

A.P. MAYANDI.

Participatory Rural Development Expert | PRA Specialist | Community Development Consultant

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Professional summary

Accomplished Rural Development Professional with over 40 years of experience in participatory planning, community development, livelihood promotion, social research, and capacity building. A pioneer in the application of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodologies in South India, trained by Robert Chambers, the internationally acclaimed pioneer of PRA. Extensive experience working with NGOs, government agencies, financial institutions, donor organizations, and community-based institutions to design, facilitate, and evaluate sustainable rural development initiatives.

Core competencies

- Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)
- Community Development Planning
- Farmer Producer Organization (FPO/FPC) Development
- Livelihood and Rural Enterprise Development
- Women's Self-Help Group (SHG) Strengthening
- Capacity Building and Training Facilitation
- Social Research and Baseline Studies
- Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
- Natural Resource Management
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation
- Institutional Development
- Stakeholder Engagement and Facilitation

Professional experience

Senior Rural Development Advisor & Mentor

- Provides strategic guidance on participatory planning and rural development initiatives.
- Mentors teams working on Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), natural resource management, and sustainable livelihood programmes.
- Supports the design and implementation of community-driven development processes.

- Facilitates training and capacity-building programmes for development professionals and community institutions.

Rural Development Consultant & PRA Facilitator

- Facilitated participatory planning exercises across rural communities and development projects.
- Conducted social assessments, baseline studies, impact evaluations, and participatory research.
- Supported the formation and strengthening of Farmer Producer Companies and Self-Help Groups.
- Developed training modules and learning materials for community development programmes.
- Facilitated workshops on PRA, participatory planning, and institutional development.

Key innovation

Participatory Learning Meet (PALM) - Designer and developer of the **Participatory Learning Meet (PALM)** methodology, an innovative learning and planning approach evolved from PRA principles. PALM has been successfully applied for:

- Business planning of Farmer Producer Companies.
- Institutional strengthening of community-based organizations.
- Stakeholder consultations and strategic planning.
- Participatory learning and capacity-building initiatives.

Major contributions

- Strengthened Farmer Producer Companies through participatory business planning and governance systems.
- Empowered Women's Self-Help Groups through capacity building and institutional strengthening.
- Conducted participatory needs assessments in tsunami-affected coastal communities.
- Developed training modules for Barefoot Doctors and community health workers.
- Designed community development interventions for child sponsorship programmes.
- Facilitated participatory development processes among adolescents, farmers, women, and vulnerable communities.
- Contributed to natural resource management and watershed development initiatives.

Research & evaluation experience

Participated in and contributed to research studies, evaluations, and development initiatives supported by:

- VET-AID, Scotland
- DFID, United Kingdom
- IIED, United Kingdom
- UNDP – Small Grants Programme

- IDS, United Kingdom
- PEACE Trust, New Delhi

Key Research Areas

- Sustainable Agriculture
- Farmer Markets
- Watershed Management
- Disaster Management
- Economic Literacy
- Natural Resource Management
- Livelihood Development
- Community-Based Development

Educational qualification

Master of Arts (M.A.) – Sociology

Professional highlights

- Over 40 years of professional experience in rural development and participatory planning.
- Trained by Robert Chambers, globally recognized pioneer of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).
- Pioneer in introducing and promoting PRA methodologies in South India.
- Designer of the innovative Participatory Learning Meet (PALM) methodology.
- Extensive experience collaborating with NGOs, donor agencies, government institutions, and community-based organizations.

Professional vision

Mr. A.P. Mayandi firmly believes that sustainable development begins with people's participation. His lifelong commitment has been to enable communities to identify their strengths, analyze their challenges, and create practical, locally owned solutions for long-term and inclusive development.