

Government of Andhra Pradesh

Dr.MCR HRDI of AP

89th Foundation Course for Central Civil Services, IES &ISS officers

Handout on PLA Exercises (Prepared by Dr.Kota Tirupataiah, IFS Additional DG &CC)

Introduction

As soon as the team reaches designated village, and shortly after introductions, please have a brief discussion with the village liaison officer and inform that the team would take up 'Transact Walk' early next morning. Request that as many villagers as possible may be informed and mobilized for the transact walk. If village elders are present when the team reaches the village, inform them as well.

1. Transact Walk

What?

It is an exercise involving a 'walk through' the village. During the walk through the team is required to cover the areas outside 'abadi'(NON-Habitation area like fields) as well as the abadi.

Why?

This is the main exercise through which the team of OTs will get an idea about the profile of the village. While Transact Walk outside abadi provides information covering topography, lands, agricultural crops, water resources (surface/groundwater), forests, employment activities, connectivity, 'Walk Through' in abadi provides information on internal roads, drainage, houses, location of various communities, drinking water facilities, sanitation, institutions like school, anganwadi, health sub-center, cooperative society etc.

Where?

Transact walk starts in the village. So, select a point of assembly and start the walk. Ensure that you have at least 10-15 villagers with you on the walk. Ask for such a route which will give you an opportunity to cover as many key areas of the village and its resources, as possible. The walking path need not be a straight path. Better to take a typical path which farmers/villagers use to go to their fields. Carry out walk through outside abadi first and then within abadi towards the end.

When?

People generally go to their fields early in the morning say 6.00 am so better to follow their time. This exercise takes about half a day to full day time. So go prepared with something to eat and carry drinking water.

By whom?

The team of OTs will be guided on this 'walk through' by the villagers. So, it is an exercise done by the OTs and the villagers together.

How?

At the beginning point, please explain briefly the purpose of the exercise i.e to understand various features and resources of the village. Identify one or two villagers to guide the team. The team members in turn need to divide responsibilities among themselves. Responsibilities include: keeping conversation, recording important points/features and keen observation of the exercise.

It is better to complete the exercise outside abadi as well as within abadi in one day. So, ensure that lunch break is taken in such a way that too much time is not lost. Local liaison officer can help the team in this aspect. Please also ask for arranging food for the villagers coming on the walk through exercise and have it together somewhere in the fields.

Keep a 'mental map' of the path that the team and villagers are travelling on since this needs to be drawn as a 'physical map' on completion of the exercise.

2. Time Line

Introduction

Try to complete the walk through exercise by about 5 pm. Inform village liaison officer that you would like to meet the villagers, especially elders, at around 7 pm for the next exercise.

What?

It is an exercise to document the key/historical events and important developments that happened in the village.

Why?

This exercise provides information about the extent and speed of development as well as its impact on the village/rs.

Where?

This exercise needs to be done in a spot where the village informal evenings 'get togethers' happen i.e. typically under a tree or racha banda etc.

When?

Evening time before night is the ideal time for this exercise. Typically, villagers take dinner early and come out for a chit chat. This exercise takes about 2-3 hours to do.

By Whom?

OTs have to initiate the discussion by saying that they would like to know important events in the existence of the village like when was it formed? When was road to village laid? When did electricity come? Etc. The best persons for this exercise are the ‘elders’ in the village. So request the village liaison officer to please inform and mobilize the elderly from the village. Other age groups can also be present since it may be an education for them also.

How?

The OTs will initiate the discussion by asking the elders to narrate the historical events in the existence of the village. Since this is a ‘recollection process’, please allow people to recollect. Do not rush the process. Further, it is not necessary for the people to recall events ‘from the oldest to the recent’. Recollection can be random. However, the OTs must record all events as they are being recalled and later, they could be put in chronological order. So, do not push them to recollect in an orderly fashion. While recollecting, they may be discussion and arguments on the time of events. Do not worry, and let the villagers come to a consensus by ‘triangulation’. Precision is not essential for the exercise so exact dates or months is not important.

So allow the recollection to be completed, read out all the events that are shared, ask if any important events are left out. In this method, the OTs are facilitating recollection, recording the events and then summarize them. At the end of the exercise, the team can ask whether the villagers are happy with the extent and speed of the occurrence of the events. In their opinion, what could be 2-3 important events/developments that they expect to occur in the village in the next few years?

3. Resource Map

Introduction

With the completion of the Time Line exercise, the first day in the village will be over. The next day, the OTs team can relook at the information gathered from the ‘walk through’ exercise as well as the ‘time line’ exercise, among themselves. If they find any information missing, they could gather that in the morning on the second day. Otherwise, the team is ready for doing the next exercise called Resource Mapping. If you are likely to start this exercise in the morning, it can be started around 11 am when villagers return from fields. If some more information has to be gathered in the morning, then this exercise can be started in the afternoon.

What?

This is an exercise where the information gathered through transact walk (in the fields as well as in the village) and time line is to be depicted on a map.

Why?

The villagers will be seeing the resources every day. However, during the walk through the OT team will try to seek as much information as possible on the resources. They will also ask questions on why resources are in given condition? Why certain practices are done in the way they are done? The villagers would have not looked at the resources from a community perspective nor would they have looked at the inter-relation among resources like irrigation and agriculture. So, the pictorial depiction of the resources helps in greater appreciation and analysis.

Where?

The resource map is a very important output from the village study. This needs to be available for the OTs and the villagers to look at for some time. It is better if the mapping is done in such a place where the map will not be disturbed for at least one day. Choose covered places like a school verandah or a community hall for this purpose.

When?

As mentioned above, the time of this exercise depends on when the transect walk and time line are completed. Ideally afternoon is more suited because farmers would return back from field for lunch and stay in the village.

By Whom?

The OTs have to explain to the villagers the purpose of this exercise and link with transect walk and time line. If the villagers are not able to start, OTs can initiate the mapping exercise. Patience is required while doing this exercise since there may be initial hesitation among the villagers. But after sometime, the villagers will take over. The role of the OTs then will be to observe what the villagers are doing, relate it with the walk through and time line exercises and ensure that they are able to depict all the resources.

How?

The OTs have to explain that a map is a very useful tool to see all aspects together and make some good decisions. Based on the practice exercises carried out at the Institute, the OTs can facilitate this exercise. If villagers are unable to start, OTs can facilitate by starting the mapping exercise and slowly hand over the tasks to villagers. While the villagers are doing the exercise, the OTs must do seeking clarifications, ensuring that all resources are depicted, observe how many are participating, how conversation is taking place about plotting various aspects, how self-corrections are taking place among themselves. All this process needs to be recorded.

When the exercise is completed, ask some villagers to summarize what they see from the map. Are there certain aspects they are discovering by mapping? Identify them and record. The team OTs can then summarise their observations on the resources and close the exercise.

4. Social Map

Introduction

Based on the time available on the second day, this exercise can be done in continuation to the Resource Map exercise. If time is not sufficient, then it could be done on the third day. Social Map is actually building on the Resource map by depicting the location of various communities in the village, BPL families, facilities like drinking water, housing, sanitation etc.

What?

It is an exercise through which human aspects like communities, house types, poverty, access to facilities like sanitation, drinking water are depicted on the map. It is actually an addition to the resource map. If time permits, social map can be done altogether separate from resource map. Otherwise, it can be done on the resource map itself.

Why?

This exercise enables the participants to assess the socio-economic conditions of people especially BPL Families. In addition aspects like access to facilities like housing, drinking water and sanitation can be assessed and analyzed. Being a transparent process, the output from the exercise will be self-evident whether the schemes benefitted the deserving or not.

Where?

Social Map exercise is to be carried out at the same venue where the resource map is done.

When?

On the third day and preferably when the BPL families are present.

How?

Please remember that while doing the resource map it may so happen that only landed persons would follow the team. Those who do not own resources may not find it interesting. The social mapping exercise in a sense is meant for such families. So, please ask the village liaison officer the previous day to particularly invite the BPL families to this exercise. The SHG leaders from SC/ST/BC communities need to be invited for this exercise. For them to come, the venue has to be neutral like a school or a community hall. Avoid religious places. The OTs can facilitate the social map exercise in the initial stage and encourage the villagers to carry on. If resource rich persons are present during the exercise, it is OK. But let them not take over the exercise from the BPL families.

Take 3-4 issues for mapping like BPL families and poverty, Housing, Drinking water, sanitation etc. Once the exercise is completed, let the participants summarize the picture and highlight what

impression is emerging on the reach and effectiveness of the government schemes. Like in case of other exercises, the OTs have to share responsibility for facilitation, documentation and observation.

5. Seasonality Analysis

Introduction

The next three exercises need to be completed on the 4th day of the village study. Seasonality analysis is a very useful tool in understanding the variations in time, of the availability of rain, employment, disease occurrence etc. The information generated through this exercise would be highly useful to take preventive as well as remedial actions. Some topics for seasonality are: rainfall, wage employment, food grains availability, occurrence of diseases, market rates of essential commodities, types of crops grown etc.

What?

This is an exercise carried out to find out the occurrence of a particular aspect like rainfall, disease or about the availability of say wage employment in a year, in a village.

Why?

The information from seasonal analysis gives planners an idea about the occurrence of events over different months in a year. Based on this information, it is possible to plan necessary interventions or align the programmes to enable maximum benefit to the villagers.

Where?

This exercise can be done anywhere in the village. However, it would be better if it is done at the same place where mapping is done.

When?

This exercise can be done any time. It also does not require too many people. So OTs can facilitate this exercise as soon as they have enough number of people.

By whom?

Seasonal analysis can be done with any group of villagers. However, aspect like rainfall will be better understood by farmers while aspect like employment better appreciated by wage seekers (people without land holdings). So, please request the village liaison officer to please invite farmers and wage seekers for this exercise.

How?

At the beginning of the exercise, the OTs can explain the purpose i.e to know the seasonality of say rainfall or wage employment under MGNREGS. First let them start talking and discussing. The discussion should first cover the identification of months in a year. Indian months start with Chaitra and end with Falgun. Then, discussion should be on which month gets the first rain, which month gets the highest etc. Similarly, discussion can be facilitated on the months that provide highest wage employment and the months with lowest potential. After they have finished oral discussion, the OTs can request them to show the seasonality on the ground. The months can be depicted on the ground by dots. The OTs can collect sticks of different sizes and give to the participants to use. Ask the participants to place appropriate size sticks against each month. The bigger the stick, the greater is the occurrence of rainfall or the employment potential in the month.

The OTs need to take responsibility for facilitation, recording and observation of the process. Allow for reasonable time for triangulation by the participants to arrive at the size of the sticks. OTs can ask the quantity of rainfall in cm/inches (rough figure) if it is a seasonality of rainfall or the number of persons getting employment, if it is a seasonality of wage employment. After the exercise is finished, let the participants summarize. OTs also can summarize the content as well as the process. Record the figure on to a note book and take a picture of it. Ask participants how they are making use of the variability in the seasons i.e. how they are growing crops to suit rainfall or how they are availing the wage employment. Take suggestions for any interventions.

6. Ranking

Introduction

Villagers give different levels of importance to different things. These may relate to issues like poverty or to developmental issues or even to trees in the forest. This exercise helps to understand their preferences.

What?

It is an exercise wherein villagers can express their choice/preference for various things.

Why?

The information from this exercise helps in understanding the villagers' choices, the reasons for the choices and provides an insight in to probable interventions.

Where?

This exercise can be done anywhere in the village. If ranking is being done for a topic like 'reasons for poverty', it could be done in the SC colony. It is OK if it could be done in the same place where mapping is done.

When?

This exercise can be done any time of the day. It takes about 2 hours to do this exercise.

By Whom?

As mentioned above, if the exercise is on say ranking of 'reasons for poverty', then ensure that BPL families are present to carry out the exercise. If it is say 'ranking of importance of various tree species', then families who are dependent on forests need to be involved. OTs need to share responsibility as in case of other exercises. A group of about 10-15 persons is adequate for this exercise.

How?

First, OTs need to explain the purpose of the exercise. Ensure that the relevant stakeholders (BPL for poverty ranking and Forest dependent families for ranking trees etc) are present.

For poverty ranking, seek information about the number of BPL families in the village, general conditions of living etc. Then seek information about the reasons, in their opinion, for poverty. At this point, do not worry which reason is more important. Let all reasons be stated. OTs need to write down the list of reasons. After ensuring that the participants have exhausted all reasons, then read them out. Ask them what rank they would like to give to each reason. Ask each participant to give rank to each reason for poverty. They may differ in their ranking of various reasons. The ranks need to be cumulated and averages need to be arrived at. This has to be repeated for each reason. Once the exercise is completed, the OTs need to summarize the results and ensure that the participants agree with the summary results. Choose about 5-6 reasons for ranking. Ranking of large number of reasons may be difficult for villagers and it could get complicated.

If the exercise is on say ranking of various tree species in a village, then ensure participants from families that are dependent on forest. Introduce the exercise. Seek general information about how frequently they go to forest and what produce do they collect. Ask them to list out important tree species in the forest. Write down the list. Once listing is over, ask them to name 5-6 important species. Then ask them about the criteria for importance say useful for timber, useful for minor forest produce, useful for fruits etc. Then facilitate their ranking of each species on a particular criterion. Eg: Give rank to each of 5-6 tree species on 'usefulness as timber'. Repeat this for each of the criteria. At the end, cumulate the ranks for each tree species. Smaller the rank, more important is the tree species.

7.Venn Diagram

Introduction

A number of government institutions are present in every village to provide services to the people. However, people do not relate themselves with all these institutions in the manner. Venn diagram helps us to know more about this relationship between people and institutions.

What?

It is an exercise where people express their relationship with various government institutions in terms of closeness/nearness as well as intensity/depth.

Why?

The information from this exercise provides planners to assess the performance of the government institutions. It is also useful in finding out reasons for the non-performance and brings out possible interventions

Where?

This exercise can be done anywhere in the village. Ideal would be at the Gram Panchayat since that is the most dominant institution in the village.

When?

This exercise can be carried out at any time of the day.

By Whom?

This exercise calls for participation from a cross section of people using the services of village level institutions. To seek information about how the school functions, parents are needed. To assess the anganwadi center, the pregnant and lactating mothers and children are needed. For primary cooperative- farmers, for health center-patients (if they can come), are needed. Though any villager could possibly comment on functioning of the institutions, it is better to get information from those who availed services.

How?

First, ensure that villagers who frequently interact with various village institutions are informed and invited to the exercise. OTs need to explain the purpose of the exercise. Initial discussion can be facilitated by asking the participants to name the village level institutions. List them out and write down in a note book. Once all names have come, then ask them whether they think all institutions are equally close to them in terms of frequency of use and intensity of relationship.

Now introduce the chapatti/round chart pieces of various sizes and colours. Put one medium size chapatti at the center on the ground and say that represents the villagers. Lay the rest of the chapattis on the ground and ask them to pick up one chapatti to represent one institution. Eg: Choose one chapatti for Gram Panchayat. The choice of chapatti should reflect the frequency of interaction and closeness to people. Bigger the size, more important is the institution. Closer the chapatti to people, stronger is the relation. Generally, bigger size chapattis come closer to the central chapatti (people). Keep asking questions why the participants choose a particular size of chapatti and placed it at a particular distance from the centre. Write down the reasons are they are being explained.

The choice of size or place of putting the chapatti need not be rigid. For example, after placing some chapattis, the participants would like to change the size of chapatti or its place, they should be encouraged. Each time they place a chapatti on the ground, please write the name of the institution on it. When the participants want to change it to represent another institution, cut the name and write the second name. While this process is going on please observe the proceedings keenly and see how triangulation/correction is taking place. Note down the reasons being given for choosing a size for an institution and placing it at a certain distance from the centre. OTs can ask suggestions on how the functioning of these important institutions could be improved. Write down the suggestions.

At the end of the exercise, the OTs need to summarize the findings and ensure they got it right.