



**CO-MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS IN
BANGLADESH: A STRATEGY FOR
ESTABLISHING AN INSTITUTIONAL
FRAMEWORK**

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Acronyms

ACF:	Assistant Conservator of Forest
ASA:	Association for Social Advancement
BCAS:	Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies
BDR:	Bangladesh Rifles
BELA:	Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association
BRAC:	Bangladesh Rural Advisory Committee
CBO:	Community-Based Organization
CCF:	Chief Conservator of Forest
DCCF:	Deputy Chief Conservator of Forest
DFO:	Divisional Forest Officer
FD:	Forest Department
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
FSMP :	Forestry Sector Master Plan.
Ha:	Hectare.
IGA:	Income Generating Activities
IRG:	International Resource Group
Km:	Kilometer
LGED:	Local Government Engineering Department
MOEF:	Ministry of Environment and Forest
MP:	Member of Parliament
NGO:	Non-government Organization
NSP:	Nishorgo Support Project
PBSA:	Participatory Benefit Sharing Agreement
SF:	Social Forestry
SP:	Superintendent of Police
UNO:	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
USF:	Un-classed State Forests.

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Chapter – 1

THE CONTEXT FOR OPERATIONALIZATION OF CO-MANAGEMENT IN PROTECTED AREAS

1.1. BACKGROUND

Only thousand years ago, eighty percent of the Indian Subcontinent was estimated to possess dense forest cover¹. Historians believe that much of the area comprising present-day Bangladesh and the Indian State of West Bengal was in wilderness till about 1000 BC. The mangrove forest covered the southern part, bordering the Bay of Bengal; the hills of the Arakan Range, spreading from Sylhet in the north to Chittagong and Cox's Bazaar in the south, were covered by dense mixed evergreen forest, and the central part, the Modhupur Tract and the northern parts covering the district of Dinajpur, were enveloped by thick deciduous *sal* forest. The forests were rich in bio-diversity, having various types of birds and animals. The famous Royal Bengal Tigers of the Sundarbans were the most exotic and notable among others. Human settlements started only after 1000 BC by Dravidian speaking people who were later known as Bang². People lived in small village settlements, collectively helping each other in their efforts towards exploiting nature for their survival and livelihood.

The landscape was crisscrossed by the mighty rivers, the Ganges, the Meghna and the Brahmaputra and their numerous tributaries, endowing the country with thriving wetland resources. Rich alluvial soil and good weather provided ideal condition for agriculture; water bodies supplied fish in abundance. Economic prosperity of Bengal attracted people from all other parts of India as well from other countries during the Mughal period. In fact, such settlements continued between the 13th and the 18th centuries.

The total population of the area now constituting Bangladesh was only 11.4 million in 1770 and 14.5 million in 1801. The population during this period grew slowly at the rate of only 0.67%, checked by recurrent epidemics like cholera, malaria, small pox and kalajar. Famines, resulting mostly due to mismanagement of food distribution, also took a heavy toll on life. It took 100 years for the population to double from 14.5 million in 1801 to 28.9 million in 1901. Rapid increase in population took place after 1930s, primarily due to decline in mortality in face of persisting high fertility, advances in medical sciences and improvements in public health facilities and services. The population increased by three folds during the period between 1940 and 2001 from 42 million to 129.25 million³.

¹ Mark Poffenberger, et.al, (1996) Grassroots Forest Protection: Eastern Indian experiences, Research Network Report, Number 7, USA

² Tara Chand, (1886), Society and State in Mughal Period, Government of India Press, Faridabad, India; U.S. Library of Congress, (2004), Bangladesh, Early History, 1000BC – AD1202, <http://countrystudies.us/Bangladesh/4.htm>.

³ **Banglapedia**, (2003), National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh, Asiatic Society, Dhaka, 2003.

Unabated expansion of the population in a finite landmass had direct bearing on the forest cover. Demand for fuel, fodder, building materials, and space for habitation led people to encroach and clear forest; enhanced value of timber and its increased use in the commercial sector only expedited the denudation process.

1.2. DEFORESTATION AND POVERTY: A LINK LITTLE UNDERSTOOD

Most people, care less, or understand little about the link between prevailing poverty and deforestation. Forests provide fuel, material for building and fencing, fruits, fodder and shade. Poor people collect biomass and take fuel wood but the rich extract valuable timbers. What people, rich and poor alike, do not really know is that trees stop soil erosion, helps in water conservation and trigger precipitation. In fact, the visible problems of land degradation, silting of river beds and less availability of fish, shrinking of grazing land for cattle, lowering of ground water table and manifestation of desertification syndrome are all due to unplanned over extraction of forest resources that offset the symbiotic bio-physical relationship and contribute to accentuation of poverty that falls disproportionately on the poor. In Bangladesh, many forest covers have disappeared, the existing ones have become badly denuded, in many cases beyond redemption. The impact of such denudation has already been felt through destabilized eco-balance that is believed to be causing lower precipitation, poor crop yields, scarcity of fish and consequent increase in poverty. The situation is likely to worsen further if appropriate interventions are not made to arrest the prevailing denudation process.

1.3. THE DEPLETING FOREST

Although statistics on Bangladesh forestry vary considerably from one source to another, rapid decline in forest cover is clearly visible. According to the Forestry Sector Master Plan (FSMP), the total land area covered by forest is 2.56 million hectares, which accounts for 17.8% of the total land area of Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics⁴ notes that the total forestland is about 2.25 m ha, which is 14% of the total land area. In 1997, the World Bank⁵ reported that Bangladesh has some forest cover on 1.47 m ha or 11% of total land area. Whatever might be the spatial coverage of the forest, the striking reality is that much of country's forest land is devoid of trees, and the actual tree cover is alarmingly less; disappearing rapidly. The FSMP has estimated that the total 'area under forest vegetation' is as low as 0.84 m ha or 5.8% of the total land area. The World Bank has also estimated the forest vegetation to be only 7,70,000 ha or 6% of the forestland having tree cover of at least 20 per cent⁶.

Apart from the designated government forest land of 1.49 m ha under the

⁴ Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh (1999), Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh, Dhaka

⁵ World Bank, (1997), Review of Key Environmental Issues in Bangladesh, Workshop Discussion Draft, World Bank, Dhaka.

⁶ Ibid

purview of the Forest Department covering both natural and plantation forests, there is about 0.72 m ha of land designated as “un-classed state forests (USF)” under the control of the Ministry of Land, 0.27 m ha of home gardens and village forest groves scattered all over the country and 0.27 m ha of tea estate and rubber gardens. The public forest land, un-classed state forest, home gardens, tea estate and rubber plantations together make up about 17% (2.46 m ha) of the potential tree cover of the country

This limited forest cover is depleting fast due to illegal felling. In order to prevent the country from experiencing environmental apocalypse due to further denudation of forest cover, the government, under the Bangladesh Wild Life (Preservation) Order of 1973, has established 16 protected areas covering an area of 2,41,675 hectares where any extraction of forest products is declared as illegal and punishable offence (See in Annex-1) . Over the last 3 decades, the protected areas have hardly remained protected. It has increasingly been recognized that the traditional forest protection with armed guards is no longer appropriate, community involvement is essential. Bangladesh Forest Department has launched a new programme--Nishorgo Support Project (NSP)—with the financial support of US AID to protect and conserve bio-diversity in selected protected areas with the help of the community through what is known as collaborative management. The NSP will be implemented in 6 of the 16 declared protected areas; 5 have been selected, one needs to be selected yet. The five selected sites are as follows:

SELECTED PROTECTED AREAS UNDER NISHORGO INTERVENTION

Name of the Protected Areas	Forest Type	Area in ha	Current Status
Lawachara National Park	Hill Forest	1250	Community mobilization, and awareness building process initiated by partner NGO.
Rema-Kalenga Wild Life Sanctuary	Hill Forest	1795.54	Community mobilization, and awareness building process initiated by partner NGO.
Satchuri National Park (proposed)	Hill Forest	240	Community mobilization, and awareness building process initiated by partner NGO.
Chunuti Wild Life Sanctuary	Hill Forest	7761	Community mobilization process just initiated
Tekhnaf Game Reserve	Hill Forest	11615	Community mobilization process just initiated

Chapter – 2

DYNAMICS OF RESOURCE EXTRACTION: WHO TAKES WHAT AND HOW

Resource extraction and resource flow in the five protected areas located in the north-eastern and southern parts of Bangladesh is presented in Fig:1. Resource extraction, particularly timber, is carried out by very powerful people who are affluent; wood, bamboo, cane are extracted mostly by poor people, primarily to sell in the market to meet their basic needs. Poor people also harvest other non-timber products, i.e., fruits and vegetables, sun grasses and medicinal plants, which they mostly use for household consumption. Apart from extraction of resources one critical problem is encroachment of forest land. This particular problem is acute in the southern sites where forest is cleared and settlements take place sometimes with the support of socially and politically powerful people with the unofficial consent of the forest department.

A number of Focus Groups discussions (FGDs) and intensive interviews were held with FD personnel at various levels and different sections of the community to understand the dynamics of forest depletion and resource extraction. Common responses received from the forest department were as follows:

“To tell you frankly, systems within the forest department are responsible to make our staff corrupt. New entrants usually start their service career with commitment and a positive attitude towards their work. However, their commitment gradually diminishes as they are blamed, harassed and subjected to intense questioning if, despite their best efforts, fail to stop illegal felling. Their sincerity and dedication are hardly recognized and rewarded. Soon they realize that colluding with illegal fellers is more rewarding—extra income, which they can use to please their higher ups to secure their job. We do not have any provision for reward for good work or punishment for negligence and corruption. So staff-members are not motivated to take additional but necessary steps to protect the forest. Frankly speaking, our staffs are now totally demoralized...”

“You see, we are always blamed for being corrupt. Our public image is poor. Unfortunately no body knows that many of us have to get involved in illegal activities to raise money to meet unexpected and inconceivable demands of top level decision makers....FD officials at different levels involved in the process also make money...easy way...and why not if the top is like that...?”

“Very powerful people having connections with the political elite and the administrative machinery are involved in plundering forest resources.

Some corrupt officials of the forest department also assist them in the process....

"Most field staffs keep their families in urban centers for the purpose of education of their children. Demand for extra money to maintain two establishments, one at the work place and another in urban center, forces many of the officials to get involved in corrupt practices...",

"Well, the banks where you keep money use most sophisticated technology and keep adequate armed guards to protect your money. Yet, money gets lost, sometimes taken by robbers and sometimes stolen by bank officials, forging documents... Now think of our forest, we have lacs and lacs worth of timber trees remaining unprotected in remote forest areas ...Why should they stay when people can easily chop them down and fetch easy money?"

"You talk about protection, we do not have enough people; even our arms are obsolete and can hardly match with the sophisticated arms used by illegal feller-gangs...Many of us now strongly feel that it is not possible to protect such a huge area with only a few beat officers, guards and gardeners. Even well-armed, increased manpower is also not going to help under the current situation when the pressure on the forest is so intense; we need to involve the community to protect the forest more in the line of participatory forestry..."

"As a matter of fact, the check posts are the primary centers of corruption. Those officials at the check posts are suppose to check illegal timbers getting transported but they make deals with timber pirates and allow them safe passage. If the people in the check posts were honest, 90% of illegal felling would stop..."

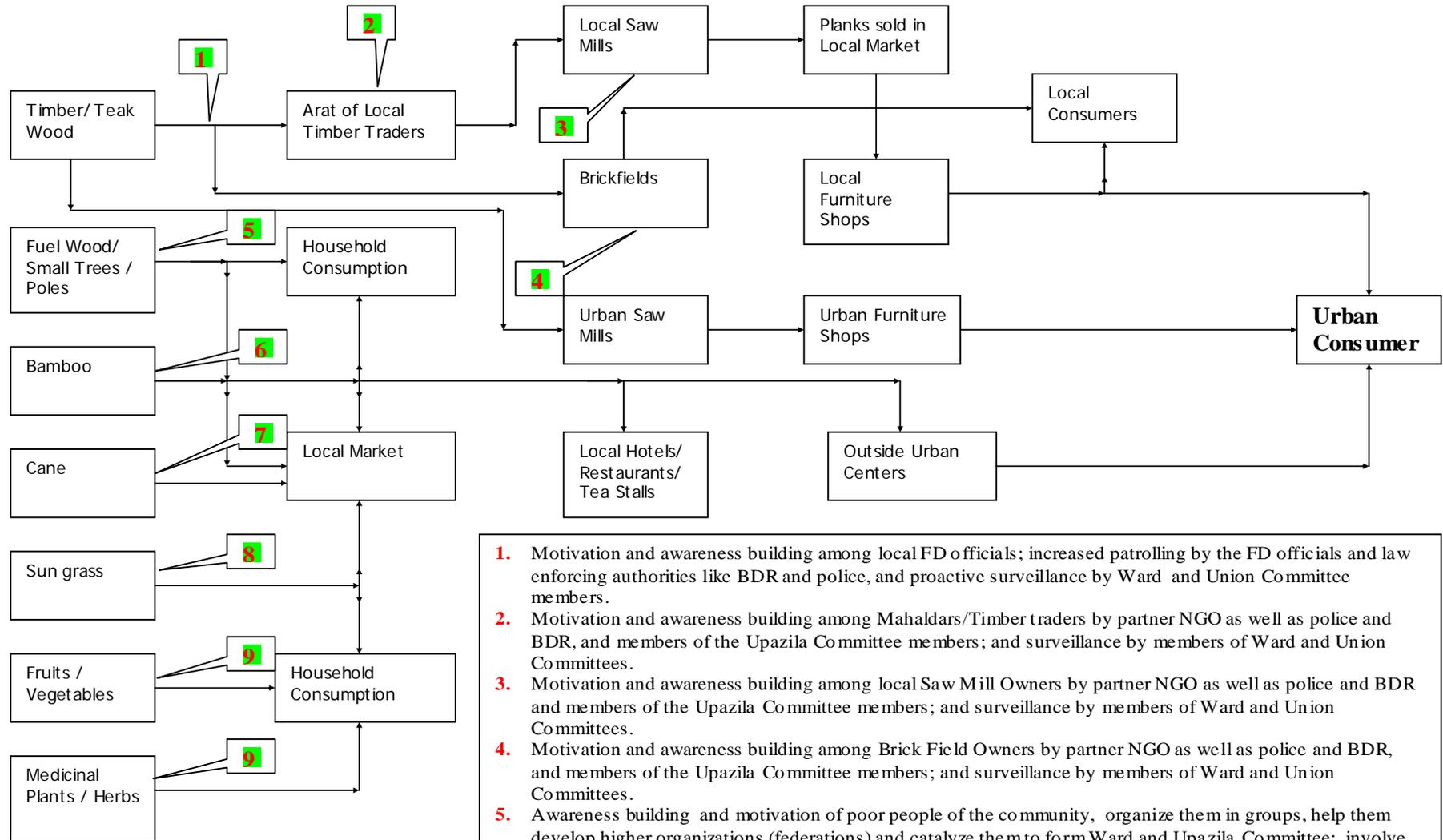
"Timber felling is one problem but the unseen and the real problem is gradual encroachment of the forest land by community people, sometimes innocuously and sometimes forcibly...Even if the forest department wants it can not take harsh actions against them because of political interference. Once settled, they can hardly be evicted due to humanitarian and other considerations..."

"Rohinga refugees in Cox's Bazaar and Tekhnaf areas are real problems. They are very poor and many of them have settled inside the reserve forest. Due to lack of income and employment opportunities, they get actively involved in forest resource extraction. It is a political question; FD alone can not take decision..."

"Forest villagers were brought in by the forest department and each family was granted 2 ha of land for their agricultural activities. Although 20 families were granted permission to settle, the number over the years has increased; new families needing space acquired it through clearing and encroaching forest land...We can do nothing now

though we have the legal right to evict them”.

Resource Extraction, Resource Flow and Proposed Interventions in Protected Areas



1. Motivation and awareness building among local FD officials; increased patrolling by the FD officials and law enforcing authorities like BDR and police, and proactive surveillance by Ward and Union Committee members.
2. Motivation and awareness building among Mahaldars/Timber traders by partner NGO as well as police and BDR, and members of the Upazila Committee members; and surveillance by members of Ward and Union Committees.
3. Motivation and awareness building among local Saw Mill Owners by partner NGO as well as police and BDR and members of the Upazila Committee members; and surveillance by members of Ward and Union Committees.
4. Motivation and awareness building among Brick Field Owners by partner NGO as well as police and BDR, and members of the Upazila Committee members; and surveillance by members of Ward and Union Committees.
5. Awareness building and motivation of poor people of the community, organize them in groups, help them develop higher organizations (federations) and catalyze them to form Ward and Upazila Committee; involve them in alternative livelihood, involve them in buffer zone plantation and provide need-based training for capacity building.
- 6-9 As Above

Responses of the community people, however, were quite different. It was embarrassing and disheartening that most people bluntly pointed at FD's intimate involvement in the resource extraction processes. Common responses were as follows:

"Forest department is primarily responsible for deforestation; you control the beat officers and the range officers the forest will remain in tact. Sir, let me tell you something, if the forest department really becomes serious about forest protection, no one will be able to take out a bunch of sun grass from the forest let alone trees."

"Timber is not something, which you can carry in your pocket. It has no value in the forest, but value addition takes place only when you take it out and market it. Its removal involves felling, taking out of the forest and then trucking out to an appropriate place. All these activities involve number of people and cannot be done without being noticed by the forest department staffs. The fact is those fellers before getting involved in the act get approval from the local forest department officials through under-hand deals....That's how they make money."

"...You are concerned about outside people being involved in timber felling and other resource extraction. Don't bother about that. No one will enter the forest if they do not get tacit or explicit approval from the forest department. Sir, nothing will work unless you control the local forest department officials. There is a saying: you give fence to protect the chillies, if the fence starts eating up the chillies, who can help?"

"Two groups of people are instrumental in forest depletion, one the 'mahalders' and the other the forest villagers who work as unofficial forest guards. You go to any beat office or range office you will find 'mahalders'⁷. These mahaldars bid in auctions that forest department holds periodically....Sir, government rules are strange; forest department can not auction captured timber unless the associated cases are settled in the court. It takes years before such cases are settled. Meanwhile, the timbers start to rot, losing in value. Yet, those decayed timbers are auctioned and 'mahalders' buy those. They buy those because they can take out valuable fresh timber in connivance with the forest department officials...."

"Sir, there are villages at the periphery of the forest, which are inhabited by Bangali migrants from Noakhali and Chandpur. Local forest department officials hire these people unofficially as forest guards to work with them. Since they cannot pay money for their services they ask them to take away timber as payments. Initially,

⁷ Interestingly enough, in every forest office we visited we found the presence of mahalders.

they took small quantities, but now what they take is huge. Sir, they were thieves previously, but now they have become dacoits. The Forest Department is behind them, they take money and issue pass for unhindered passage of the timber to a safe place....They also have connection with the local police. The police gives them 'tokens' (a pass that indicates that necessary payment has been made to the police station) to have free transit. How can you stop them?"

"...I did not ever cut a piece of wood from the forest. One day I saw a few villagers, so called forest guards, openly carrying loads of valuable timber. I challenged them and verbally abused them. The next day, to my utter surprise, I got arrested by the police for steeling timber....Sir, I have 35 cases against me, some even have 70 cases against them. Now I extract timber from the forest and I will continue to do so to meet case expenses. Every time a case comes up for hearing I have to spend Taka 500; now calculate how much I have to pay for 35 cases. My family is poor; they will not be able to give such a huge amount every month. The forest department has made me a thief; I will steal from the forest as long as I have to attend to these cases...."

"You are asking why they should file a case against me unless I have committed crime. You do not need to do any crime. These forest people have to file cases to prove their efficiency to their higher boss; to show that they are active and doing good job.... Sir, let me tell you something, if you can do something to relieve us from these cases and involve us in some income generating activities, then we will do everything to protect the forest. But if the cases continue, what ever you do we will extract resources from the forest to meet our case expenses...."

"Many people are now grabbing forest land. They would not dare to encroach if the forest people did not allow them to do so. You know, the beat officers and range officers are taking Taka 20,000 to 30,000 and granting land to those encroachers. They do not get official papers from the FD staffs but then what does it matter, once settled no one can evict".

"This is a poor area. People have no employment for most part of the year. They have to survive and they do it through stealing timber from the forest. If you can provide some opportunities for income generation for these people they will not go to the forest taking risk of being shot at or getting arrested...."

"More than eighty percent of the people in this district are dependent on the forest, directly or indirectly. Many have made fortune; they are still milking the forest. We have to do something. First and foremost people living adjacent to the forest must be organized and motivated.

There should be committees at the local level comprised of villagers, members of the local government, local influential people and illegal fellers who would be made responsible to see that no felling is done illegally. The saw mill owners, timber traders, mahaldars, furniture shop owners and brickfield owners should also be kept in the committee so that they do not feel that they are left out and become an opposing force."

The above statements present views and insights of forest department staffs and community people on the extraction of forest resources. While FD officials denote resource extraction to be the consequence of FD's inadequate manpower and lack of modern firearms to combat organized powerful gangs, community people consider corruption by FD officials as the primary reason. Both views have validity. It is undoubtedly true that the number of forest department's current field level staffs is grossly inadequate to guard such a large forest cover; arms used by them are also obsolete compared to those carried by the feller-gangs.

In the past, the administrative machinery backed the forest department with necessary support whenever such assistance was required. The situation has changed; the governance has become weak and the law enforcing agents have become grossly corrupt and unaccountable. As one of the FD officials sadly noted: "Even if you give sophisticated firearms to FD field staffs no one will use those. Any casualty that is likely to result to the fellers during the fire exchange will inevitably go against the staffs involved in the incidence. The police will be after those staffs, make their lives difficult through continuous harassment until large sums of money are paid...."

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the above responses. These are:

- ❖ Pressure on public forest land and consequent rapid disappearance of forest clearly attest to the fact that the Forest department alone, with its limited manpower, is not in a position to protect and conserve the forest. This has become all the more difficult for FD staffs because of their weak morale and negative public image resulting from corrupt practices. The objective reality calls for an alternative strategy, which focuses on: (i) sharing of power and responsibility with community people in conservation and protection of the forest, and (ii) changing of mindset of FD staffs through close interaction, motivation, capacity building and involving them in community mobilization, conscientization and collective actions.
- ❖ Majority of people in these areas are poor and remain unemployed for most part of the year. Resource extraction from the forest serves as the primary source of income and, perhaps, the only livelihood option. The situation offers a space for programmatic interventions focused on promoting alternative livelihood options for these people.

- ❖ Currently, reserved forests and protected areas are subject to illegal timber extraction and loss of land through encroachment. Such extraction or encroachment is done by a group of very powerful people who are not only affluent but also have strong connections with the central politics. Unfortunately, some officials of the forest department are also assisting these perpetrators in exchange of illegal transactions. The dynamics are complex and can only be addressed through the involvement of the total community.
- ❖ A group of people settled by the forest department in villages adjacent to the forest and recruited unofficially as forest guards are directly involved in illegal felling. They are considered by the community people as key instruments of forest depletion. Only intimate involvement of the community in the management of the forest can stop such illegal operation of the forest villagers.
- ❖ A large number of community people have court cases against them, filed by the local forest department officials. Such act has not only made community people hostile but has also forced these people to get involved in illegal felling to meet case expenses. They will not stop extracting forest resources unless something is done to relieve them from these court cases. The situation offers an opportunity for the forest department to use the case victims in conserving and protecting the forest through withdrawing court cases.
- ❖ Poor people living in villages adjacent to the forest are also involved in forest resource extraction, i.e., fuel wood, small trees, poles, bamboo, sun grass, canes, fruits and vegetables. The volume of wood, poles, bamboos extracted by an individual may not be much but the collective volume, particularly when a large number of people are involved in the act, can be enormous and can have significant negative impact on future forest regeneration and biodiversity. Dependence of these poor people on forest could be significantly reduced if alternative income generating opportunities were provided to them by the project to make them self sustaining.
- ❖ Transport of timber from the forest involves very visible operations and can not be done without being noticed by the local forest department staff, community people, and law enforcing authorities. If the community people are motivated, mobilized and involved in the protection process with well defined responsibilities supported by law enforcing authorities then illegal offenders will find their entry and exit difficult, which will reduce extraction of forest resources significantly.

Chapter - 3

FOREST MANAGEMENT IN BANGLADESH: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Little is known about management of forest in Ancient India. The earliest account of forest management could be found in Kautilya's Arthashastra, the administrative manual written by Chanakya, the Prime Minister of Chandra Gupta Maurya in 321 B.C. The forest department was headed by a Superintendent of Forest or Kupayadhkyaksha assisted by a number of forest guards called Vanapalas. The forests during the Maurya period were classified into three categories: (i) Reserve Forests, (ii) Forests donated to eminent Brahmins and (iii) Forests for the people. Some of the forests were exclusively reserved for the kings for their periodic recreational hunts. Others were maintained by the Kupayadhkyaksha enforcing strict control against illegal felling and illegal animal hunts. Some animals were brought under the protection of the state and hunting of those animals was considered punishable offence. Some forests were set aside for use by the subjects following certain rules, strictly enforced by the Kupayadhkyaksha and his team⁸.

After Chanakya's account little is known about forest management till the Mughal period. From available reports it appears that during the Mughal period emphasis on agriculture and revenue augmentation led to clearing of many forests for agricultural purposes. The Mughals also granted large tracts of forests as '*Jagir*' to their preferred subjects who managed those as per their own discretion. Like earlier kings, Mughal Emperors also kept some pristine forests reserved for their recreational hunts. They paid little attention to preservation, propagation, protection and improvements of forests during their reign, perhaps, because large parts of India were then heavily covered by forests, more than what the habitation needed⁹.

Organized forest management activities in India were, in fact, started during the British rule in 1857. Sir Dietrich Brandis was appointed as the first Inspector General of Forests and Mr. T. M. Anderson was appointed as the Conservator for Bengal, Assam and Bihar forests. Subsequently, a separate forest was created for Bengal in 1906 for the management and preservation of forests in Chittagong and the Sundarbans. However, management plans were prepared much later; the plan for the Sundarbans was written in 1903-04 and for the Chittagong forests in 1923. The reservation process in Sylhet was started in 1914 and its first management plan came into operation in 1938. Dhaka-Mymensingh forests were owned by large landlords; the same was true

⁸ Rawshan Ali Chowdhury and Zakir Hussain, 1990, "Forest Management Practices in Bangladesh: Traditional Practices and Alternative Approaches", in S.H. Rahman, M.Z. Hossain, S.I. Ali and S. Huq (ed.) Forest Resource Management in Bangladesh: Problems and Prospects, Bangladesh Centre of Advanced Studies, Dhaka, 1990.

⁹ Ibid

for Dinajpur forests. All the forests, particularly those owned by the landlords, were acquired, taken by the government for management in 1950 under the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act. A forest division was created in 1950 and the first management plan for these forests came into effect in 1960.¹⁰

3.1. PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN FOREST MANAGEMENT: SOME INITIATIVES OF THE FOREST DEPARTMENT¹¹

(i) The First Initiative

Involvement of community people in forestry was initiated first in 1979 on government owned denuded hilly forest land at a place called Betagi under Rangunia Upazila in Chittagong district. The programme, following the Sawmirvar principles, involved 101 families, each receiving about 4 acres of land. The families planted mainly fruits and timber trees; the Krishi Bank provided credit and Grmeen Bank workers supervised the credit. The Betagi project achieved notable success and was extended to Pamora mouza which was a part of the protected forest but in denuded condition. Betagi was, perhaps, the first experiment in community involvement in forest management in Bangladesh.

(ii) Community Forestry Project--1981-1988

Another attempt to introduce participatory approach to forest management was made through the Community Forestry Project. The project was targeted to the rural poor and concentrated on developing awareness among community people about the benefit of tree plantation and motivating them to plant fuel wood, fruit and timber trees collectively along road strips and undertake agro-forestry. The programme also concentrated on developing a permanent institutional capacity within the FD to undertake social forestry throughout the country. The intervention was carried out in seven northwestern districts of Rangpur, Dinajpur, Pabna, Rajshahi, Bogra, Kushtia and Jessore.

The physical targets, such as establishment of strip plantations, fuel wood plantations, agro-forestry, training, institutional support, were mostly achieved. However, limited headway was made in achieving the social goals. Farmers were generally indifferent to the timber species promoted by FD; they were also suspicious of government's benefit-sharing plan since no written, formal assurance was given on the share of the harvest once the trees had matured. Furthermore, fuel wood grown under the project was not used by farmers for domestic consumption, but catered for industrial uses. The project, however,

¹⁰ Khawja Shamsul Huda, (1992), Community-Based Natural Resource Management in Bangladesh: Role of NGOs, ADAB, Dhaka.

¹¹ This section is heavily drawn from Niaz Khan, Junaid K. Chowdhury and Khawja S. Huda, 2004, op cit.

provided employment to several thousand laborers in nurseries and plantations and contributed to an increase in the biomass production.

(iii) Upazila Afforestation and Nursery Development Project: 1989-1996

This project was basically a sequel to the Community Forestry Project and aimed at increasing biomass fuel production, and enhance FD's institutional capacity to implement a self-sustaining nation-wide social forestry program.

The project was undertaken in 61 out of 64 districts. The participants were mainly expected to make their contribution through protection of the plantation. The level of participation of the participants in the programme varied significantly. Generally, farmers actively participated in protecting trees in their agro-forestry plots. In the woodlots, the intensity of participants' involvement in protection varied with the degree of fuel scarcity and the value they attached to the provision of tree by-products (e.g. leaves and twigs). The worst performance was noted in the case strip plantations. The main burden of protecting trees in the strip plantations fell on the poorer participants who had no resources and whose abiding concern was to work and earn their daily subsistence. Furthermore, they did not have the strength or courage to prevent local elites' use of the strip plantations for livestock pasturage.

Land tenurial insecurity negatively impacted on participants' morale. The government's commitment of reviewing and reconsidering the one-year land use permit was not translated into action. The attempts at organizing the participants into community organizations, coined as the 'forestry associations', were only partially successful.

(vi) Coastal Greenbelt Project: 1995-2002

This was another project implemented in coastal areas through community involvement. The objective of the project was to protect and improve the coastal environment by increasing tree cover and reducing poverty by creating supplementary income opportunities for the poor. Some 8934 km of strip plantations and 665 ha of foreshore plantations were established, and about 143936 participants and more than 100 NGOs were engaged. 12.56 m seedlings were distributed free of cost for planting in homesteads and institutions.

Participants received direct benefits from intercropping vegetables, and extracting fuel wood, fodder and fruits. Some 100,000 participants received payment for planting activities in the year 2000. The project helped in generating employment for more than 3.5 m man/days. Initially few women were involved in the project activities; however, female participation increased

in the last two years. Unclear land use agreement caused reduced morale of the participants in the initial months. This problem was subsequently responded to by incorporating the Participation and Benefit Sharing Agreements from the Forestry Sector Project. Some NGOs expressed dissatisfaction regarding the process and nature of NGO engagement in the project. Procedural delay in timely release of funds and frequent change of the Project Director hampered smooth implementation. The project staffs were recruited on a temporary basis, causing low staff morale and job insecurity. After completion of the project, some 400 'development budget' staffs lost their job.

(vi) The Forestry Sector Project: 1998-2004

Another attempt to engage community people in afforestation activities was undertaken under the Forestry Sector Project. The project was approved in 1997 and was initiated in 1998 with funding from ADB. The primary objectives were to: increase production of wood; institutionalize forest resource management through local community participation, strengthen FD's management capacity and promote policy reform. In fact, the primary objective was to involve the community in afforestation activities under a benefit sharing arrangements where by the participants get the total share of the pruned products after three years and a certain mutually agreed proportion of benefit at harvest end, which may be after 10-12 years.

The Project achieved insufficient progress on meeting plantation targets. Compared to 10300 ha of planned woodlots, agro-forestry, char land and pond plantation, and 3750 km strip and gully plantation, achievements up to September 2003 were 7776 ha woodlots, 2509 ha agro-forestry and 9990 km of strip plantations. The component of Participatory Natural Forest Rehabilitation and Management through local community also lagged behind the targets due to delay in government's approval of the project. The strip and institutional plantations showed good progress.

Initially, the participants were reluctant to take active part because of their skepticism about getting a share of the product at maturity. However, after getting benefits from the first rotation felling, participants gained confidence in FD and have become more eager to participate in the Project through Participatory Benefit Sharing Agreement (PBSA). So far under participatory approach about 35000 families, mostly poor have been integrated in the plantations as beneficiaries or participants.

(v) Sundarban Biodiversity Conservation Project: 1999-2006

The project was a rudimentary attempt towards collaborative management of natural resources involving the community. The project aimed at development of a sustainable management and biodiversity conservation for the Sundarban

Reserve Forest (SRF) resources, and reduction of poverty of 3.5 m people living in the impact zone. The basic objective aimed at following a participatory and flexible approach for social progress in the impact zone, which included: (i) assessment of baseline data on socioeconomic condition of target population in the impact zone; (ii) Mobilization and development of organizations of resource users, (iii) provision of alternative resource options to organized resource user groups in the form of micro-credit to promote employment and enterprise development to reduce their dependence on the Sundarbans for their livelihoods, and (iv) development of social infrastructure. The organizational and institutional structures, such as the Sundarban Management Unit (SMU), Sundarban Stewardship Commission and Stakeholder Advisory Council, were put in place, although the SMU remained understaffed. Plans for enrichment planting and sample plots were prepared and reviewed.

Since the late 2002, however, a number of ADB Review Missions expressed concerns over the project's 'lack of significant progress' especially in such areas as development of a participatory environment engaging the local people and other stakeholders, and effective financial management. Ultimately, in September 2003, the ADB suspended the loan for the project "on account of serious implementation delays and lack of proper financial management of the project".

Although the philosophical underpinning in all the above-mentioned forest management initiatives was to promote community participation through afforestation and its management and have a share of the benefit after a defined period; people's involvement in planning, decision-making, and implementation was superfluous and tangential. In many instances, afforestation was done by the FD to meet the target and then people were drawn from the community to form beneficiaries' groups for nurturing and protection. Perhaps, a more appropriate approach will be to pursue collaborative management, which will ensure support and collective efforts of all sections of the community who have stake in the forest.

Chapter - 4

APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Given the disquieting scenario what can be done to improve the situation? One critical aspect in planning for sustainable forest management is that many different groups and organizations having disparate and sometimes conflicting perceptions, values and objectives are linked with the forest or have stakes in it. The existence of such differentiated stakeholder segments with differing and conflicting interest; and gradual weakening of exclusive management and control by a “single entity”—the forest department—draws us into what we call pluralism in forest management.

Pluralism is an old concept, basically acknowledges and accommodates roles and responsibilities of a variety of groups and associations with different, autonomous and sometimes mutually conflicting interests, values and perspectives. Pluralism in sustainable forest management, in fact, refers to natural resource management situations where a number of autonomous and independent groups with fundamentally different values, perceptions, objectives demand a role in decision making about natural resource management and its outcomes¹². The situation demands accommodation of diverse opinions and management of conflicting objectives through certain participatory means. In fact, it calls for collaboration and institution of appropriate checks and balances so that such differences and conflicts do not end up in becoming destructive. As part of collaboration and conflict management one moves into what we call collaborative management.

4.1. WHAT IS COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT?

The two words clearly define the domain. Collaboration refers to collective efforts drawn upon the values of partnership, group efforts and teamwork. Gray (1985)¹³ defines collaboration as “pooling of appreciations and/or tangible concerns...by two or more stakeholders to solve a set of problems which neither can solve individually”. Selin and Chavez (1995) assert that “collaboration implies a joint decision-making approach to problem resolution where power is shared, and stakeholders take collective responsibility for their actions and subsequent outcomes from those actions.”¹⁴ Management can be defined as the generation and implementation of tangible improvements in a

¹² Jon Anderson, Jean Clement and Loy Van Crower, (1999), “Pluralism in Sustainable Forestry and Rural Development”, in Pluralism and Sustainable Forestry and Rural Development, FAO, Rome.

¹³ Gray, B. (1985), “Conditions Facilitating Inter-Organizational Collaborations”, *Human Relations*, 38, as quoted by Daniels, Stevens E and Gregg B. Walker, (1999), “Rethinking Public Participation in Natural Resource management: Concepts from Pluralism and Five Emerging Approaches”, in Pluralism and Sustainable Forestry and Rural Development, FAO, Rome

¹⁴ Ibid

conflict situation within a structure following certain rules and defined processes such as transparency, accountability, rights and entitlements, etc. Collaborative management of forest resources thus refers to what Borrini-Feyerbund defines as “a situation in which two or more social actors negotiate, define and guarantee among themselves a fair sharing of management functions, entitlements and responsibilities for a given territory, area or a set of natural resources”¹⁵. The key elements are: involvement of resource users/stakeholders in forest protection; sharing of management functions with explicit delineation of roles and responsibilities and clear cut definition of rights and entitlements. E Franklin Duke in his famous book , Resolving Public Conflict: Transforming Community and Governance has, perhaps, articulated collaborative management vision succinctly and consistent with a pluralistic approach as follows:

Beyond the practical need for agreement is the moral need to move beyond the type of fighting that which characterizes so much of public conflict. This moral need has led to the search not only for common ground but for higher ground: a ground for engagement of issues on such terms as fairness integrity, openness, compassion and responsibility. It is the search for forums and processes where individuals and organizations can be forceful advocates without being 'adversarial, where public officials can make effective decisions without being dictatorial, and where communities can come together rather than split apart when faced with tough problems and divisive conflicts.”

4.2. WHY A CO-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE?

Like any other developing country, the structure of the rural community in Bangladesh is differentiated by inequalities in wealth and power, and such differentiation gives rise to serious problems of conflict of interests. In recent year, society is also divided on the basis of political affiliation; inter-class conflicts are also determined by party interests and orientations. Poor people, dependent on these powerful elite in some form or other for their survival, also tend to align themselves with one group or the other.

Poor people can become a profound social force if they are organized and collectively work towards a common goal subscribing to a shared value. Yet, they may not prove to be a sufficient force to stop illegal operation like felling in the reserve forests or protected areas since people who are directly involved or linked with such operation are very powerful, socially and economically. To counter such forces there is a need to develop an institutional structure with broad-based support and participation of people from various strata of the society. Such institution will not only contribute towards generating positive escalation of social energy but will also lessen inter-class tension and overt

¹⁵ As quoted from Monoj Kanti Roy, (2004), Designing a Co-Management Model for Protected Areas in Bangladesh, Paper presented in seminar on Protected area management, University of Montana, USA.

hostility. It will, however, function effectively if it has fewer members and all members subscribe to a shared value, and function on the principles of collaboration, participation, transparency, and accountability.

4.3. STRATEGIES FOR FORMING CO-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES IN PROTECTED AREAS

Drawing people from various strata of the society having uneven status and power and differing interests on a common platform to subscribe to a common value and pursue similar goals and objectives is a daunting task. In the case of protection of forest resources in protected areas it is likely that some sections of the community dependent on the forest for their livelihoods, and some having deep interest in extracting resources to further enrich themselves will oppose any move towards collective protection and conservation efforts. However, appropriate strategies could be adopted to erode such opposition and promote collaboration and collective actions. Such strategies would include, among others, sustained motivational efforts towards changing the mind set of the community people, building alliances with various support agencies, neutralizing hostile forces through appropriate interventions, adopting strategies to provide alternative livelihoods for those whose livelihood is dependent on the forest, and promoting an enabling environment where community people regardless to their social position can resolve their mutual conflicts, collaborate sustainably, participate democratically following principles of partnership, accountability and transparency.

One of the important strategies to bind people together and bring them on common platform is to subscribe to a common value is to harp on the pride they hold in common and the dream they so dearly cherish. Some areas have unique symbol/s of pride that people of those areas are proud of and would very much like to preserve, and every person wants to have better health and higher longevity and a prosperous future for their children. The strategy to promote collaboration among community people will be to harp on the negative impacts of forest depletion on preservation of their pride symbols, i.e., well acclaimed natural beauty and wild life, and on the future health and wellbeing of their children. An effort has been made in the following section to define the strategies to facilitate and promote collaborative management of the five project sites.

4.4. OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES

- ❖ Poor people constitute an overwhelming majority of the population in all the five protected areas; a large section of these poor people are dependent on the forest for their livelihoods. One key intervention will be to mobilize and organize these people in groups, enhance their social consciousness through persistent awareness building and motivational campaigns using innovative methodologies and tools, and develop their larger structures at the landscape level through federating the groups.

- ❖ Enhance the technical, social and managerial competencies of the organized poor through need-based training so that they can undertake alternative income generating activities (IGAs) that are within their means and management capabilities. Provide access to financial resources as well as linking them with other financial institutions (BRAC, ASA, Grameen Bank, national banks) to help them undertake alternative IGA.
- ❖ One problem, particularly unique to Srimongal, is resource extraction by unemployed workers of tea gardens, which boarder the protected areas. An appropriate strategy will be to seek permission from Planters' Association to work with the garden employees, organize the unemployed poor and involve them in alternative IGAs.
- ❖ As noted earlier, many community people have multiple cases against them, filed by the Forest Department. Such action by the FD has impacted negatively and has forced the victims to extract forest resources to meet case expenses. They will, for their survival, continue their illegal operation as long as the cases last. An effort could be made to work with the FD to withdraw the cases and discontinue harassments to gain community confidence and support.
- ❖ To build alliance with key stakeholders i.e., political elite, mahalders, timber traders, sawmill owners, brickfield owners, furniture shop owners, BDR, police, etc.; develop their awareness through close interactions and structured sessions, and change their mind set through continuous motivation and concurrent communication campaigns.
- ❖ Catalyze various sections of the community (organized poor and other stakeholders) to form Co-management Councils (Co-MgtCouncil) and co-management committees (Co-MgtCommittee) at the landscape level, help the Committees to prepare plans, and motivate them to undertake social actions against violators.
- ❖ Form a Wild Life Advisory Committee either at the forest department or at the divisional level to develop a link between the Co-management Committees and the high level Wild Life Advisory Board set up by the government at the Ministry of Environment and Forest headed by the Minister.
- ❖ Link the Co-Management Committees to the existing government Upazila and District Environment and Forest Development Committees and seek assistance as and when required.

Apart from the above strategies partner NGOs will work closely with FD officials, involve them in all the processes and also motivate them as and when opportunities arise. Such motivational efforts may not make rapid impact on behavioral change of local forest department staffs, however, well informed,

conscious, and organized poor people at the grassroots with the support of the Co-Management Committees could put pressure on forest department staff to bring an end to illegal operation.

4.5. STRUCTURES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE CO-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

A two-tier institutional structure for sustainable forest management in protected areas based on the principles of co-management has been proposed here:

1. **Protected Area Conservation Council:** It is the first tier of the structure, and would take area specific name such as, Lawachara National Park Conservation Council, Satchuri National Park Conservation Council, Tekhnaf Game Reserve Conservation Council, etc.
2. **Protected Area Conservation Co-Management Committee:** This is the second tier of the structure and would also take area specific name such as, Lawachara National Park Co-Management Committee, Tekhnaf Game Reserve Co-Management Committee, Satchuri National Park Co-Management Committee, etc.

The Council and the Committees will be formed within a defined landscape. For all practical purposes and based on objective realities the landscape, for the Northern Sites, has been delineated as an area covering one kilometer around the protected areas and for the southern sites the delineated area is two kilometers. If the spatial coverage of the landscape is large, it will be divided into smaller segments, if possible, aligning with the Union Parisad (UP) boundaries. It is expected that such lining up with the UP boundaries will help in avoiding conflicts of authority and consequent indifference and lack of cooperation that could emerge if UP representatives from two different Union Parisads were together in the same committee.

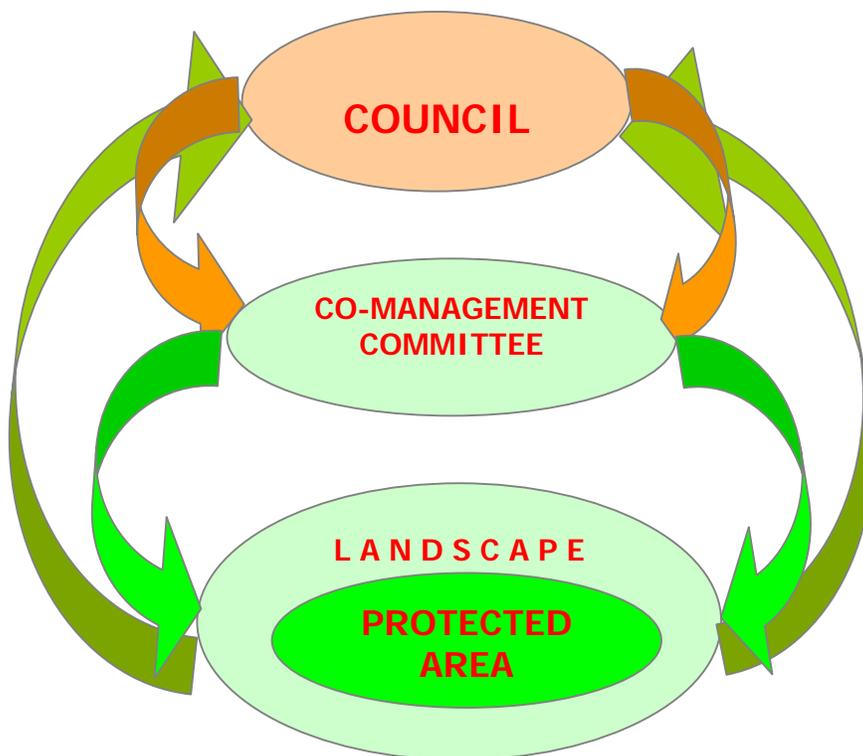
Protected Area Conservation Council will have a broad-based structure, drawing people from different strata of the community from the total landscape. The total number of members will not exceed 50 (see the composition below). The members shall meet twice a year, once after six months and another at year end in the Annual General Meeting. The DFO or ACF will serve as the Chairperson of the Council.

Protected Area Conservation Co-Management Committee will consist of 20 members, (ideal number would be 15), elected by the Council following a structured guideline. The ACF will serve as the Chairperson to the Committee. The guideline will not only indicate how many people could be elected from each of the representative group noted above but will also provide election procedures and norms and the tasks to be performed by the committee. The committee will have a Chair Person, Vice-Chairperson, and a Secretary. Half of the members of the committee will retire voluntarily every year and new

members will be elected in the vacant posts. A member can not be elected in two consecutive years; attention shall be paid on ensuring that all members get elected eventually.

The Co-Management Committee will be primarily responsible for overall management of the protected area. If the landscape of the protected area is too big, the Co-management Committee will segment the landscape into multiple sectors and form an informal action committee in each sector to undertake actions aimed at protecting the forest and conserving bio-diversity. The Committee will prepare an action plan for protecting the forest specifying roles and responsibilities of specific people selected for the purpose. Some reward system could also be introduced for sectors achieving notable success at the end of a specific time frame. Such reward system could generate a sense of competition among the sectors, which in turn, could bear positive impact on protection of the forest and preservation of bio-diversity.

LINK BETWEEN PROTECTED AREA CONSERVATION COUNCIL AND PROTECTED AREA CONSERVATION CO-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



4.6. COMPOSITION OF PROTECTED AREA CONSERVATION COUNCIL

The composition of the Protected Area conservation council will be as follows:

- DFO/Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACF)
- 9 Representatives from NGO Organized Federations/Groups
- 12 Representatives from the Local Government
- 7 Representatives from Local Elite: Teachers, Doctors, Social Activists, Journalist, Religious Leaders, others.
- 5 Representatives from Resource Owning Group: Sawmill Owners, Brickfield Owners, Timber Traders, Furniture Shop Owners, Large Land owners, Representatives from Bazaar Committees, Representative from Tea gardens.
- 2 Representatives from the Forest Department: Range Officer/Beat Officer
- 2 Representatives from Law Enforcing Authorities: BDR, Police, Ansar/VDP
- 5 representatives from NGOs/CBOs
- 3 Representatives from Ethnic Communities
- 5 Representatives from Other Government Departments: Dept of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Ministry of Health and Family Planning (MOHFP), Department of Fisheries, Department of Land.

Total Number of members: 50

4.7. COMPOSITION OF THE PROTECTED AREA CO-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- ACF/Range Officer-Convener
- 3 Representatives from Forest Villages: Village Headman/Minister
- 2 Representatives from NGO-Organized Federations/Groups
- 2 Representatives from the Local Government
- 2 Representatives from NGOs
- 1 Representative from CBOs
- 3 Representatives from Local Elite
- 2 Representatives from Resource Owning Group
- 1 Representatives from Law-Enforcing Authorities
- 2 Representatives from the Government Department

Total Number of Members: Maximum 19, Ideal 15

4.8. SOME POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE PROPOSED TWO-TIER STRUCTURE

- ❖ The council presents a broad platform allowing representation of people from all sections of the community who, most often than not, are in conflict relationship. Drawing them on such a platform will facilitate exchange and cross fertilization of ideas, reduce tension, promote cooperation and facilitate release of social energy.
- ❖ The process will help in promoting mutual tolerance and collaborative participation, which will facilitate in strengthening the process of democratization at the grassroots.
- ❖ Since the process will allow representation of every Council member in the Co-Management committee at any point in time through voluntary retirement, participants in the council are likely to take interest and participate in collective actions.
- ❖ The council includes representatives of Union Parisad who are elected members and, by virtue of their position, holds power in the community. It also includes representatives of other political parties and local elite who command allegiance and support of large sections of community people.
- ❖ Participation of Resource-Owning Class like the Sawmill Owners, Brickfield Owners, Timber Traders, Furniture Shop Owners, Large Land owners are responsible for forest destruction. The structure will provide an opportunity to interact closely, help in changing their mindset, and reduce their involvement in illegal felling.
- ❖ Participation of representatives from BDR and Police will help neutralizing many forces that are likely to be difficult to deal with initially.

4.9. BROAD FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council will perform the following tasks apart from addressing others that may need its attention:

- ❖ Review in the half yearly meeting the progress made on the programme of action prepared by the Co-management Committee, give feedback and necessary advice, if required.
- ❖ Assist meaningfully, both individually and collectively, in implementation of the six-month programme plan.
- ❖ Undertake awareness building and motivational campaigns, both individually and collectively, within the project sites to make people aware of the negative consequences of forest depletion, and assist the

Co-Management Committee in its efforts towards building resistance against forces involved in destruction of forest resources and bio-diversity.

- ❖ Assist the Co-Management Committee to take appropriate actions to prevent illegal encroachment of forest land.
- ❖ Identify people who are involved in regular extraction of forest resources, motivate them and generate public opinion against such action to bring about their behavioral change. Identify local resources, and promote alternative livelihood options for them to reduce their dependence on forest.
- ❖ Assist the Co-Management Committee in resolving local conflicts, if needed, in advocacy campaign and networking with other agencies and groups.
- ❖ Work wholeheartedly and collectively to make the area safe and attractive to national and international tourists.
- ❖ Assist in creating public opinion at all levels of the society to ensure that the Nishorgo Support Project achieves its desired objectives.
- ❖ Energize, bind people on a common slogan:
“AI BON O PRANI AMADER GORBO, AMRAI EKE RAKKHA KORBO”--“THESE FORESTS AND ANIMALS ARE OUR PRIDE, ONLY WE SHALL PROTECT THOSE”.

4.10. BROAD FUNCTIONS OF THE CO-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Co-Management Committee will perform the following tasks apart from addressing others that may need its attention:

- ❖ The Co-Management Committee shall prepare a six-monthly plan of action for forest protection and bio-diversity conservation (as per management plan prescription) with the support of the facilitating NGO, and meet bi-monthly to review the status of the planned activities--achievements made, problems encountered, and suggest remedial actions.
- ❖ Undertake awareness building and motivational campaigns within the project sites using different communication techniques to make people aware of the negative consequences of forest depletion and involve schools children, scouts, girls guides to undertake specific actions at the project sites.

- ❖ Take appropriate actions to prevent illegal encroachment of forest land and take stern social actions against the encroachers jointly with the Forest Department. If needed, approach the law enforcing authorities to prevent such encroachment by the encroachers.
- ❖ Divide the forest into sectors, form informal action groups and assign a block to each group with specific tasks aimed at protecting the forest and conserving the bio-diversity, assist and take appropriate actions to help them perform their tasks effectively.
- ❖ Develop with the help of the facilitating partner NGO monitoring tools and indicators of forest resource and bio-diversity protection and conservation, and monitor periodically with the help of community people to see the achievements made in each block. This will generate a sense of ownership and accountability and will also develop a positive competition among the groups, which could have positive impact in the long run.
- ❖ Motivate brickfield owners and other resource user groups not to assist in illegal extraction of forest resources and generate strong public opinion against such actions so that they conform to public demand.
- ❖ Undertake actions to allow natural regeneration of the forest, and also undertake plantation activities, if required, as per the advice and technical support of the forest department.
- ❖ Undertake afforestation activities involving community people, organized poor in particular, along the roadsides, railway tracts, khash land, and other degraded areas with the advice and support of the forest department following the benefit sharing principles of social forestry.
- ❖ Identify and assign families, if possible, from amongst organized group members, to raise nurseries as part of income generating activities. Also identify other alternative resources that could be accessed and used for generating income and employment for the poor people of the community.
- ❖ Work wholeheartedly and collectively to make the area safe and attractive to national and international tourists and work with the FD to ensure proper upkeep of the areas.
- ❖ Assist the facilitating NGO in having access to local resources for poor people, and also assist in ensuring timely repayment of the loan money borrowed by project beneficiaries.
- ❖ Develop financial management skills within the structure having a trained accounts person. Open a bank account to deposit a portion of income from the park and other income that the committee can

generate, and prepare a guideline for use of the accumulated funds for social development of community people, poor in particular. Maintain proper books of accounts, have audit done regularly and submit statement of accounts to the Council at the Annual General Meeting. It is expected that the system will prepare the committee to operate and manage funds during the post-phase out period.

- ❖ Resolve local issues and conflicts that may arise from time to time. Also provide appropriate information and technologies to community people.
- ❖ Maintain close linkage with other government departments that have presence at the community level and interact closely with the community people.
- ❖ Energize, bind people on a common slogan:
"AI BON O PRANI AMADER GORBO, AMRAI EKE RAKKHA `KORBO"--"THESE FORESTS AND ANIMALS ARE OUR PRIDE, ONLY WE SHALL PROTECT THOSE".

The Ministry of Environment and Forest has already set up a **Wild Life Advisory Board** with the Minister as the Convener and the Conservator of Wild Life as Member Secretary (see the list of members in Annex-2). The Board was constituted as per the provision of the Wild Life (Amendment) Preservation Act of 1973 and mandated to, among others; deal with all policy matters related to wild life protection and conservation. Given the necessity of maintaining a link with this Board, formation of a Wild Life Advisory Committee has been proposed here either at the Divisional level with the Conservator of Wild Life as the Convener and DFO as the Member Secretary, or at the Forest Department with the Chief Conservator of Forest (CCF) as the Convener, and Conservator of Forest--Wild Life as Member Secretary. In the former proposition one committee will have to be formed in each Division, and in the later, one committee at the Forest Department. The tasks of this particular committee will be to provide technical knowledge and support to the Co-Management Committee, apprise the Board of the actual programmatic interventions taken at the field level to promote and conserve wild life, progress made, problems encountered, and specific policy support required to address those problems.

4.11. COMPOSITION OF THE PROPOSED WILD LIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- CCF/CF-Wild Life – Convener
- DFO-Wild life, Chittagong
- DFO-Wild life, Khulna
- DFO-Chittagong South
- DFO-Sylhet

- Professor of Zoology, Dhaka University/Chittagong University/Sylhet University/Rajshahi University/Jahangirnagar University
- Representative from Paribesh Forum
- Representatives from NGOs—BCAS/Dharitri/BELA/...
- Representatives from Department of Fisheries and Livestock
- Representatives from Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh

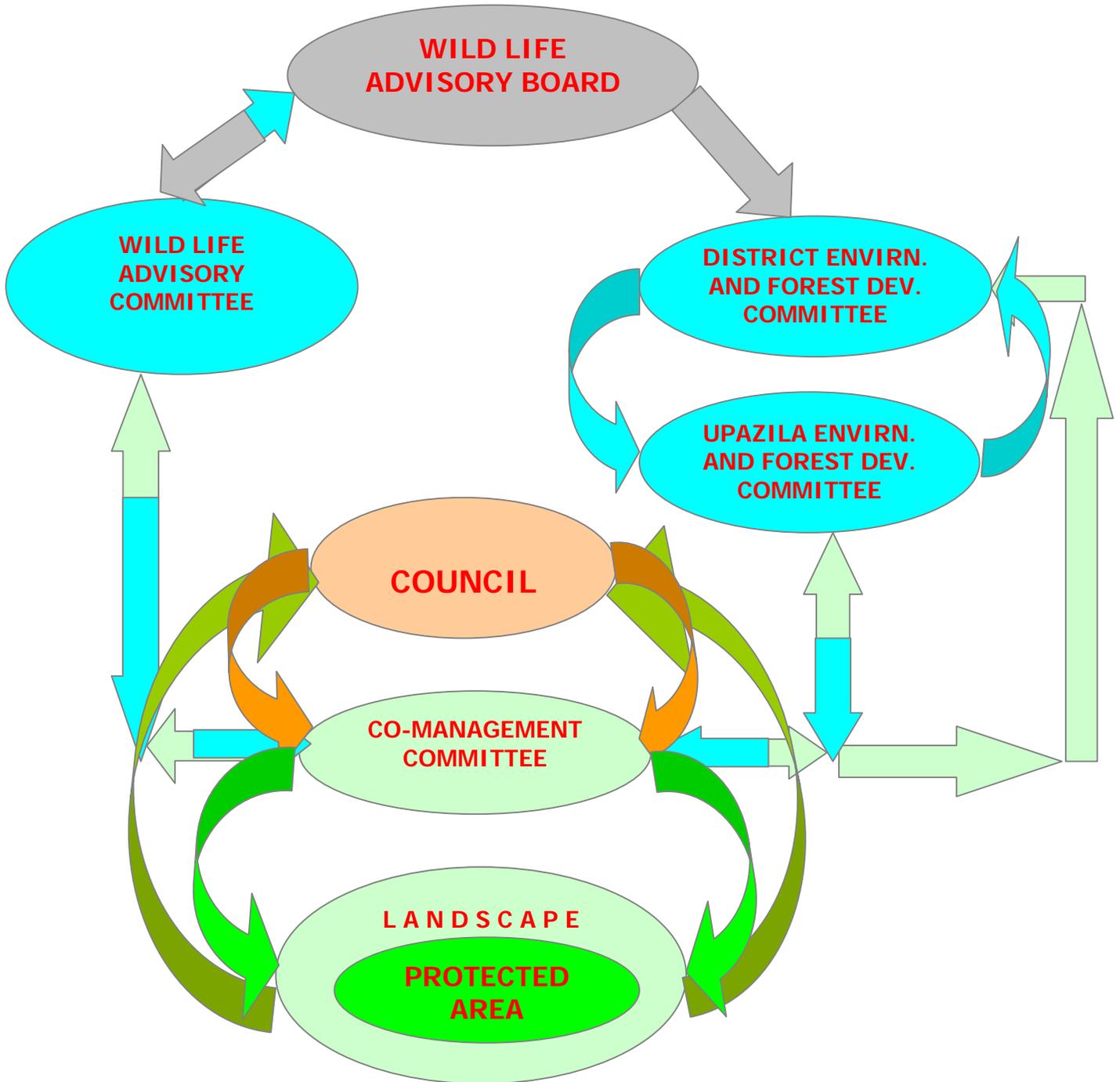
The primary task of this committee will be to provide technical knowledge and advice related to promotion of wild life protection and conservation. Provide advice on undertaking programmatic interventions that would create enabling environment for protection and regeneration of the Wild life.

Apart from the Advisory Board, the government has also set up two other committees to facilitate and promote environment and forest development in the country. Two committees are: 23-member **District Environment and Forest Development Committee** and 20-member **Upazila Environment and Forest Development Committee**. The compositions of the two committees are different; however, the assigned tasks are same (see the composition of the two committees in Annex-3 and 4).

The Co-Management Committee will maintain close links with these committees and seek assistance as and when required. The operational linkages between different committees are presented below in Figure - 2.

Figure - 2

OPERATIONAL LINKAGES BETWEEN DIFFERENT COMMITTEES



ANNEXES

LIST OF PROTECTED AREAS

SI. No.	NATIONAL PARKS	FOREST TYPE	AREA (HA)	ESTABLISHMENT YEAR
1	Bhawal National Park	Sal forest	5022	1974/1982
2	Modhupur National Park	Sal Forest	8436	1962/1982
3	Ramsagar National Park	Sal Forest	27.75	2001
4	Himchari National Park	Hill Forest	1729	1980
5	Lawachara National Park	Hill Forest	1250	1996
6	Kapatai National Park	Hill Forest	5464	1999
7	Nijhum Deep National Park	Coastal Mangrove	16352.23	2001
8	Medha Kachapia National Park	Hill Forest	195.92	2004
9	Satchari (Proposed) National Park	Hill Forest	240	
	WILD LIFE SANTUARIES			
10	Rema-Kalenga Wild Life Sanctuary	Hill Forest	1795.54	1996
11	Char Kukri-Mukri Wild Life Sanctuary	Coastal Mangrove	40	1981
12	Sundarban East Wild Life Sanctuary	Natural Mangrove	31226.94	1960/1996
13	Sundarban West Wild Life Sanctuary	Natural Mangrove	71502.13	1996
14	Sundarban South Wild Life Sanctuary	Natural Mangrove	36970.45	1996
15	Pablakhali Wild Life Sanctuary	Hill Forest	42087	1962/83
16	Chunuti Wild Life Sanctuary	Hill Forest	7761	1986
	GAME RESERVE			
17	Tekhna Game Reserve	Hill Forest	11615	1983
	ECO-PARK			
18	Bashkhali Eco-Park		n/a	2003
19	Madhupkunda Eco-Park		125	2001
20	Sitakundu Eco-Park & Botanical Garden		1000	2000
21	Dulhazara Safari Park		600	1999
22	Mirpur Botanical Garden		84	1961

COMPOSITION OF THE WILD LIFE ADVISORY BOARD

- Minister, Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF)—Convener
- Deputy Minister, MOEF
- Members of Parliament (MP),Thakurgoan-1/Sherpur-2/Satkhira-3/Cox's Bazar-4/Sunamgonj-5/Bhola-4
- Secretary, MOEF
- Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
- Secretary, Ministry of Land
- Director Generals of Environment/Bangladesh Television/Radio/BDR
- Professors of Zoology-Dhaka University/Jahangir Nagar University/Rajshahi University/Khulna University/Chittagong University/Sylhet University/Mymensing Agricultural University
- Prof. Kazi Zakir Hossain, Dhaka University
- Joint Secretary, MOEF
- Joint Secretary, Ministry of Land
- Chief Conservator of Forest (CCF)
- DG, Directorate of Livestock
- President, Poribesh Forum
- Country Representative, IUCN
- Chief Executives from NGOs—Peace, BCAS, Dharitri
- Chairman, Forum of Environmental Journalists in Bangladesh
- Conservator of Wild Life—Member Secretary

COMPOSITION OF THE UPAZILA ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Local Member of Parliament (MP)	Advisor
1. Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO)	Chairperson
2. Assistant Commissioner-Land	Member
3. Upazila Agricultural Officer	Member
4. Upazila Engineer, LGED	Member
5. Sub-Divisional Engineer: Roads & Highways	Member
6. Sub-Divisional Engineer: Water Development Board	Member
7. Sub-Divisional Engineer: Bangladesh Railway	Member
8. Upazila Education Officer	Member
9. Project Officer: Secondary Education	Member
10. Upazila Rural Development Officer	Member
11. Assistant Director : Youth Development	Member
12. Officer In-charge of local Police Station	Member
13. Upazila Ansar and VDP officer	Member
14. Representative of NGOs	Member
15. Chairperson of all Union Parisads	Member
16. Principal/Headmaster of a local college or High School	Member
17. Representative of the press club	Member
18. Representative from scout and girls guide	Member
19. Two representatives from local elite	Member
20. Assistant Conservator of Forest/Range Officer	Member

COMPOSITION OF DISTRICT ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minister in-Charge of the District	Advisor
1. Deputy Commissioner	Chairperson
2. Superintendent of Police (SP)	Member
3. Chief Executive Officer-Zilla Parisad	Member
4. Additional Deputy Commissioner-Revenue	Member
5. Deputy Director-Agriculture Extension Department	Member
6. Executive Engineer- Roads and Highways	Member
7. Executive Engineer-Water Development Board	Member
8. Concerned Upazila Nirbahi Officers	Member
9. Divisional Engineer—Bangladesh Railway	Member
10. Executive Engineer-LGED	Member
11. District Education Officer	Member
12. District Primary Education Officer	Member
13. Assistant Director- Youth Development Board	Member
14. Assistant Director-BRDB	Member
15. District Adjutant-Ansar/VDP	Member
16. Principles of colleges/Head Masters of High schools	Member
17. Representative from Zoology Department of local university/College	Member
18. NGO Representatives	Member
19. Representative from Chamber of Commerce	Member
20. Representative from Press Club	Member
21. Representatives from Bangladesh Scouts/Girls Guide	Member
22. Representatives from Local Elite (2)	Member
23. Divisional Forest Officer (DFO)/ACF	Member

THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE TWO COMMITTEES ARE AS FOLLOWS

- ❖ Make tree plantation movement popular and arrange tree fare.
- ❖ Materialize government's decision to stop use of polyethylene.
- ❖ Take programme action to conserve wild animals and implement government's ban against shooting of birds, including migrating birds.
- ❖ Stop burning timber/wood in brickfields, and implement government's order on brick-burning (Control) law, 1981 and Brick-burning (License) ordinance, 1989.
- ❖ Undertake appropriate programmes to protect and conserve Bio-diversity.
- ❖ Undertake promotional activities and provide support to local nurseries to facilitate expansion of medicinal plants, timber and fruit trees.
- ❖ Take actions against cutting hills and collecting sand.
- ❖ Take appropriate actions to control vehicles polluting environment through emission of black smote and loud honking.
- ❖ Take appropriate actions to protect endangered animal species.
- ❖ Stop any activities creating imbalance in the land and water eco-system.
- ❖ To make people aware of programmes/projects focused on afforestation and Environment development and undertake coordination among them.
- ❖ Identify sites for social forestry and provide guidelines for selection of beneficiaries.
- ❖ Undertake other responsibilities given from time to time.

The committees do not have provision for the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR). PRA and RRAs have indicated that BDR has played a positive role in reducing incidences of illegal felling and apprehending violators when brought to their notice. In recent intensive interviews with BDR officials, it was indicated by the commanders in all the sites that necessary assistance will be extended as and when required. Increased patrol by the BDR team could deter the violators significantly and also neutralize hostile forces at least at the initial stages when community mobilization is taking place. Perhaps, the TNOs and DCs could be motivated to include members from BDR.