

## EVOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES IN BANGLADESH (1972-2010)

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### Abstract

This article attempts to examine how the government of Bangladesh has gradually incorporated the environment conservation issues in the national policy regime. The concerns for environment protection were reflected in all the Five Year Plans and different policies of the government of Bangladesh. Major policy initiatives, strategies and plans emphasized environment and natural resources management to achieve sustainable development. It examines all these aspects from a critical perspective including the environmental policy of 1992 which lays emphasis on abatement of pollution and conservation of natural resources. An attempt has been made to study the four decades of environmental policy in Bangladesh right from the independence of the country in 1971.

### Introduction

In early years since independence, there was no precise environmental policy in Bangladesh. But it does not mean that the environment absolutely remained as a neglected field. The concerns for environment protection were, however, reflected on the national planning process and several policies. Like all other nations of the world, Bangladesh also acted on the global call for the protection and conservation of natural environment and ecology.<sup>1</sup> In 1989, the Ministry of Environment and Forests was established to address the emerging environment

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1 The English word 'ecology' is taken from the Greek *oikos*, meaning house, the immediate human environment. In 1870, the German Zoologist Ernst Haeckel first gave the word its broader meaning, the study of the natural environment and of the relations of organizations to each other and to their surroundings. General use of the word came only in the late 1800s, when European and American scientists began to call themselves ecologists. The first societies and journals explicitly devoted to ecology appeared in the early decades of this century. Man is an integral part of the ecology of the world. Pressure of population and reduce of the forest and ecological component led to an ecologically unsound decision and to an economic, social and environmental disaster. Local forests are being cut rapidly for firewood. See details, Robert E. Ricklefs, *Ecology* Third Edition, New York: W. H. Freeman and Company 1990, p. 3

related issues.<sup>2</sup> The government started to take measures, drafted the National Conservation Strategy, adopted the National Environment Policy, 1992 and revised the old law by enacting the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995 which has also restructured the Department of Environment (DoE). Moreover, National Environment Management Action Plan has also been prepared, and it is being implemented. A study on the regulatory regime shows that there are about 200 laws that have bearing on environment, directly, indirectly or causally.<sup>3</sup> These laws provide for measures relevant for environment conservation, offer protection against various environmental offenses and by prescribing or prohibiting certain activities, lay down rights and duties. Bangladesh is a signatory to as many as forty four international conventions, treaties, and protocols in connection with the conservation and protection of environment and ecology.<sup>4</sup> Some of them have been ratified. But there are some others which are yet to be ratified. I have attempted to examine how gradually the environment conservation issues were incorporated in the National Planning policy in Bangladesh. This article attempts to analyze the evolution of environmental protection and preservation policies in Bangladesh from a historical perspective. It gives an overall account of environmental protection and preservation through the several Five Years National Planning processes. Eventually, the policy initiative of Bangladesh Government gives a relevant policy and legal instruments that have direct or indirect impacts on environment policy implementation.

#### **Environmental Policy during the Seventies and Eighties (Post-Independence Era)**

Any complete system of pollution control will include at least four elements such as formulation of pollution policies, administration of the scheme of control, enforcement of controls, and research.<sup>5</sup> In the early years of the independence, there was no precise environmental policy in Bangladesh. But it does not mean that the environment absolutely remained as a neglected field.

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2 Mohiuddin Farooque, *Environmental Order : The Security of Survival*, Dhaka: BELA, 2004. p. 2

3 Mohiuddin Farooque and S. Rizwana Hasan, *Laws Regulating Environment in Bangladesh*, Dhaka: BELA, 2004, Prelude xvi.

4 See, Annual Report- 2007 of Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest, GoB, Dhaka: DoE, 2007, p. 63

5 J. McLoughlin and E. G. Bellinger, *Environmental Pollution Control: Introduction to Principles and Practice of Administration* (International Environmental Law & Policy Series), London, U.K: Graham and Trotman Ltd., 1993, p. 21

The concerns for environment protection were, however, reflected in the national planning process as 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plans. The national planning process was started in 1973 in Bangladesh with the formulation of First Five Year Plan. The First (1973-78), Second (1980-85), and Third (1985-90) Five Year Plans laid thrust on the promotion of agriculture and industrialization. Environment-related issues pertaining to the improvement of human environment such as sanitation, public health, nutrition, water supply and housing got due priority in national programs under the first three five year plans. However, environment protection did not receive any significant attention under the development planning except for the development of forestry, fisheries, and agriculture.

***Environmental Policy Perspective in the First Five Year Plan (1973-78)***

When Bangladesh emerged as a sovereign state in 1971, environmental issues and consideration were not as much prioritized as it is today. Economic development was the main target for all planning activities. Thus in the successive development plans, environmental issues were not included as an integral part of development approach. Different sectorial strategies addressed some of the major environmental considerations.<sup>6</sup>

The *First Five Year Plan (FFYP)* (1973-78) showed maximum concern about agriculture and water sector including rural institutions, irrigation and flood control and had the highest share of resources. This sector included crop production, livestock, forestry, fishery, irrigation, flood control and works program.<sup>7</sup>

In the first Five Year Plan, the objectives in fisheries sector were maximization of the utilization of fishery resources, both inland and marine. The fisheries activities of the public sector was, by and large, limited to inland waters until 1964 when the Fisheries Department Corporation was created for exploiting marine resources.<sup>8</sup>

The FFYP 1973-78 called for the protection of crops from pests and diseases. This led to the enactment of the Pesticide Act<sup>9</sup> to regulate manufacture,

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6 M. Q. Mirza and Ainun Nishat, "Development and Environment in Bangladesh: Past Approach, Present Concerns and Future Issues" in *Bangladesh: Past two decades and the current decade*, ed. Q. K. Ahmed, (Dhaka: BUP, 1994), p. 86

7 The First Five Year Plan (1973-78); Planning Commission, GoB, November 1973, p. 73

8 Ibid, pp. 112-113

9 The Agricultural Pesticides Ordinance, 1971 (Ordinance No II of 1971), GoB.

formulation, labeling and use of pesticides and consolidation of all existing plant protection agencies and wings under a single central authority.<sup>10</sup> Bangladesh is a country where there were numerous tanks fulfilling the multipurpose water requirement in rural areas. It indicated not only re-excavation of existing tanks but also excavation of new tanks.<sup>11</sup>

Flood control program during the plan period included flood protection embankment to protect low lying areas from floods and coastal embankments to protect land from saline inundation and also to develop polders for irrigation and drainage. Besides, protecting the land from damages to crops, flood protected areas provided improved social security, communication, commerce and trade, land value and environmental condition to the people inhabiting the area.<sup>12</sup>

Large scale destruction of rural and urban houses had taken place during the War of Liberation in 1971. This resulted in heavy felling of trees in rural areas. The situation has been further aggravated by banning timber and firewood extraction from Government forests since early 1972. The first Five-Year Plan demarcated and reserved some areas of unclassified state forests in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).<sup>13</sup>

In the twelve broad objectives of the FFYP, the main focus was on the reduction of poverty. This was due to the fact that poverty was thought to be the principal polluter of the environment. Natural resources management was not directly addressed to in the plan.<sup>14</sup> The Plan included massive flood control programme but their impact on environment were not foreseen. However, there was a small sub-chapter on natural resources which focused mainly on its development.

***Environmental Policy Perspective in the Two Year Plan (1978-80):***

The strategy of the *Two Year Plan (1978-80)* reflected the political programme of the party in power. The plan stated that “if takes specific cognizance of the socio-economic objectives of the President’s Nineteen Point Programme.”<sup>15</sup>

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10 The First Five Year Plan (1973-78); Planning Commission, GoB, November 1973, p. 133

11 Ibid, p. 145

12 Ibid, p. 149

13 Ibid, p. 118

14 M. Q. Mirza & Ainun Nishat, *Op. cit.*, p. 86

15 The Two Year Plan (1978-80); Planning Commission, GoB, March 1978, p. 29

One of these points was “to strengthen the economy by according top priority to agricultural development”.<sup>16</sup> For this purpose, President Zia-Ur Rahman adopted a campaign of digging canals across the country. The main focus of the plan was to achieve higher economic growth. Environmental aspects of the large scale fertilizer and pesticide use were not evaluated. The Plan encouraged use of groundwater through expansion of shallow and deep tubewells.<sup>17</sup>

The *Two Year Plan* recommended that the practical measures would be taken to rationalize and enforce the Fish Conservation Act.<sup>18</sup> The total areas of 52,000 acres were planted in the old forest areas against the target of 55,000 acres.<sup>19</sup> However, the management of natural resources<sup>20</sup> was not included in the main objectives of the plan as before. The plan underscored the need of flood-control projects and measures required for combating the drought problems. It also stressed the need for some major flood control drainage and irrigation project such as the Chandpur Irrigation Project, Barisal Irrigation Project, Karnafuli Irrigation Project and Manu Project. These projects did not incorporate environmental considerations. Recently many questions have been raised about adverse environmental impacts of these projects.<sup>21</sup>

***Environmental Policy Perspective in the second Five Year Plan (1980-85):***

The first objective of the *Second Five Year Plan (SFYP)* was “to bring about a noticeable improvement in the standard of living by ensuring adequate supplies of the basic needs”.<sup>22</sup> During the 2<sup>nd</sup> FYP (1980-85), forestry development strategies were re-structured and reoriented. Emphasis was laid on the development of forest with the participation of people. In 1980, there was 3.25 million acres (9% of total area) of forest managed by the Forest Department.<sup>23</sup> There was a little scope for expansion of production from the Sunderbans, the

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16 30th April, 1976, President summed up his policies through the nineteen points.

17 M. Q. Mirza and Ainun Nishat, *Op. cit.*, p. 88.

18 The Two Year Plan (1978-80), p. 98

19 *Ibid*, p. 107

20 Natural Resources management means Water resources, Fisheries, Forestry, Energy, land, Wet-land, River, Canal, Tank etc. management plan.

21 see details, Monirul Quader Mirza, *Environmental Impact Evaluation of Water Resources Development Project. A Case Study of Chandpur Irrigation Project*. BUET, Dhaka: 1991.

22 See, The Second Five Year Plan (1980-85); Planning Commission, GoB, May 1980, Chapter II.

23 The Second Five Year Plan (1980-85); Planning Commission, GoB, May 1980, p. xii 41

inland Sal forests and the home stead forests in the short term and this plan emphasized replenishment of the productive capacity of these resources.<sup>24</sup>

Forest Plantation included replanting of exploited hill forests (94,000 acres), Coastal (100,000 acres) and USF (Unclassed State Forests) (100,000 acres) afforestation, and rehabilitation of denuded forest areas (65,000 acres). It has been emphasized in Apparent Consumption above that considerable increases in supply will be necessary in order to avoid wood fibre raw material constraints on economic development in future. Furthermore, the environmental effect of deforestation which has already occurred, in particular as this affects the overall productivity of the land, also calls for a large scale approach to reforestation.<sup>25</sup>

Beginning of the eighties inland fisheries were in real danger due to rapid environmental changes, both natural and man-made. The *Second Five Year Plan* adopted an intensive training of field staff (in the form of workshops, seminars, regular training programs) to enhance their professional efficiencies so that they could contact, motivate and train the fish farmers and local youths in scientific methods of fish farming and conservation practices.<sup>26</sup> Like other development plans, the management of natural resources and environment were kept out of the objectives of the plan.

In the forestry sector, the plan expressed concern about Unclassified State Forest (USF) in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It observed, "This land is completely denuded due to repeated shifting cultivation by local people."<sup>27</sup>

***Environmental Policy Perspective in the Third Five Year Plan (1985-90):***

While the First and Second Five Year Plans identified "poverty alleviation" and "improvement of standard of living" as prioritized objectives, the *Third Five Year Plan*'s priority was significantly different from the previous two. Population growth reduction was the prime objective of the Third Plan.<sup>28</sup>

The *Third Five Year Plan* mentioned that encroachment on forest land had reduced the forest area to a critical level (8% of area) to threaten the whole environment. Since the scarcity of arable land would grow further, a forward looking land use policy was prioritized to avoid creeping environmental entropy. The third FYP noted that national level use and settlement study was on progress at the Directorate of Urban Development and its recommendations

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24 Ibid, p. xii 45

25 Ibid, p. xii 46

26 Ibid, p. xii 57

27 The Second Five Year Plan, Chapter II, p. xii 41

28 The Third Five Year Plan (1985-90); Planning Commission, Go, December 1985, P.

would deserve careful consideration for early action. Decentralization of administration and development of upazila headquarters would prove to be a powerful tool not only for implementation of a national land use policy at local level but also for redistribution of human settlements at selective places, relieving thereby pressure on agricultural land.<sup>29</sup> One of the major objectives of the Third Five Year Plan (1985-90) was to improve general environment and public health.<sup>30</sup> It also incorporated the Upazila Afforestation and Nursery Development Project.

Although the plan admitted the illegal encroachment in the forest areas, it did not suggest a strategy for effective legal action against illegal encroachment.

As in the previous plans, wildlife is also a neglected aspect of the forestry-management programme. But the plan recognizes, "it is of utmost importance to set aside suitable forest areas for adequate protection of animal and plant life particularly those species which are threatened by extinction." The plan did not suggest any particular work-plan or propose to make inventory of threatened or extinct wildlife species of Bangladesh.

The Third Five Year Plan was the first to discuss the cyclone-warning system of the coastal area. It stated that "the objective of such a programme is to minimize effect of such natural calamities on human life and property."<sup>31</sup>

#### **Development of Environmental Policy since the Nineties**

The 1990's decade marks the beginning of the history of environmental policy in Bangladesh. The developments taking place during this decade gave a new direction to the policy concerns in the field of environment protection. In the following Five Year Plan, emphasis was made for the first time on environmentally desirable integrated development. During the 1990s, the environmental policy in Bangladesh had taken shape. The policy perspectives were reflected in the Fourth Five Year Plan, and subsequent five year plans. A brief survey of the policy perspectives is made here.

#### ***Environmental Policy Perspective in the Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-95):***

The Fourth Five Year Plan<sup>32</sup> introduced a chapter was incorporated for the first time on "Environment and Sustainable Development".<sup>33</sup> It identified number of

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29 The Third Five Year Plan, p. 172

30 The Third Five Year Plan, p. 194

31 The Third Five Year Plan, p. 51

32 The first draft of the Fourth Five Year Plan was brought out in June 1990. The revised draft of the Plan was published in October, 1990.

important factors which would affect environment in now and near future. The environmental activities in Bangladesh were organized by the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) through the Water Pollution Control Ordinance of 1973. Municipal bodies in different towns were also involved in some environmental management activities. The promulgation of Environment Pollution Control Ordinance, 1974 and creation of a Department of Environment Pollution Control (DEPC) were significant steps in environmental promotion in this country.

In the Fourth Five Year Plan environmental aspects have been considered directly on many sectors of plan owning, probably, to growing global environmental concern. The Fourth Plan identified environmental degradation as number eleven constraint for achieving the development goal. Although the plan identified environmental degradation as one of the constraints for economic development, the strategy for considering this particular constraint was not discussed in the main strategy of the plan in any form. The management of natural resources was not included as a priority agendum in the plan.<sup>34</sup>

The main focus of this chapter, however, is not to evaluate the successive plans but to make an analysis of policies directly or indirectly relating to environment. Poverty is one of the main factors of environmental degradation in a developing country. Poverty alleviation has been in focus in all the successive plans but the country had different experiments to face in different plans.<sup>35</sup>

#### ***Environmental Aspects in the Fourth Five Year Plan***

***Agriculture:*** The plan has a distinct difference from other plans in respect of development programs in the agriculture sector. It recognized the environmental impacts of the irrigation facilities, application of chemical fertilizer, insecticides and pesticides, and introduction of High Yielding Varieties (HYV). It also recognized the need of indigenous research for environmentally sustainable planning. For this purpose, it considered so far made arrangement between the researchers and planning to be of *ad hoc* nature.<sup>36</sup> However, no strategy is set for achieving this goal.

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33 Chapter IX, The Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-95), Planning Commission, GoB, June 1995, pp. 1-4

34 M. Q. Mirza and Ainun Nishat, *Op. cit.*, p. 93

35 M. Q. Mirza and Ainun Nishat, *Op. cit.*, p. 93

36 The Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-95), Planning Commission, GoB, June 1995, pp. 1-

***Flood Control and Water Resources:*** The plan considered water resources as one of the crucial elements for achieving agricultural production and productivity. For the first time it was recognized that “ the construction of embankments along with the major rivers and the control of flood levels within adjoining flood-plain compartments undoubtedly have socio-economic as well as environmental implications.<sup>37</sup> In 1995, a law concerning flood management was enacted, which required clearance of the Department of Environment for development projects. Since then bottom-up procedure for project approval has attempted to integrate inter-departmental coordination and environmental considerations.

***Fishery:*** The Fourth Five Year Plan covers major environmental concerns of fishery development. The enforcement of the existing laws relating to conservation of fishery resources of the country is a major impediment for its development. The plan recognizes the “defective fish conservation laws and inadequacy of proper processing” as two major factors that affect proper development”.<sup>38</sup> But the plan does not include any strategy or policy-option either to implement the existing laws or to formulate new laws or to make necessary amendments in this regard.

***Forestry:*** The plan considered various aspects of the forestry sector development. It envisaged “to rehabilitate or reforest the denuded and degraded national forest lands”<sup>39</sup> as a principal objective. All past plans focused on forest resources exploitation rather than afforestation or reforestation.

Wildlife conservation was not included in the list of objectives. However, the plan recognized the need of establishment of protected areas in order to maintain biodiversity, genepool and habitats of rare and endangered plants and animals. It gave importance to protection and preservation of wildlife through strict enforcement of existing laws and establishment of game sanctuaries.

Although the plan envisaged the need of protection and preservation of wildlife, no institutional arrangement was formulated. Nothing was mentioned about the effectiveness of the existing laws for forest conservation.

***Industry:*** Industrial pollution has become a major area of concern in Bangladesh; but the plan ignores it. In fact no attempt has been made to control

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37 Ibid, p. V. B.-11

38 Ibid, p. V. C. 2-3

39 Ibid, p. UE-7

the quality of industrial effluents and wastes that have adverse environmental impacts.

**Energy:** The plan suggested setting up of bio-gas plants, briquetting plants and solar thermal energy conversion. It also envisaged utilization of solar energy, wind energy and mini hydropower on small scale basis. But actual actions towards these alternative energy sources are still to be seen. The plan recognizes that deforestation within Bangladesh as a catalytic factor for flooding, erosion and siltation.

In order to promote environmental consciousness and arrest degradation, the following measures have been undertaken:

A National Environment Policy was finalized in 1992 as a guide to long term sustainable environment friendly development. The environment policy 1992 outlined the following objectives: 1) Preservation and improvement of ecological balance; 2) Identifying and controlling all environment polluting and degrading activities; 3) Minimizing the impact of natural disaster on environment; 4) Ensuring environment friendly development in all sectors; 5) Ensuring long term sustainable/ environmentally sound utilization of natural resources; and 6) Active promotion and participation in all international initiatives for the improvement of global/regional environment.

To achieve these objectives in the long-run, the Environment Policy 1992 identifies possible remedial measures to be taken up by the concerned Ministries/Agencies:

- a) The government has attached high priority to environmental promotion, protection and preservation. This has been highlighted in national and international forum;
- b) A separate Ministry of Environment and Forests and Department of Environment (DoE) have been established;
- c) A National Conservation Strategy is under formulation;
- d) The year 1990 was observed as “Year of Environment” and the nineties have been identified as “The Decade of Environment”;
- e) Environmental concerns have duly been recognized by the development planners and decision-makers. This has been reflected through inclusion of environmental issues in all development projects. Besides, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) by the Ministry of Environment and Forests has been undertaken. In order to consider the environmental impacts of the public sector development projects, the Ministry for Environment and Forests has been included as a permanent member of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council;

- f) Formulation of a comprehensive and updated ordinance named “Bangladesh Environment Preservation Ordinance” is in the process of finalization. Two other new laws relating to radiation control and protection of marine environment are under preparation;
- g) Major ecologically critical areas of environmental pollution have been spotted and environmental up-gradation programs have been undertaken by the Department;
- h) Major polluting industries/establishments have been identified and remedial measures are being pursued. Establishment of new industries either in public or private sector requires the clearance of the Ministry of Environment;
- i) Programmes for creation of environmental awareness have been undertaken through the mass media. As a part of educational curricula, “Environment” has been introduced at school level and higher degrees are also being offered on this subject;
- j) Uses of fuel-wood in brick burning and cutting forest reserves have been banned. Social Forestry Program has been undertaken on a priority basis;
- k) In order to maintain ecological balance, preservation of wildlife is being emphasized and killing or exporting frogs, lizards and all kinds of birds and animal species have been banned;
- l) Use of improved varieties of oven/stove and installation of low latrines and tube-wells in rural areas have been undertaken in the public sector which are being complemented by the NGOs;
- m) A Master Plan Organization has been established to effectively manage and improve water resources taking due consideration of environmental issues;
- n) A Coastal Environment Management Plan for Bangladesh has been prepared;
- o) Import of toxic waste and its recycling have been banned;
- p) An International Institute for Environmental Studies and Disaster Management has been established in Dhaka; and
- q) The Montreal Protocol for Protection of ozone layer has been ratified by the Government; and so forth.<sup>40</sup>

The environment and sustainable development program are spread over different sectors such as Agriculture, Rural Development, Water Resources, Physical Planning, Education, Health, Family Welfare, Social Welfare, Labour and Manpower etc. The environmental issues, policies and programs pertaining to various sectors have been discussed in respective sectoral chapters. Besides, around TK. 700.00 crore was invested for environment improvement activities

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40 The Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-95), Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Govt. People’s Republic of Bangladesh, June 1995, Chapter IX, pp. 1-4

directly under the Department of Environment and Forest Department during the *Fourth Five Year Plan* period.<sup>41</sup>

***Environmental Policy Perspective in the Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002):***

The two years (1995-97) till June-1997 has been a sort of plan holiday period for the country meaning that the annual development programs of the country were prepared and implemented outside the frame of a five year plan.<sup>42</sup> *The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)* was the most important planning and policy document of the government covering all major sectors of development and intervention. The *Fifth Five Year Plan* emphasized ‘environment and sustainable livelihood.’ After the independence the growth of industries in the country has generally been unplanned without keeping the issue of environmental protection in careful consideration. There are many industries in the residential area causing pollution of air and water through smoke emitting chimney and dumping of untreated effluent. Industrial wastage have polluted the water of the Buriganga, the Shitalakhya, the Karnafuli and the Rupsha rivers. Effluents from tanneries are extremely harmful to human beings since they contain high concentration of chromium compounds. About 250 tanneries in Hazaribagh area<sup>43</sup> within the Dhaka city are causing serious environmental pollution and health hazard making the area virtually unsuitable for human habitation.<sup>44</sup>

In order to promote, nurture, protect and expand nature and natural resources and link all development activities with environment towards improving the quality of life, the Fifth Plan enunciates the following objectives:

“i) promoting sustainable livelihood by alleviation of poverty; ii) ensuring active participation of the poor, especially women, in environment protection activities; iii) promoting environment-friendly activities in the development

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41 Ibid, Chapter IX, p. 1-4

42 *The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)*, Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Govt. People’s Republic of Bangladesh, June 1997, Foreword.

43 Leather industry in Bangladesh causes horrendous environmental pollution. Of the 270 tanneries in the whole country 90 % are located in Hazaribagh, a densely populated residential area of Dhaka. Of these, tanneries in Hazaribagh alone generate 7.70 million liter liquid waste and 88 MT solid wastes everyday. See details, Philip Gain, Shishir Moral, ed., *Leather Industry Environmental Pollution and Mitigation Measures*, (Dhaka: SEHD, 2010), Preface.

44 *The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)*, Planning Commission, GoB, June 1997, p. X-

interventions; iv) preserving, protecting and developing the natural resource base; v) strengthening the capabilities of public and private sectors to manage environmental concerns; vi) controlling and preventing environmental pollution and degradation related to soil, water and air; vii) creating public awareness for participation in environment promotion activities; and viii) conserving non-renewable resources and sustaining auto and equi-generation of renewable resources.”<sup>45</sup>

The plan mentioned ‘Polluters Pay Principle’ and it will be followed in order to ensure strict compliance of environmental legislation; incentives, in the form of tax rebate, tax holiday etc. will be provided and the incremental cost incurred by the environment-friendly entrepreneurs will be met in various forms/sources. Although the Environment Conservation Act, 1995 is based on this principle, there is a lack of broad-based standards about the potential and actual damage.<sup>46</sup> So these standards are required to be set. The plan also mentioned of ‘National Environment Fund’, which would be established in order to provide assistance to the victims of environmental degradation caused by natural disasters and human activities.<sup>47</sup> The Fifth Plan provides for the expansion of DoE offices and manpower. The goal of such expansion is to make DoE capable of performing its conservation activities in extended perimeters. It has also made provision of establishing the local offices of the Department in 18 greater districts<sup>48</sup>. Necessary orders were issued toward opening Divisional offices of the DoE in Barisal and Sylhet Divisions.<sup>49</sup>

#### ***Environmental Policy Perspective in the PRSP-I***

The Bangladesh Government in April, 2003 designated the general Economic Division of the Planning Commission as the National Poverty Focal Point (NPFP) and entrusted it with the task of preparing a full-blown Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) for Bangladesh. A National Steering Committee, headed by the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p. X-4

<sup>46</sup> Jesmul Hasan, “Environmental laws in Bangladesh: In search of a regulatory framework”, in *Bangladesh State of Environment Report 2000*, ed. Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, (Dhaka: FEJB-2000), p. 301

<sup>47</sup> The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), Planning Commission, GoB, June 1997, p. X-7

<sup>48</sup> In 2010, DoE has extended its offices in 21 districts due to all industries and projects under Environment Conservation Act.

<sup>49</sup> Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest, GoB, World Environment Day, Dhaka: DoE, 2001, pp. 29-30

consisting of the Secretaries of nineteen relevant Ministries, was also formed in September, 2003 to provide overall guidance to the task of preparing the PRSP.<sup>50</sup>

The completion of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) titled *A National Strategy for Economic Growth, Poverty Reduction and Social Development*, in March 2003, marked an important milestone in the process of renewing the national goal of policy ownership over the formulation of poverty reduction strategies (PRSs). While the commitment to poverty reduction since then continued to be pursued through a wide range of concrete actions, the Government also undertook specific steps to ensure a comprehensive participatory process by which to deepen policy ownership in the formulation of a full-blown PRS.<sup>51</sup>

*PRSP-I* mentioned environment as the major thrust of poverty reduction strategy. The thematic-group report on the environment focuses on resources like land, water, and air which must be kept pollution-free for sustainable development. Pollution affects health, education, energy, livelihood, amenities and heritages and in this way increases poverty as well as the severity of poverty. Hence, environmental balance should be ensured in all sorts of development activities. The importance of proper waste management and recycling activities and an action plan to save endangered animals, fish and plants were recognized. In addition, planned use of land, environment-friendly energy policy and social forestation are emphasized in the report.<sup>52</sup> Environmental issues, as stated in the PRSP, are mostly to be seen as a cross-cutting issue and integrated into national poverty alleviation strategy.

#### ***Environmental Policy Perspective in the PRSP-II***

In October 2008, the Caretaker Government published PRSP-II on “*Moving Ahead National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction II (FY 2009-11)*.” It has a chapter on *Caring for Environment and Tackling Climate Change*.

#### ***PRSP-II (Revised):***

After the general election of 2008, the new government revised the previous PRSP-II. It is called “*Steps Towards Change: National Strategy for Accelerated*

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50 *Unlocking the Potential, National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction*, General Economic Division, Planning Commission, GoB, October, 2005

51 *Ibid*, p. xi-xii.

52 *Unlocking the Potential, National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction*, General Economic Division, Planning Commission, GoB, October, 2005, p. 38

*Poverty Reduction II (Revised) (FY- 2009-2011)*". It has a chapter on 'Environment and Development.'

The Department of Environment (DoE) implements environment policy and development. DoE has extended its offices in 21 districts<sup>53</sup> to cover all industries and projects under Environment Conservation Act, 1995 (ECA).<sup>54</sup> It creates mobile court in order to implement action against ECA violator. Government makes Environment Conservation (Amendment) Act-2010, Environment Court Act, 2010.

Bangladesh implemented 5 successive Five Year Plans (Between FY 1973 and FY 2002) and an interim Two Years Plan (1979-80). From FY 2003 to FY 2010, there was a deviation from the five year plan to a process of shorter term Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). PRSP emphasizes the conservation and expansion of natural resource base so that the poor and vulnerable communities can depend upon the natural resources on a sustainable basis. This objective corresponds to that of National Programme of Action (NPA) particularly, the enhancement of livelihood opportunities in the coastal areas through the conservation and sustainable use of coastal natural resources. The Strategic goals set forth by the PRSP include, the reduction in the rate of deforestation, conservation of biodiversity, solid waste management and improvement of water quality of particular significance is the PRSP's strategic action to improve the coastal water quality by the installation of Effluent Treatment Plants (ETP) in industries and introduction of environmental audit for the ship breaking industry.<sup>55</sup>

***Environmental Policy Perspective in the Sixth Five Year Plan (2011-15):***

The *Sixth Five Year Plan (SFYP)* has three parts: 1) Strategic Directions and Policy Framework; 2) Sectoral Strategies, Programs and Policies; and 3) Statistical Annex and Technical Framework. It has a slogan of "*Accelerating Growth and Reducing Poverty.*" On its first part, a chapter is included on "Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Management for Sustainable Development."<sup>56</sup>

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53 21 districts are Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Mymensingh, Tangail, Munshiganj, Faridpur, Manikganj, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Noakhali, Brahmanbaria, Feni, Comilla, Chadpur, Jessore, Kushtia, Bagherhat, Rajshahi, Rangpur.

54 Bangladesh Economic Review- 2011, Economic Department, Ministry of Finance, GoB, p. 230

55 Annual Report 2006, DoE, p. 111.

56 The Sixth Five Year Plan (2011-15), Planning Commission, GoB, (Part-I), Dhaka: July 2011.

While perceiving the long-run consequences of environmental degradation to the country's ecosystem and citizen's welfare, the Government has set a number of goals to attain a sustainable environment and to address the fallout of climate change. With a view to attaining these goals, the main objectives relating to environment and climate change under the Sixth Five Year Plan can be described in the following manners: 1) To monitor, control and prevent environmental pollution and degradation related to soil, water and air; 2) To strengthen the capability of public and private sectors to manage environmental concerns; 3) To ensure active participation of the poor, especially the women in environment management activities at all levels; 4) To promote cooperation with regional and international institutions/ organizations to address local, regional, and global environmental problems; and 5) To improve air quality in major cities through monitoring and prevention measure.<sup>57</sup> According to the Plan the government will take a number of initiatives to strengthen environmental capacities. In the public sector efforts will continue to strengthen the Department of Environment and other ministries dealing with environment including Agriculture, Land, Water, Energy, Industry and Local government.<sup>58</sup>

With a view to achieving the goal of sustainable development, the SFYP is focusing in integrating poverty, environment and climate change into the process of planning and budgeting. In this context, appropriate policy and institutional capacity building for sustainable land-water management, biodiversity conservation and climate resilient development are crucial. Environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction must be addressed in a broader development context, recognizing climate change as an added challenge to reduce poverty, hunger, diseases and environmental degradation.<sup>59</sup>

The DoE is formulating and implementing policies and programs that ensure a realistic balance between the existing livelihood requirement of the people and sound environmental resource management. A major part of its activities include environmental impact assessment carried out through the Environment Conservation Rules promulgated under the Environment Conservation Act 1997. These programs will be continued and would be strengthened during the

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57 The Sixth Five Year Plan (2011-15), Planning Commission, GoB, (Part-I), July 2011, p. 193

58 *Ibid*, p. 195

59 *Ibid*, p. 421

SFYP. Programs undertaken by the government include raising awareness on environment, environmental management and its monitoring, implementation of the international conventions and protocols signed by the government and programs to implement existing environmental laws of the country.<sup>60</sup>

**Policy initiatives of Bangladesh Government:**

The concern about environmental issues has been reflected in different policy initiatives taken by the government of Bangladesh. The major policy initiatives, strategies and plans emphasized environment and natural resources management to achieve sustainable development. Extreme pressure of a huge population of more than 170 million on a limited resource base, including land, has strained the country's carrying capacity- in terms of both the source and the functions of the environment. In such an all-pervasive predicament, the importance of sound environment policy-making cannot be overemphasized.<sup>61</sup>

The art of environmental policy-making in a developing country like Bangladesh is a new domain, without much of past experience. There are two steps in the formulation of an environmental policy: the choice of an overall goal and the selection of a means to achieve that goal. In practice, these two steps are often linked with the political process because both the choice of a goal and the selection of a mechanism for achieving it have important political ramifications.<sup>62</sup> The problem is compounded by inter-linkages in the conditions of air, land and water resources, and the time gap between actions as well as effects on the environment. This obviously requires inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary expertise, which are lacking in Bangladesh.

Since the 1990s environmental management has become a priority issue in Bangladesh. Already, successive governments have developed detailed policy frameworks. This includes the National Environment Policy- 1992, National Tourism Policy- 1992, National Forestry Policy-1994, New Agriculture Extension Policy-1995, The Energy Policy-1995, Private Sector Power Generation Policy of Bangladesh-1996, Policy Guideline for small Power Plants in Private Sector-1997, National Fisheries Policy-1998, National policy for safe water and sanitation- 1998, National Agricultural policy-1999, National water

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<sup>60</sup> The Sixth Five Year Plan (2011-15), Planning Commission, GoB, (Part-II) July 2011, p. 423

<sup>61</sup> Mizan Khan, "Environment Policy-making in Bangladesh", in *Bangladesh State of Environment Report-1999*, ed. Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, (Dhaka: FEJB, December, 1999), P. 217

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 217

policy- 1999 (National Water Management Plan, 2004), Industrial policy- 1999, National Health Policy-1999, National Shipping policy-2000, Integrated Pest Management Policy-2000, National Land Use policy 2001, National Integrated Pest Management Policy- April, 2002, Renewable Energy Policy of Bangladesh-2008, Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan- 2009, Bangladesh Rubber Policy-2010, National Bio-safety Framework-2010<sup>63</sup> all of which aimed to ensure development in harmony with the natural environment. The Wetland policy (draft)<sup>64</sup> puts special emphasis on the conservation of wetlands.<sup>65</sup> However, all these array of policies need to be armed by effective policy instruments for their proper implementation.<sup>66</sup> These policies are often hard for elected politicians to sell to a population which is already faced with financial hardship.<sup>67</sup>

A sound policy-making requires thorough and up-to-date knowledge of the available policy instruments. Such instruments can be categorized into three groups: a) Government regulation and control; b) market mechanisms and; c) social instruments. In Bangladesh, the regulatory regime, with about 200 environment related laws, is protecting the environment. But studies around the world have shown that government regulation as an instrument is difficult, ineffective and costly, in most of the cases.<sup>68</sup> The policies sound more mission-like, with statements of pious objectives, rather than real policy directions. The sectorial policies and guidelines prescribe Do's and Don'ts, rather than showing how to do or why not to do. There is a chapter in the Industrial Policy (1991) on financial incentives to industries, but no incentive provision for industrial pollution control has been mentioned.

In the formulation of Environmental Policy, different actors and factors played some direct and indirect roles.<sup>69</sup> The actors were basically of two types, external

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63 Abul Kalam Azad, *Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Bangladesh: A Case for Peoples Management*, *biss papers* 20, Dhaka: December-2003, section- III, pp. 87-88

64 Mizan Khan, *Op. cit.*, P. 218

65 Md. Sohrab Ali, *The Development-Environment Conflict: Lessons learnt*, The Daily Star, 13 February, 2010

66 Mizan Khan, *Op. cit.*, p. 218

67 Md. Khalequzzaman, "Environmental Philosophy in the Context of Bangladesh", *Weekly Holiday*, Dhaka: 30 July, 1999.

68 Mizan Khan, *Op. cit.*, p. 218

69 S. M. Aminuzzaman (2010), *Environment Policy of Bangladesh: A case study of an Ambitious policy with Implementation Snag*. Available from: [http://www.monash.edu.au/research/Sustainability-institute/asia-project/paper\\_salahuddin\\_aminuzzaman.pdf](http://www.monash.edu.au/research/Sustainability-institute/asia-project/paper_salahuddin_aminuzzaman.pdf) [Accessed 24th December, 2010]

and internal. Among external actors, United Nations General Assembly, international forum, international organizations, donor agencies (IDA, USAID, UNDP, ADB) were major players. Internal actors include, environmental NGOs (CARDMA, BCAS, IUCN, FEJB, ADAB) government agencies i.e. Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF), Department of Environment (DoE), Planning Commission, concerned ministries, consultants, bureaucrats, civil society and so on. Although the MoEF was responsible for drafting the policy, in reality it was drafted by an informally organized Task Force composed of the major actors.<sup>70</sup> Besides the Policy, a National Conservation Strategy (NCS), which has identified all the sectoral issues, the strategies and actions required. Moreover, a National Environment Management Action Plan was made with expert and grass-root level input in its methodology in identifying the problems and priorities. The Bangladesh Country Report to UNCED, Brazil 1992 is a useful source of information. Other materials on this topic include the Task Force Report, 1991 and published documents prepared by donors on the 'State of Bangladesh Environment' e.g., DANIDA, CIDA, SIDA, USAID, etc.<sup>71</sup>

**The salient features of the above policies are appeared as below:**

The Cabinet adopted the Environment Policy in November 1992 to provide some general guiding statements and to describe sectoral policies for the Ministries. The objectives of the Environment policy, 1992 are:

- Maintaining ecological balance and ensuring sustainable development of the country through protection and conservation of the environment;
- Protecting the country from natural disasters;
- Identifying and regulating all activities that pollute and destroy the environment;
- Ensuring environment-friendly development in all sectors;
- Ensuring sustainable and environmentally sound management of the natural resources; and
- Maintaining active association, as far as possible, with all international initiatives related to environment.<sup>72</sup>

Environmental activities encompass all geographical regions and development sectors of the country. The Policy details various specific programs and

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>71</sup> Mohiuddin Farooque, "Reflections on the State of Environment and Environmental Law in Bangladesh", in *Environmental Order the Security of Survival*, S. Rizwana Hasan ed., (Dhaka: BELA, 2004), p. 10

<sup>72</sup> The Environment Policy- 1992, A Compilation of Environmental Laws Administered by the Department of Environment, Dhaka: BEMP-2002, p. 322

principles of their implementation for 15 various sectors.<sup>73</sup> It also provides for an environmental action plan toward ensuring its goals and objectives. The action plan is presented under the head 'Implementation Program' in tabular form for each of the 15 sectors.<sup>74</sup>

It would be worth to note the topics being briefed in the said Policy under Articles- 4 and 5. Article-4 of the Policy talks about the legal framework. It says that-

- Amend all laws and regulations related to protection of environment, conservation of natural resources, and control of environment pollution and degradation, to suit the needs of present time.
- Frame new laws in all necessary sectors to control activities related to environmental pollution and degeneration.
- Ensure observance of all clauses of relevant laws/regulations and create widespread mass awareness in this regard.
- Ratify all environment related international laws/conventions/protocols those Bangladesh considers to be ratified and amend/modify existing laws/regulations in line with the ratified laws/conventions/protocols.<sup>75</sup>

Articles-5 of the Policy contains Institutional Arrangements that says as follows:

- The Ministry of Environment and Forest would coordinate the implementation of this Policy.
- A National Environment Committee with the Head of Government as the Chairperson be constituted to give overall direction for implementation of the Environment Policy.
- The Ministry of Environment and Forest would take timely steps for appropriate amendment and adjustment of this Policy on the backdrop of changes in the state of environment and socio-economic and other needs of the country.
- Department of Environment will make final review and approve all EIAs.<sup>76</sup>

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73 15 sectors are as Agriculture, Industry, Health & Sanitation, Energy & Fuel, Water Development, Flood Control and Irrigation, Land, Forest, Wildlife and Bio-diversity, Fisheries and Livestock, Food, Coastal and Marine Environment, Transport and Communication, Housing and Urbanization, Population, Education and Public Awareness, Science, Technology and Research.

74 Annual Report 2006, *Environment for Sustainable Development*, Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest, GoB, p. 8

75 Environment Policy, 1992, GoB.

76 The Environment Policy- 1992, *A Compilation of Environmental Laws Administered by the Department of Environment*, Dhaka: BEMP-2002, p. 327

**The National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP), 1995:**

Formulated in 1995, NEMAP envisages identification of the key environmental issues of immediate concern for Bangladesh and the actions to halt or reduce environmental degradation, improve the natural and man-made environment, conserve biodiversity and its habitat, promote sustainable development and improve the quality indicators of human life. It was developed for a period of 10 years (1995 to 2005) and is likely to have influence in shaping policy directives regarding the environmental issues in the foreseeable future.<sup>77</sup> To this end, it has grouped all the relevant actions under four heads: institutional, sectoral, location specific and long-term issues.

The institutional aspects reflect the need of inter-sectoral cooperation to tackle environmental problems that need new and appropriate institutional mechanisms at national levels.

The sectoral aspects reflect the way the Ministries and agencies are organized and make it easier to identify the agency to carry out the recommended actions. The location-specific aspect focuses on particularly acute environmental problems at local levels that need to be addressed on a priority basis. The long-term issues include environmental degradation of such a scale that it might become more serious and threatening than they seem to be if their cognizance is not immediately taken.<sup>78</sup>

A National Conservation Strategy (NCS) and a National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP) have been formulated. Both NCS and NEMAP contain national strategies and national programs for conservation of sites important from biodiversity consideration. The Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP) had a total of 26 components of which three components were directly concerned with the conservation of biodiversity in the wetlands and in the floodplains of the country through community participations.<sup>79</sup>

**Environmental Policy Perspective in the National Energy Policy-1996**

The National Energy Policy (NEP) aims to ensure environmentally sound sustainable energy development programs causing minimum damage to environment.

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77 ADB (2004), Country Environmental Analysis : Bangladesh. Available from: <http://www.adb.org/Documents/CEA/sBAN/BAN-CEA-Jul-2004.pdf> [Accessed 24th December, 2009]

78 Annual Report 2006, *Environment for Sustainable Development*, Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest, GoB, p. 8

79 Annual Report 2006, DoE, p. 69

NEP envisages that environmental issues will be considered for all type of fuels and in each and every step of fuel cycle; namely, exploration, appraisal, extraction, conversion, transportation and consumption.

It may be reiterated that at present per capita emission of carbon dioxide gas is very low. It is envisaged that in the foreseeable future, emission of carbon dioxide gas would not exceed the existing average emission of low income developing countries. Environmental issues to be considered under National Energy Policy are to be mandated under National Environment Policy and Environment Act.

***Environment Policy on the issue of Energy:*** The 1996 NEP stresses that a) Environmental Impact Assessment should be made mandatory and should constitute an integral part of any new energy development project; b) Use of economically viable environment friendly technology is to be promoted; c) Use of fuel wood is to be discouraged and replacement fuels are to be made available at an affordable price; d) Popular awareness to be promoted regarding environmental conservation; e) In case of coal based power plants, disposal of ash and reduction of environmental emission are to be considered in technology selection; f) In case of nuclear power plant, internationally acceptable criteria on radiation emission are to be observed. Abandoned hard rock mine faces may be considered for final disposal of such wastes; g) Use of lead free<sup>80</sup> petrol will be encouraged.

- i) Petroleum Policy<sup>81</sup> mentioned its objectives as promote measures for environmental impact assessment in this sector.
- ii) Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) shall be mandatory for any project of electricity generation. Clearance of projects from environmental point of view shall be accorded without undue delay so as to avoid cost and schedule over runs.
- iii) The Department of Environment shall prescribe standard contents and formats of EIA to be submitted on electricity projects and also define other regulatory codes, guides and standards on emission and thermal pollution from generating plants. Some environmental standards shall be applicable to the new plants in the private and the public sectors.
- iv) Provisions under the Nuclear Safety and Radiation Control Act<sup>82</sup> and its regulations in addition to environmental standards of the Department of

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80 Lead pollution in the air was very high until the introduction of lead free petrol in the city since 1999.

81 As approved by the Cabinet in its meeting held on 18.07.1993.

82 Act 21 of 1993, the GoB.

Environment shall be mandatory in installation, operation and maintenance of nuclear power plants.

Article (V.2.13) of the National Energy Policy notes that Environment Impact Assessment for possible future power plants to be built by the PBS/REB have to maintain the same standard as applicable for any other power plant.<sup>83</sup>

**National Water Policy- 1999:**

Water resource is of immense importance for socio-economic development of the nation. Bangladesh is endowed with a good number of water bodies scattered all over the country. Regional cooperation is indispensable for water management and protection of water resources and rational use of water. In accordance with its election pledge, the government took initiative to formulate a coordinated water policy involving Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan and to establish regional water security for tackling the prevailing water crisis so as to ensure water resource conservation, Bangladesh's share and proper use in future. An agreement on Ganges water sharing was concluded with India in 1996.<sup>84</sup> According to the agreement, Ganges water available at Farrakha is being distributed between two countries through joint review team for the period of 1 January to 31 May in every year's dry season. In accordance with the article-IV of the said agreement, an India-Bangladesh Joint Committee was formulated for implementing and monitoring of the flow distribution measures at Farakkah and near Hardings Bridge.<sup>85</sup> An all out effort has been continuing for formulating water sharing agreement for rest of the 53 rivers, especially for relatively important Tista, Dhorla, Dud Kumar, Monu, Khoai, Gomuti and Muhuri rivers on a priority basis.<sup>86</sup>

**National Land Use Policy- 2001:**

Optimum use of land and water depends on planned use of land, water resources and natural environment which are the important sources for growth. It is possible to ensure optimum use of scarce land resources by way of integrating the uses of these three natural resources. With this end in view, the Government has approved 'National Land Use Policy, Bangladesh'. The

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83 Bangladesh Gazette- 1996.

84 See, Shah Alam, "Ganges Water-Sharing Treaty : How Much is the Scope for Criticism or Opposition?" *The Daily Star*, Dhaka: 16, March, 1997, p. 4

85 Shah Alam, *Shomokalin Antorjatik Ain (Contemporary International Law)*, (Dhaka: New Warsi Book Corporation, September-2000), pp. 68-71

86 Bangladesh Economic Review 2010, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, April-1011, pp. 243-244

Government has adopted various other national policies and measures to prevent land depletion. These include ‘The National Environment Policy’, ‘National Environment Act and Rules’, ‘National Forestry Policy’ and ‘The National Plan for Agricultural Research’.<sup>87</sup>

#### **Industrial Policy, 1986:**

The Industrial Policy, 1986 also incorporates the issue of environment pollution. Regarding pollution control, the 1986 industrial policy suggests that all sanctioning agencies will ensure that in the case of projects involving pollution and health hazards, the project proposals contain adequate measures for effluent treatment/disposal and other pollution control devices. All existing industrial units involving pollution and health hazards shall take appropriate measures for pollution control within the period specified by the Government.<sup>88</sup>

#### **Forest Policy:**

The Forest policy of Bangladesh has been highly influenced by political changes that have occurred in the country over a long period of history.<sup>89</sup> The most widely known forest related law was enacted in 1927. Since then the Forest Act has been amended many times with the last amendment being done in 2000. A private Forest Act was introduced in 1945 which was followed by the promulgation of the Private Forest Ordinance 1959, to regulate forest management on privately owned land. The first forest policy of independence of Bangladesh was enacted in 1979. The latest forest policy came in force in 1994.<sup>90</sup> In 1989, the forest act was amended to strengthen forest protection by providing for stiffer penalties for offenders and restricting the discretionary powers of the forest officials and local magistrates. The revised act relied on traditional forest protection and did not favour social forestry. The strict provisions did not, however, achieve the desired results. To accommodate social forestry, the act was amended in 2000.

#### **Conclusion**

Bangladesh has a long legacy of environment related policies. This paper shows that quite a good number of policies are targeting the environmental issues. For that reason some overlapping may be observed. Since overlapping such policies

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87 Bangladesh Economic Review 2010, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, April-1011, p. 243

88 Industrial Policy 1986, Chapter- xv.

89 Mahbubul Alam, “Evolution of Forest Policies in Bangladesh: A critical Analysis”, *International Journal of Social Forestry (IJSF)*, 2009, 2(2), pp. 149-166.

90 The first forest policy was enacted in 1894 during the colonial era.

create confusion about different institutions role and responsibilities. Since the early 1980s environmental issues have started drawing attention of the policy planners in Bangladesh. Some international and national level organizations initiated a number of studies among which the reports prepared by DANIDA (1989), Department of Environment (1989), CIDA (1989), ADAB (1990), USAID (1990), NORD (1990), SIDA (1991) etc. are notable. Almost in all reports, similar concerns have been expressed. Some reports analytically discussed the policy-options mostly at the national level with less importance on regional and global environmental changes and their implications for Bangladesh. The 1990s marks the beginning of the history of environmental policy in Bangladesh. The developments taking place during this decade gave a new direction to the policy concerns in the field of environment protection. This was evident in the facts that the *Fourth Five Year Plan* introduced a chapter on environment and sustainable development, the *Fifth Five Year Plan* emphasized environment and sustainable livelihood, the *Sixth Five Year Plan* focused on environment, climate change and disaster management for sustainable development. In a nutshell, the major policy initiatives, strategies and plans emphasized environment and natural resources management to achieve sustainable development. This article describes the environment related policy history in Bangladesh. At the same time, it highlights the formulation process of the National Environment Policy 1992. After a long period of 20 years of its implementation, now it is imperative to reevaluate its effectiveness. Moreover, during last two decades a lot of research has been carried out on environmental issues and the capacity of the government, civil society and other stake holders has been enhanced to formulate a better environment policy for Bangladesh.