

**Application of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques:
A case study in Weliganga Wasama**

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Farming communities have much wisdom regarding production of food from land, but their level of living and productivity could be improved by learning more of what is known outside their community. To bring this to reality Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) was introduced to improve the decision making process at community level. Weliganga Wasama in Kothmale was selected to execute PRA activities in collaboration with Hadabima Authority. In fact, the villagers in this locality have encountered adverse impact from the resettlement scheme of Kotmale electricity project.

The activities were conducted during April, 2006. First, pair-wise ranking was carried out to identify the problems in the area. Two matrix rankings were used to select the most appropriate crop and soil conservation method for the area, respectively. About 10 to 15 members participated in each and an extension officer facilitated the activity.

Results showed that the prime problem for the area is poor accessibility to water. Lack of planting materials and animal threats were ranked as second and third, respectively.

First matrix ranking showed that the most suitable crop for the area was tea. Pepper and clove were next best. According to the second matrix ranking the most applicable methods for soil conservation were live fences and stone ridges.

Hence, PRA tools practised in Weliganga Wasama helped to identify the important problem which should be immediately addressed. Also it provided an idea about the crops which are suitable for the area and also the most applicable soil conservation methods.

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