

**Challenges in Adopting Floating Bed Cultivation in
Waterlogged Areas: A Case Study from Southwest
Bangladesh**

61109603

Shantanu Kumar Saha

**Dissertation Presented to the Higher Degree Committee of
Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Asia Pacific Studies**

April 2015

Abstract

The construction of embankments under the Coastal Embankment Project (CEP) initiated in 1960s, has gradually created waterlogging in southwest Bangladesh. The situation has become worse with frequent floods. As a result marginal poor farmers have become landless and jobless during the waterlogged period. This study focuses on initiatives taken by NGOs (non-governmental organizations) for promoting floating cultivation as an alternative cultivation practice among poor farmers. The aim of this study is to explore how the adoption of floating bed cultivation is taking place among poor farmers in waterlogged areas of southwest Bangladesh and, how it is perceived amongst them.

This research adopted the 'case study' methodology. It is based on field-work carried out in the village named *Chandra*. The *Chandra* village is located under *Trimohini* union in *Keshobpur* upazila of *Jessore* district. Snowball-sampling procedure was used to find the respondents for the five groups of the study. The five groups of people include poor farmers of ongoing projects, poor farmers from previous projects, poor farmers without experience of floating cultivation, agricultural landowners, and experts and organizers of projects related with floating cultivation. . All together 27 research participants were selected.

The study found that floating bed cultivation introduced by the NGOs is found not adequate to develop a sustainable solution for the poor farmers to cope with adversity. The research did not find any individual initiative of practicing floating bed cultivation within the village. All the floating bed practitioners were the beneficiaries of the NGOs. And, after finishing the project most of them did not continue the practice. The research illustrates that though the floating bed cultivation projects hold potentials to create income opportunities, other complicated issues remain as challenges in adopting the practice. The research identified the challenges of floating bed cultivation as risk and uncertainty, hardship, complexities, and incompatibility with the existing farming system. Furthermore, climatic variability, emphasis on incentives rather than the agricultural practice, incompatibility with the geographical settings, limited NGOs efforts, landlessness and limited access to resources remain as the barrier for the adoption of floating bed cultivation in the study area. This research recommends that more involvement of the government and civil sector with long term planning are necessary to develop sustainable solutions and income opportunities for the poor in waterlogged areas.