ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES AT VABODHA WATER LOGGING AREA IN SOUTH-WEST REGION OF BANGLADESH

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Extended Summary

Environmental problems, climatic change and natural hazards are the most burning issues and concerned matter in all over the world. Bangladesh has also been witnessing end of the adverse impacts of climate change. Despite being the least contributor to the causation of climatic vulnerability, Bangladesh is one of worst victims, and is exposed to severe and frequent floods, tropical cyclones, storm, droughts and water logging situation in many areas. Millions of people of five Uppazilas namely Phultala, Abhoynagar, Monirampur, Keshobpur and Jessor sadar are the victims of water logging for last 35 years. A number of studies and newspaper reports were explored the vulnerability of the population in this region. However, none of the researches highlighted the peoples' initiatives, their wisdom, their own effort, knowledge and experiences in their practical livelihood strategies. Neither any of the studies conducted to explore the environmental friendly integrated farm practices and diverse income generating activities adapted as a survival strategy of the population of Vabodha area. Considering the overall situation, present study is; a) to explore the socio-economic status of the people in Vabodha area, b) assessment of adaptation process of livelihood at household level and c) to suggest policy recommendation for improving the socio-economic condition of the affected people in Vabodha water logging area.

Several villages were overviewed under Jessore, Sathkhira and Khulna district. The visited Upozilas were Phultala, Abhoynagar, Monirampur, Keshobpur and Jessor sadar are the victims of water logging for last 35 years. Among all the mentioned Upozila, Abhoynagar was found as the most affected area of water logging. Considering this fact, this Upozila has taken for present study purpose. Several villages under this Upozila were visited and Dattogati village was purposively taken for this study considering its severity of water logging and people's effort to cope the situation. All households (358) under Dattogati villages were surveyed primarily using very simple questionnaire. Questions were mostly concentrated to understand the socio-economic status of the households. Again 42% of the households were randomly sampled and studied in details using structured questionnaire.

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Since long been Vabodha areas were characterized as poor, lack of income generating activities due to water logging situation, stagnant agriculture activities,

and hopelessness condition of the population. However, present study has explored the potentials of the population in Vabodha area and their effort to overcome the adverse environmental situation. Moreover, this study has highlighted recent trends of peoples' experiences and knowledge in adapting environmental friendly integrated agriculture farm practices; crop-vegetable-fisheries (Pic: A, B,C,D). This type of integrated farming has not only enhanced the agriculture production, but also has ensured an efficient management of local resources under vulnerable environmental condition. Moreover, present farm practices have opened up a diverse income generating activities; such as pond preparation, fish feed preparation, making fishing trap and net, netting ponds, fishing and fishery related business, vegetable cultivation on the bank of the ponds as well as all the activities concerning rice production. Farmers in Vabodha areas have adapted an especial type of agriculture system in which a unit of land has simultaneously producing rice fish and vegetables. Each land has specially prepared as about 30 % of its excavated deeply to keep fish during *boro* rice cultivation. Moreover, the mud from excavation is used to make a high and wide boundary of the land. This boundary of the land has been used for production of year round vegetable. Only a couple of years back farmers had nothing to do except open fishing practices due to water logging condition. Only a very few farmers use to produce low productive traditional rice varieties in part of their land. However, recent adapted farm practices have enabled farmers to produce *boro* rice with fish in dry season and pond fisheries in rest of the year. Moreover, varieties of vegetable have been produced round the year. As a result, farmers have diversified their sources of income through rice production, fish cultivation and vegetable production simultaneously at the same unit of land which must have increased their family income and consumption.