



Grass-root realities of renewable natural resources and an assessment of the reliability of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method

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This study attempts to capture the validity of PRA, as this is the most widely used method to appraise the resources and the reliability of PRA is still questionable. This study was carried out in the village of Chattisghar, India under the specific objectives (a) appraisal of natural resources by PRA method (b) to work-out resource users' attitudes on the major renewable natural resources (c) to suggest institutional arrangements for better utilization of renewable natural resources. Two methodologies were used in this study namely, traditional household questionnaire survey and PRA method. For the household survey 125 respondents were used to capture the value attached to the resources by resource users' point of view and close-ended questionnaire was given them to value the resources. In case of PRA, small groups (10-20 per each) of respondents were selected randomly to perform different activities related to PRA. The findings of the study indicate that PRA and traditional household survey is compatible. Especially in case of resource priorities, resource users showed highest value (avg.1800/month) for the use, maintenance and protection of land resource followed by common water bodies (avg. Rs.1250/month) and multipurpose tree species (avg. Rs.1150/month) respectively. The same results were obtained in PRA exercise through venn- diagramming. Moreover, PRA information presented by the villagers is similar to the original records of the village, verifying the reliability of the PRA method. As PRA results were congruence with traditional household survey method, PRA can be used as a complementary method for appraising natural resources as it enhanced the validity of household survey method which is more time and energy consuming. High monetary values reflect the potentiality of the villagers to protect the renewable natural resources. After analyzing the resource users' perspective, the study recommends that, collective management of renewable natural resources by group of villagers may help to launch user-friendly policies for sustainable development.

Keywords: participatory rural appraisal, renewable natural resources, sustainable development