

**Community and organizational responses to wetland management in
Bangladesh: A capsule of suggestive policy recommendations**

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Abstract

The unique ecosystem of wetland is extremely valuable and productive for fish and wildlife habitat. It is the home of many other animals and plant species. Wetland plays a ubiquitous role in regulating stream flow apart from their importance to wildlife. The ecosystem holds back seasonal rainwater and often reduces annual flooding like sponge in several parts of Bangladesh. Its spongy effect has some additional benefit of recharging the groundwater supplies. In fact, wetland is used to grow certain cash and food crops as well as to cultivate fish. It's hidden value and usefulness in regard to the aquatic resources is not always apparent; and in most cases, it is not even known to our people. They are often filled in, or dredged to make way for housing, recreation, industry, and garbage dumps. The plight of wetland in Bangladesh is alarming as their protection laws and regulations are like toothless watchdogs. It is however, disappointing to know that the wetland management has not, to date, received special attention either by government and/or non-government organizations or by the social scientists. This situation claims that social mobilization and effective national wetlands refuge system should be introduced for the management of wetland. The present paper devotes its entrepreneurship to explore the role of community people and government and non-governmental organizations to develop sustainable indigenous and technologically sound strategies for restoring and preserving the resourceful ecosystem of wetland in Bangladesh. Also it tries to examine the contributions of government and non-governmental organizations to mobilize and train the community people and different professionals for such preservation of the wetland. The present paper is wedded to find out the reasons for which the wetland is lost in our country and accordingly, it tries to locate the responses to its management at the community level in Bangladesh. The empirical data of this research are collected through survey, observation, and focus group discussions methods. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been employed for data gathering and processing as well. Finally, the paper concludes with some suggestive policy recommendations, which may be adopted and mobilized by the policy planners and implementers for the sustainable conservation and restoration of wetland resources in Bangladesh.

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