

## Carrying out Rapid Socio-Economic surveys using Participatory Rapid Assessment techniques:



By

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## **Preface & Introduction:**

The Ten Seed Technique (TST) developed by the author of this booklet has been used for a variety of programs, varying from MED, HIV/AIDS, Health, CEDC, Agriculture and Livelihood analysis, Wholistic World View Analysis etcetra. In 2001 the use of this technique in Food Security programming especially for situation analysis, and planning interventions was researched in detail, while the author was the Regional Food Security and Disaster Mitigation Advisor for World Vision International – Asia Pacific Disaster Management office. It was tested and tried and further modified in its use for identifying the most vulnerable in a community. The technique is also excellent for carrying out Socio-economic surveys.

*The following pages describe in a simple way how the tool can be used in the carring out rapid socio economic surveys. Though the examples are from Sri Lanka, they apply equally in any other context.*

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### **Identifying the most Vulnerable in a Community:**

While being able to identify the most vulnerable in a Community is the quest of every organization, actually carrying it out properly is not so easy! Various methods have been used for this, including Wealth Ranking or well-being ranking, which employ Participatory tools. The following pages recommend a simple tool that involves the use of the 10 seed technique (TST) and a simple checklist generated using the Rapid Food Security status assessment (RFSA) exercise. The method is simple and involves very simple steps:

**Step-1:** Using the 10 seed technique (TST) , carry out the Rapid Food Security Status (RFSA) exercise, where the different levels of Food Security are determined.(Follow the steps outlined in the *step-by-step guide on use of the ten seed technique for Food Security status assessment: By Dr Ravi Jayakaran* published by the Asia Pacific Region-Disaster Mitigation office, WVI-Philippines).Through interaction with a mixed group of villagers who are familiar with their community, the technique is explained and they are asked to separate out the 10 seeds into groups representing the households in their village into 2 initial groups of those who encounter struggles to 'make ends meet' and those who do not have a struggle.



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**Step-2:** After this, the seeds representing those who face a struggle are further segregated, as also those representing those that don't have struggles into further groups. Care should be taken to capture the Community's perception and their descriptions. For example in this case where the exercise was carried out in a village covered by the Kothevera ADP in Sri Lanka, where World Vision Lanka is working; the Community determined that there were 4 types of people when classifying them according to their Household Food Security status:

- 0.1. **Posatha** (those who had enough)
- 0.2. **Madhyaste** (those who were 'in between', & who could just about manage)
- 0.3. **Duppatha** (those for whom life was a struggle, because of shortages)
- 0.4. **Antha Duppatha** (those for whom life was an extreme struggle always)



**Step-3:** This involves getting further details for each group. The following chart shows the outcome of the exercise and also the way the community described each of the categories, through profiling representative families. Each representative group was given a name by which the Community described them, and the Community's criteria for classifying them in that particular group were determined. This was then further cross checked with the larger group to determine if everyone agreed and also if everyone understood what was happening.

Number of Seeds	Food Security Status	Local name	Profile of representative households
00	Have enough (above the 'Prosperity line')	"Pohasath"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permanent house</li> <li>1-2 employed permanently</li> <li>Have livestock(15-20)</li> <li>Cultivate own land (large farms)</li> <li>Low indebtedness</li> </ul>
000	The 'Just enough group' (just above the Poverty line)	"Madhyasthe"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Half built semi permanent house</li> <li>Small scale livestock(2-3)</li> <li>Look after livestock of Group 1</li> <li>Petty trade in the village</li> <li>Experiment with other trades (artisan/fishery)</li> <li>Cultivate land (small farms)</li> </ul>
000	The Poor (just below the Poverty line)	"Dupatha"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impermanent houses</li> <li>Education level higher than group 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>More indebtedness</li> <li>Land mortgaged when not used for more than 2 years</li> <li>Sell labor in the village</li> <li>Look after livestock of Group 1 &amp; 2</li> </ul>
00	The very poor (those below the 'Charity Line')	"Anatha Dupatha"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't have own houses. Stay with extended families</li> <li>Some stay in rented places</li> <li>Land mortgaged</li> <li>Migrate out of village to sell labor outside</li> </ul>

**Step-4:** These **community determined criteria** are now put on a checklist beginning with the first group criteria listed first followed by the next and so on. The profile criteria are listed on top and the names of the heads of the households are listed on the left. Teams of 2 to 3 persons (with an external person as a 'control') now go out to the whole village ensuring that they cover every household in the process. As they come to each household, all they need to do is write the name of the head of the household and tick for each criteria if that household meets the criteria.

**Food Security Status of Individual House Holds(Checklist):**

(Sample Format for creating a survey baseline)

Date:.....Name of data Collector:.....

Sl. No.	Name	Permanent House	Livestock15-20	1-2 Permanently Employed	Low Indebtedness	Cultivate Own Land	Half Built Semi Permanent Houses	Livestock Only 2-3	Look After Livestock Of Grp.1	Petty Trade In Village	Experiment With Other Artisanal Trades/Fishery	Cultivate Land	Impermanet Houses	Education Level Higher Than1&2	More Indebtedness	Land Mortgaged When Not Cultivated For More Than 2 Years	Sell Labour In The Village	Look After Livestock Of 1&2	Don't Have Own Houses(Extended Family)	Stay In Rented Houses	No Land: Part Of Original Settlers	Migrate Out Of Village To Sell Labour						
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In the above chart, the people in the different groups are represented by the colors Blue, Gray, Green and Pink. After the households are surveyed (a process that should take only around 5- 8 minutes per household if done correctly), the families that have the maximum number of ticks in the pink box are the most vulnerable, followed by those in the green box that are the next most vulnerable.

This checklist can be dated and will form the baseline for the Food Security status of the households in the village at that point of time. It will be able to identify the number of families that fall into the vulnerable group, and this can be used for preparing the indicators. Also, since the names of the families are available, the progress of these can be tracked for evaluation at periodic intervals, and Socio-Economic changes over a period of time can be tracked to see if there is an upward or downward movement of households across the Food Security status levels as the result of an externally induced intervention.



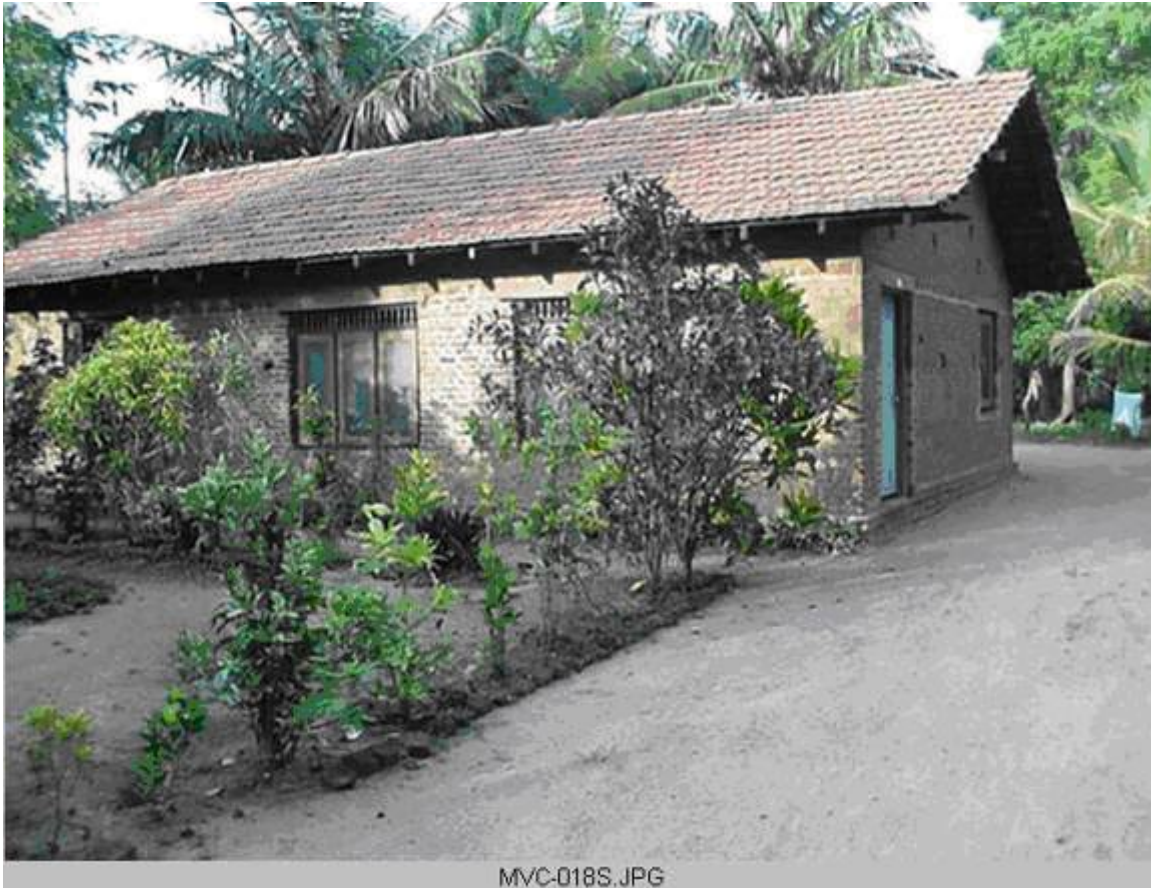


**PROFILE OF THE “POSATH” GROUP (the 'well off'):**



- They live in a permanent House
- They have one or two family members in a regular salaried job
- They have 15-20 Livestock which they own, though these may actually be in the care of one of the other groups
- They cultivate their own land (usually large plots)
- They very rarely take loans hence there is very low indebtedness among them.

**PROFILE OF THE “MADHYASTHE” GROUP (the 'middle'):**



- They live in half built, or partly built , yet permanent houses
- They have a fewer number of livestock, usually 2 to 3
- They look after the livestock of the 1st group (the Posatha)
- They have petty trade(s) in the village
- They are known to frequently try to experiment with other trades such as being Artisans and catching fish
- They cultivate their own land



**PROFILE OF THE “DUPPATH” GROUP (The Poor):**



- They live in impermanent houses made out of Mud
- Strangely enough, their education levels are higher than the first two groups!
- There is greater indebtedness in this group
- They have to resort to mortgaging their land when it is not used for more than 2 years
- They sell labor within the village
- They look after the livestock of the first two groups

**PROFILE OF THE “ANTHA DUPPATHA” GROUP (The Very Poor):**



- They usually don't have their own houses, and stay with extended families or in cheaply priced rented places
- Their land is usually mortgaged so they do not have cultivateable land
- They migrate out of their village to sell labour outside, during the difficult months.

### **Summary & Conclusion:**

After completing the checklists, each group of persons now bring these together and compile the master list. This acts as the *baseline* for the program. The list of the vulnerable households can be prepared separately, for determining whom the project should primarily concentrate on. The progress of this group can therefore be closely monitored and tracked to see how the programs are impacting them.

At periodical intervals, during evaluations, a similar exercise can be done, using the old list on a new chart, and the status redetermined by another visit to each household. The profile of individual families can then be compared to the *baseline* to see if there has been any improvement, and if the families in fact have moved up or down the Food security status categories. Missing names, will show those who have migrated from the village, and additional names will show those who have come into the village from outside.

This type of rapid appraisal using a combination of the Ten Seed Technique (TST) and the checklist generated by it, can enable the project staff to determine if they are targeting the most vulnerable and also if the programmes they are implementing to serve them are in fact impacting them in a proper way. If, on evaluation, the findings are that the program is not actually benefiting the most vulnerable, then it is an opportunity to make corrections and revisions to more effectively focus on them.

The RFSA exercise (Rapid *Household* Food Security Status Assessment) exercise can be used along with the new participatory tool developed by the author for applying the '*IDS-DFID sustainable livelihoods framework*' and also adding various components such as Education, Livelihood patterns, forest dependance, NRM use, etcetra. This can help create a framework according to the specific needs of the program.

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**Additional Reading by the Author:**

No	Name of Book /Manual	Author
1.	Participatory Poverty Alleviation & Development	Dr Ravi Jayakaran, 2003
2.	Facilitating Small Groups	Dr Ravi Jayakaran, 2003
3.	The Ten Seed Technique	Dr Ravi Jayakaran, 2001
4.	Step-By-Step guide to use of TST in RFSA	Dr Ravi Jayakaran, 2000
5.	CBELL –Cross Border Interaction Manual (ADB 6171)	Dr Ravi Jayakaran, 2005
6.	Manual for Participatory Assessments (ADB 6171)	Dr Ravi Jayakaran & Mr Janmejay Singh, 2005
7.	Participatory Process Assessment and Evaluation (UNDP-MoEYS Cambodia)	Dr Ravi Jayakaran, 2006