

National Forest Policy, 1994

The Bangladesh Government formulated the National Forest Policy for the first time on July 8, 1979 after the independence of the country. In the meantime, initiative have been taken to orient the policies to meet demand of the time, particularly in consideration of the task of tackling the natural and undesired hindrances arising out of abnormal and quick depletion of forestry resources owing to numerous socio-economic factors. As apart of this attempt the Government has undertaken the formulation of National Forestry Master Plan for a period of 20 years, the draft of which has recently been prepared.

In the above mentioned draft Forestry Master Plan Proposals / suggestions have been put forth to amend the national forestry policy, 1979 after detailed examination and evaluation of it in the light of the demand of the time and overall prevailing conditions in the forest sector.

After amendment of Forestry Policy, 1979 in the light of the above mentioned proposals and suggestions National Forestry Policy 1994 has been formulated.

In the formulation of the Forestry Policy, 1994 the following issue have been brought into special consideration;

- a. Peoples welfare principles inscribed in the constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh;
- b. Long term and specific roles of the forest sector in the overall socio-economic development of the country including the environment.
- c. National Policies for the development of agriculture, cottage industries and of the sectors;
- d. Decisions and recommendations taken in different international conferences and conventions (wherein Bangladesh has taken part or identified with the decisions/ recommendations) particularly the envisaged programs on afforestation cited in the Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit in Brazil in 1992.

For the preservation of climate and natural condition of the country and recognition of the long-term and very important role of forest sector to ensure balanced economic development,

Realizing the need of massive and planned tree plantation, maintenance and preservation in the coastal areas including the embankments on rivers and canals to protect forests, soil and related natural resources, to reduce the velocity and intensity of cyclone, tornado and tidal bore so that air, water and others get less polluted and ecological balance remain undisturbed.

Apart from the production of forest, wood and fuel materials, oil seeds, spices, fiber, rubber, medicine ingredients, and other goods for the economic development of the country.

in the interest of total development and ecological balance of the country facilitating afforestation, tree plantation, nursery establishment, development, maintenance and preservation through involving, encouraging and extending cooperation to the people of different sections of the society, the government has expressed desire to adopt following things as apart of National Forest Policy, 1994 upon the amendment of the Forest policy, 1979.

- a. Pre-condition for the forestry development,
- b. Objective of the national forest policy,
- c. Statement of the national forest policy,

The main feature of the Forest Policy, 1994 in terms of the above mentioned captions will be the following :

Preconditions for the development of Forestry sector

1. The Forestry sector provides several commodities and services which are essential for the fulfillment of the basic needs of the people. Basic needs fulfillment will be ensured by providing timber for the construction of houses and boats, firewood for cooking, fodder for animal, medicinal herbs for health care and services for conservation of the environment and bio-diversity.
2. Benefits of forestry sector development will be equitably distributed among the people, especially whose livelihood depends on trees and forests.
3. Scope for peoples participation in afforestation programs required for the development of forestry sector will be created and in the planning and decision making process, the opinions and suggestions of the planters, users of the forest and whose livelihood depends on forestry resources and forest land will be incorporated.
4. Long term political commitment of the government will be continued in the development of the forestry sector since afforestation is a long term program.
5. Attempts will be made to ensure the effective use and the conservation of the bio-ecology and bio-diversity by installing sound management of forestry resources. This will be done so as to ensure their contribution in the rural and national development.

Objectives of the National Forestry Policy

1. To meet the basic needs of the present and future generations and also to ensure greater contribution of the forestry sector in the economic development, about 20% of the total area of the country will be afforested by taking up various afforestation programs. Side by side fallow lands, lands not useful for the purposes of the agriculture, hinter lands and in other possible areas, Government sponsored afforestation programs will be implemented. Moreover, appropriate measures will be taken to encourage afforestation on private land and technical support and services regarding the production of forest crops has to be ensured.
2. By creating employment opportunities, strengthening the rural and national economy, the scope of poverty alleviation and trees and forest based rural development sectors will be extended and consolidated,
3. Bio-diversity of the existing degraded forests will be enriched by the conserving of remaining natural habitat of the birds and animals,
4. Agricultural sector will be strengthened by expanding assistance to the sectors related with forest development, especially by conserving the land and water resources,
5. National responsibilities and commitments will be fulfilled by implementing by various international efforts and government ratified agreements relating to global warming, desertification and control of trade and commerce of wild birds and animals,
6. Though the participation of the local people, illegal occupation of the forest lands, illegal tree felling and hunting of the wild animals will be prevented.
7. Effective use and utilization of the forest goods at various stages of processing will encouraged, and
8. Implementation of the forestation programs –on both public and private lands will be provided with encouragement and assistance.

Statement of the National Forestry Policy

1. Attempts will be made to bring about 20% of the country's land under the afforestation programs of the government and private sector by year 2015 by accelerating the pace of the program through the coordinated efforts of the government and NGOs and active participation of the people in order to achieve self reliance in forest products and maintenance of ecological balance.
2. Because of limited amount of forest land, effective measures will be taken for afforestation in rural areas, in the newly accreted char in the coastal areas and in the denuded unclassed State Forest areas of CHT and northern zone of the country including the Barind tract.
3. Private initiatives will be encouraged to implement programs of tree plantation and afforestation on fallow and hinter land, the bank of the pond and homestead land which are under private ownership. Technical and other support services will be extended for introducing agro-forestry on privately owned fallow and hinter land to keep intact the production of grass and herb which is grown on government and privately owned forests fallow lands.
4. Tree plantation on the courtyards of rural organization such as Union Prishad, school, eidgah, mosque – moktob, temple, club, orphanage home, madrassa etc.

and other fallow lands around can be initiated. The government will encourage this type of initiative and extend technical and other supports.

5. Massive afforestation on either side of land surrounding road, rail, dam and khas tank through the partnership of the local people and the NGOs will be commenced. Side by side, rubber plantation will be encouraged in all suitable areas of the country including Chittagong Hill Tracts, Sylhet and Modhupur.
6. Special afforestation programs will be taken in every city of the country under the auspices of the government in order to prevent pollution of environment in the density populated area. Municipal and town and other relevant authorities will take concerted efforts in implementing this program. Attempts will also be taken of residential areas.
7. Massive afforestation programs in the denuded hilly areas of Unclassed State Forests areas of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban will be taken under the auspices of the government and private initiatives. The participation and rehabilitation of the local Jhum cultivators will be ensured while implementing this program. This will be done under the auspices of the Ministry of land in cooperation with the local government by keeping the land ownership rights intact.
8. The priority protection areas are the habitats which encompass representative samples of flora and fauna in the core area of National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Game Reserves. Attempt will be made to increase the amount of this protected area by 10 per cent of the reserved forest land by the year 2015.
9. Multiple use of forest, water and fish of Sundarbans through sustained management will be ensured keeping the bio-environment of the area intact.
10. All state owned forests of natural origin and plantations of the Hills and Sal forest earmarked for conserving soil and water resources, and maintaining the bio-diversity. Keeping in view the ecology, the management of forest lands will be brought under profit-oriented business.
11. Inaccessible areas such as slopes of the hills, fragile, watershed, swamp etc. will be identified and kept as protected forests.
12. The areas under the reserved forest which have been denuded or encroached, will be identified. Afforestation in these lands will be done through people's participation. In this regard, the use of agro-forestry will be encouraged. NGOs will have opportunities to participate in this program. Side by side, the lands in Chittagong and Sylhet which were allocated to different persons and institutions for the developing the tea gardens still remain unutilized and uncultivated will be identified and used for tree plantation and afforestation.
13. Initiatives will be taken to reduce wastage by using modern and appropriate technology at all stages of extraction and processing forest products.
14. Emphasis will be imparted on modernization of forest-based industries to ensure effective utilization of the forest raw materials.
15. Steps will be taken to bring state owned forest-based industries to competitive and profit-oriented management system under the free market economy.
16. Forest resource based labor intensive small and cottage industries will be encouraged in the rural areas.

17. Rules and procedures regarding transportation of forest produces in the country will be simplified and made up-to-date.
18. Export of log will remain banned given the scarcity of wood in the country. But processed forest products can be exported. Import policy on wood and wood – based products will be liberalized, but import tariffs, for the wood products which are abundant in the country, will be levied appropriately.
19. Because of the scarcity of forest land, state-owned reserved forest cannot be used for non-forestry purposes without the permission of the Head of the Government.
20. A large number of tribal people live around a few forest zones. Since the ownership of land under their disposal is not determined, they grab the forest land at will. They will be imparted ownership of certain amount of land through the forest settlement process. The rest of the forest land will be brought under permanent protection.
21. Funds from different donors including International Aid Organizations will be used to promote private forestry Organizations and tree farming, and for such programs like training, technical and financial supports will be imparted at an increasing rate.
22. Women will be encouraged to participate in homestead and farm forestry, and participatory afforestation programs.
23. Ecotourism, related to forest and wildlife, is recognized as forestry related activity, which will be promoted taking into consideration the carrying capacity of nature.
24. There are will be a massive campaign through the government and non-government medias for raising consciousness among the people regarding afforestation and conservation, and use of forest resources.
25. Encouragement will be extended to grow fruit trees for producing; more fruits along with be production of timber, fuelwood and non-wood forest products under the afforestation program.
26. Initiatives will be taken to reduce wastage by increasing efficiency and modernizing the technology for extracting forest resources.
27. Forest department will be strengthened in order to achieve the goal and objectives of National Forestry Policy. A new department called “Department of Social Forestry” will be established.
28. The implementation of National Forestry Policy will be supported by strengthening educational training and research organizations. This will contribute to forestry sector development.
29. Laws, rules and regulations relating to the forestry sector will be amended and if necessary, new laws and rules will be promulgated in consonance with goals and objectives of National Forestry Policy.

