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## Popular Participation in Environmental Governance in Non-Western Societies: Procedure and Application

A. K. M. Mahmudul Haque

### Introduction

Environment basically refers to the things and beings that make our surroundings and affect our ability to live on earth. Popular participation means general participation by the people in the society. In the actual sense of the term, mass participation in the environmental governance process is not welcome in the non-western societies in consequence of which non-western societies have become contaminated and polluted by the second-hand participants.<sup>1</sup> In most countries, the demand for environmental conservation percolates upward, from ordinary people to decision-makers. The people form environmental concern groups like Earth System Governance Project, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Nature Organization (WNO), Centre for

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<sup>1</sup> Those who are ill-motivated over the world are called second-hand participants.

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Science and Environment (CSE), even the Green Party, and put the environment in the headlines and make it impossible for the State or major opinion-makers to ignore or forget the Earth.

In America, in the 1960s, it was the “highway revolts” (Mohl 2004) against building of new highways that helped to formulate the Environmental Protection Act 1970, creating the Environmental Protection Administration. It was ordinary people, sharing information, holding meetings and demonstrations, lobbying politicians and so on whose pressure produced green stickers,<sup>2</sup> saved the whales<sup>3</sup> and the baby fur seals,<sup>4</sup> got genetically modified food labeling requirements or bans (Bello 2013). International environmental NGO Greenpeace almost started a war between France and New Zealand over nuclear fallout from bomb tests in the Pacific Ocean in 1985 (Wilshire 2015).

However, in Bangladesh, environmental protection has been a “top-down” affair (Islam 2000). Donor countries pushed Bangladesh to act and the Government acted, mainly to keep the donations coming. Some say that the real purpose was merely to create an image of environmental protection and not to do anything for the environment. There was no groundswell of support or public demand. Environmental policy is not an issue in Bangladeshi elections, except sometimes at the local level. The majority of the people are apathetic, uninformed or even hostile to environmental protection, especially when it interferes with popular infrastructure construction (Mahmudul Haque 2015).

This chapter will first explore why Bangladeshis have less interest in protecting the environment than Europeans, Americans and Australians. Then the chapter will consider how an effective environmental protection policy can be constructed without such popular support as exists in other countries, in ways more consistent with Asian culture.

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<sup>2</sup> See *e.g.* International Standards Organisation, ISO 14001 and ISO 14000 series.

<sup>3</sup> International Whaling Commission Schedule, para (e) (1982).

<sup>4</sup> At least from having their fur sold in the European Union, [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2015/1850](#).

## Concept of Environmental Governance

The environment is what we have around us. The environment is composed of the natural, the artificial and the supernatural. The environment is a system. People interacting with the environment constitute a social system. A social system must be governed purposively or it will govern itself, without purpose and without regard to its effects on other systems in society. A social system may, by luck, be effective for those involved in it and not produce social problems, without governance. However, experience shows that the opposite is the more likely result. Everything we know about the environment today, especially in Bangladesh, shows that we have not been that lucky. Environmental governance is the purposeful government of the environment, for its own protection and for the protection of social systems with which the environment interacts.

The words “environmental governance” have become poignant, pithy and terse. The term has an intuitive appeal and most people think that they understand it when they hear it. Yet, when they begin to discuss it, most people arrive at the conclusion that environmental governance is a difficult concept which they barely understand at all. Environmental governance is a concept that coexists, and interacts, with the core concept of governance. If political science is the theory of governance, environmental governance is “applied governance”. So the relationship of environmental governance and governance in general is complex and central to both issues. Without governance, environmental governance has no content. Without environmental governance, governance, along with the governed, will eventually cease to exist, along with the rest of the world.

## Governance

Governance generally involves political, economic, theocratic and social issues: no less does environmental governance. The concept of “environmental governance” is a consolidation of the learning from the study of government and the learning from the study of the environment. In fact, environmental governance has appeared from recent pedantic endeavors

to standardize the ambience governance rapport. Such endeavors are elaborately based on the presumption that the presence or absence of democratization or sound governance consequently affects the environment (Mugabe and Tumushabe 2011).

According to Mugabe, the difficulty in conceptualizing “environmental governance” lies precisely in the complexity of defining “governance” in general (Mugabe and Tumushabe 2011). Thus, before even trying to discuss environmental governance, we need to review what we know about governance in general. Then perhaps we can arrive at sense rather than continuing nonsense and confusion.

Governance is related to maintenance: of a thing living or non-living. Governance is the control of human action. Policies are formed by policymakers to control the actions of people. In the economic, social, environmental and political disciplines, the term “governance” has multiple interpretations (Harman 2008). Rhodes describes this term with six segregated uses: as marginal state, as consolidated governance, as the innovative public management, as accountable governance, as social cybernetic process and as organizing rapport-building procedure (Rhodes 1997). The World Bank defined governance as the exercise of political power to manage a nation’s affairs (Hardallu 2011). The Institute for Global Environmental Studies explained governance as a complex set of values, norms, processes and institutions by which society manages its development and resolves conflicts (Institute for Global Environmental Strategies 2010). The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) explained governance as interrelated with sustainable human development. According to it, governance is:

“the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, process and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences”. (UNDP 1997)

UNDP denotes that the aim of governance should be to develop capacities promoting uplift, giving priority to the pauper, sustaining the

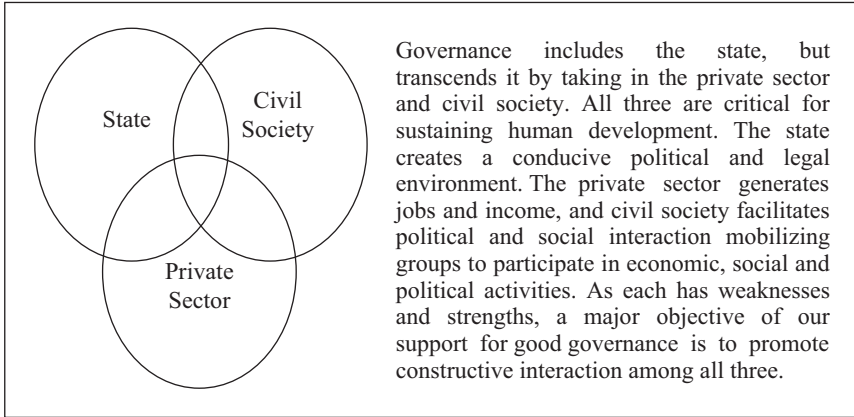
environment and creating chances for employment for survival (UNDP 2011).

Similarly, Louis O. Dorvilier said that governance implements itself through the application of authority in the socio-economic and political domain as a way to actualize the matters of the country. It includes the institutions, procedures and apparatus through which citizens and groups promote their common factors, orientation, interests and rights: and also through which they meet their responsibilities and reconcile their differences (Dorvilier 2001).

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in its *Capacity Building for Governance Monograph* opines that governance connotes more than government referring to a political process, encompassing the whole society and delivering the making of massive citizen agile uplift to the social contract binding them together duly (Quoted in Parvin 2007). According to United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, governance refers to the process of decision-making and the method or device by which decisions are implemented or not implemented (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific 2013).

According to Mugabe and Tumushabe, governance is beyond government. Governance is thought as an authority that enacts laws for an authority; government is the authority and its political administration and decision-making procedure. In the process of governance of a state, civil society and private sector must be planned to contribute to tolerate human amelioration. Different types of associations grouped in civil society also lead the static world to the proper implementation of the environmental governance. It ensures the orchestration of the environmental melioration with a view to enhancing the proper habitation of the mob in the planned environment. It may well be said that environmental governance is connoted by the enactment of laws for the welfare of the people and implemented by the authority concerned.

The institutions of governance in a state, civil society and private sector must be planned to contribute to tolerate human amelioration. Governance can effectuate all these things actualizing socio-political and economic factors for poverty minimization, job assurance, environmental protection and empowerment of women (Fig. 31.1).



**Fig. 31.1** Good Governance reaches beyond the State. (Source: UNDP 1997 quoted in Lima 2002)

Civil society lying betwixt the individual and the state consists of individuals and groups working socio-politically and economically controlled by efficacious laws. The political system (the state) can actualize many things for the preservation of the environment, maintaining micro and macro-economic condition, ensuring public health and safety for all, standardizing resources for better livelihood. All these can be authorized by the state for the benefit of infrastructural development, uplift of law and order, security and socio-political and economic upkeep and uplift (UNDP 1997 quoted in Lima 2002).

As a consequence of post-Cold War governance crises, the United Nations Commission on Global Governance defined the term governance as:

“the sum of the many ways through which individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action may be taken”. (United Nations Commission on Global Governance 1995)

Among the actors involved in governance, the Government is one of them. Other actors lying in governance vary depending on the level of

governance. It may well be that in the rural areas where intellectual landlords are included. Different institutions like NGOs, peasant associations, cooperatives, research institutes, religious leaders, defense institutes, political parties and other organizations assist in governance, but it is more complex in the urban areas.

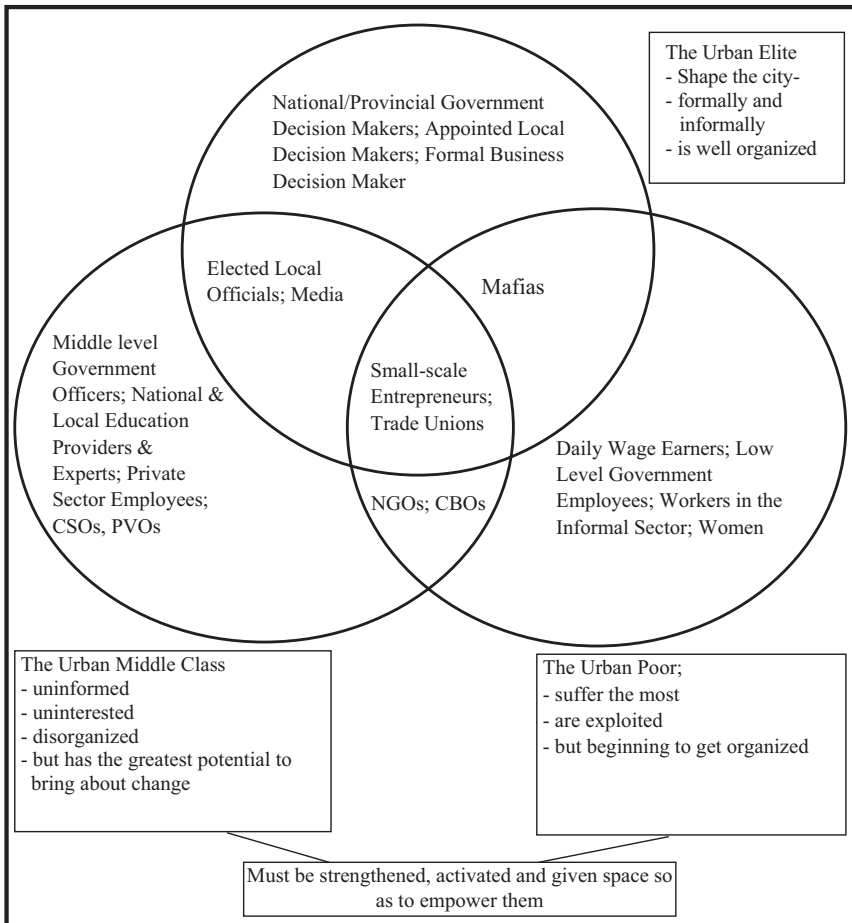


Fig. 31.2 Interconnection among Urban Actors in Governance. (Source: United Nations Commission on Global Governance 1995)

Figure 31.2 delineates interrelationship between actors involved in urban governance. In addition to the above actors, media, lobbyists, international donors, multi-national corporations, and so on at the national level may influence the decision-making procedure. Without the government and the military, all the actors are a part of civil society. In some countries like Bangladesh, crime syndicates also influence governmental mechanism.

At the same time, government structures are the devices through which decisions are made and actualized. Informal decision-making procedures at the national level exist as well. The organized crime syndicate influences decision-making in urban areas. Locally powerful families in some rural areas influence decision-making procedure. This type of decision leads to corruption (United Nations Commission on Global Governance 1995).

The above connotations indicate that governance, as a concept, recognizes that power lies inside and outside the formal authority and institutions of the state. In many cases, governance combines both central and local government, the private sector and civil society. Governance includes the institutions, processes and instruments through which a society collectively takes decisions and acts upon them. It recognizes that decisions are made taking the common interests of the citizens and groups into account.

## Environmental Governance

From the discussion of governance, we can arrive at a more precise definition of environmental governance: Environmental governance means the interaction of social systems to take, and act upon, collective decisions which concern the interaction of the social and natural environments. Environmental governance is an important instrument, governance systems influence environmental outcomes. The term “environmental governance” is used to describe how decisions about the environment are made and who makes such decisions. It maintains structural and informal institutional arrangements for wealth and environmental decision-making process. It expands beyond the state to convolve the private sector



and civil society basically. Ergo, it involves a level of institutions and other organizations together with traditions and taboos; they influence the way of power exercise by all these performances and ensure the accountability of governance in various related aspects of the state.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) defines “environmental governance” in the following way:

“Environmental governance is the manner in which people exercise authority over nature. It concerns the actors—within each level of government, between elected and appointed officials, and among ‘traditional’ private and non-governmental bodies—and the power that they exercise to make decisions about the disposition of natural resources and benefits that flow from the environment”. (ADB 2000)

According to Graham, Amos and Plumtre, governance, in the context of the environment, encompasses the nexus and interplay among state and other related entities. In this connection, it maintains all the procedures of the environment concerned (Graham et al. 2003). Environmental governance thus concerns legal and policy decisions to manage environmental issues; compliance with those policies in development management; and the participation of common people who are directly affected by the outcome of such decisions (Olowu 2007).

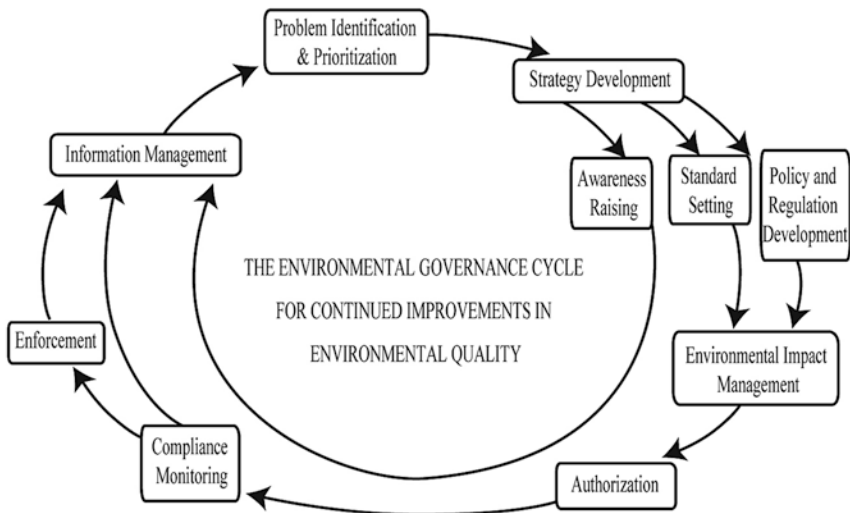
Mugabe and Tumushabe observed that the literature related to environmental issues failed to define the concept of environmental governance. According to them, environmental governance is a process of democratization in which everybody has a share. Participation of many actors in the static system can develop the concept of governance of environment. The political system in a broad sense or the static system at the global level and delegation of power managing and preserving the environmental governance must be combined cohesively and inherently. The juxtaposition of governance and the environment has a number of features (Mugabe and Tumushabe 2011).

- Firstly, the democratic process and the civil society are held responsible for environmental governance according to their domains;

- Secondly, the nexus between governance and environment prescribes that environmental management convolves political matters and procedures;
- Thirdly, the linkage denotes that environmental preservation is reciprocal work shared betwixt government and the civil society; and
- Last of all, environmental governance throws light on different yet connected roles of State, civil sector and participation of the people, democratization, civil society and the like.

An effective policy framework is important in developing an integrated environmental governance system. The frameworks will permit and inspire participation of all stakeholders: government, business and public. In actualizing these, they ensure sufficient and accountable spreading of data for all groups because of interaction.

The Environmental Governance Cycle (Fig. 31.3) recognizes the necessity for a gradual and continuous assessment for pollution and reduction initiatives. Through initiating this cycle, the central and local government will enable to display the necessity for heavier local steps according to demands.



**Fig. 31.3** The environmental governance cycle. (Source: Department of Environment and Tourism of South Africa 2007)

## Part I

### Environmental Policy Without Environmental Consciousness: The Bengali Concept of the Environment

Bengalis have a concept of the environment much like that of other tropical, non-western people, like Africans and South Americans, who, not so long ago, lived in nature in a jungle setting (Swan and Conrad 2014). They never looked after nature: nature looked after them. They have great faith in the power and perfection of nature and cannot believe that anything they do could damage it.

Western people think of themselves as custodians of the Earth and responsible for maintaining it.<sup>5</sup> Most Bangladeshis are Muslims and the Surat al-Hajj of Al-Quran (22:10) says:

Do you not see that Allah has made subject to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth and amply bestowed upon you His favors, [both] apparent and unapparent?

Of course, if you believe that nature is created “subject to you”, you do not care so much about what happens to nature. You use it and enjoy, without any responsibility or care for it.

There are other cultural aspects to the difference in thinking too. Western people are teleological (Popkin 2013): they always ask “what is the purpose?” and believe that they can change the future from action today. Asians conceive of time as the ebb and flow of the sea, believe that they cannot change anything and consider that all they can do is to adjust as everything changes around them (Ames 2016). Of course, if you believe that you can change the future, you want to act today to save the Earth for your great grandchildren. Yet, if you believe that you can do nothing, the concept of trying to do something is quite silly.

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<sup>5</sup>One of the most clear examples was the British Government’s White Paper, “This Common Inheritance” in 1990, HMSO, Cmnd 1200, “We have a moral duty to look after our planet and to hand it on in good order to future generations”.

The role of science is also an important source of the differences in thinking between Bengalis and western people about nature. Science is not a Bengali concept. Science is thoroughly western in its emphasis on the objective, on logical inference and on its attempt to understand processes and predict their outcomes (Siddique 2009). That is not to say that Bengalis do not study science but it is difficult for them: someone who gets “golden A+” (all subjects A+) in the Science stream in the Bangladesh Higher School Certificate is thought of as extremely intelligent, as few can do it. Indeed, a few years ago, almost all the Bangladesh Bank Governors (a highly prestigious position) were Physics graduates, not economists.

The point here is not about who gets better marks in Science but to emphasize that western people instinctively believe and trust scientists but Bengalis do not. If scientists say that the world is being destroyed by our actions, westerners feel that they must stop it urgently. Bengalis are unlikely to understand the scientists, less likely to believe them and may find their predictions of doom rather humorous. The scientists are not like them: they are different.

## A Different Kinds of Politics

Western politics is fundamentally interest group politics (Cigler et al. 2015). Parties appeal to different interest groups by offering them the policies they want. In Government, the interest groups jostle for influence and negotiate among themselves to arrive at policy decisions. The pluralist model (Dahl 1961) predominates and no one can make a decision by himself.

Bangladesh politics is not like that. Policies are handed down by a charismatic Party leader. When there is a coalition Government, the policies may be the result of negotiations between the Prime Minister and her coalition partners. The leader’s Party members follow blindly to support the policies, with their lives if necessary and the opposition Party members oppose root and branch. There is no negotiation and interest groups do not take a leadership role to get their preferred policy adopted. Rather,

the Parties try to infiltrate, intimidate and puppetize the civil society organizations to get them to support their Party's policy choices.

Therefore, there is no obvious aperture for civil society organizations to use in influencing policy decisions in the direction of protecting the environment. There has never been a Green Party in Bangladesh, although there is now one in almost every western country. The one successful civil society organization on environmental issues, BELA (Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association), has not really tried to use the political process to get environmentally friendly policies. They use the courts to stop environmentally unfriendly actions and have been very successful in getting High Court injunctions to stop various acts of central and local government.

## Foibles to Environmental Protection

The project is simply poignant, terse and pithy. But the matter is that our popular participation is not adequately conscious about the phenomenon. This unconsciousness leads to the incompleteness of environmental governance. Moreover, unconsciousness prevents all from doing the work properly. Lack of planning is a great threat to environmental governance in non-western societies. Western societies actualize any work on the basis of scientific and long-term planning while non-western societies are averse to it. In consequence of it, in the air of the non-western societies, there is much plum bum/lead (PB). At the same time, we find much CO<sub>2</sub> and other destructive gases that suffocate our breathing system. Our water has been contaminated by industrial wastage. The popular participation in conservation and percolation seems to be nonchalant. Their involvement is also very imprudent. In consequence of it, we do not see perfect environmental governance in non-western societies. Popular participation is habituated to filthy environment for which they keep their shelter, atmosphere, even a thing poor and dirty. Due to habit, we see occupational hazard in non-western societies that creates severe problems of basic needs and rights in the region. Popular participation cannot realize occupational hazard unless and until they suffer from tuberculosis, dermatological problem, reproductive problem, respiratory problem and

the like. The most crucial problem is environmental hazard. That is the resultant of nonchalance of popular participation in environmental governance.

In the process of application, popular participation is found inactive, irksome and derailed. The application and procedure of environmental governance is not properly enforced due to the ignorance of the popular sovereignty and the most important thing is that they are not willing to preserve their environment. We have delineated the process of environmental governance in non-western societies. But it depends on the eagerness and literacy of the popular participation. It does not have any long-term planning regarding the conservation of environment. We talk about coordination in matters of cleaning of the environment. But we do not visualize it. Indian Prime Minister is of the opinion that *swachhata* (cleanliness) is second to the development of our country. It is because it leads us to good health, sound environment, pollution-free society and good nourishment that result in our combined flourishing. People should believe in the protection of environment by being clean and cleaning up.<sup>6</sup>

Our popular participation believes in naturalism as a result of which they think that what is looted cannot be blotted. So, they do not try to change themselves in matters of environmental protection. River erosion is one of the problems of environment in this region. Hill side is a great threat to environmental conservation. If our popular participation wishes to clean up the hilly region, it cannot be possible easily. Here, many open fields are covered recklessly with the filthy and dirty things. Policy-making procedure is not suitable for our popular participation regarding environmental governance. Since non-western political system is not efficacious, political parties fail at making effective environmental policies. Only stable political parties can bring good policies regarding environmental governance. But it is a matter of great regret that we do not have stability in our political system that results in bizarre policies regarding it. Finance is a great problem to the conservation of environment. In the policy or structure of anything, finance is allocated equally. But owners of the structures do not pick finance up in their policy and they also do not

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<sup>6</sup>Television Interview with Narendra Damodardas Modi by Sony TV, 19 September 2017.

finance environmental governance as a result of which environment becomes corrupted and bare. Industrial hazard comes out of their structure which pollutes the environment severely and appallingly. Non-western societies have overpopulation which cannot favor the concept truly. As a result, the environmental governance remains haggard and hazy. So we must remove and eradicate all these foibles from non-western societies in matters of environmental conservation and protection. It has been statistically proven that non-western societies do not have inspiration and aspiration for a sound environment for their sound habitation. They believe in industrial development without proper consideration of environment issues for which the most important phenomenon environmental governance is not properly done in this region. Since they believe in short-term policy, they do not accelerate the development of the environment from which they can get multifarious benefit. According to Huntington, we see the clash of civilization which includes flow of water, excavation, prevention, transformation and good coordination. These are not properly done due to the conflict and clashes, resulting in the uncleanness of the society. Here we also mention illiteracy of the popular sovereignty together with policing a state instead of welfare state. He also mentions about group work for the development of the global development (Huntington 1990). Overall Huntington talks about lack of spontaneity among the non-western society regarding their development and the *mise-en-scène*. Last of all, we can say that there are many weaknesses and limitations in the conservation, we have to overcome all these for better environment through popular participation. It is deeply believed that environmental pollution is great treat to our body, mind and soul which can be easily eradicated and eliminated by the prescription we have jotted down here.

## Some Environmental Movements

Yet things might be changing. BAPA (*Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon*) meaning “Bangladesh Environment Movement”, is a Bangladesh environmental voluntary society (which stresses that it is not an NGO and receives no contributions) that has achieved some major successes on

environmental policy issues. They proceed through seminars, conferences, deputations, press conferences, publications and public rallies. On their website, they claim among their policy successes the banning of plastic bags, leaded petrol and two-stroke engine vehicles. The views and opinions of civil society and NGOs are now given more importance by the Government (Mollah 2007).

The formulation of NEMAP (National Environmental Management Action Plan), in 1995, was the first time that the Bangladesh Government actively involved the NGOs and civil society in policy development. The Government “proactively initiated a consultation process, in association with NGOs, journalists, academics, and other segments of civil society” (Ahmed and Roy 2015”).

The only NGO directly related to Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) in Bangladesh is the National EIA Association of Bangladesh (NEAB) set up in late 1997, providing a platform for the EIA planners and others involved. NEAB has been working to ensure consciousness of EIA in all connected sectors, assisting in the development of EIA and some other related things in Bangladesh. A Memorandum of comprehension signed between NEAB and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Bangladesh Country Office, in 1999 is working to multiply environment-assessment ability in the country. Bangladesh Environment Network is based in New York City and is composed of Bangladeshi emigrants. They have been mainly assisting in communication about the environment since 1998 and work mostly through BAPA.

Many electronic and print media have shown and written about environmental development and awareness. All these media have focused on the consciousness regarding environmental uplift, especially on June 5 (Environment Day).

The civil societies, democrats and NGO, have linkage with the national and international organization for strengthening environmental programs. They have forwarded and extended training, workshop, seminar, and so on to promote environmental issues. In this respect, different sister concerns of UNO played a crucial role.



## Part II

### A Non-Western Strategy for Environmental Protection

There are some truths which transcend culture and one of them is that the environment must be protected. People in some cultures may have less information and less concern about the environment, but that does not change the fact that their environment is endangered now too. In such cases, dying may be culturally sensitive but it can never be an acceptable result: at least because what happens to one culture on this little globe affects other cultures. Slash and burn agriculture was very much a part of Indonesian culture but the release of huge amounts of greenhouse gases from burning forests created a big hole in the ozone layer (Augustyn 2007), from which we have still not recovered.

So an alternative strategy must be found that must be culturally sensitive as well. The alternative strategy cannot depend on the sort of popular movements that have powered the environmental movements in the west but must obtain its legitimacy from the sorts of places that non-western leadership obtains it.

Now let us revise for a moment where non-western leadership gets its legitimacy:

- **Ascribed Status**—age, gender, family background, and so on.
- **Wealth**—in Asia, wealthy families are liked instinctively and often without reason, sometimes because they bribe everyone generously.
- **Association**—people who are associated with persons of high status and influence often obtain some vicarious power and influence from that association.
- **Required Status**—as in the Bangladesh local government legislation in 2009 (Local Government (Union Parishads) Act 2009 and Local Government (City Corporations) Act 2009), when the leaders require people to participate in a process, even when they would not have dared try, participation becomes acceptable and possible.

Using these basic concepts of what gives an Asian the right to participate in a process and to monitor the actions of his social superiors, we can begin to develop the idea of a participatory process of environmental protection policy (Bulkeley and Mol 2003) not based on environmental consciousness. Participants should be mostly older, male<sup>7</sup> and from famous or wealthy families. They should be associated with people of high status. The legislation should require the participation of other persons who do not meet these requirements, to give them their missing status. Inclusion of other persons without the required social status and without legislative mandates might cause the members to lack popular support and respect, so that they are ignored or laughed at in practice.

The picture emerging seems to be one of a kind of Environmental Congress: a group of wealthy, high-status people who are required to act on environmental issues. We can imagine the kinds of issues they would be suitable to act on, not being technical experts:

- auditing expenditures on environmental protection;
- hearing complaints against the enforcement or non-enforcement of environmental policy;
- developing new ideas for environmental policies;
- setting out goals and objectives for environmental policies;
- setting up meetings for community participation in developing environmental policies.

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<sup>7</sup>It is true that there are women leaders in Asia: in Bangladesh, two women have been Prime Ministers for almost the whole time from 1990 to the present. Yet those women are only there because one is the daughter of the founder of the nation and one is the wife of a national hero who was also a very popular President: both assassinated. This is true in other nations of Asia too: Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka (daughter of a former Prime Minister); Prime Minister Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar (daughter of Gen Aung San, who liberated the nation from the Japanese in World War II); Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India (daughter of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru); Prime Minister Park Choong Hae of South Korea (daughter of President Park Choong Hee); Prime Minister Shinawatra of Thailand (sister of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra). Yes, women can be leaders in Asia: but they need to draw their legitimacy from some popular male member of their family who was a politician or national hero. Similarly, women can be a part of local environmental councils but preferably the daughter or sister or wife of the popular local male MP or male local council Chairman.

Such a local Environmental Congress could inject communities with some interest and information about the environment. They could start discussions on needs and priorities. They could hold officials responsible (depending on the powers given to them in the legislation establishing them) or at least ask them questions about what they are doing and why. They could make plans and lay out goals and objectives for improving the environment in their local areas.

Obviously the establishment of such Environmental Congresses would have to be a “top-down” action. No one is rushing to create them. It is their creation in legislation that would give them the legitimacy they need to accomplish their goals. The legislation should set out areas of their authority and give a mandate to investigate official actions, make plans, organize popular meetings, audit expenditures, adjudicate complaints and to submit policy proposals directly to the Minister.

Britain started to involve individuals in environmental policy, but this was participation in implementation, not in policy development (Eden 1996). Mainly, these were campaigns to educate the public and ask them to carry out policy decisions like making their homes more energy efficient or reduce carbon emissions (Eden 1996).

## Decisive Statement

While some environmental organizations have been created “from the bottom up” in recent years, there has not been a fundamental change in the ways most Bangladeshis think about the environment. There is still no widespread demand for environmental protection.

This situation could continue indefinitely; however, there are real consequences to doing so. In the west, strong civil society movements for environmental protection pressurize the State to show action and results. When this is absent, things can tend to settle into a “no noise” situation, where nothing is done and no one complains about it. In politics, “the squeaky wheels get the grease”.

There have been many reports that the environmental laws and policies in Bangladesh and other developing countries are mainly for show

and do not lead to any results (Faure 1995). This is the direct result of the absence of political and public pressure in favor of these issues.

This is not only a phenomenon of Bangladesh. This is a common reaction of ordinary people to environmental protection in many parts of the developing world. At one level, hungry people care about roads more than trees: yet it runs deeper. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the concept of the role of people in the environment is fundamentally, philosophically and culturally different in non-western societies. What has happened in Bangladesh (or, more accurately, the fact that little has happened) was therefore totally predictable and understandable. Leaving aside the broader issues about non-western societies, trying to copy western law to become “modern” is not the right way to do for the environment.

In Brazil, Jose Puppim de Oliveira found that the government authorities sometimes fail to materialize environmental protection policies generally because of their lack of political system. This happens due to inadequate wealth, problem of institutional capacity and the like. All these lead to weaken the significance of cooperation at the local sphere and phase (Oliveira 2009). The story sounds the same as Bangladesh. Gamman found a similar picture in his study of the West Indian islands, St Lucia, Barbados and St Kitts. He ascribed this to four major elements: national politics, behavior in the donor agency, the culture of decision making, and economic necessity. So he was one of the first to recognize the role of political culture in the failure of environmental protection in developing countries (Gamman 1990).

Bell and Russell begin their article by saying (Bell and Russell 2002):

Most developing countries have long since established laws and formal governmental structures to address their serious environmental problems, but few have been successful in alleviating those problems.

Now we are arguing that we need to look more deeply, to culture, to understand why. That article said that the problem was caused by international finance organizations pushing market-based solutions on people who lacked the infrastructure and what we might call the “market-based

culture” to carry them out. Yet it is so pervasive a problem that we believe it runs deeper than that.

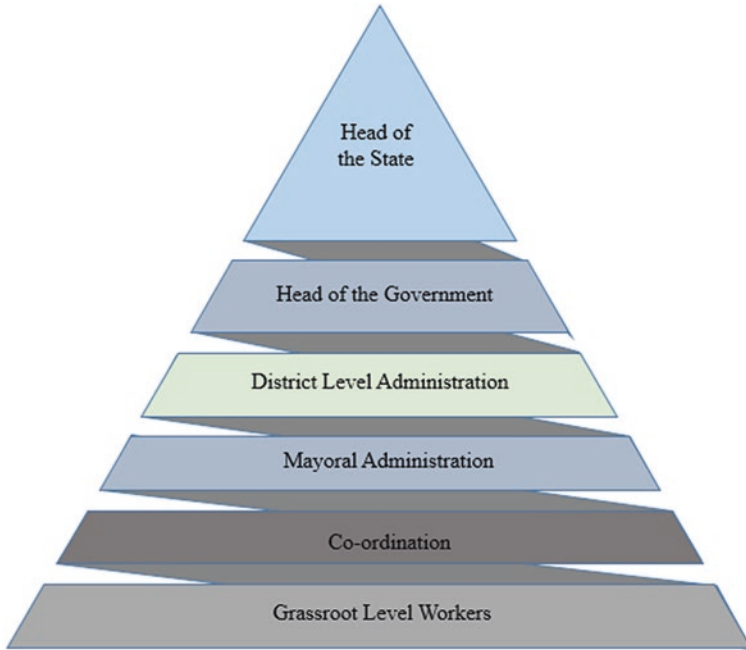
If we care about the environment, then we need to care about what happens to it in the developing world, where many of the problems are. So far, there has been a lot of action in the western countries and not that much real change outside them. If this goes on, the environment will not be improved.

This chapter has put the argument that there is a fundamental difference in world view between the western and non-western societies about the environment. When we accept and understand it, we can understand why the global summits failed and why environmental protection, western-style, is not working in the non-western societies. So, we need to start thinking about ways in which we can be more effective in protecting the environment in the non-western world. This chapter has put forward one idea for trying to do that: the centrally sanctioned, locally based “Environmental Congress”. It is certainly not the only possible way, yet let us begin to think in such a culturally sensitive way of new alternatives to get better results in protecting the environment in non-western societies. Hence, we can show two figures for the protection of environment where hierarchy will be a catalyst of popular participation of environmental governance in non-western societies in matters of procedure and application.

In the Fig. 31.4, we see that grass root level workers will maintain the environment through a process. The process will have different stages. At the bottom, workers will be engaged directly in environmental activities such as pollution control, waste management, forestation, sanitation and the like. It will be monitored by a coordination of the Ward Councilor. Ward Councilor will be supervised by the mayoral administration. It will be liable to the district level administration which includes District Council Chairman, Deputy Commissioner, law enforcing agencies and big guns<sup>8</sup> of the society. This administration will be checked and reviewed by the head of the government. Simultaneously, it will be justified by the head of the state. According to Gramscian theory, this hierarchy is followed and materialized all over the world. If we follow this hierarchy for the protection of environment, it will be the big success in course of time.

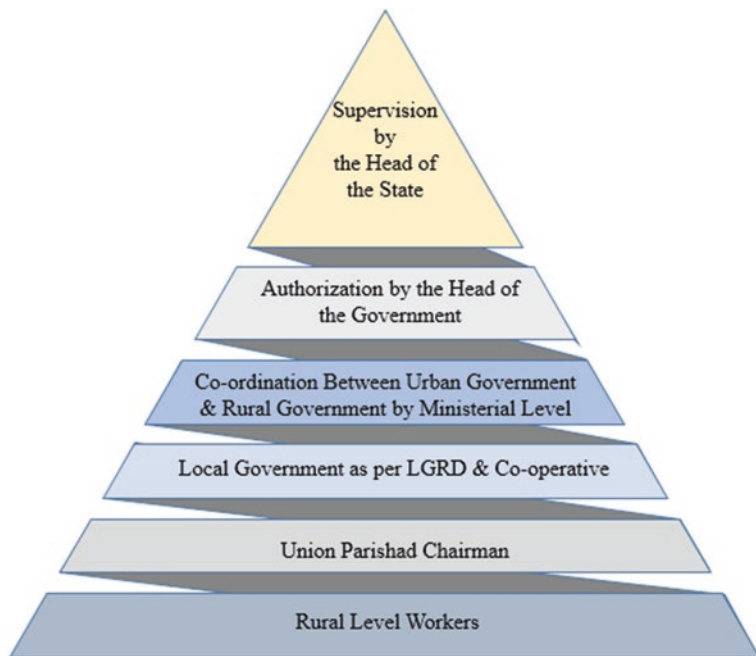
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<sup>8</sup> Those who are included in civil society and sophisticated are known as big guns.



**Fig. 31.4** Town/city congress to conservation. (Source: Developed by the researcher)

According to Fig. 31.5 as is stated in the Gramscian theory (book: Selection from the Prison Notebooks) we can say that rural level workers will do their environmental duties to the right direction like burning and removing dirty things, watering away the filthy things, covering dirt with soil and the like. They can also excavate different channels to let the filthy things go away. The whole work will be monitored by the Union Council Chairman. He/she will be liable and answerable to local government as per the rules of Local Government Division of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) and Cooperatives. It will be justified by the district level administration, which consists of different government and non-government organizations. Obviously, there will be coordination between urban government and rural government by ministerial level in matters of popular participation for environmental governance in non-western societies. At the end of the journey, the



**Fig. 31.5** Village/rural congress to conservation. (Source: Developed by the Researcher)

environmental protection and conservation will be authorized and reviewed by the head of the state government together with the head of the state.

World Health Organization (WHO) is of the opinion that health is the summation of proper physique, sound mental condition and environmental protection. First time, the WHO did not include environmental protection in sound health. Afterward, understanding the importance of environmental condition, it included it in overall sound health. There is no denying the fact that environmental protection must follow the code of conduct which has been delineated in the article entitled Figs. 31.1 and 31.2. Environmental Congress will play a vital role to clean up our society and to enjoy sound health. The process depicted by Gramsi and A. G. Frunk through satellite and metropolitan processes, the environment may be governed in toto and to the hilt. It is ineluctable

that participation of popular sovereignty only can ensure environmental governance in non-western societies. Effectivity, enforcement, consciousness, motivation, dream, planning and long term-process must be treated as the catalyst for the application of protection of the environment from which all the people concerned can derive the best benefit which will ensure the perfection in body, mind and soul.

## Conclusions

At the end of our discussion it can be stated that percolation process must be actualized truly and scientifically. If not, we will endanger ourselves sooner or later. Environmental governance by popular participation should be stringently perfected. But popular participation is not true to this process and application. We have to change them up properly. Popular participation can be maintained truly and duly under any form of government. But it requires perfect and smooth coordination with supervision. Working and consciousness from the bottom up level is essential. The success of this matter depends on overall cooperation and sense of hygiene. Since hygiene keeps us sound, we have to work unitedly in this connection. Environmental education is a catalyst in matters of popular participation in the protection of environment. Sincere working with technical knowledge is sine-qua-non for this phenomenon. The environmental Congress must finance the project properly. Along with it, monitoring, supervision, maintenance and all other necessary things must be accomplished. If the recommendation of the environmental Congress is not followed properly, the whole project will go in the darkness. Seminars, symposiums, and elaborate discussion must be continued to get good results. To fructify the project, all must be serious about it. If not, the concept with the recommendations will not be translated into reality.

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