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## **PURI FARMERS FIND RAY OF HOPE IN FLOATING GARDEN**

*Thursday, 03 July 2014 | HEMANTA KUMAR PRADHAN | BHUBANESWAR*

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### **After vegetables grown in abandoned wetlands successfully**

Farmers of Satyabadi block in Puri district, whose hundreds of acres of land are covered with waste water round the year, have a reason to cheer with successful implementation of a pilot project that allows them to again raise crops on the land in an innovative way.

Before the project, the farmers had lost hope on their land covered with waste water. They had left farming due to the water-logging problem. But the members of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Regional Centre for Development Cooperation (RCDC) and the Society for Women Action Development (SWAD) told the farmers that they could use the water clad land by raising floating gardens.

According to the process of making a floating garden, the farmers first make rectangular plots with bamboo sticks. After making plots (20 ft length, five ft width and 1 ft high) intertwined with bamboo sticks, the farmers cover the wooden plot with water hyacinths and leave it dry. Then the hyacinths are covered with a layer of soil mixed with compost to make it ready for farming.

This year, farmers sowed seeds of green leaves, coriander, panmahuri, chili, tomato and other vegetables and have yielded good amount of vegetables. "I got vegetables sufficiently for 15 days and also sold some of these in the market," said a woman farmer Sumi Baral, adding, "I'm not calculating loss and profit out of the vegetable produce, but I'm happy that I am able to use the waste land and raise crop on it."

SWAD member and a farmer, Swadhin Pradhan said the vegetation on the bamboo plot from a distance seems like a garden floating on the water. The bamboo plot is tied to a log so that it cannot change its location, he added.

Now, Sumi is more confident about her crop. She would create more bamboo plots to sow seeds on it. Floating garden concept has brought a new ray of hope for the farmers of waterlogged areas, said RCDC manager Barsha Mishra.