

Natural Resources Management (NRM)
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Week – 03
Lecture - 19
Ranking Technique

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5. Ranking

It is a comparison between two datasets. Ranking or scoring means placing something in order.

Procedure:

- 1) Look for key informants or other knowledgeable villagers who are willing and able to participate in the ranking exercise.
- 2) Explain and agree on the purpose and objectives of the exercise before starting. Brief the villagers on how to conduct the exercise and discuss expected outcome and its usage.
- 3) Ask the villagers to identify and prepare a list of issues (i.e. problems) to be ranked.
- 4) Prepare a matrix on a large sheet of paper or blackboard. Indicate the issues on the top left side of the matrix
- 5) To get the villagers' preferences (through voting), facilitate the comparison of issues with one another. The first issue listed on the left side of the matrix will be compared with all the issues listed on the top. Repeat the process until all the issues have been covered.

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So the next is ranking, what is ranking? Ranking is a comparison between two data sets, so ranking or scoring it means that you place something in order and this particular technique is often used to compare between different households, it could be with respect to finance, it could be with respect to agricultural production, it could be with respect to health, education, many thing, so how actually you do it the procedures.

So first thing that we need to do is look for key informants or other some senior knowledgeable villagers who are ready to take participation in the PRA process, so those are the people you need to identify. Next, you have to explain and you should be able to convince the participants about your purpose and the objective of the whole exercise before you start it. We need to also tell the participants the villagers that how we are going to conduct the entire exercise and also

you can tell them that what would be the some of the expected outcomes because that probably will help them to get involved with the exercise right from the beginning.

Ask the villagers to identify and also prepare a list of issues that will be much easier exercise for them. They will definitely will be able to identify the issues and also share with you. Once they do that then you prepare a matrix of a large sheet of paper like chart paper you can actually put it on left side or right side of the hall or the place that you are actually interacting with the people or you can also have some white board or blackboard if you have that. Otherwise chart paper would be sufficient and then you indicate those issues on top left side of this matrix in the chart paper.

Next to get the community's preferences on certain options or alternatives which will actually somehow facilitate the comparisons of issues in hand, so the first issue listed on the left side of the matrix will be compared with all the issues listed on the top and these comparison you can do it through this technique called ranking. So this process we need to repeat until all the issues that the community or the participant will bring are covered or touched upon.

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5. Ranking

- 6) Note (write down) the number of times each problem was preferred. Make a summary of the preferences and rank them accordingly.
- 7) Encourage discussions while the exercise is being conducted to enhance probing and cross checking of information. Ask the villagers' reasons for their choices and note these reasons.
- 8) Give enough time to villagers to discuss. Do not rush the exercise.
- 9) At the end of the exercise, briefly discuss, analyze, and summarize the results together with villagers.

The commonly used ranking methods are:

- 5.1 Preference Ranking
- 5.2 Direct matrix Ranking
- 5.3 Pair wise Ranking
- 5.4 Wealth Ranking

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Once you do that then, it is time for noting down the number of times each problem was mentioned or preferred by the participants, make a summary of all the preferences and rank them accordingly. Encourage the participants to get involved in the discussion while this exercise is going on and you as a coordinator of this exercise will slowly start probing or cross checking of

the information. So, you need to ask the one information coming from one participants you can ask them in a very smart way with the other one, cross check whether that ranking that is given for one particular issue by one or two individuals the others are also agreeing to that? So this verification is done right at that moment then and there.

Give enough time to the villagers to discuss do not rush or rush this exercise, it has to be in a very relaxed environment. That is why if you recall that the first at the very beginning of this PRA topic I mentioned that this is an exercise very critical exercise for resource management, an efficient resource management require a very good PRA exercise and a good PRA exercise can only be possible when you give good amount of time, relax environment for the people to interact with you and interact among each other.

At the end of this exercise you should briefly discuss, analyze, summarize all the results together with the villagers. It should not be carried out inside a room or inside a locked room away from villagers, no, the best way to do it is to do it with the villagers in front of them. So, what are the commonly used ranking methods that often for PRA exercise we use? Number one, preference ranking, second, direct matrix ranking, pair wise ranking and wealth ranking. So these are four commonly used ranking methods that we often use for PRA exercise, preference ranking, direct matrix ranking, pair wise ranking and wealth ranking.

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5.1 Preference Ranking

- Ranking is determined by voting
- The interviewer chooses a set of problems or preferences to be prioritized.
- Then the interviewer asks the interviewee to give his/her favored in the set, in order of priority.
- The process is repeated with several interviewees.
- Finally, the responses are tabulated on the basis of preferences.

5.2 Direct matrix Ranking

- Direct matrix ranking takes the data gathered from early discussion and questioning to recording respondents' views directly onto a table or matrix.
- It is simple, quick, and informative, and everyone seems to learn something from it.
- It draws up a matrix with the objects across the top, and the criteria down the side. From this, the interviewer asks the farmers and creates the ranking

Now I will discuss each one of these ranking methods one by one. First, preference ranking, from the name itself you can easily understand that you will be actually allowing the participants to come out with their preference among suppose two or more issues or options. So, ranking is determined largely by voting in case of preferential ranking largely. So, the interviewer actually will choose a set of problems or preferences which need to be prioritized, prioritized on the basis of ranking which we call preference ranking.

Then the interviewer asks the interviewee to give his or her favored one in that set in order of priority. Suppose there are three issues that a particular villager says that these are the three important issues that need to be addressed immediately among those three now you will guide him to prioritize the most important one should be number one, then number two, then number three.

The process is repeated with several interviewees, why, to cross check that the prioritized order of issues to be addressed is actually correct one. Finally, the responses are tabulated on the basis of the preferences, so this will allow the policy makers or the people who will actually facilitate the implementation of certain programs, certain solutions, so this ranking if it is correct the preferences are more or less correct it will actually lead a better development paradigm, a better way of management of natural resources or any resources that is available within a geographical unit.

Next, direct matrix ranking takes the data gathered from an earlier discussion through various process and then those ranking, those data information will directly come to a matrix. So, your information from a previous exercise will come directly into the matrix of ranking, so we call them then direct matrix ranking. It is largely very simple, quick and informative and everyone will have a scope to learn from this particular ranking method. What it does, it draws up a matrix with the object across the top and the criteria down the side.

I repeat what it does in direct matrix ranking, it draws up the matrix with the objects across the top and the criteria down the side. So, from these it helps the interviewer to ask the farmers or participants to give their individual ranking on the basis of the information that comes directly on the top, across the top and the criteria down the side. So they have to now give the ranking on the

basis of these criteria and also the information that are coming from the previous exercise in the form of some preferences.

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5.3 Pair wise Ranking

- In pair-wise ranking items of interest (trees, food, solutions etc.) are compared pair by pair where the informants are asked which is preferred of the compared two and why?
- The reasons given by the respondent reveal the reason for the preferences of different persons / groups.
- The criteria are likely to change between groups (youth and old, men and women, etc.) to the criteria used to select between the items of interest.

5.4 Wealth Ranking

- It determines the economic attributes of households in a village and shows information on the relative wealth and well-being of households in a village.
- It helps in determining the social and economic status of households in a village.
- It serves as baseline and as an opportunity to identify indicators for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of village development activities (including selection of village organizing strategy).

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5. Ranking

- 6) Note (write down) the number of times each problem was preferred. Make a summary of the preferences and rank them accordingly.
- 7) Encourage discussions while the exercise is being conducted to enhance probing and cross checking of information. Ask the villagers' reasons for their choices and note these reasons.
- 8) Give enough time to villagers to discuss. Do not rush the exercise.
- 9) At the end of the exercise, briefly discuss, analyze, and summarize the results together with villagers.

The commonly used ranking methods are:

- 5.1 Preference Ranking
- 5.2 Direct matrix Ranking
- 5.3 Pair wise Ranking
- 5.4 Wealth Ranking

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So next comes pairwise ranking, this is also another very useful ranking method. What it does, you actually compare two solutions or two aspects or two issues in a pair. Pair wise ranking can be various kind of interest like suppose a farmer is there now he needs to decide that whether he will go for food crops or trees or cereal or pulses which one so that can be compared pair by pair where the participants are asked which is preferred of the compared to and why.

So among that pair supposes you have two or three pairs so then there will be a kind of a comparison between this. So, the ranking in this case will come pairwise. The reasons of asking this or reasons of having this pair wise ranking because the respondent will reveal the reason for

the preferences of different persons or groups to choose why this particular pair in place of the other one. So, the criteria are likely to change between one group to the other. It could be due to gender difference, due to age difference okay. So pairwise ranking will finally allow someone to see that how a particular pair of issues or particular pair of solutions is preferred than the other one. So the information comes here, the ranking comes here pairwise; that is we call pairwise ranking.

The last one is wealth ranking, now here it determines the economic conditions of the household in a village, very commonly used ranking process; it shows that how one particular household is better off than the other, than his neighbor. It also helps in determining the social and economic status of various household in a village, what it does it serves a baseline okay, a baseline of economic condition of a particular area which gives an opportunity for the policy makers to identify the indicators for planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation of various development activities in an area.

So, I discussed now four different ranking methods, preference ranking, direct matrix ranking, pair wise ranking and wealth ranking, so we also discussed in detail what are those and how it works.

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5.4 Wealth Ranking

It occurs by the following steps:

- Step 1: Be able to identify wealth indicators or the differences and features/ description of the households in each category or grouping .
- Step 2: Categorize the households into rich, average, and poor (or into whatever categories that will emerge).
- Step 3: Take notes of the processes, particularly the difficulties encountered. Also note new learning taking place in conducting the wealth ranking exercise.

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So wealth ranking; it occurs in two step okay, step one, one should be able to identify the wealth indicators or the differences and features or descriptions of the household in each category or

group. Suppose this category could be livelihood wise, suppose agricultural farmer, fisherman community, and weaving community. So among them inside one group you can see the wealth ranking and across the group also you can see the wealth ranking. So these two things will give two sets of information for policy making.

Step 2, categorize the household into rich, average and poor on the basis of income.

Step 3, take notes of the processes particularly the difficulties that people or community encountered, we should also note the new learning or knowledge that is taking place while you conduct the wealth ranking exercise. During this exercise itself you will find that there are various kind of deliberation might take place across the group, among one group so it is this is actually fascinating to see these dynamics during the exercise, so that also need to be captured.

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6. Venn diagramming

The Venn Diagram shows institutions, organizations, groups and important individuals found in the village, as well as the villagers view of their importance in the community. Additionally the Diagram explains who participates in these groups in terms of gender and wealth.

Objectives:

- To identify external and internal organizations/groups/important persons active in the community
- To identify who participates in local organizations/institutions by gender and wealth
- To find out how the different organizations and groups relate to each other in terms of contact, co-operation, flow of information and provision of services

Key Questions:

- Which organisations/institutions/groups are working in or with the community?
- Which institutions/groups do the villagers regard as most important, and why?
- Which groups are addressing household food security and nutrition issues?
- Which organisations work together?
- Are there groups which are meant for women or men only?

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Now the next tool that I am going to discuss is Venn diagram, so many of you might know already what is Venn diagram? Venn diagram basically it shows institutions, organizations, group and important individuals found in an area in a village or any community as well as the villagers' view of their importance in the community. Along with this Venn diagram also explain who participates in this group in terms of gender and wealth.

Now objectives of Venn diagramming what actually the purpose or objective of this Venn diagramming; it is to identify external and internal organization, groups, important persons who

are active in that particular area or particular community where actually you have gone for carrying out PRA exercise. It is to identify who participates in local organization or institution by gender and also by wealth; it also helps to find out that how the different organization and groups relate to each other in terms of contact, cooperation, flow of information and provision of services.

So, I think Venn diagram is very important when it comes to understand the social networking dynamics, working between different groups so how actually Venn diagram you should actually carry out.

So what are the questions that you would be asking to your participants. First, which organization and institutions or groups are working in your community, they will be able to answer that easily. Second, which institutions or groups do you or means the villagers regard as the most important one, there will be many organizations, which one according to them is most important and why? Third, which groups are addressing household food security and nutrient related issues? Who are actually working together? There will be four or five organizations suppose in an area certainly some will be working in isolation and some will be working as a group. That is also required to be find out because this also has an implications for some policy for the development initiatives in a particular area.

Are these groups which are meant for women or men only? So, that means are there any group who are dedicatedly for women and dedicatedly for men or they are all groups who are working regardless of gender? That information is also important for carrying out some further exercise.

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7. Structured direct observation

- Sometimes people idealize a situation and tell things which are more a description of how things should be than how things are.
- Other reasons for this difference is that while talking about routine activities a person is only able to give information about some aspects of this activity.
- Usually farmers do not talk much about their routine activities, like selection of seeds, preparation of seed mixtures etc., they simply do it.
- Hence, what people tell in interviews is not a picture of the reality, but their mental construction of the activities.
- Direct observation allows a cross-check of findings of what people tell. It can also be used to generate on-the-spot questions in direct interaction with the farmers. This helps farmers to explain things which are grounded in their activity and not on their remembrance of the activity.

Structured direct observation can be done by using the following methods:

- ✓ Indicators
- ✓ Recordings
- ✓ Observation checklists
- ✓ Use your senses
- ✓ Measurements

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Next tool is structured direct observation. I mentioned that at the earlier point that structured direct observation then and there you get the information from your participant. Sometimes what happen is that people idealize this situation that this is the best situation for us, for me and then tell the things which are more of a kind of a description how things should be then how things actually are, so they somehow visualize themselves more into that idealized situation than the actual situation.

So, you as a coordinator of the PRA exercise need to be aware of this kind of situation. So, naturally if they are already into imagining themselves into idealized situations and somehow ignoring the current reality then the feedback that you will get from the people will be very different and naturally your PRA report also will be very different and it will be little far away from reality.

So other reason for this difference is that while you talk with the people about their routine activities a person or individual is only able to give information about some aspects of this activity. Suppose fishing; he will be able to give you only related to the fishing some information but there could be some other implications associated with the fishing profession, so it is your responsibility to guide them to provide those information as well.

Usually as I said that rural people do not talk much about their routine activities. They largely feel that there is nothing fun in that like selection of seeds, preparation of seed mixtures,

preparation of for that matter carrying fertilizers from one place to the other, preparation of land. So for them they just considered it just like in a normal activity, but you know that these are critical activities come under the entire production system, so what happens that is why people in the interview does not give a picture of the reality.

So they sometimes keeps some of the activities thinking that those are nothing special to share with someone so it is your responsibility again to guide them towards that direction because you need to have the entire picture. You know that even a small activity according to them the small daily regular activity is also a very critical activity towards the larger goal.

Direct observation allows also a cross check of findings which you get from the people. It can also be used to generate on the spot questions in direct interaction with the farmers and it helps them to explain things in a much better way and much in touch with the reality and not in an imaginary situation. So, structured direct observation can be done using these following methods. You need to have some indicators, record, have a checklist you use your senses and some measurement, these are the methods that often you need to use for direct structured observation.

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8. Key informant interview

- Depending on the nature and scope of an inquiry, an investigator identifies appropriate groups from which the key informants may be drawn.
- Often there are some people in the community with deeper and more detailed knowledge about some topics. For example, barbers in India know well about the family size of households; shepherds know much about animal structure within the village and development of animal herds over time etc.
- Such specialists for special knowledge domains are selected as key informants for interviews . A key informant is an individual, who is willing to talk and has a great depth of knowledge about a specific field.
- The accuracy of information obtained from key informant interviews depends mainly on developing a suitable interview guide, training of the interviewers and the selection of the informants.
- The information received from the key informants has to be cross-checked through group discussions and interviews with other people.

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Next comes key informant interview, means as I said at the beginning that you need to identify one or two depending upon the total size of people few key informant, so depending on the nature and the scope of an issue or enquiry you need to identify appropriate groups from where

you will identify this key informant that is one of the key to the success of your PRA exercise. Often you will find that there are some people in the community they have much deeper knowledge and sense of belongingness, ownerships about their community and resources, so those are the people or potential client for your key informant.

For example the barbers; a barber is well aware of the family size of a household because of his profession and all of us we know that we love to go visit barber and when he cuts the hair then a lot of discussions takes place. So huge amount of information exchange takes place, so that actually what happen is also could be a source of information about households and then animal also structure, village structure, village dynamics and different other issues.

So I am not telling that you always identify a barber as your key informant but I am just giving an example that you have to choose very smartly among the lot that who would be your key informant. Such people for these special knowledge domains are selected as key informant, a key informant remember is an individual who is willing to talk and has a great depth of knowledge about a specific field.

Suppose from fisherman community you identify one, from agriculture one, from weaving one, so like that you identify and then the entire information basis that you have collected you can always sit with this small group of people, you can have a deliberation with them cross checking, filtering. So all these exercise why we do, we do it for finer, a better PRA report or PRA exercise outcome.

The accuracy of information obtained from key informant depends mainly on developing a suitable interview guide, means how actually you are going to deal with your key informant. It requires some training for the interviewers and especially the selection of the right person as an key informant; that is critical. Then comes the information what you receive from the key informant that needs to be cross checked as I just mentioned through either through group discussions or interviews of specific group so that also need to be cross checked.

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Conclusion

After the entire process is completed, the data gathered is turned into a report

A report that has considered, analyzed and evaluated every possible parameters and objectives that gives the best possible outcome/solution/remedy for the project in question.



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So finally we are here to conclude this PRA topic and I am sure that at the end of this particular topic on participatory rural appraisal you are now in a position to understand the complexity or the importance of PRA exercise in the development of an efficient, development plan for an area and especially for a rural area. So after this entire process is completed for PRA the data gathered will be converted into a report. Because that report will be a document which will be shared with people who are actually going to develop a policy for that particular area.

A report that has considered, analyzed and evaluated every possible parameters and objectives that gives the best possible outcome solution remedy for the project in questions or the problems in hand or the issues that you are trying to address for a particular area. So, friends overall participatory rural appraisal is an exercise which provides opportunities to help a community, an area to develop and develop sustainably.