Social Map

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The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

The most popular method in Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) social mapping explores where and how people live and the available social infrastructure: roads, drainage systems, schools, drinking-water facilities, etc. A social map is made by local people and is not drawn to scale, illustrating what the local people believe to be relevant and important for them. This method is an authentic way of determining what the social reality looks like for locals through social stratification, demographics, settlement patterns, social infrastructure, etc.

Steps: The process for social mapping should include the following steps:

1. Consultation with the local community to identify an appropriate time and place for the exercise. Ensure that the time and location is suitable (good size, convenient, comfortable for all members of society) for as many people as possible.

2. Explain the purpose of the exercise to the participants. Ask them to begin by drawing the main physical features of their locality. Let them use whatever materials they choose (local or other materials) as creatively as possible. This may mean using twigs and rocks or yarn on canvas on the ground, or it may mean markers, depending on the community.

3. Watch the process carefully and take detailed notes. Don't rush things!

4. Keep track of who is actively involved – to which section of society do they belong? Who is being left out? Take steps to involve them.

5. You are just a facilitator — intervene only when necessary, like when participants are going through a rough patch.

6. It is important not to disrupt this process – wait for a good time in the process if you must add or clarify anything. Ask them: "What about …", "What does this symbol represent?" etc.

7. When they have finished mapping, ask some people to identify their houses in the map.

8. Identify and number the household details you need according to the goal of the exercise, like caste composition, school age children, etc.

9. Take a look at the map and clarify: ask specific questions on parts that are unclear to you. Copy the map made by participants onto a large sheet of paper immediately, with all details.

10. Triangulate the information generated with others in the locality.

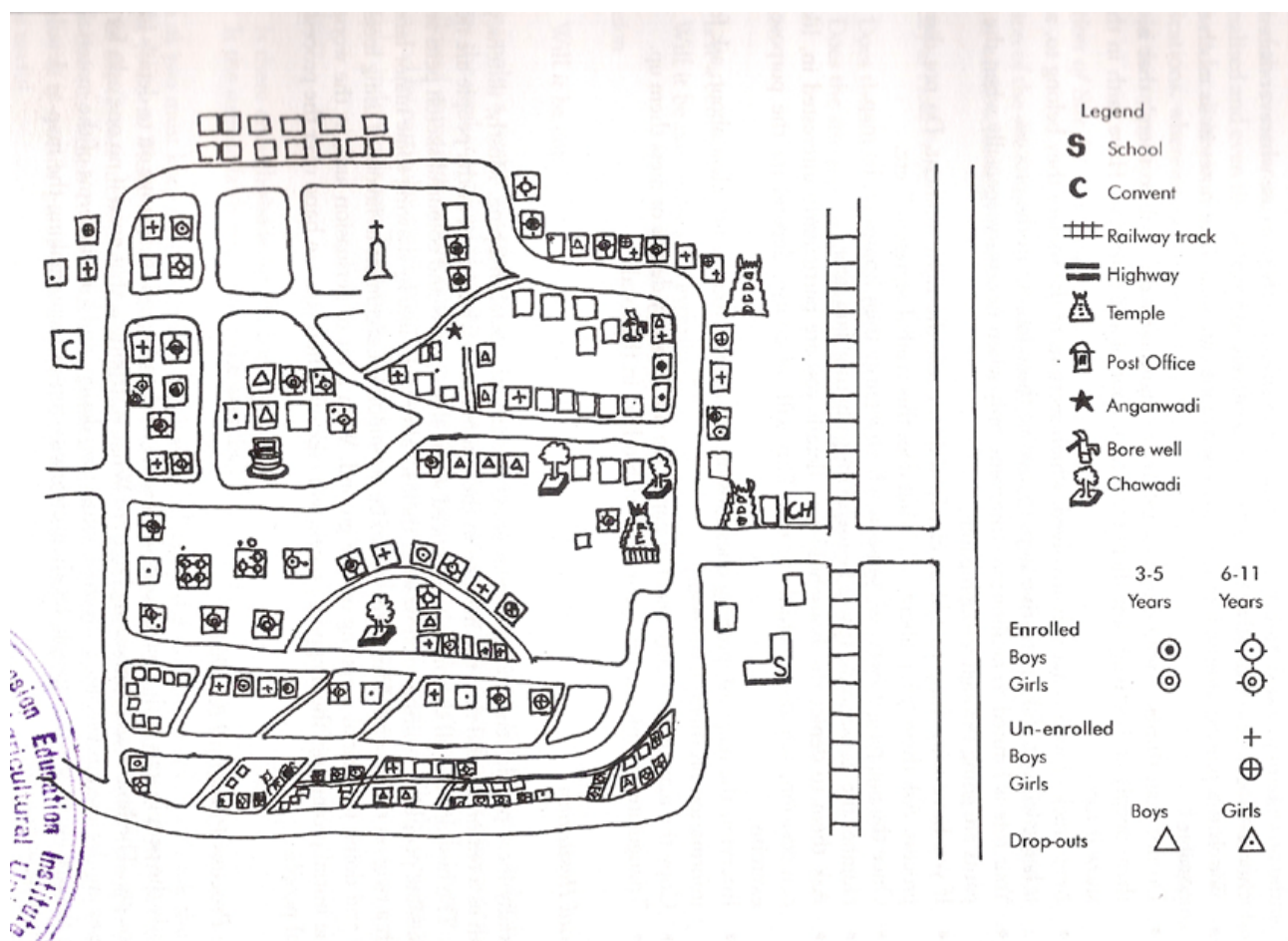## Social mapping helps gather village information on:

➢ Caste distribution and their spatial distribution within the village
➢ Ethnic distribution
➢ Social institutions and economy
➢ Family structure, patterns, and relationships
➢ Government institutions available
➢ Education background of villagers
➢ Social groups
➢ Assimilation patterns
➢ Accommodation practices
➢ Leadership patterns
➢ Value systems of the village
➢ Social interactions
➢ Cooperation and conflict practices
➢ Media/communication practices
➢ Social norms, folkways, history
➢ Social evils like alcoholism, child labor, prostitution
➢ Religion, leadership pattern and customs

Extension professionals can design and plan interventions in a village to improve extension and advisory services with this information.

"**What amazes new PRA practitioners is the way in which even those who generally remain on the fringes of the community process viz., old people, women and children get involved in mapping. The marginalized and even the illiterate follow the process and most of them are able to locate their houses and their localities in the social map.**"

Example of a Social Map: Villagers mapped out Chetlamallapuram in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh, shown in figure 1. They depicted the lanes, sub-lanes, school, railway track, temple, post-office, well, community hall, and convent in the village. The map helped determine the educational situation by gender and age, revealing that more boys go to school than girls, more girls and un-enrolled than boys, and more girls drop out than boys in the 6-11 year age group. From this information, extension workers can better determine next steps for the community.

Figure 1: Social Map of Chetlamallapuram