

A Study on Participatory Rural Development in Cambodia

-A case of an Island Village along the Mekong River-

3rd year student

Nepal Field School

Research Area: Cambodia

Yui Miyazaki

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Background and objectives of my research

The objective of my research is to seek for the way of rural development which benefits all the villagers including the poorest. As my study village was located in an island along the Mekong River, the villagers don't have many chances to go outside the village to find a job or other purposes.

In my pre-doctoral thesis, I focused on how the villagers adapted to and were influenced by development activities supported by two NGOs (CRDT <Cambodian Rural Development Team>, a local NGO, and Oxfam-Australia) which had conducted 'participatory rural development' activities in each way. The former seemed to benefit each household rather than villagers' organizations (eg. fish pond), while the latter put priority

on making villagers' organizations (eg. rice bank). The existence of these two NGOs enabled to examine how each type of activity influences on villagers' attitude and value of development.

There are 142 households in the village, which in my research are divided into three classes (poor, medium, rich) according to the possession of paddy field and 'the balance of rice' (subtracted the amount of rice consumption from the yield). The research found that the poor seemed easier to benefit from development activities through the villagers' organization than individually.



Pounding roasted rice in a mortar

They reserve it to eat between meals (Writer's grandparents were also used to eat this kind of snack.)

As for individual activities, they seemed to result in improvement of self-sufficiency, but they required each household to use their labors and lands. That's why they were mostly benefitted by those who had important roles in rural administration or development organizations. They tended to think the inequality of beneficiary came from difference of 'motivation' and 'efforts', and were unwilling to help poor people.



Biodigester: It changes dung into energy for cooking and the lamp

Self-help is important for sustainable development, but I think it's also necessary for NGO staffs and those who have leadership to consider more about the poor to raise the minimum economical situation whole the village.



*Meeting on NGO's activities:
Most of participants are women*