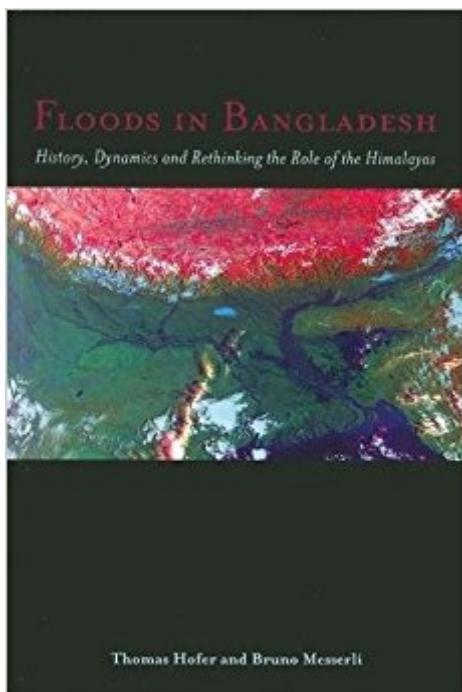


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Floods In Bangladesh: History, Dynamics And Rethinking The Role Of The Himalayas



Synopsis

Deforestation and land use practices of Himalayan farmers are commonly blamed for the recurring, devastating monsoon floods in the plains of the Ganges and Brahmaputra. Floods in Bangladesh presents new evidence to disprove this long-held assertion. This book demonstrates that the hydro-meteorological processes in the Himalayas are not the main causes for the floods in Bangladesh. The combination of simultaneous discharge peaks of the big rivers, high runoff from the Meghalaya Hills, heavy rainfall, high groundwater tables, and spring tides creates particularly favorable conditions for large-scale flooding. Accordingly, the myth about deforestation creating big floods and the habit of blaming mountain dwellers for the flood catastrophes must be abandoned.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Thomas Hofer is a mountain expert in the UN Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome. Bruno Messerli is professor emeritus and former director of the Institute of Geography and rector of the University of Bern, Switzerland.

The reader might despair of Bangladesh after reading this book. It describes the massive overcrowding of > 100 million people on a riverine delta. Subject to annual flooding, as has just happened last week. In this case, due to a cyclone. The book describes how most of the land is at sea level. Actually quite fertile, due to the silt deposited by the rivers, that builds up the delta. Historically, this very fertility led to today's huge population. But the episodic flooding (quite apart

from the cyclones) gives a concomitant death toll and massive property damage. The latter being inflicted on people with already very little. Various remedies are proposed. The reader might ponder the efficacies of these. Well meaning, though maybe just palliatives. If much of the population could migrate to other countries, that would ease many of the problems. But India is the only obvious choice, and is unlikely to permit this.

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