kankh अषाढ - कार्तिक	"	"	Grain is small, use of fertilizer is धान छोटा, खाद का उपयोग करना पड़ता है।

Figure 50b. Summary of findings from paddy variety analyses

KGVK/HRD/PRA-TECHN

PADDY VARIETY CAUSES OF CHOICE & DISLIKE
(धान के किस्म. पसन्द-नापसन्द के कारण) (YES-NO) हाँ-नाँ

PADDY VARIETY किस्म	BASIS आधार	YES NO. हाँ नाँ	CAUSES OF CHOICE & REJECTION ON पसन्द-नापसन्द का आधार
LAL DHAN (CHAMRA-3) (लाल धान) जैत-3	Yield (उपज)	NO नाँ	Unfilled rice is more. 15-20 Unfilled rice in 50 paddy per (कोंकी ज्यादा होता है। 15-20 कोंकी 50 दाने में।)
	TASTE (स्वाद)	YES हाँ	Tasty but Yield is less. (स्वादच्छि मगर उपज कम)
KALAMDAN (कलमदान)	TASTE (स्वाद)	YES हाँ	MOST TASTY (सबसे स्वादच्छि)
HALDISAL (हल्दीसाल)	TASTE (स्वाद)	NO. नाँ	LEAST TASTY (स्वादि में सबसे कम पसन्द)
BACCHA KALAMDAN (बच्छा कलमदान)	YIELD (उपज)	YES हाँ	YIELD IS GOOD. (उपज अच्छा होता है।)
KARANJISAL (करंजसाल)	YIELD (उपज)	NO. नाँ	YIELD IS VERY LESS. (उपज बहुत कम होगा।)

ON THE BASIS OF STRAW (पुआस के आधार पर) -

DO NOT CONSIDER ON THE BASIS OF STRAW.
(पुआस के हिसाब से धान नहीं लगाते हैं।)

CONSIDERATION OF PADDY VARIETY FOR CHAURA -
(जैरा के लिये धान की पसन्द का आधार)

GOODYIELD, MATURES WITHIN SHORT DURATION BECAUSE RAIN DOES NOT
OCCURE AFTER DURGA PUJA.
(अच्छी उपज हो, जल्दी (कम समय में) मैचर हो जाय क्योंकि दसहरा के बाद प्रायः
बार्ष नहीं होती है।)

CHOICE OF MAJORITY ON THE BASIS OF CULTIVATION -
(उपजाने के हिसाब से लोगों की पसन्द)

1. BACCHA KALAMDAN (बच्छा कलमदान), BHOJANI (भोजनी)
2. ANJANISAL or RAJASAL (अंजनीसाल या राजासाल)
3. KALAMDAN (कलमदान)

Figure 51. Matrix ranking of six potato varieties, Mahilong

MATRIX RANKING OF POTATO VARIETIES

Sr. No.		ULTIMATAM	KUCRU-SUNNY	2234	Kufi-CX	Ka-Alu-lw	Ka-Pu+V
1.	DROUGHT (सुराह)	3	3	2	1	-	-
2.	YIELD (उत्पत्ति)	3	1	2	4	5	5
3.	DURATION (अवधि)	5	5	2	1	-	-
4.	SIZE ()	2	1	3	4	-	-
5.	SHAPE (आकार)	3	2	1	2	-	-
6.	DISEASE (बीमारी)	1	2	3	3	-	-
7.	STORE (संचयन)	1	2	2	1	-	-
8.	SEED (बीज) AVAILABILITY (उपलब्धता)	2	1	3	4	-	-
9.	MARKET (बाजार)	2	1	3	4	-	-
10.	PRICE (मूल्य)	1	1	3	4	-	-
11.	IF ONLY ONE (एक ही) ONE ONLY (केवल एक)	2	1	3	4	-	-
12.	SEED (बीज)	3	1	2	4	-	-
13.	HAULM	3	1	2	4	-	-
14.	EARLY (पहिले)	2	4	1	3	-	-
15.	LATE (दिले)	2	1	3	4	-	-
16.	SPROUT (पुष्प)	-	-	-	-	-	-

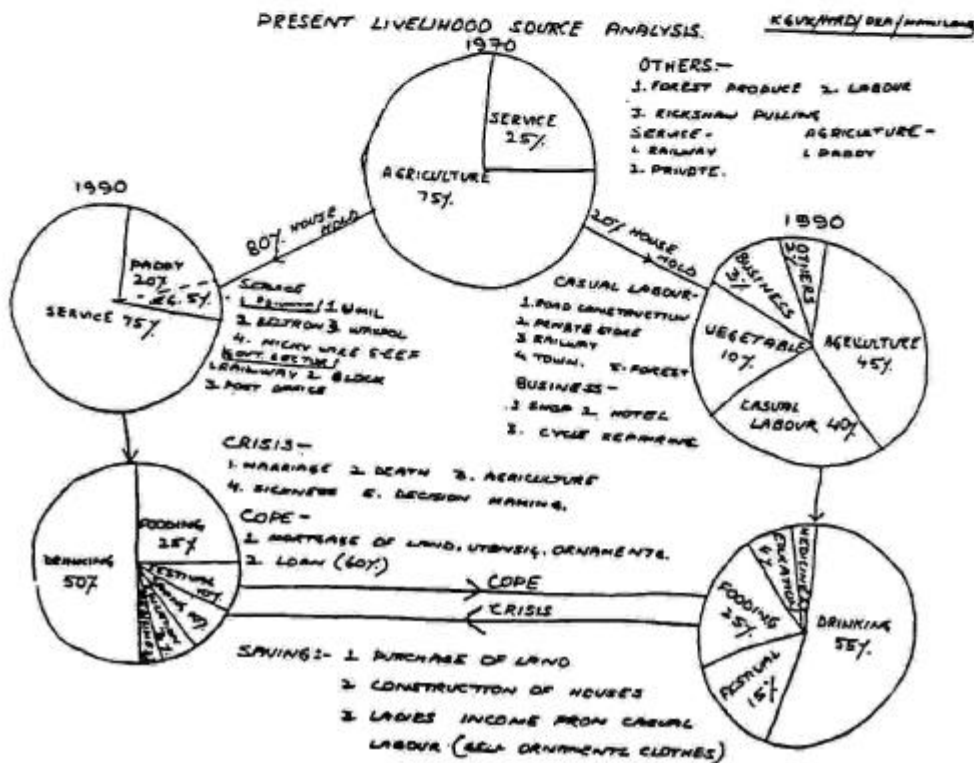
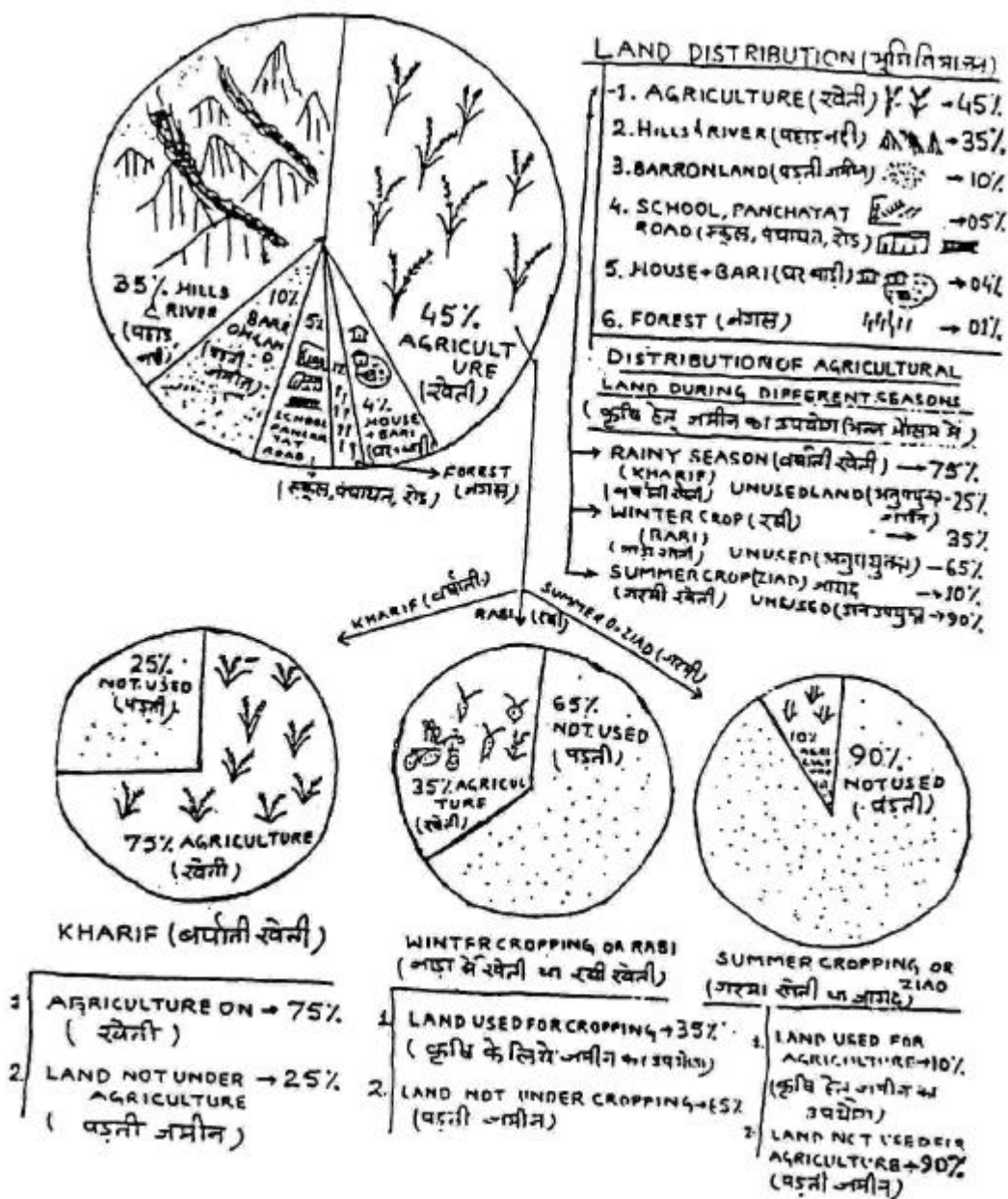


Figure 52. Livelihood source analysis

Figure 53. Pie diagrams of land utilisation



The unexpected brings opportunities

Though the timing for the camp was not suitable inasmuch that it was during the farmers' busiest time, most groups reported that active participation of farmers was there when they visited them at their threshing grounds. Most farmers gave quite a lot of their time talking and explaining. Much of this was preceded by the participants' offer to 'join in and help'.

Another unexpected event was the staging of a street play or 'Nukkad' arranged by the Forest Department to which they invited the participants. The events though seeming to be a wasteful diversion of time initially opened up the possibilities of the use of drama also to introduce new concepts of development to villages.

A conclusion also drawn was that while harvest time could be avoided for future camps it was also a blessing in that at least most of

the farmers were available in the village. The camp site however, should be right in the middle of the village itself so that less time is wasted going up and down for field exercises.

Some selected diagrams

There have been many innovations. Two are represented in Figures 52 and 53, which comprise an analysis of livelihood sources and changes, and a pie diagram of land utilisation.

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