

Introduction to Environment & Environment Governance in Bangladesh



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What is Meant by “Environment” ?

- ❖ Environment means our surroundings, which comprises of land, water and air and other bodies. Environment is affected by the physical properties of these components. It is also affected by the changes in interrelationship prevailing between and among the components ranging from micro-organism to human bodies (ref: section 2 (d), ECA, 1995)

Why is the Environment so Important ?

- ❖ Our life-support system is maintained by all the species that make up the biosphere-biodiversity. The survival of all these species are interconnected and dependent on each other. Human being is also a part of this biosphere, extinction of one species is really the extinction of many species and the decline of our life-support system for ourselves and future generations.
- ❖ Development means the interaction of man on natural resources to improve our quality of life by meeting our needs; unrestrained development degrades the environment

What is Meant by “Governance” ?

- ❖ Governance can be defined as a complex set of values, norms, processes, and institutions by which society manages its development and resolves conflict, formally or informally.
- ❖ Generally speaking, governance involves state players (various levels of government), but also civil society at the local, national, regional, and global levels (Hempel 1996).
- ❖ It also involves political institutions and sets of rules, including decision-making procedures that give rise to social practices.

What is “Environmental Governance” ?

- ❖ Environmental governance is about how societies deal with environmental problems. It is concerned with the interactions among formal and informal institutions and the actors within society. These interactions influence how environmental problems are identified and addressed.

Background

- ❖ The problems of the human environment are not just national concerns. They were placed on the international agenda in 1972 at the United Nations Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm.

Seven Elements of Environmental Governance

1. Institutions and Laws
2. Participation Rights and Representation
3. Authority Level
4. Accountability and Transparency
5. Property Rights and Tenure
6. Markets and Financial Flows
7. Science and Risk

1. Institutions and Laws



- ❖ *Who makes and enforces the rules for using natural resources?*
- ❖ *What are the rules and the penalties for breaking them?*
- ❖ *Who resolves disputes?*

Government ministries; regional water or pollution control boards; local zoning departments and governing councils; international bodies such as the United Nations or World Trade Organization; industry trade organizations. Environmental and economic laws, policies, rules, treaties, and enforcement regimes; corporate codes of conduct. Courts and administrative review panels.

2. Participation Rights and Representation

- ❖ *How can the public influence or contest the rules over natural resources?*
- ❖ *Who represents those who use or depend on natural resources when decisions on these resources are made?*



Freedom of Information laws; public hearings, reviews, and comment periods on environmental plans and actions; ability to sue in court, lodge a complaint, or demand an administrative review of a rule or decision. Elected legislators, appointed representatives, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) representing local people or other environmental stakeholders.

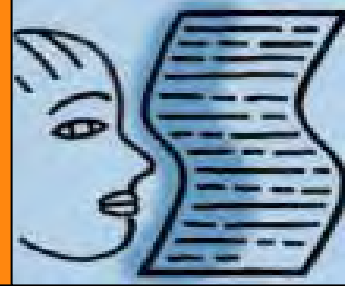
3. Authority Level

- ❖ *At what level or scale - local, regional, national, International - does the authority over resources reside?*



Visible in: Distribution of official rulemaking, budgeting, and investment power at different levels of government (e.g., district forest office; regional air pollution control board; national agriculture ministry; international river basin authority)

4. Accountability and Transparency



- ❖ *How do those who control and manage natural resources answer for their decisions, and to whom?*
- ❖ *How open to scrutiny is the decision making process?*

Mechanisms: Elections; public oversight bodies; performance reviews; opinion polls; financial audits; corporate boards of directors; stockholder meetings. Availability of public records of rules, decisions, and complaints; corporate financial statements; public inventories of pollutant releases from industrial facilities, power plants, and water treatment facilities.

5. Property Rights and Tenure

❖ *Who owns a natural resource or has the legal right to control it?*



Visible in: Land titles; water, mineral, fishing, or other use rights; tribal or traditional community-based property rights; logging, mining, and park recreation concessions.

6. Markets and Financial Flows

❖ *How do financial practices, economic policies, and market behavior influence authority over natural resources?*

Visible in: Private sector investment patterns and lending practices; government aid and lending by multilateral development banks; trade policies and tariffs; corporate business strategies; organized consumer activities such as product boycotts or preferences; stockholder initiatives related to company environmental behavior.

7. Science and Risk

- ❖ *How are ecological and social science incorporated into decisions on natural resource use to reduce risks to people and ecosystems and identify new opportunities?*



Mechanisms: Science advisory panels (e.g., Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change); natural resource inventories (e.g., Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations biennial State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture report); ground- and satellite-based ecosystem monitoring programs (e.g., Millennium Ecosystem Assessment); national censuses and economic tracking; company health, safety, and environment reports.

Environmental Governance in Bangladesh

Environment Policy 1992

Bangladesh National Environment Policy approved in May 1992, sets out the basic framework for environmental action, together with a set of broad sectoral action guidelines.

❖ **Key elements of the Environment Policy are :**

- Maintenance of the ecological balance and overall progress and development of the country through protection and improvement of the environment
- Protection of the country against natural disasters
- Identification and regulation of all types of activities which pollute and degrade the environment
- Ensuring proper Environment Impact Assessment prior to undertaking of industrial and other development projects
- Ensuring sustainable use of all natural resources

Environmental Legislation

- The Environmental Conservation Act (ECA), 1995
- The Environment Conservation Rules (ECR), 1997
- Brick Burning (Control) Act, 1989
- The Environment Court Act, 2000

Issues of Importance and ongoing activities of Bangladesh

❖ NAPA –

- Preparation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) on Climate Change
- Project undertaken with assistance from GEF.

❖ CDM –

- Establishment of a Designated National Authority (DNA) and CDM Board
- Initiatives already undertaken.



❖ **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

- Project undertaken with assistance from GEF to prepare BSAP (Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan)
- Coordinated efforts undertaken in cooperation with Ministries of Agriculture and Science & ICT to prepare Bio-safety Framework and Guidelines

❖ **Montreal Protocol**

- Bangladesh has reduced by 60% its consumption of ODS through phase-out of the Aerosol sector
- Country programme has been prepared for meeting the 2010 deadline



❖ **Basel Convention**

- Technical assistance has been sought to prepare rules under Environment Conservation Act 1995
- A reconnaissance survey has been completed on the generation of hazardous wastes

❖ **UN Convention to combat desertification (UNCCD)**

- Preparation of National Action Plan initiated Further projects shall be submitted to the Convention Secretariat based on the National Action Plan

❖ **Stockholm Convention on POPs (toxic fertilizers)**

- Initiated a project with GEF assistance to make a detailed survey on the use and identification of their potential substitutes

Accomplishments in the Global Forum on ICTPs

- ❖ Bangladesh is currently the Chair of the ten-member Implementation Committee of Montreal Protocol
- ❖ Bangladesh has been elected Vice President of CBD Bureau
- ❖ Role of Bangladesh as an alternate member of the Governing Council of GEF has been activated
- ❖ Bangladesh is currently the Vice Chair of the LDC Expert Group under the UNFCCC and has emerged as the leader of the LDCs in the Climate Change negotiation process and a lead member of Group 77 for negotiations with other groups. It successfully organized a three day International Workshop at Dhaka in September 2002 on Capacity Building for the National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) for the LDCs
- ❖ Bangladesh has been elected as the Chairman of the Global Tiger Forum for the second time
- ❖ Bangladesh has been elected Vice Chairman of the Conference of Environment Ministers of Islamic Countries in its first conference held in Jeddah

Need for better Environmental Governance

- ❖ Creating a vision that inspires action
- ❖ Setting goals and targets for direction
- ❖ Policy coordination for efficiency
- ❖ Policy instruments and incentives that stimulate action
- ❖ Integration between government and other knowledge based institutions
- ❖ Involvement of local administration
- ❖ Capacity-building for effective implementation
- ❖ Empowerment for equity
- ❖ Ensuring the right to information for timely action
- ❖ Participation in ownership and enforceability
- ❖ Education and awareness for consensus building and participation

thank
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