



Transect is a method used to explore the spatial dimensions of people's realities, focusing on the natural resources and factoring in social aspects of a village. It is normally done after resource mapping the village, helping in triangulation. A transect depicts a cross-section of the different agro-ecological zones and provides a comparative assessment of the Zones on different parameters (topography, land type, land usage, ownership, access, soil-type, soil fertility, vegetation, crops, problems, opportunities and solutions). Such social aspects as ethnic determinants of settlement access and control, as well as gender-related dimensions can be incorporated depending on the exercise objectives. A transect helps identify problems to then plan for natural resource development in the area.

Objectives

- Appraisal of natural resources in terms of status, problems and potential
- Verification of issues raised during other PRA exercises – social mapping and natural resources mapping especially
- Plan various interventions and check the relevance of planned interventions
- Monitoring and evaluation of interventions and projects.

Making a transect consists of two sets of processes:

1. A systematic walk by the facilitators and the local people to observe the natural surroundings to arrive at a detailed understanding of the area-its topography, natural resources, entitlements, problems, opportunities.
2. The production of the transect diagram depicting the cross section of the walk route in terms of various agro-ecological zones in conjunction with a matrix of comparative analyses of the zones across certain parameters.

Steps: The transect could comprise of the following steps:

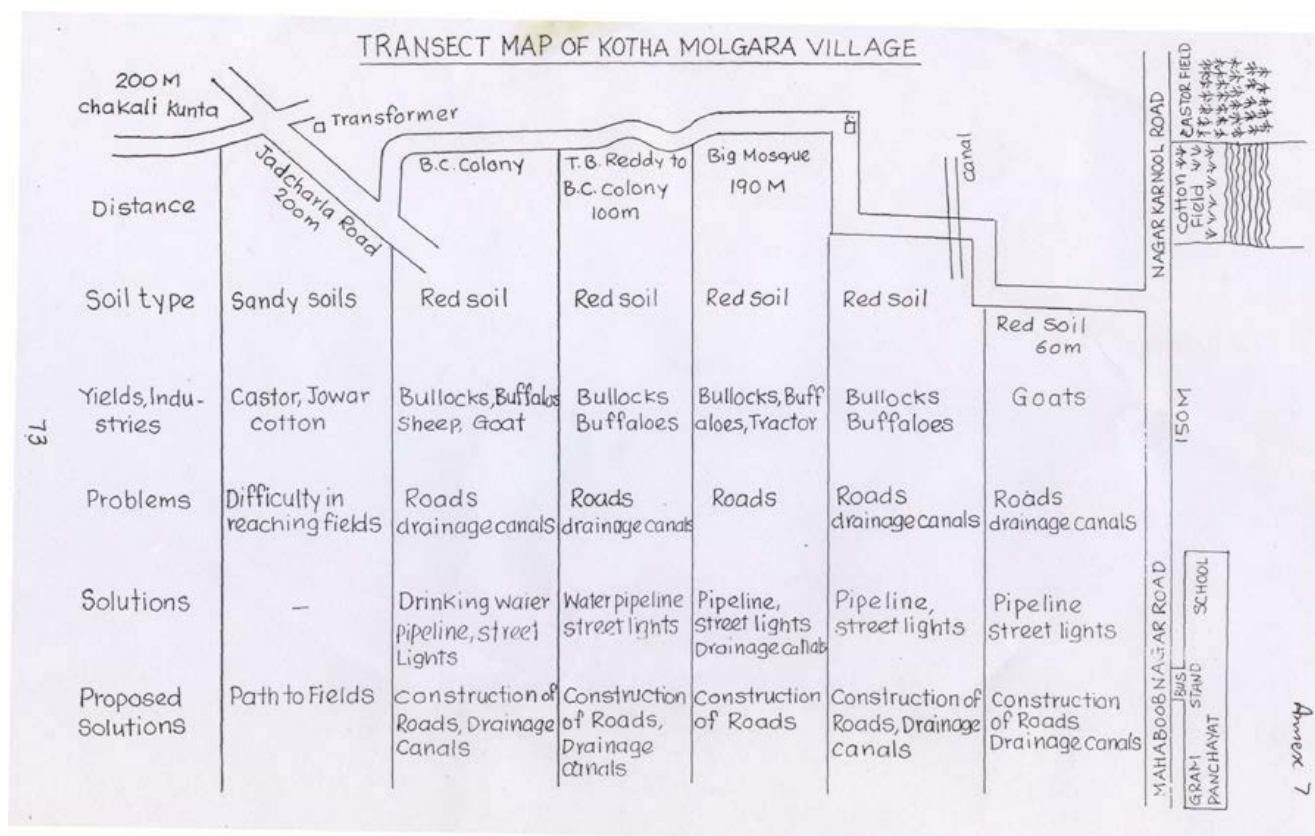
- Locate a group of individuals willing to talk with you, who have some knowledge of the area.
- Explain the purpose of transect to the people and have them help decide the transect path you should take to maximize observations of details of the locality – discuss and arrive at the parameters according to which you would like to collect data during the walk.
- Go along with the people at a predetermined time and path. If needed, make modifications as you go! Collect data based on the list of parameters.
- Observe the surroundings – take detailed notes using local terms.
- Ask questions to clarify things you are not clear about to the local people accompanying you. Listen carefully to what they say. Also listen to the discussions they have amongst themselves. Encourage them to explain as you move.
- Stop at various locations for detailed discussions as you discuss important points that come up. Take a breather! Use this opportunity to clarify issues emerging from the social map, resource map and other methods.
- After returning, draw a transect on a large sheet of paper. Let the local people take the lead in drawing the transect diagram. Use your notes and the notes of other members of the transect team.
- Show the transect to others in the locality and ask them their views to triangulate the details and clarify your doubts.

The transect path can be decided in different ways using 1) *random selection method*: transects done without marking the transect path. You may not be able to capture maximum info this way **OR** 2) *an existing map*: you can use social or resource maps, or regular maps of the village, to mark out the path for the transect.

Example: Transect of Kotha Molgara Village

Villagers divided the area into seven agro-ecological zones of Kotha Molgara, as shown in figure 1. They detailed soil type and yields/industries, depicting the transect path and distance from the main road. Participants discussed problems within each zone, which included issues with drainage on their roads. Villagers determined a need for an improved water pipeline and drainage canals to help solve the problem.

Figure 1. Transect of Kotha Molgara Village



Designed to be Shared



License: Creative Commons Attribution 3.0
Unported creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/

Major Source: Material comes from a Distance Education program (PGDAEM) offered by MANAGE, India, used by permission by Dr. M.N. Reddy, October 2012.
<http://bit.ly/1yRvyXx>



Prepared by Oliver Ferguson and Kathryn Heinz, July 2014
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



Available at www.meas-extension.org/tip-sheets