

Socio-economic Constraints of Floodplain Stocking

by KC Mandal

Bangladesh, situated at the delta of three major river systems — the Ganges, the Jamuna and the Meghna, provides a vast fresh water fisheries. Amongst the world's inland fish producing nations, Bangladesh ranks third behind India and China. Fisheries sector contribute about 8 per cent of the total foreign earnings, 2 per cent of the GDP and 65 per cent of the animal protein intake. As per Fish Catch Statistics of Bangladesh 1988-89, the total inland water area of the country is 43.08 lakh ha. of which 1.14 lakh is natural depression like beels and haors which produce 47 thousand metric tonnes (MT) fish. 28.32 lakh ha are seasonally flooded area producing 1.86 lakh MT fish. Total fish production is 10.5 lakh MT and per capita consumption is 23 gm per day (1992-93) against the requirement of 45 gm. During the 1970s and 80s floodplain fish production as well as fish production declined gradually. Statistics, supplied by directorate of fisheries (DoF), shows that floodplain fish production has gone down from 2.35 lakh MT in 1979-80 to 1.86 lakh MT in 1988-89. The major reason of this drastic reduction of floodplain fisheries are the introduction of flood control, drainage/irrigation (FCD/FCID) projects, construction of polders and rural roads, blocking of fish migratory routes by constructing sluice gates, culverts etc. indiscriminate use of agro chemicals and above all, adverse impact of the Farakka.

To mitigate this drastic reduction of fish the Government has undertaken different programmes financed by different donor agencies since early 90s. Two of these programmes are Second Aquaculture Development Project (SADP), financed by Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Third Fisheries Project (TFP), financed by International Development Agency (IDA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Overseas Development Administration (ODA). SADP has been designed to support increasing floodplain fisheries in the North-eastern Bangladesh. Presently it has been concentrating on about 40 water bodies (beel, baor and road side khal) in five districts of greater Sylhet and Kishorganj. Under this programme carp hatchling of four five days are released in March/April and are being reared — for next 90 days. The programme had started in 1991 and would continue upto June 1996. Among those water bodies three are under New Fisheries Management Policy (NFMP) and the rest are under lease system. The TFP, the largest floodplain stocking programme, has also undertaken programmes to help increase floodplain fisheries in South-Western and North-Western Bangladesh. Its main objective is to increase fish production through application of aquacultural technique and equitable distribution of increased resources to the rural communities. It has presently been stocking nine minor and major floodplains, spread over 24 districts, of them two is open, six is under leased and remaining one is under (NFMP). Where stocking starts in July/August. It has a plan to increase its activities upto one lakh ha by 1996 from its present 32,500 ha level. Here, we shall discuss some of the problems faced under TFP stocked beels.

Problems of the Beels
In the beels fish production has increased to a considerable extent but there still exists some technical, physical and social problems, which are deterrent to cherished goal. First we shall present technical and physical problems, then social

Technical and Physical Problem
Fingerling mortality and fish escaping form the floodplain are most common technical problems. Mortality depends upon mainly physical health of the fingerling and the way it is being carried to the stocking points and the way it is being released. All fingerlings are released from one or two points for better management. But carrying from a long distance and releasing of a huge fingerling from one point or two points make the water turbid which cause mortality of the stocked fingerling. The physical boundary of all the stocked beels are not always well demarked and is reported to have breaches which make fingerling to find out escaping route.

Social Problem
Apart from technical and physical problem, there are series of social problems. Some of the problems are general in nature i.e. applicable for all beels and others are beel specific with varying degree and nature. Here we shall first discuss some general problems then the specific problems will be elaborated.

Lean Period and Livelihood
Generally fingerlings are released from July to mid-August. A three months 'lean period' (when the poor are left with no other work opportunity) is executed following completion of releasing activity. To allow fish growth to a considerable size traps and gears which may trap under sized fish is restricted in this said period. Some wage labourers are deployed to guard through and DoF staff and officials make visit to check illegal gear use and fishing of under sized fingerlings. Despite this, fingerling stealing by pond owners and use of banned gear and net is often heard. Realistically a positive response can not be expected from the poor people without providing them with alternative sources of livelihood during the lean period. Of course, in some cases this selective fishing restriction is leading to complete banning of fishing by lease-holder/NFMP licence-holders. Response to ban must be seen in the light of livelihood strategy.

Awareness: Poor and uneducated common people are not so much aware of the fishing regulation, restricted period and gear use. Adherence to fishing regulation in some cases is guided by the tradition. It is observed that adherence to regulation is more positive by the traditional fisherman who fish round the year as because they are more guided by the sense that in the future the resource will be their's and also because that they are equipped to fish otherwise excepting beel fishing. But the same is appeared not that much positive to the part-time fisherman as they are not guided by that sense of direction and not well equipped to fish otherwise.

Kua issue
Kuas (submersible ponds) are another reason which hamper egalitarian distribution

of benefit to the beel community. Kuas are usually dug in relatively depressed areas of the beel where fish assemble in the draw-down following recession of the flood water from beel and floodplain. To attract fish bushy branches are left in draw-down. Some times supplementary feeding like rice bran, wheat bran etc. are supplied to ensure fast growing of fish. Kuas are generally harvested in February/March. Harvesting is done by employing family labourers or wage labourers are sold out. A sizeable kua is able to attract a huge quantity of fish which gives a handsome income to a household. Poor and landless people having no land as such no kua (who together constitute a vast majority of beel community) are deprived of getting benefit from it. Moreover, kua owners exert their rights to the vicinity of the kua beyond their legal boundary.

Sustainability
Sustainability of the Project is a crucial issue, which need to be addressed first. In fact, is

not a social problem rather it is a TFP problem. Cost recovery is coming up as a way of sustainability with or without Government. Since the kua/gher owners are getting extra benefits from stocking programme so imposition of some sort of levy might be considered as a means of cost recovery, since the programme needs a huge involvement of cash. Well, the problem is — kua/gher is a private land, hence its owner retains to the right to use it in any way, he likes. But imposition of levy will be double taxed as he is already paying revenue to the Government for it. So to address the problem government rules related to the land use need to be amended, which again will raise a series of questions.

Denial of Fishing Rights
The TFP programme is aiming at the betterment of poor people specifically the people dependent on fishing for their livelihood. But in some cases it is directly contributing to the

marginalization of the poor. Tungpara beel may be mentioned as a good example of it. In the beel about 60 per cent of the total households are involved in fishing — most of whom (about 35 per cent) are part time/seasonal fishermen, who have turned into fishermen depending on beel and floodplain fishing as a means of livelihood during the monsoon and draw-down. The beel is privately owned land, not a jalmohal, but it is conjuncted with other jalmohals (one is under NFMP and the others are under leased system). But the lease-holders and NFMP licence holders are imposing restriction on the beel areas beyond their legal boundaries. The beel experiences an early flooding and receding time. At the lean period a complete restriction is being imposed by the aforesaid people on the one hand and on the other hand, when this period expires the poor people no more enjoy fishing rights in the khal and beels without payment.

Jalmohal Policy
The floodplain stocking programme includes two different (in terms of ownership) types of water bodies: 1) Open water bodies, and 2) Jalmohal. Jalmohals are Government owned land and at present there are 13,400 Jalmohals under government. As per East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act of 1951, following the abolition of 'Zamindar' system, Government owned this, which have been used as means of revenue collection through bidding system by ministry of land, who retains its administrative control. However, the responsibility of management and maintenance of aquatic resources are given to DoF. Provision lease is awarded for a certain period to the highest bidder who may or may not be a fisherman. To ensure in the Jalmohal access fisherman has to pay a fixed fee or to maintain some contracts. In this system, besides administrative and management problems there are several serious distributional problems. In most cases, specifically in southern region, it is observed that fishing rights to common fishermen is denied by lease-holder/sub lease-holders even after payment. To combat with these problems and to ensure direct participation of the fisherfolk as well as better management of aquatic resources NFMP is introduced in 1986, at a pilot basis, in 10 water bodies, which expanded in 264 water-bodies in 1993. Government has a plan to replace all the leased jalmohals by NFMP by the year 2000.

Possible Solution
To reduce fingerlings mortality to a minimal rate, fingerlings release at different points may be considered. In order to combat high mortality local hatchery may be encouraged. This will also open an avenue for some people to be employed at the lean period. To reduce fish escaping from the floodplain physical boundary of the beel, there should be well demarked. To have a good response in lean period alternative job opportunities may be provided. In this context, the involvement of beel community should be ensured in fingerlings release and to oversee the beel. Credits could be provided so that they get themselves involved in small trading. Awareness building activities in relation to fishing regulation, should be strengthened.

The author, was involved in the Project for a short term assignment, is solely responsible for the views presented here. He is, however, grateful to the TFP Management Technical Assistance (MTA) authority and to Dr B M Chowdhury of Independent University of Bangladesh.

problems — which include some general problems which will be followed by some beel specific issues, and finally effort will be made to find possible solutions to mitigate the constraints.

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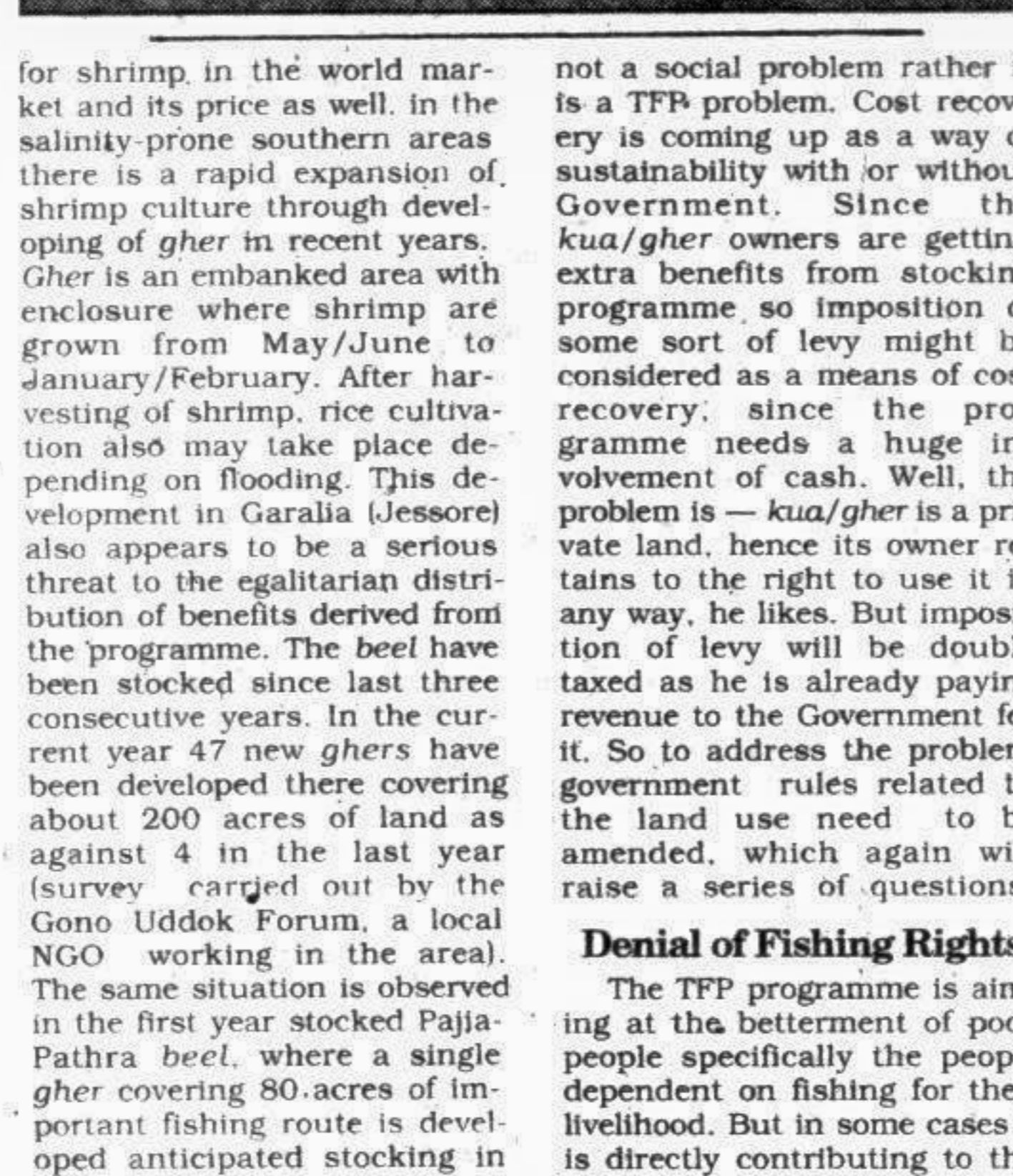
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Changing Approaches to Development

by DL Mallick

Environment and development are highly interlinked. Sound environmental management and socio-economic development are complementary to each other. Development programmes without considering environmental aspects do not sustain. It is to be taken account that an overwhelming majority, about 80 per cent of the people in the country is dependent on agriculture, forests, and fisheries. The sustainable use of these resources must be ensured. If these resources become unsustainable in course of ill-conceived development activities, the society might be threatened.

Development
Development involves a progressive transformation of both economic and socio-political-cultural system of a society. It can be viewed from three angles: — as an evolutionary process of growth and change of social and cultural organisations; — as an integration of social and cultural institutions; and — as a planned and monitored process of growth and changes of a society.

Development requires primarily economic growth with substantial changes in social and administrative structures, values and popular attitudes and in many cases, social customs and beliefs. Development economics first emerged as an academic discipline after the 2nd World War and it was believed that development would effectively replicate the experience of those countries which had been industrialised during 19th century and would follow the pattern of Britain, France, Germany, USA and Japan. Literature on development over the past four decades has been dominated by four major paradigms:

— stages of economic growth and modernization theories of 1950s and early 1960s; — the structuralist internationalist models of the late 1960s and 1970s; — people-oriented participatory development approach of 1980s and 1990s; — sustainable development approach of late 1980s and 1990s.

Economic Growth, Modernisation and Development
Taking evidence from industrially developed countries, economists stressed on increased savings and capital accumulation for economic growth. Rostow designated the sweep of modern history in five states: The traditional society, the precondition for take off, take off, the drive to maturity and the age of high mass consumption. It is a linear approach of the society and history. All economies are assumed to pass through the same sequence of these stages. Following the development model of Rostow, some western theorists promoted the idea of modernizing the less developed traditional societies in 1960s. To them, development meant modernization and westernization which encompasses a total transformation of the traditional agrarian society to an advanced industrial society. In economic terms, modernization implies industrialization, urbanization and technological transformation.

From political dimension, it requires rationalization of authority and growth of bureaucracy while from cultural view of point, modernization is represented by increased secularization of society arising from the spread of scientific knowledge. Thus modernization means changes toward those types of economic and political systems that developed in western Europe and north America in the 18th and 19th centuries. It is said that as people become more modernized and educated they necessarily become more westernized.

People-oriented Participatory Approach
The work of many development thinkers of late 1970s represent an increased focus towards the concepts of people-centered participatory development. The development thinkers gave emphasis on decentralization, participation and grassroots level development. Development approaches then move beyond the socio-economic sphere into the political and civil spheres. It is observed that countries whose citizens enjoyed greater political and civil liberty performed better in the people.

In the past, development policies were designed by the elites and the bureaucrats and it could not touch the grassroots level people. Development benefits were distributed among some limited people and it was male based. Now, development thinkers regard participation as a means to an end, where the end is development.

Sustainable Development
Sustainable development is a concept which is widely used in recent years. It has been made popular by environmentalists, conservationists and the ecologists. Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations. It contains within it two key concepts: — the concepts of needs of the poor, to which over riding priority should be given and — the idea of limitation imposed by the state of technology and social organization on

the environment's ability to meet present and future needs. Sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspiration for better life. The process of the sustainable development can function through institutional set up, awareness raising with education and law enforcement. It further requires: revising growth, changing the quality of growth, meeting essential needs for jobs, food, energy, water and sanitation, conserving and enhancing the resource base, reorienting technology and managing risk and integrating environment and economics in decision making.

Structural Change and Development
The economic growth theory and modernization theories failed to take into account the crucial fact that the contemporary developing countries are the parts of a highly integrated and complicated international system, a world capitalist system. The five stages approaches of Rostow has been replaced by the structuralist school of thought in 1970s. This approach views that both development and under development are the two wings of a single process. In such a world, external factors like aid relation and multinational companies badly influence the indigenous development process. The structuralist approach, viewed that the third world countries lags behind because of their time-old institutional shape and rigid social structure. Moreover, these societies are caught up in the dependency and dominance relationship to the rich countries. The dominant countries are endowed with technological and commercial, capital and socio-political predominance over less advanced countries. The dependency ties could be removed with an interdependency of the developed and developing countries.

Conclusion
Bangladesh has near about 120 million population with an annual growth rate of 2.17 per cent. The natural resource base is very poor and the GDP growth is also very low, i.e. 5 per cent only. The human development report of UNDP ranks countries by their success in meeting human needs like education, employment, income growth and social security. The position of Bangladesh is among the least developed countries in terms of human development indicators. The country needs rapid economic growth to feed the growing population. It can be achieved through industrialization, employment generation, planned urbanization and agrarian reforms. The country also requires structural change to ensure people-oriented participatory development.

There is a process of centralization of wealth in the hands of a few which let to pauperization. This process has serious negative impact on the social structure. Poverty and deprivation are leading the rural masses to migrate to the urban centres. So, all development programmes should aim at poverty alleviation through resource allocation and empowerment of the poor, giving them employment and raising their income with education, better healthcare, sanitation and minimum shelter.

Development programmes without considering environmental aspects do not sustain. It is to be taken account that an overwhelming majority, about 80 per cent of the people in the country is dependent on agriculture, forests, and fisheries. The sustainable use of these resources must be ensured. If these resources become unsustainable in course of ill-conceived development activities, the society might be threatened. We need economic growth urgently but not at the cost of future prospects. Economic growth and environmental management are to be integrated aiming at both the quality of growth and quality of life of the people.

— BCAS Feature

Putting your Money where your Morals are

Among those rubbing their hands over South Africa's first majority role election are the managers of the growing number of "ethical funds."

These funds attract customers by buying shares only in companies judged to be environmentally or politically sound — and until this year that included firms investing in apartheid South Africa. Now Pretoria has lost its pariah status, enabling those with a conscience as well as money to invest in the country's lucrative mining and industrial concerns.

Though defining what constitutes ethical investment behaviour is still open to debate, the sector is attracting serious money in the United States, where it started in the 1960s, and on a smaller scale elsewhere.

In Britain for example, small investors have ploughed more than £550 million into about 30 different units, trusts and pension schemes, up from £365 million in 1993. Ethical funds invest in shares as in any other unit or investment trust and pension or insurance fund, except for the way the shares are selected.

For example, a "green fund" manager would not buy stocks

of a company making toxic chemicals or practising factory farming of animals for a fast food chain. Peace activists would demand that the trust or pension funds they invest in stays clear of arms and munition manufacturers.

Decisions can be finely balanced. South Africa, for example, though back in the fold of places where people with principles can invest, is not totally in the clear. Companies there are still being monitored for wage differentials for employees of different races and training programmes for black employees.

Peter Webster, executive secretary of Ethical Investment Research Services (EIRIS), claims that interest in the ethical sector is growing rapidly. EIRIS is often used by fund managers to scan the credentials of companies they want to invest in.

Webster says that more than 90 per cent exclude anything to do with armaments. The tobacco industry is the second most shunned sector. Environment is also one of the prime concerns on both positive and negative lists, which indicate the companies to invest in and

Damandeep Singh writes from London

those to be shunned. On the negative lists are usually companies using tropical timber, dealing in pesticides and ozone-depleting substances, nuclear power and those involved in animal test.

The oldest ethical fund in Britain, Stewardship, run by Friends Provident, has existed for more than a decade, but the boom in ethical funds, towards the end of the 1980s has tailed off a little.

Ethical funds — which attempt to give capitalism a human face by refusing to invest in armaments industries or polluting companies — continue to attract the cash of small investors. But it is more than just conscience money, reports Gemini News Service, because fund managers say that morality pays dividends.

ing, says Webster, adding that criteria are always chosen by the client. On the positive list are companies that publish their environmental statements.

Funds would want to invest in companies that either produce environment-friendly goods of conform to environmental regulations, and avoid groups that degrade the environment," Webster says. Other major concerns of "ethical" investors include gambling outfits and alcohol. He adds,

the equity growth market achieved 6.2 per cent over one year and just over 35 per cent over five years. For the equity general market, figures were 4.6 per cent and 40.9 per cent respectively. Funds investing internationally tended to fare better.

A spokesman for Stewardship, which is also the largest ethical fund with about £167 million, sees this as a clear indicator that "one does not have to sacrifice one's finances for ethics."

Paul Barns, press officer of Micropal, says ethical considerations undoubtedly limit options. "It is really a question of when the political will of the government will change to support things like renewable energy so that the investor can benefit by putting his or her money there."

Others disagree, pointing to various other investment opportunities. Peter Silvester, investment director of Friends Provident, recently said his group had identified "more than 430 quoted companies with a market value of £140 billion which conform to our criteria."

Still others go beyond the

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division between ethical/green and regular funds. They claim that environmentally-sensitive companies have already crossed the Rubicon and are actively sought after.

"Nowadays, the financial consequences," for firms, which ignore environmental legislation are huge," NM Conscience Brian Wilkinson said recently. "It means companies which have sound ethical and environmental policies are likely to be better managed and have better growth prospects."

Purists, however, disagree with the whole approach. Says Derek Wall, author of the book, Getting There: Steps Towards a Green Society: "Ethical investment can be seen as a way of window-dressing the whole consumer-capitalist destruction in a typically reformist way; combining ethics and the market rather than challenging the system fundamentally."

This is a contentious issue, with many believing in a gradual, transitional switchover to "caring capitalism" by methods such as ethical funds and buying shares in a company in order to have the right to make speeches and lobby at annual meetings.

People like Webster believe that with ethical funds giving the general ones a run for their money, people might as well listen to their conscience and put their money where their morals are. — Gemini News