

Livelihood analysis

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Why analyse livelihood?

Some key issues are:

1. HH income
 - What appears to be mainstay of HH income?
2. Asset constraints
 - Vary from place to place, group to group and across income level
 - Poorer groups typically have limited access to assets and are more constrained in their choice of livelihood strategies than richer groups
3. Risks/vulnerabilities
 - Different groups experience different risk factors in their livelihoods which needs to be understood to reduce vulnerability
4. Social and government factors
 - The capability of individuals and groups to exercise choices may be constrained by social and government factors

How to analyse livelihoods?

1. Secondary data

- Refers to information and statistics that are already available
- Includes reports; research results; and statistics regularly collected and published by GOs
- Advantage is- providing material that is not available elsewhere
- Disadvantage is – it may be unreliable
- It should be used to inform only rather than frame

2. Sample survey

- Carried out using a sampling method (i.e., survey of the part rather than whole population)
- Cost effective method (less use of time and staff)
- Often can not provide strong evidence of cause and effect
- Major steps include: defining target population (may be a HH, partial HH, individual or a large group); selection of sample size; development of questionnaire; recruitment and training for the field investigators; collection and analysis of data; and interpretation of the findings
- Complementary to, and often informed by, participatory methods
- To be effective, it should be preceded by an initial qualitative overview of the community

3. PRA

- Participatory approaches are used not only for investigation but also to involve people in the process that affect their livelihood and empower them in dealing with external actors

- Although there can be a problem of bias, PRA offers techniques for rapid exploration of livelihoods
- It has strengths in terms of qualitative information, ordering of priorities, income and wealth ranking and purposive involvement of distinct social groups in problem solving
- Useful for analysis of historical, social and environmental context of livelihoods
- Are being increasingly used to understand policy issues.

