

## **Application of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques in rural development programme: Case study in *Elpitiya watta* village**

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Community involvement is one of the best requirements of community development. In the context of agricultural production, this aspect should receive prime attention. The Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques facilitate to obtain community participation in development projects. A series of PRA techniques was executed at *Elpitiya watta* village to identify the resource availability and livelihood pattern of the village, and to estimate the problems associated with the development of rural community. At the same time, study attempts to select the best agricultural enterprises. Data collection was done by using PRA techniques. Focus group discussion was carried out as an entry to PRA techniques. Primary data were gathered by using a resource map, transect walk and seasonal calendar. By using matrix ranking and pair wise ranking specific data were collected.

In ancient times, *Elpitiya watta* was a tea estate, but under the land reform regulations it was converted to colonization scheme. One farm family was given 0.25 ac lands by the government. Few of them have their own lands. However, at present all are suffering from common problems. Main problems are limitations regarding land ownership, lack of knowledge about farming, and severe soil erosion. *Elpitiya watta* is farming village, and farmers practice cropping pattern based on the rainfall. The village receives more rainfall during April and May. By considering the criteria such as tolerance to drought, suitability to the weather conditions in that area, low wild animal damagers, resistant to pest and diseases, higher demand, and capability of storage, pepper is the most suitable crop. Coffee and cloves are also desirable for the area.

This study demonstrates that application of PRA techniques in development programmes provide more insights to the constrains encountered, and offers possible alternative solutions. Further, as such decisions are made community participation, sustainability of the development effects can be expected.