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### **Agricultural extension programme development: Use of participatory rural appraisal techniques**

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Participatory Rural appraisal (PRA) is a series of techniques used in extension programmes. PRA techniques are used to ascertain the real problems and the solutions of farming community. In fact, PRA is a more farmer friendly, community based method with high degree of success. Therefore, a PRA practice was carried out in *Pitigoda* village area in *Ududumbara* Divisional Secretariat of *Nuware Eliya* district with the collaboration of two institutions, University of Ruhuna and *Hadabima* authority in September, 2007, to determine the current situation of the Pitigoda village, to determine the existing problems and issues of the village and to develop the development plan for the village with the help of villagers.

In PRA, number of different tools was applied for situation analysis, identify the problems, and also suggest solutions. The executed tools were participatory mapping, Venn diagramme, pair wise ranking, and matrix ranking. All those tools were carried out by the assigned group consisting 10- 15 farmers; The *Hadabima* cum University students made the facilitator role. The participatory map demonstrates all the resources, roads, lands, cultivations, institutions, etc very clearly and in meaningful manner which would be very helpful to get an idea about the village. Venn diagram revealed the available service providing institutes, individuals, and organizations in the area, their importance, and the extent of relationship built with community.

*Grama Niladhari*, Wildlife officer, Midwife, Death Donation Society and Farmer organization were identified as the best service providers, respectively. Pair wise ranking was assigned to identify the most severe problems in the area and they were determined by comparing a number of problems one against each other. The results show Wildlife damage, lack of new technology, and poor road facilities were ranked as the first, and problems regarding land ownerships and poor transport facilities were identified as the second and the third, respectively. Moreover, Housing problems and Common infrastructure facilities were also identified by the community as limiting factor.

Matrix ranking was carried out to investigate the most suitable crop for the area. The alternatives were evaluated using predetermined criteria and the total score ranking was done to select the best alternative crop to the area. As a result, mango, coconut and orange were selected as the most suitable crops for the area. Using the results of the study, any organization, individual, or institute can formulate extension programmes and development programmes which would be the most effective and efficient for the *Pitigoda* village.

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