

Revisiting Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)-related studies and exploring PRA's success determinants: A content analysis

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ABSTRACT. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) has shown that participation in development programs in poor communities can be empowering not only for the community members but also for the development workers. However, not all PRAs have seen successes especially in fulfilling their mission to encourage real participation. Hence, it is imperative to understand whether PRA has led to adequate understanding of indigenous perspective to call for action and the interest PRA serves. This analysis aims to provide critical insights and reflections from the experiences of previously conducted PRAs. It further aims to reveal whether PRAs were used effectively and successfully according to their goals. Through content analysis, this paper studied 13 PRA-related journal articles published from 2005 to 2020 retrieved from the UPLB Journal Subscription collection. The assessment of a PRA's success was done using Townsley's findings on advantages of PRA as guide. It was found that PRA is a powerful approach in addressing community development, but it is also prone to abuse. In conducting PRAs, transparency, inclusivity, involvement, and sustainability are important success factors.

Keywords: *Community development, extension, participation, participatory rural appraisal*

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INTRODUCTION

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) has shown its usefulness in development projects either by the public or private sector. It is broadly utilized across the globe in research, planning, and training in development (Gujit & Cornwall, 1995). However, PRA's vitality as a tool for enabling community involvement (and development) may not be realized if utilized ineffectively by poorly trained practitioners. Hence, many scholars have asked: whose interest does PRA serve? What type of participation really happens?

It has been proven many times that participation in planning, analysis, and implementation of development initiatives in poor communities can be an empowering experience not only for community members but also for development workers. PRA was conceptualized in the late 1980s by individuals using Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) as a distinct approach in people-centered development research and planning (Gujit & Cornwall, 1995). From their work, two insights emerged: 1) by using group-based visual analysis, local people can represent and assess information about their livelihoods and can also make plans on their own; 2) the above-mentioned learning process can encourage: scholars, change agents, and locals to perform differently and carry out various types of action.

Gujit and Cornwall (1995) add that PRA sought to change the focus by improving the capability of the local people to act themselves. In the literature, PRA is defined in different ways. PRA, according to scholars, is a brood of approaches and methods that aims to enable people in the rural areas to facilitate information sharing on their own, analyze life's situation in the community, and think, plan, and act together (Absalom et al., 1995; Kamble, 2014). For Ramirez et al. (1995, as cited in Lawas et al., 2009), PRA involves gathering stakeholders and getting information from them about the situation in their community using PRA tools. Results of PRA can help in developing proper interventions to problems in communities.

The aforementioned definitions show lack of agreement among scholars: Is PRA an approach? A methodology? An activity? A technique? A process? These 'misunderstandings' over definitions of PRA are directly related to "confusion over objectives" (Gujit & Cornwall, 1995). Some practitioners might have been confused between RRA and PRA and were misguided when they used the two (Cornwall & Pratt, 2011; Maxwell, 1998, as cited in Brown, 2006). Thus, it is important to reassess project objectives and see if PRA fits in achieving desired data.

Townsley (1996) opines that varying interpretations of PRA should be acknowledged because they could have great impacts in development initiatives. Townsley (1996) further advised that individuals using PRA techniques and tools should be cautious on the usage of the term and what is it for them to achieve their purpose and avoid being misguided.

Given these views, participation can be problematic. Since the 1970s, participatory approaches continue to be refined and debated upon. Ideally, participation develops from the bottom-up model of encouraging community level groups to form management associations and become effective managers of their own communities (Lawas et al., 2009); enable collaboration and interaction among the stakeholders who are (and should be) parts of the development process (Besette, 2004); and involve analysis that is valuable when aiming to investigate crises, assess needs, and identify opportunities as perceived by user groups (Jarvis & Campilan, 2006). It is the case, however, that not all participatory initiatives have followed the concepts mentioned.

According to Mwiru (2015), participation is a “core value” when it comes to community development, but its significance has been inadequately emphasized because of unclear interpretation of development that leads to indistinct key players of effective development. Cornwall (2008, p. 276) notes that participation “...constitutes a terrain of contestation, in which relations of power between different actors, each with their own ‘projects’, shape and reshape the boundaries of action. While a frame might be set by outsiders, much then depends on who participates and where their agency and interests take things.” In his critique, Richards (1995, p. 13) asks: “Does current PRA practice relate to what its original proponents had in mind?” “If not, what has it become?”

Further, Richards (1995) claims that it is extremely challenging to understand the plight of the rural poor because they live complex lives. Poverty's cultural dimensions are hard to study because long-term commitments should be established. For Richards (1995), the emergence of RRA/PRA as an ‘answer’ to the ‘problem’ is unrealistic if it is within the bureaucratic processes of development institutions, which conflicts the original purpose of PRA – to promote empowerment among the rural poor. Hence, if it is used otherwise, it just becomes a meaningless word.

Using an anthropological approach, Stadler (1995) critiques the concepts and methods that are utilized in PRAs. He found that PRAs have weaknesses such as its advancing of assumptions on social context (e.g., perceptions promoting undeveloped communities as ‘backward’ or

traditional, or both). Cornwall and Pratt (2011) claim that PRAs have been mixed up by both critics and donors, which drew critiques, mostly from the academe, who lack experience as PRA facilitators. Hence, they suggested that PRA success stories and issues on misuse and abuse must be given attention by development institutions.

This current paper builds on the theoretical debates above. While scholars tackled critiques on the humanistic aspect of PRA, this current paper is a review of past studies on PRA aimed at having a peek on various ways in which PRA is used or misused in practice. This review aims to provide critical insights and reflections from the experiences of previously conducted PRAs. It also aims to investigate whether PRAs (and PRA tools) were used effectively and successfully. This review was guided by the following questions: 1) Do all PRA methods/approaches bring positive changes to the target communities?; 2) Based on Townsley's (1996) identified advantages of PRA, what are the common success and failure indicators observed?

The results of this analysis can be used to inform PRA practice so it can be carried out more effectively. Additionally, this analysis can also be used by academics, especially those who study or teach participation, extension, and development, as reference material to further explore PRA concepts. Moreover, this paper could help policymakers who pursue development initiatives to understand the importance of local people and their knowledge in creating effective development policies.

The literature review framework of this study is anchored on Coope's (1988, as cited in Ballena & Feranil, 2021) study (Figure 1): 1) identification of research problem, which specifies the researcher's intent (research objectives); 2) collection of PRA-related articles from UPLB Journal Subscription; which emphasizes the source of the articles to be reviewed; 3) evaluation of the suitability of articles collected, which highlights the author's exhaustive identification of which articles to include or exclude in the analysis based on the research objectives; 4) textual analysis of articles, which shows that the articles were analyzed based on Townsley's (1996) advantages of PRA such as identification of the genuine priorities for the target group, devolution of management responsibilities, motivation and mobilization of local development workers, forming better linkages between communities and development institutions, use of local resources, mobilization of community resources, and more sustainable development activities; and 5) presentation and discussion of results – which shows not only how the results of the literature would be presented in line with the objectives of the study but also how the perspective of the author of the current study would be considered.

Figure 1
Review framework of the study



METHODOLOGY

This paper examined 13 PRA-related journal articles published from 2005 and retrieved from the UPLB Journal Subscription. A set of indicators based on Townsley's (1996) findings on PRA advantages was used to extract data which were encoded on a thematic table to facilitate analysis. It specifically utilized in vivo coding and deductive coding to refine and finalize the themes that were initially identified by Townsley (1996) such as 1) identification of genuine priorities for target group, 2) devolution of management activities, 3) motivation and mobilization of local development workers, 4) forming better linkages between communities and development institutions, 5) use of local resources, 6) mobilization of community resources, and 7) more sustainable development activities. This process was done by making assessments of the text and categorizing it as a good or bad conduct of PRA, based on Townsley's work.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study. It includes the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data collected. Each case presentation starts with the use and value of mapping and other PRA tools. In discussing each article, the author pays attention whether the PRA methods/approaches brought positive changes to their target communities.

The 13 Articles Reviewed

Article 1: The use and value of maps in community-oriented primary care: Does process matter?

This article examined the utility and importance of mapmaking and maps per se in providing health services through Ward-Based Outreach Teams (WBOTs). Healthcare professionals and health workers

were involved in this study that used three participatory qualitative mapmaking. It also used Local Institutional Support Assessment (LISA), which intended to support community health workers (CHWs) to assess their performance and strategize further involvements with associations and institutions. The maps generated helped the participants in establishing focus on their actions and in planning the delivery of their services. Mapmaking also helped them observe and assess their accomplishment and improvement. It also motivated them because they saw the value of their profession. Likewise, the maps also inspired talks about the weak links between the information gathered in the communities and facility-based services. This prompted them to examine feasible ways to enhance collaboration among the resources and WBOTs and other collaborators in the community.

This study shows that maps became creative writing tools used in evolving ways. By having consultations on the data visualized on the map, the informants created insights and produced new knowledge. There were three maps created which were made from different media, each had a varying lifespan. LISA used a physical mapmaking method. It made CHWs understand visually their working environment. Through participatory mapping, the participants generated their map in the 'history of health', enabling the participants to be involved in the learning process. Further, digital maps were used in the 'health project'. They were discussed, projected, and analyzed among the healthcare workers.

In conclusion, this study showed that if there is direct involvement of community members, the information gathered is more reliable. The participatory process also promotes collaboration and understanding among the participants. As the authors put it, "the processes used in mapmaking helped them look for possible solutions, thereby transforming maps into tools to improve learning and stimulate agency in service" (Honiball & Marcus, 2020, p. 8).

Article 2. PRA techniques in agriculture: Common diagramming and mapping tools

The study used different PRA techniques: mobility map, transect, timeline, and time trend. It was authored by six researchers from different disciplines – environmental science, fish nutrition, agricultural microbiology, agricultural biotechnology, fish health, and agroforestry. Although not directly stated, it can be assumed that the mapping tools may have been used in the decision-making of the villagers. The authors concluded that "The social map describes the social structure and

characteristics of a rural society, neighborhoods, institutions and collectivities, while the time trend captured the price and production trends and price fluctuations in tomato crop over a period of time" (Mahesh et al., 2017, p. 422). These findings could help decide when to plant or harvest and sell their crops to optimize the value of their produce.

The specific genuine priorities set for the target participants could not be ascertained, because the benefits of the study to the target community were not indicated. The results would solely be used for the researchers' extension programs. Given that there was no intent for the target beneficiaries to be involved in the upcoming development projects, no transfer of responsibilities was given to the people in the community. The planning of extension programs might be helpful in the future, but there was no assurance if those programs will push through, could really improve people's lives, or will just fulfill their need to assess the community's condition. As there is just an apparent focus on the PRA methods, this study could be an example of 'domestication', which is an indicator of pseudo-participation in Deshler and Sock's (1985) model of participation.

Article 3. To shame or not to shame: That is the sanitation question

In Cambodia, a policy called Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) is used to address problems in open defecation particularly in rural areas. Usually, it utilizes PRA-based designs, but the technique is using public humiliation as means to improve community sanitation standards. The said strategy was used to change the behavior and attitude of the people in their communities without tokenism in the form of incentives or subsidies. CLTS implies that intensified shame is needed in communities where open defecation is practiced. However, studies that deal with emotions found that shame is a problematic emotion and may create an array of negative psychological outcomes.

The paper aimed to evaluate the use of shame as method to force behavior change in public hygiene as a social policy tool and whether CLTS dealt with the community members respectfully and constructively. It used transect walk and neighborhood mapping to collect data.

This study prioritizes the psychosocial wellness of the individuals shamed to improve sanitation practices. There was no discussion on management responsibilities. This study found that Cambodia's CLTS strategy involved PRA methods. During the transect and neighborhood

mapping, the participants were tasked to draw the village map and indicate where open defecation sites were. They were brought to the site and asked to answer the questions in fresh dumps to make them feel ashamed about it. Hence, the village map and transect walk became instruments to encourage shame and stigma among the people in the community.

The local implementers and government officials in the study site were reluctant to use “shaming” strategies. There were proposals to stop the shame. Shaming, however, continued albeit at a reduced scale. The introduction of CLTS in Cambodia in 2004 by Concern Worldwide and with the eventual involvement of UNICEF and the Cambodian government could have provided opportunities for development workers to explore solutions. This, however, did not materialize. There was no evidence of plans toward sustainable activities for the villages to build restrooms to address the open defecation issue.

While “shame” strategies seem appalling, such practice is not new. For example, a former mayor in Batangas City in the Philippines made drug suspects parade in town with placards hanging on their necks. Certainly, the approach failed to solve the issue. It may also result in unfavorable psychological effects to “offenders”. The Cambodian Mental Health Survey (2012, as cited in Bateman & Engel, 2017) found that shame has terrible effects on people’s mental health. It would do well to address the root causes of the issue. The study revealed that there were disagreements among government officials, the villagers, the executing organizations, and even the donors and recipients of the development projects in using shame.

In this case, PRA, which aims to “enable rural people to share, enhance, and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act,” (Absalom et al., 1995) was absolutely misused, making it meaningless.

Article 4. Using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in the identifying children with disabilities in rural Kilifi, Kenya

This study assessed the effectiveness of PRA in finding children with disabilities in rural areas. Twelve social mapping activities and focus group discussions were conducted to collect relevant information. Village leaders, teachers, and women’s groups were the participants of the study who were purposively chosen based on their local perceptions.

Enhanced distribution of essential services to children with disabilities was the target goal of the activities. In addition, they included consultation of local people so that they would be involved in the identification process. The previously done surveys lack involvement of the community, negatively affecting the services for the disabled.

The participants gave their own perceptions of incapacity. A key finding emerged in which teachers and women's groups thought of underprivileged orphans as children with disability. It showed that societal factors of disability are perceived to be excluded in the context of determinants of disability.

The results of this study show that disabilities were perceived by the participants as the "existence of impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions" (p. 1). Interestingly, this study found that disabilities are linked with their traditional beliefs such as "punishment from Gods, evil spirits, and witchcraft" (Gona et al., 2006, p. 1).

Gona et al. (2006) claim that PRA is a cost-effective and efficient strategy in identifying children with disabilities as the traditional survey is time-consuming and more expensive. The results could also be useful in planning for community-based rehabilitation. As Toro-Hernandez et al. (2020, p. 2) state, "there is a gap between the implementation of disability-related policies and the meaningful participation of people with disabilities in their societies."

Their use of PRA met their goal of recognizing children with disabilities in rural areas with inadequate resources in a quick and cost-effective manner. This study can be an eye-opener that local perceptions on disabilities should be considered because it may bring encouraging impact on future involvement of the community in programs on disability rehabilitation.

*Article 5. Climate change, environmental stress and loss of livelihood
can push people towards illegal activities: A case study
from coastal Bangladesh*

People in three communities – Dalbanga South, Mazer Char, and Gabtola—were engaged in illegal activities such as shrimp farming, shrimp fry collection, and illegal logging. The paper examined how environmental issues push people to pursue illegal livelihood activities. The PRA tools used were village timeline, contextual change, and livelihood shock.

Contextual shift described all the good and bad changes that transpired in the area over their lifetime and how those impacted their livelihood (Dietz et al., 2013). Village timeline provided a historic image of the important incidents that the participants recalled. Livelihood shocks were provided from the insights of the people about various risks regarding the gravity of their impacts on their livelihood.

The study identified climactic stressors such as riverbank erosion, cyclone, drought, salinity intrusion and flood; and determine their answer to environmental stressors. It was found that community members were included in policy making where they were treated as vulnerable groups, not as offenders, and their livelihood were ensured to be resilient against any environmental stressors by having stable and diversified livelihood opportunities.

Participants were not given a chance to perform management responsibilities. Instead, they were punished for finding means of livelihood when their traditional sources of income were affected by natural calamities (such as cyclones, floods, etc.). Development workers were also not involved. Further, Bangladesh Navy and coastguard were in-charge of the rivers and seas in maintaining the rules and regulations and law enforcement, and Bangladesh's national fisheries policy and national forest policy were established.

The Bangladesh government's sustainable development activities prioritized increasing forest coverage; afforestation was also done to reserve the existing forests.

The researchers concluded that the existing method of criminalizing these unlawful practices only aggravates the weakness of the already climate-vulnerable area. They posited that rather than pursuing those who resort to prohibited practices as though they were criminals, policymakers would do well to carefully consider the damage brought about by various environmental stressors to their livelihood. The implementation of new policy programs could be made possible to help establish sustainable environment and climate-resilient livelihood for the vulnerable populations.

Article 6. Social mapping: A potential tool in public health

The study used social mapping to acquire information on cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills of the people in a village in New Delhi. The purpose of the social mapping was for the doctor to practice and learn new public health skills including communication,

managerial, and clinical skills as a family physician. The doctor was also supposed to create a holistic method to address community health problems that concentrates on social factors of health.

The benefit for the target group was implicit because they were targeted to benefit from the said activity once the student physician has gained the intended skills and apply it in her job.

The locals were not given management responsibilities. The article lacks details on the methodology. However, the social mapping activity provided significant details about the community's cultural practices, language, and social networking. The advantage of knowing those is that it would be easier for the people to determine the factors affecting health and disease outcomes.

The social map does not provide concrete, complete, and adequate comprehensive details. It is also not advisable for long-term use since social structures change every now and then. If the models of participation will be reviewed, specifically that of Pretty's (1994, as cited in Bacongus, n.d.), the approach made by the student physician was both passive and interactive, and it failed to reach self-mobilization. If Deshler and Sock's (1985) will be used, it will fall under pseudo-participation. This analysis, however, is limited to this particular study as some social mapping activities may exhibit high level and genuine participation.

Article 7. Factors that influence the use of community assets by people with physical disabilities: Results of participatory mapping in Envigado, Colombia

While most PRA studies cater to community villagers, mostly farmers, this particular study caters to persons with disabilities (PWDs). It utilized participatory mapping to determine the assets of the community and potential facilitators and hindrances to their accessibility. The researchers also used participatory mapping in monitoring and strategizing for interventions. The goal was to identify factors at different levels that restrict accessibility and use of community resources among PWDs in Colombia.

Since PWDs have limitations, they were not given key responsibilities in the community. The study found that PWDs in Envigado had limited knowledge on how to use mobility devices, and, actually, lack said devices. This situation restricted them from doing activities outside and inside their homes. It was also found that local resources such as health and recreation facilities (community assets) were not accessible for PWDs.

The people's involvement in the study resulted in establishing a community research group involving undergraduate students, community leaders, and the co-authors of this work that aims to collect a more extensive data relating to public transportation convenience in the area. It enabled the meeting of community leaders and decision makers to discuss solutions moving forward. Moreover, the local government was urged to provide additional services such as a database of people with disability that could be utilized to determine the whereabouts of PWDs in deploying public transportation.

There are available public spaces; however, the improper use of the resources, and the behavior and attitude of the people impede the use of those resources by people with disabilities.

The study's participants (PWDs and rehabilitation personnel) recognized that there is development and that some spaces in the public underwent interventions for accessibility. Addressing accessibility issues is key to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. Unlike other PRAs that concentrated on agriculture and farmers, its approach is focused on the social development and inclusion of the PWDs. This study shows the wide array of applications of PRA.

Article 8. Integrated participatory and collaborative risk mapping for enhancing disaster resilience

In Nepal, natural disasters significantly affect community development. Communities use flood hazard maps as the key sources of information. They also have flood warning systems, but these are insufficient to address the problems in disaster-prone communities.

Thus, this study was conducted to help alleviate the effects of flood in disaster-prone communities. It employed community resource maps, social maps, risk maps, and transect walks. The approach was participatory as evidenced by knowledge co-creation on risk reduction and effects. It also aimed to help local stakeholders to draw pilot areas catering to their needs. Further, it was done to comply and assess the risks in community and information capacity to further help the community members in the planning and implementation of flood risk reduction and resilience building.

Data collection transpired during a 5-day workshop. The participants such as local NGOs and social mobilizers were purposively selected based on their experience in working on community flood risk management. Most of them were fascinated about learning remote mapping and digital methods.

During the data gathering phase, the participants worked together with some households in the community and other community disaster management committees. The researchers themselves, however, acknowledged that they could not completely assess the potential of the unified mapping approach.

To promote ownership of the program, the researchers began the training workshop by asking the participants to share their aspirations, anticipations, and specific matters that they considered significant to map with a user assessment.

They recognized that there was a need to enhance local disaster risk information generation. Improving the internet infrastructure in Nepal will provide an empowering environment. If successfully realized, community members can learn about integrated risk mapping, which is a game-changer in disaster risk reduction and management in the area. Many other stakeholders such as the local government unit and the Red Cross were also engaged in the upscaling stage.

This study shows that PRA can be used in disaster resilience interventions. They used the traditional hand-drawn maps as baseline maps and digitized them later. They also used new technologies such as GIS, OSM platforms through smartphones and computers. This digitization and the use of new technology imposes problems to the older generation in the community, specifically the elderlies. Hence, if the same approach would be used in other locales, it would do well to invite the youth, especially – which could be a good opportunity for them to get involved in the process as most of the time, they disregarded in decision/policy-making processes.

Article 9. Participatory Rural Appraisal: A tool for inclusive growth and participatory development: A case study of Village Marale, MS, India

This study focused on exploring PRA as a tool of participatory rural development, discussing the case in Marale and particularly as to how it can be helpful for micro planning and participatory policy making at the grassroots level. The case study was conducted by 15 student social workers supervised by a field work manager. The villagers made a trend and historical diagram, seasonal calendar, transect walk, and village, resource and health maps for them to understand the composition, resources, and health-related issues in their place. The problems that emerged were alcoholism, youth outmigration, lack of women participation, decreasing school enrollment, early marriages, passive self-help groups, traditional farming techniques, health issues, and blind beliefs or beliefs in superstition. However, it was not stated whether the PRA intended to address the problems found.

Some women gathered to talk about the issues on alcoholism and initiated to have a contract on liquor ban. Women were also encouraged to restart and manage self-help groups. After doing the PRA, the research team returned to the village. To address alcoholism, the social workers encouraged the women villagers to solve the problem by applying social action method (but not specifically stated). For women empowerment, they assembled the women villagers. It was the only time that it happened in the community and their participation level was remarkably high. To further increase women participation, other cultural activities were held such as competitions and festival. Youth group meetings were conducted, and the participants registered to Neharu Yuva Kendra, an Indian government organization for the youth.

For the youth sector, cultural and career guidance programs were organized. For the minorities, meetings were conducted to discuss scholarship opportunities and other education-related issues. For the farmers, they were shown documentaries on modern farming techniques to make them aware of the new trends in farming.

Similar to other studies reviewed, there was no particular problem identified to be addressed by the PRA. One remarkable achievement of this study were the tangible benefits to the members of the community. Hence, in this case, the PRA was proven useful in participatory policymaking, planning, and development process.

Article 10. Communication resource mapping for coastal resources management of Barangay Malabrigo, Lobo, Batangas

The study was done to collect data about the communication needs of the people living in the marine-protected community. The resource mapping was modified to suit the purposes of a communication resource mapping. A communication resource map “shows spatial distribution of communication needs and facilities relative to other natural and biophysical resources such as river, roads, school, barangay, or village hall and other structures. It makes use of symbols to represent the various resources of the community” (Lawas et al., 2009, p. 39).

Clearly, the communication plan that would be generated after the study would help the coastal community in decision and policy making for resource management, specifically their community resource and communication needs.

The participants themselves planned their solutions ahead to address communication problems identified by the PRA leading to a proposed communication plan since most of them are LGU officials. They also recognized that a communication resource map can be a useful tool in disseminating information to solve their dilemmas in coastal resource management. They realized that barangay ordinances can be disseminated so that the residents and tourists would be reminded to take good care and protect the natural resources of their place.

The participants identified that there is a necessity to air educational programs about coastal resources management, weather bulletins, and messages from the LGU. To address these communication needs, the participants identified radio stations in nearby areas such as KISS 95.5 FM and other radio stations in MIMAROPA.

After working on the communication resource map, the stakeholders consulted some experts to gather other communication resources. They added areas with access to newspapers. Satellite cable DREAM TV was also added, as there are subscribers in the beach resorts, other residential homes in the barangay, and the barangay hall itself.

The following were the recommendations of the study: 1) placards and other publication materials about prevention of unsustainable fishing practices and ban on garbage dumping can be placed near beach resorts in the area; 2) billboards, containing the same messages can be placed in the entry point of Barangay Malabrigo; 3) students of both elementary and high schools can also be taught on the current situation of their coastal resources; hence they will be knowledgeable of the importance of proper coastal resources management.

It can be said that most of the activities done in Malabrigo were sustainable, specifically the inclusion of students and mobilization of various linkages.

When this study was conducted, communication resource mapping was recently conceptualized and has not been fully adopted yet as a PRA tool; hence, related literature was scarce. A plus point about this study was its critical reflection on the use of communication resource mapping as a PRA tool.

Article 11. SWOT analysis for socio-ecological landscape variation as a precursor to the management of the mountainous Kanshi Watershed, Salt Range of Pakistan

The study was intended to map and classify the categories of land use in Kanshi region and its sub-watersheds to measure the effects of urbanization and the interference caused by natural and human activities.

Urbanization in the area brought significant unfavorable impacts on the environment, specifically solid waste discharges, land degradation, and increased ecological contamination. In addition, the resettlement trend grows everyday due to the non-cyclic use of natural resources, lack of basic facilities, and unplanned urban growth. These cause the land used for agriculture to erode.

During the conduct of SWOT analysis, it was not indicated who participated to help input information. Hence, it could not be ascertained if local knowledge was considered.

The study found that the SWOT analysis did not provide adequate participatory mechanisms for the stakeholders. The analysis showed that the capacity of resources is inconsistent with the currently available resources and climate. However, the said inconsistency can be addressed by community participation and appropriate company management practices.

Article 12. Assessing natural resource management challenges in Senegal using data from Participatory Rural Appraisal and remote sensing

This study used secondary that were mostly PRA report. It assessed the capability of the site-specific participatory data to supplement remotely collected ecological data about the challenges in natural resources management in Senegal and Gambia. The data came from 100 PRA exercises to evaluate the problems in the area. It also evaluated which PRA tools were most effective when used together with remote sensing information.

Among the 100 available PRA data, 27 were exercises supervised by facilitators and performed by people who lack experience in using PRA tools. Three did not indicate examples or list of the tools used during the PRA and did not specify the problems to be addressed in the village.

The most common useful PRA tools were the village transect, decision tree, problem solution-matrix, and prioritization pyramid.

The least useful PRA tools were forest matrix and Venn diagrams as they were inconsistent and could not be readily understood by lay readers. It concluded that there were differences on how PRAs were conducted, but it led to similar conclusions that there were really prevalent problems in natural resource management in agricultural communities.

The researchers recommended that clear and thorough reports should be observed because they will definitely be beneficial to the target communities especially when there are funding agencies to be involved. A surprising finding in this study was the realization that while organizations globally have devoted many training programs on PRA for their workers to be used in their research, it is not uncommon for these results to be shelved; hence, they only serve as documentation materials of development projects (Gladwin et al., 2002, as cited in Brown, 2006).

Article 13. Evaluating Rapid Participatory Appraisal as an assessment of ethnoecological knowledge and local biodiversity patterns

The study was conducted to evaluate how local knowledge can be used to communicate the importance of preserving meant in southwestern Niger. Two assessments on biodiversity were used interviews to key informants. The researchers also observed agricultural and other routine activities while guiding the participants in the mapping, pairwise ranking, free listing, and other PRA tools such as resource mapping, village mapping, participant observation, and history lines. Community members were also invited during discussions so that they could participate. They made sure that most sectors of the society were represented in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, and political affiliation.

Compared to PRA, rapid Participatory Rural Appraisal (rPRA) is usually done around 4-8 days while PRA may last for months or years (Freudenberger, 2008). It was also found that local resources such as health and recreation facilities (community assets) were not accessible for PWDs. The use of rPRA in this study was found to be effective and helpful and even encouraged dialogues about biodiversity. One of the vital factors in its success was having a well-trained staff. They hired Nigerians who were trained previously in PRA techniques through a local development institution. The involvement of the well-equipped facilitators led to an effective communication, and it lessened preliminary challenges in the methodologies. The contribution of local knowledge also contributed

significantly in gathering important information like use of natural resources, local insights, and classification of diverse resources. The results of their study supported the claim of Hellier et al. (1999) that rPRA is a strong initial conservation tool. Their study further showed that community participation in initial evaluations can support the formation of a collective language of conservation, inclusion of community concerns to improve management targets, and establishment of 'culturally-grounded conservation programs'.

Among the 13 articles, 4 tackled climate and environment, 2 on people with disabilities, 3 about public health and sanitation, and the rest were about agriculture. Using Townsley's (1996) findings on the advantages of PRA, six articles included specific priorities for the target participants. Five articles indicated that using PRA as a tool encouraged local development workers to mobilize and get involved in development initiatives. In terms of establishing linkages, four mentioned that their project/research is in cooperation with other institutions or the future development projects (as a result of the PRA) will establish linkages.

The use of local resources is also an important advantage when doing PRA, but only one study (article 10) used utilize it. In contrast, in Toro-Hernandez et al., (2020), local resources were considered barriers in the mobility of persons with disabilities. It would have been a good opportunity for development workers and policymakers to act on it but no implications were mentioned in the study. Five studies recommended the development of sustainable activities after conducting PRA.

Reflecting on the findings, it could be said that most of the reviewed articles conducted PRA to fulfill organizational requirements. This falls under pseudo-participation, manipulation, passive, consultation, and nominal participation (Deshler & Socks, 1985; Pretty, 1994, as cited in Bacongus, n.d.; Cornwall, 2000, as cited in Bacongus, n.d.). Hinton (2001, as cited in Cornwall & Guijt, 1995) notes that usually, the voices of the marginalized in the communities are often unheard-of during development 'consultations'. The educated and the wealthy become the official representatives during consultations as they are the most accessible. This is supported by Richards (1995) saying that RRA/PRA contradicts its real purpose, which is the promotion of empowerment among the poor if bureaucracy gets in the way when it is used. Among all the articles reviewed, only article 10 met the criteria set forth by Townsley (1996) on the successful conduct of PRA.

PRA Methods and their Effects

Table 1 illustrates the summary of findings of this study. It includes the commonly used PRA methods and approaches that emerged, positive changes brought by PRA to the communities, and the reasons why/how the PRA method/approach was considered a success or a failure.

A realization from this content analysis is that it is indeed difficult to conduct PRA. There are many factors to consider, and it is not easy to implement it when PRA facilitators lack dedication. PRA facilitators should be able to endure all hardships to accomplish their objectives consequently eliciting organic participation from the people. Hence, based on this analysis, the author came up with the following themes as indicators of successful PRA, called *TIIS* (a Filipino term which is equivalent to the term, endurance):

1. Transparency – Prior to the conduct of PRA, the objectives of the activity should be made clear to the members of target communities or whoever will participant. The common failure that the author observed is that facilitators got in to the community to conduct PRA without prior explanation on what is in it for them.
2. Inclusivity – There should be enough representation of the members of the community during the conduct of PRA. Because if only those who are 'available' and 'accessible' join the activities, there might be important information that the project would miss.
3. Involvement – Once the PRA is done, the locals should be engaged in making decisions and policies. Their involvement should not stop from just providing information during the mapmaking or transect walks. Instead of treating them as 'subjects' or 'objects' of the study, they should feel that their contribution in the PRA can lead to a better change, hence, empowerment.
4. Sustainability – An important realization is to ensure that after the conduct of the extension activity, the change agents should make sure that the program will be sustainable, and the clientele can maintain it on their own. The role of the facilitator or the development worker does not stop when the PRA is done – once the problems were identified, they must do something to address those challenges and ensure sustainability and accountability among the target clientele.

Table 1
Summary of findings

Common PRA methods used	Positive changes that have occurred / will probably occur in the communities	Reason(s) why / how PRA succeeded or failed
1. Mapping	By having consultations on the data visualized on the map, the informants created insights and produced new knowledge. It made community health workers understand visually the environment where they worked. Through participatory mapping, the participants generated their map in the 'history of health'.	Participatory process of mapmaking; it promoted collaboration and understanding among the participants. <i>[succeeded]</i>
2. Mobility map, transect, time line, time trend	The social map describes the social structure and characteristics of a rural society, neighborhoods, institutions, and collectivities, while the time trend captured the price and production trends and price fluctuations in tomato crop over a period. These findings could help the farmers in deciding when to plant or harvest and optimize the market value of their produce.	The planning of extension programs might be helpful in the future, but there was no assurance if those programs will push through, if those could really improve people's lives, or will they just do it to fulfill their need to assess the community's condition. <i>[failed]</i>
3. Transect walk, neighborhood mapping	This study prioritizes the psychosocial wellness of the individuals who were shamed to improve sanitation experts. community. It investigated whether CLTS dealt with the community members respectfully and constructively	During the transect and neighborhood mapping, the participants were tasked to draw the village map and indicate where open defecation sites are. Then they were brought to the site and have them answer the questions in fresh dumps so that they will feel ashamed about it. In this case, the use of village map and transect walk became instruments to encourage shame and stigma among the people in the community. <i>[failed]</i>

Table 1 (continued)
Summary of findings

Common PRA methods used	Positive changes that have occurred / will probably occur in the communities	Reason(s) why / how PRA succeeded or failed
4. Social mapping	This study can be an eye-opener that local perceptions on disabilities should be considered because it may bring encouraging impact on future involvement of the community in programs on disability rehabilitation.	They included consultation of local people so that they would be involved in the identification process. The previously done surveys lack involvement from the community; hence, negatively affecting the services for the disabled. <i>[succeeded]</i>
5. Village timeline, contextual change, livelihood shock	Contextual shift described all the good and bad changes that transpired in the area over their lifetime and how those impacted their livelihood (Dietz et al., 2013). Village timeline provided a historic image of the important incidents that the participants recall. Livelihood shocks provided the insights of the people about various risks regarding the gravity of these effects in their lives.	Participant were never given a chance to perform management responsibilities. Instead, they were punished for finding means of livelihood when their traditional sources of income were affected by natural calamities (such as cyclones, floods, etc.). Likewise, there was no involvement of development workers on these activities. <i>[failed]</i>
6. Social mapping	The social mapping activity provided significant details about the community's cultural practices, language, and social networking.	The social map did not provide concrete, complete, and enough comprehensive details. It is also not advisable for long-term use since social structure change every now and then. <i>[failed]</i>
7. Participatory mapping	The people's involvement in the study resulted in establishing a community research group involving undergraduate students, community leaders, and the co-authors of this work that aimed to collect data public transportation. The presentation is just close by convenience in the area. It enabled the community leaders and decision makers to discuss solutions moving forward.	Unlike other PRAs that concentrated on agriculture and farmers, its approach is focused on the social development and inclusion of the PWDs. Hence, this study shows the wide array of applicability of PRA. <i>[succeeded]</i>

Table 1 (continued)
Summary of findings

Common PRA methods used	Positive changes that have occurred / will probably occur in the communities	Reason(s) why / how PRA succeeded or failed
8. Community resource maps, social maps, risk maps, and transect walks	Since the improvement of mobile internet accessibility and availability was in progress in Nepal, it would offer significant technical empowering environment for more community members to utilize and learn skills such as integrated risk mapping, assisting to fill the crucial spatial threat in knowledge gap, and might actually change disaster risk management and planning for development in their area.	The digitization and the use of new technology about the maps imposes problem to the older generation in the community. Hence, if the same approach would be used in other locales, the youth can better participate – which could be a good opportunity for them to get involved in the process as oftentimes they usually disregarded in decision/ policy making processes. <i>[succeeded]</i>
9. Trend and historical diagram, seasonal calendar, transect walk, village, resource, and health maps	After doing the PRA, the student social workers and the field supervisor returned to the village. To address alcoholism, the social workers encouraged the women villagers to solve the problem by applying social action method (but not specifically stated). For women empowerment, they assembled the women villagers. It was the only time that it happened in the community and their participation level was remarkably high.	A remarkable achievement of the study was that the participants benefited from it in the end. The results, which were utilized to address the identified problems lived up to the author's definition of PRA – it was seen as participatory policymaking, planning, and development process. <i>[succeeded]</i>
10. Communication resource mapping	The communication plan that was generated would help the coastal community in decision and policy making for resource management, specifically their community resource and communication needs	The participants themselves planned their solutions ahead to address communication problems as a result of the PRA to a proposed communication plan since most of them are LGU officials. <i>[succeeded]</i>

Table 1 (continued)
Summary of findings

Common PRA methods used	Positive changes that have occurred / will probably occur in the communities	Reason(s) why / how PRA succeeded or failed
11. SWOT analysis	The study was intended to map and classify the categories of the land uses in Kanshi region and its sub-watersheds to measure the effects of urbanization and the interference caused by natural and human activities.	During the conduct of the actual SWOT analysis, it was not indicated who participated in this help input information. Hence, it could not be ascertained if local knowledge was collected. <i>[failed]</i>
12. Secondary data (PRA reports)	The researchers recommended that clear and thorough reports should be observed because they will definitely be beneficial to the target communities especially when there are funding agencies to be involved.	Among the 100 available PRA data, 27 were just exercises supervised by facilitators but actually performed by people who lack experience in PRA tools. Three did not indicate examples or list of the tools used during the PRA and did not specify the problems to be addressed in the village. <i>[failed]</i>
13. Resource mapping, village mapping, participant observation, and history lines	Their study showed that community participation in initial evaluations can support in forming a collective language of conservation, inclusion of community concerns to improve management targets, and support the establishment of 'culturally-grounded conservation programs'.	Community members were also invited during discussions so that they could participate. They made sure that most sectors of the society were represented such as gender, ethnicity, age, and political affiliation. The involvement of the well-equipped facilitators led to an effective communication, and it lessened preliminary challenges in the methodologies. The contribution of local knowledge also contributed a lot in the gathering of very important information like use of natural resources, local insights, and classification of diverse resources. <i>[succeeded]</i>

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusion

It was found that all PRA approaches used in the reviewed studies brought positive changes in the target communities although those changes were not directly revealed. Mapping was the most utilized PRA tool used by all 13 articles; the tool included mobility, social, neighborhood, participatory, resource, and village map. It was followed by transect walk, time line, and sustainable livelihood analysis/framework. Other PRA tools utilized were time trend, contextual change, livelihood shock, trend and historical diagram, seasonal calendar, SWOT analysis, PRA reports, participant observation, and history lines.

Moreover, most of the studies showcased that the conduct of PRA brought and will bring positive changes in their target communities as reflected on Table 1. Majority of these changes were about encouraging community members to participate; hence, they became aware about their environment and the community they live in specifically the problems, solutions to those problems, and plans for the improvement of their communities. Because of these positive changes, most of the PRAs conducted in this study were considered successful.

Some of the reasons why the PRA succeeded were: 1) PRA promoted collaboration and participation among the participants, 2) encouraged inclusion among the marginalized sectors, 3) addressed social problems in the communities, 4) encouraged participants to design their own solutions, and 5) included local knowledge. Meanwhile, the author considered other articles reviewed in this study as “unparticipatory” because they were unable to address the problems in the communities.

The studies analyzed show that PRA is indeed a powerful and valuable approach for participatory development. The journal articles proved that PRA could empower groups and communities in the margins by having them assert their priorities, analyze the communities’ problems, and take actions for those. It gave room for improvement and better transformations in the communities through research, extension, and other development initiatives. But not all of them fulfilled the real needs of their target communities. Gujit and Cornwall (1995) mentioned that the term ‘PRA’ has been employed to refer to types of development that are covertly manipulated. In some cases, the benefits were intangible and have extensive consequences.

Other studies found that some PRA scholars claimed that the term's true meaning was already lost due to its "misuse and abuse" (Maxwell, 1998, as cited in Brown, 2006; Cornwall & Pratt, 2011). After revisiting PRA-related studies, the author realized that the definitions might actually be debatable. Nonetheless, what is more important is how the PRA tools were applied in practice. If it is used to solely achieve an agency or institutions' objectives, then truly, the real meaning of the word is lost. But we can always overemphasize the 'P' in PRA and unleash from the deceptions of doctrines, beliefs, and pointless rhetoric, so we can restore the commitment to the essential values with which the PRA originated.

Conducting PRA could be challenging and tough, but a dedicated PRA facilitator could endure so long as the goal of the PRA was attained and real participation was achieved. Upon the review of the articles, the author proposes that for PRAs to be successful, they must have *transparency* about their objectives, *inclusivity* towards the members of the community, *involvement* of local people in making decisions and policies, and *sustainability* of the development projects.

Recommendations and Implications

1. It is important for the facilitators to know and understand their roles in doing PRA. They should also be aware of the specific objectives that need to be met. Like what de Koning (1995) claimed, the agents who utilize PRA must find improved approaches for communities to reveal shifting power relationships over time and to be committed that those different ideas and needs of the grassroots are not only listened to and documented but also well accounted for.
2. Most scholars and practitioners must continue to nurture their career by writing about conflicting definitions and bad practices of PRA. It is imperative that seemingly "bad practices" must be rectified.
3. It is also important to train other trainers. Since most of the results of the review revealed that the failure of PRA stems from untrained facilitators, it is then imperative to pass on the knowledge of veteran practitioners to budding development workers.
4. After the conduct of the PRA, it is important to write clear, specific, and comprehensive documentation of reports/results. Those reports/documents could be the bases of future development projects (or sustainability), so it is with utmost significance that no pertinent information is missed, and that no data is disregarded.

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