Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Report for Shamshallapur Village, Zaheerabad <u>Telangana</u>

1. Background of Shamshallapur Village

Shamshallapur village is situated in Zaheerabad. The village comprises 240 households (HH), primarily dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. The village experiences challenges related to drought conditions, poor soil quality, and wildlife interference, particularly from wild boars.

2. Participants in the PRA

Number of Participants: 29 farmers (men and women)

Participants:

- Yashodhamma, Kudhamma, Ratnamma, Sridevi, Praveena, Meena, Kasturamma, Swaroopa Rani, Saraswathi, Narsamma, Lakshmi, Tengyamma, Gujjamma, Godavari, Anitha, Laxmi, Chendramma, Bhagyavathi, Sridhevi, Lakshmi, Archana, Babu, Vaidhyanath, Arjun, Pakkanna, Lakshman, Baabanna, Shankar, Lakshmi

Bakkappa, Lakshman, Rachappa, Shankar, Lakshmi

- Facilitators:

- Dr. Christophe, Senior Lecturer, Geneva Graduate Institute

- Dr. G.V. Ramanjaneyulu, Executive Director, Centre for Sustainable Agriculture (CSA)

- Team CSA: Dr. Gowri Shankar Rao, Ms. Vinyasa, Dr. Shirisha, Ms. Mamatha, Ms. Aleesha

- Team Deccan Development Society (DDS): Ms. Divya, Ms. Laya, Ms. Priyanka, and 4 Sangham (collective) members



Group photo of villagers, team CSA, team DDS and Christophe

3. Introductory Activities

The PRA session commenced with a folk song in Kannada, sung by the villagers. The song depicted a mother urging her son to bring his sister back from her mother-in-law's home. This was followed by introductions from all participants. Ms. Laya explained the purpose of the visit, which was to conduct social and resource mapping in the village.

4. Social Mapping

Objective: To illustrate the social structure, housing patterns, and infrastructure of the village.

Steps:

- **Participants**: Engage a wide representation of the community, ensuring inclusivity of different social groups.
- Data Collection:
 - **Mapping Session**: In a participatory setting, draw a map marking households, communal facilities (schools, temples, markets), and infrastructure (roads, water supply).
 - **Categorization**: Use symbols or colors to categorize households based on socio-economic status, caste, or other relevant social divisions.
 - **Infrastructure Marking**: Highlight essential infrastructure and services, noting their condition and accessibility.
- Analysis: Identify patterns in settlement, service distribution, and access issues related to social categories.
- **Output**: A map showing the social layout of the village, highlighting areas for potential social and infrastructural development.



Discussion during Social mapping

Women led the social mapping activity, identifying key social structures in the village:

- Places of Worship: 1 Church, 5 Temples
- Water Tanks: 1 small, 1 large
- Community Halls: 2
- Government School: 1 (up to 5th grade)
- Total Households: 240
- Forest Area: 950 acres
- Main Castes: mala, madiga, hatkar, marathi, gollalu (majority belong to Scheduled Caste (SC))

Land Ownership:

- Cultivable Land: 1695 acres
- Largest Landholding: Approximately 100 acres
- Landless Members: 2-3

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Pictorial form of social mapping done by participants

5. Resource Mapping

Objective: To identify and document the natural and man-made resources available in the village.

Steps:

- **Preparation**: Gather basic information about the village and prepare materials (maps, markers, papers).
- **Participants**: Involve a diverse group of villagers, including key informants like elders, community leaders, and local experts.
- Data Collection:
 - **Mapping Session**: In a communal setting, draw a map with the participants, marking the locations of different resources.
 - **Discussion**: Discuss the availability, accessibility, and quality of these resources.
- Analysis: Analyze the map to identify resource-rich and resource-poor areas, seasonal variations in resource availability, and usage patterns.
- **Output**: A visual map indicating the distribution of resources, challenges in access, and potential areas for development.

The villagers identified the following resources and challenges: **Soil Types:** 800 acres of red soil, 100 acres of black soil (Regadi).

Crops Grown: Green gram (Pesarlu), Black gram (Minumulu), Sorghum (4 types of Jowar), Finger Millet, Foxtail Millet (Korra), Little Millet (Samalu), Cowpea (Bobbarlu), Hyacinth beans (Anumulu), Soybean, Red gram (Kandhulu).

Major Crops for Household Consumption: Safflower seeds (Tella Kusumalu), Sorghum (Jowar), Bengal Gram.

Crops for Sale: Finger Millet, Green Gram. **Challenges:**

- Wildlife Interference: Wild boars causing significant crop damage.
- Water Source: Predominantly dependent on rain-fed irrigation.



Pictorial form of Resource map done by participants

6. Livelihoods

Primary Employment:

- Most of the village population is engaged in agriculture, which serves as the primary source of livelihood. Most villagers work on their own land or as labourers on the farms of others.
- In addition to farming, a portion of the villagers also seek employment in nearby cities, primarily in the construction sector. This work is often seasonal and depends on the availability of agricultural work.

Seasonal Work:

• During the summer months, when agricultural activities are minimal, many villagers find employment through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). This government scheme provides wage employment for unskilled labourers, helping to sustain livelihoods during the off-season. The work typically involves manual labour such as road construction, pond digging, and other infrastructure development projects within the village.

Livestock:

- Livestock farming is limited in the village due to a shortage of fodder, which restricts the number of animals that can be maintained. However, some households have small-scale poultry operations, which provide a supplementary source of income and nutrition.
- The villagers primarily rear chickens, which are used both for domestic consumption and for sale within the local market.

Income:

- The average income from agriculture is approximately ₹15,000 (INR) per acre per season. This income fluctuates based on the type of crop grown, market prices, and the yield, which is heavily dependent on rainfall.
- For many families, this agricultural income is supplemented by earnings from construction work or other forms of labour during the non-farming season.

Government Support:

- Farmers in the village benefit from the Farmer Support Scheme (Raithu Bandhu), a government initiative that provides financial assistance to farmers to support crop production. These funds are used to purchase seeds, fertilizers, and other necessary inputs for farming.
- The scheme has been instrumental in helping farmers manage the financial burden of agricultural activities, especially in years of poor crop yields.

Market Access:

- The village has access to markets in both the local area and nearby cities. The produce is primarily sold in Beedhar city and within the village itself, where local traders and consumers purchase the crops.
- Jowar, one of the major crops grown in the village, is sold in Sangareddy, a larger market that offers better prices due to higher demand.
- Despite these market connections, the lack of a dedicated transport infrastructure sometimes poses challenges in getting the produce to market on time, potentially affecting the price and quality of the goods sold.



Focused Group Discussion

7. Issues Identified

Wild Boar Attacks:

- Wild boar attacks have emerged as a significant problem for the villagers. These animals frequently invade the fields, causing extensive damage to crops. The destruction of crops by wild boars has led to considerable economic losses for the farmers, further exacerbating their financial difficulties.
- The absence of proper fencing and other protective measures has made it difficult to prevent these animals from entering the fields.

Water Scarcity:

- Water scarcity has been a persistent issue in the village, particularly over the last three years. Low rainfall has significantly affected the availability of water for both irrigation and domestic use.
- The reliance on rain-fed agriculture means that crop yields have been directly impacted by the erratic and insufficient rainfall, leading to reduced agricultural productivity and income.

8. Proposed Solutions by participants

To address the challenges faced by the village, the following solutions have been proposed by the villagers:

Infrastructure Development:

• **Installation of Fences:** To protect crops from wild boar attacks, the villagers are seeking the installation of sturdy fences around their fields. These fences would act as a barrier to prevent wild boars from entering and damaging the crops, thus safeguarding their primary source of livelihood.

Alternative Livelihoods:

• **Provision of Goats:** As an alternative income source, the villagers have proposed the introduction of goat farming. Goats are relatively easier to manage and require less fodder compared to larger livestock. Additionally, goat farming can provide a steady income through the sale of milk, meat, and offspring, offering a financial cushion against the uncertainties of crop production.

9. Final Discussion at Krishi Vignan Kendra (Farm Science Centre), Zaheerabad

Meeting Overview: A meeting was convened following the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) with the involvement of the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture (CSA) team, Deccan Development Society (DDS), and scientists and staff from Krishi Vignan Kendra (KVK). The purpose of the meeting was to finalize the interventions and develop a comprehensive action plan to address the challenges faced by the village, particularly in agriculture and livelihood.

Key Issues Discussed:

- Fencing Requirements:
 - It was identified that 40 acres of land require fencing to protect crops from wild boar attacks, particularly during seed sowing, fruiting, and harvesting periods. The estimated cost for this fencing is around ₹40,000.
 - The wild boar problem is especially acute during critical agricultural phases, leading to significant crop losses and threatening the livelihood of farmers.
- Water Scarcity:
 - The ongoing issue of water scarcity, exacerbated by recent years of low rainfall, was highlighted as a major concern. This scarcity affects not only crop production but also the overall sustainability of agricultural practices in the village.

• **Opportunity for Women:**

• It was recognized that women in the village have time available during the offseason, which presents an opportunity to engage them in alternative livelihoods or value-added activities. This can help supplement household income and improve economic resilience.

Proposed Interventions and Action Plan:

- a. Estimation of Plant Requirements: An assessment will be conducted to determine the number of plants required per acre for the proposed interventions, including live fencing and fruit crop cultivation.
- b. Live Fencing: The implementation of live fencing using plants like Gorintaku (Henna) and Karonda (Carissa carandas) was proposed. These plants not only serve as effective barriers against wild boars but also have additional economic or ecological benefits.
- c. **Distribution of Seeds and Saplings:** The distribution of seeds for leafy vegetables, chillies, and **Goru Chikkudu** (cluster beans) saplings was suggested to enhance household nutrition and generate additional income.
- d. **Poultry Support:** KVK will provide support to households for poultry farming. This intervention is aimed at increasing household income and providing a steady source of protein.
- e. **Goat Provision for Single Women:** It was proposed that goats be provided to single women who do not have any other means of livelihood. Goat farming is seen as a viable alternative source of income that requires relatively low investment and maintenance.
- f. Awareness and Linkage to Zero Interest Loans: The villagers will be made aware of the **Rang De** initiative, which offers zero-interest loans. Efforts will be made to link this initiative with needy individuals in the village to provide financial support without the burden of interest.
- g. **Experimentation with Vegetable Cultivation:** A pilot project will be undertaken with 1 or 2 farmers who have access to reliable water sources to experiment with vegetable cultivation. The goal is to assess the feasibility and benefits of growing vegetables in areas with good water facilities.
- h. Fruit Crop Cultivation Using Household Wastewater: Farmers will be encouraged to grow fruit crops such as banana and Seethapal (custard apple) at home using wastewater from household activities like dishwashing and laundry. This practice promotes resource efficiency and helps address water scarcity.
- i. Exploration of Marketing Facilities for Forest Wild Fruits: Efforts will be made to explore and develop marketing facilities for forest wild fruits. Additionally, support will be provided for processing these fruits to ensure year-round availability and increase their market value.



Meeting at KVK, Zaheerabad



Group photo at KVK, Zaheerabad

Conclusion:

- The meeting concluded with a consensus on the proposed interventions and action items.
- The collaborative effort between the CSA team, DDS, KVK scientists, and the villagers aims to address the pressing challenges of wildlife interference, water scarcity, and limited livelihood options.
- The focus is on sustainable agricultural practices, alternative income generation, and improved market access to ensure the long-term well-being of the village community.