

Research Agenda for the 2002/3 PPA

On Monday, 4th February, the Implementing Consortium (IC) for the 2002/3 Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) convened a full-day workshop with multiple stakeholders to develop a Research Agenda reflecting policymakers' real information needs (see Appendix 1 for details). Following further consultation with specialists, the IC was able to refine this draft Research Agenda into a workable framework approved by the Research & Analysis Working Group on 15/2/02.

The final Research Agenda – to be used by PPA Research Teams as a starting and ongoing reference point – reflects policymakers' interest in learning about:

1. The concept of “vulnerability” and who is vulnerable
2. The forces that make people vulnerable and lead to (further) impoverishment
3. “Coping mechanisms” at individual, household and community levels

The following presents a more detailed breakdown of the core *Topics* and *Issues* to be explored by the 2002/3 PPA:

1. The Concept of Vulnerability

1.1 How do people experience and perceive the relationship between poverty & vulnerability?

1.2 Which Social Groups are perceived in diverse communities to be particularly vulnerable?

- Are specific social groups (e.g. female-headed households) *recognised* and *considered vulnerable* in all settings?
- What characteristics do community members see as particularly relevant in assessing whether one social group versus another is categorically “vulnerable”?

2. Causes & Consequences of Vulnerability

2.1 Environment & Vulnerability

2.1.1 Popular perceptions

- What environmental factors (including the status of natural resource and climatic conditions) do people perceive as affecting – and how – their vulnerability to becoming poor(er)?
- What patterns do people perceive regarding (a.) environmental conditions and (b.) Government response
- What do people think can be done by themselves and policymakers at various levels to reduce the frequency, intensity and impact of impoverishing environmental conditions?

2.1.2 Environmental Degradation (e.g. Soil, Pasture, Forest & Fisheries)

- How does environmental degradation affect the well-being and vulnerability of different social groups (e.g. women and/or small farmers)?

2.1.3 “Natural” Disasters (e.g. Drought & Flood)

- In what ways do natural disasters affect the wellbeing of diverse social groups?
- Are some social groups more vulnerable than others to the negative affects of natural disasters?
- How do people (at individual, household and community levels) try coping with natural disasters?
- How can Government support local responses to natural disaster and how should it intervene?
- Is vulnerability “seasonal”?

2.2 Livelihoods & Vulnerability

- What role does “child-labour” (i.e. that which precludes formal education) play in household strategies to minimise risk and stave off absolute poverty? How do children themselves view this strategy? Do they perceive it as increasing their long-term vulnerability as individuals?
- Is the vulnerability experienced by unemployed rural and urban youth particularly different from that of other social groups?
- Do the livelihood options open to particular social groups (e.g. women versus men and people with disabilities) mean that some are inherently more vulnerable than the other?
- What forms of vulnerability are associated with specific livelihoods?
- What is the relationship between land-ownership (or lack thereof) and vulnerability vis-à-vis diverse social groups?

2.2.1 Hazardous and “Illegal” Livelihoods

- Why do people engage in hazardous and illegal livelihoods (e.g. prostitution and poaching)? What is the relationship between these livelihoods and “vulnerability”?
- How do some of the worst forms of child labour affect the short and long-term vulnerability of children?
- How can Government facilitate people shifting from hazardous and illegal to safe and legitimate livelihoods?

2.3 “Economic Reforms” and Vulnerability

2.3.1 Access to Quality Social Services & Markets

- What is the relationship between access to quality social services and the vulnerability of particular social groups?
- How do illiteracy and innumeracy contribute to individuals’ vulnerability?
- To what extent has the recent collapse of public social services increased people’s vulnerability?

2.3.2 Policy Shocks

- What effect has the sudden removal of Agricultural Subsidies had on the wellbeing and vulnerability of particular social groups?

2.3.3 Cash-Crop Price Fluctuations

- What effect does cash-crop price fluctuation have on the vulnerability of small-holder farmers?

2.4 Good Governance & Vulnerability

2.4.1 Corruption

- How does corruption in social service delivery affect people’s vulnerability?
- How does corruption affect different social groups’ access to social services?
- What suggestions do people have for reducing corruption in social service delivery?

2.4.2 Unequal Policy Influence between Industrial vs. Small-scale Operators (e.g. artisanal vs. industrial miners and fisherman)

- Do some social groups experience and perceive themselves as essentially “excluded” from policy debates in general and about poverty alleviation in particular?
- Do community members perceive Government, at various levels, as having been “captured” by elite interest groups?
- Does the limited policy-voice of certain social groups affect their vulnerability? If so, how?

2.5. “Social Power” & Vulnerability

- How does the exclusion (or diminished influence) of specific social groups in household and community decision-making processes affect their vulnerability?
- What forms of social exclusion significantly increase the vulnerability of certain social groups?
- What social groups are most affected by exclusion from or limited voice in households and community decision-making processes?

2.6 Physical Abuse & Vulnerability

- What forms of Physical Abuse are perpetrated against particular social groups, and what are the consequences for individuals, households and communities?
- Does the mere threat of Physical Abuse curtail livelihoods and/or undermine wellbeing?
- What measures are taken by individuals, households and communities to guard against Physical Abuse?

2.7 Health & Vulnerability

- What is the relationship between “health” and the vulnerability of individuals and households?

2.7.1 HIV/AIDS & Vulnerability

- How does HIV/AIDS affect the wellbeing of individuals, households and communities?
- Do the experiences of HIV/AIDS infection and care taking differ between social groups?
- What are the consequences of HIV/AIDS positive parents for children and grandparents?
- What affects the quality of home care provided to HIV/AIDS patients?
- How do HIV/AIDS positive households cope with the loss of productive labour? Does the significance of lost labour vary according to livelihood?
- Do HIV/AIDS positive individuals and households suffer from “social exclusion”?
- What can Government do to facilitate grass-roots support to HIV/AIDS affected individuals, households and communities?

2.8 Other Shocks & Processes leading to increased Vulnerability

3. Coping Mechanisms

3.1 Strategies to “Prevent,” or avoid, crises (e.g. moving away from a drought-prone area)

- What prevention strategies are employed at individual, household and community levels?
- How does membership in one social group versus another affect these strategies?
- Are these strategies changing? Are specific strategies becoming more or less widespread/effective? How so? Why?
- What is the role of non-farm rural enterprises in these strategies?

- ❑ How do power relations at household and community levels affect these coping strategies?

3.2 Strategies to “Prepare” for a crisis and prevent negative impact (e.g. building-up food stocks)

- ❑ What actions have individuals, households and communities taken to prepare for negative shocks/processes? What has the outcome been?
- ❑ Are these strategies (e.g. community-based Disaster Management and safety-net/Care Programmes) changing? How? Why?

3.3 Strategies to “Mitigate,” or diminish, the impact of negative shocks/processes (e.g. food-for-work programmes)

- ❑ What actions have individuals, households and communities taken to mitigate the impact of negative shocks/processes? What has the outcome been?
- ❑ Are these strategies (e.g. community-based Disaster Management and safety-net/Care Programmes) changing? How? Why?
- ❑ What can Government do to encourage and support grass-roots initiatives?
- ❑ What complementary actions can Government take?
- ❑ What is the role of livelihoods diversity at the household level (and particularly rural/urban pairing) in mitigating the impact of negative shocks/processes?

Key “Categories of Vulnerable People” that will be engaged in the participatory research process include:¹

1. Elderly People
2. People with Disabilities
3. Women
 - ❑ Female-headed Households
 - ❑ Widows
 - ❑ Teenage Mothers
4. Youth
 - ❑ Unemployed Urban or Rural Youth
5. Children
 - ❑ Under 5’s
 - ❑ Child-headed Households
 - ❑ Orphans
 - ❑ Street Children
 - ❑ Child-labourers
6. HIV/AIDS Affected People
 - ❑ Individuals
 - ❑ Households
 - ❑ Communities
7. Pastoralists
8. Hunter-gatherers
9. Small-scale Farmers
10. Rural Landless
11. People in Degraded Landscapes
12. Urban Landless & Squatters

¹ Of course, individuals belong to many “categories” at the same time (e.g. someone can be a “woman” and “elderly”). Particular combinations frequently culminate in what has been referred to as “multiple lowers” and “multiple uppers.” Thus, listing social groups/Categories of Vulnerable People is nothing more or less than a heuristic device to ensure an inclusive research process.