

Green Accounting : Challenges Ahead

by Quamrul Islam Chowdhury

Green accounting does not mean to put some new figures in the national income accounting rather it means a lot. It should be used to build greater awareness and should help the policy makers to formulate sustainable policies towards the greater prosperity of the present as well as future state of Bangladesh economy.

DONT the blazing inferno of Magurchara still haunt our decision-makers even after a year of that devastation? Have we calculated in our conventional national accounts the cost of the Magurchara disaster? Have we deducted the cost of Haripur disaster? Or do we estimate the loss incurred because of the grave air pollution or water pollution or catastrophic arsenic contamination or soil degradation or depletion of the Sunderbans? No, we are not calculating these degradations and resource erosions. Green accounting, comparatively a modern concept and multi-disciplinary approach, equip us with the technique of calculating those costs in terms of resource erosion for our national accounts.

As the people are becoming more sensitised about the environment, and environment is getting relatively more importance in development programming, the green accounting, environmental accounting, greening the economy and such other terms have gained popularity in the academic and research circles, among the policy makers, the development and international organisations during last two decades or more. So it is not an unfamiliar concept. In fact, Net National Welfare (NNW) was implemented for Japan in 1955, 1960, 1965 and 1970 which had provisions for some environmental damage allowances. Index for Economic Aspects of Welfare (IEW) was prepared in 1981. It included pollution costs and resource depletion. The Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW) was forwarded in 1990. Measurement of Economic Welfare (MEW) was proposed in 1973. SEEA is a follow up of all these versions of welfare accounting. But the focus of SEEA is narrower since it concerns only environmental issues.

A sustainable economy is one in which the life of the ecosystem, its services, and consequently the economy, can be maintained for a long time. It is possible to create such an economy. It is possible to develop such a system, if there is strong political will, pragmatic planning and people's participation. Environmental accounting is only a step towards that direction. It is the full integration of environmental costs and benefits into the national accounts to create Environmentally Adjusted National Accounts.

Bangladesh like many other countries is practicing the traditional way of calculating the national income. The traditional national accounting system actually fails to incorporate various issues like poverty, income inequality, social factors and environmental issues. The newly developed field of economics successfully incorporates the issues related with poverty, income inequality and social factors into the national accounting system. But still the nations all over the world have not taken into account all those factors. On the other hand, many environmentalists are continuously working on the issue of introducing environmental impacts in the national income accounting.

United Nations Statistical Office (UNSTAT) has produced recently several documents containing methodologies to achieve the objective of incorporating environment into the national income accounting. The methodology produced in

the most recent publication is called the System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA). All these ideas, proposed practices, research activities come under the Green Accounting. Globally, Green Accounting has gained circulation. Some countries have already been practicing this type of accounting process to ensure their sustainable growth with correct measures. The concept of green accounting is yet to be explored fully to achieve highest integration between the traditional national accounting and the newly invented SEEA process. Many specialists and environmentalists are working hard to have completed adjustment to SEEA to have greater sustainability in the long run at the earliest. Even Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) has received technical support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in this regard.

Under the Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP), UNDP is providing BBS with technical support. But in the context of green accounting practice, Bangladesh is still in an infancy position. IUCN Bangladesh has launched the Green Accounting Initiative as a part of Global Green Accounting Initiative. The pace of work in this regard could easily be understood through the activities of newly formed organization named Association for Green Accounting in Bangladesh (AGAB). Last year the IUCN arranged two workshops on application of environmental accounting in Bangladesh to enhance the introduction of Green Accounting in the country's national income accounting.

The concept of Green Accounting as a multidisciplinary innovative subject, needs to be handled with great care as it is also difficult to apply. It is an integration among various professions like economists, environmentalists, sociologists, statisticians, accountants, engineers and development planners who can have their different languages and jargons. So it may become intensely tough to come to a single point or issue i.e. green accounting where people from different sectors are working and sometimes defending their own disciplines and buzz words.

Despite all these limitations, there is a growing need for this system in a country like Bangladesh where population and resources have no match. In economic development history it is a very rare phenomenon that actually we are facing — such a densely populated country with very little natural resources. Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries in terms of per capita income but in terms of per square kilometer GDP we are in the middle rank and even better than many European countries. It should not be our pride rather we should be concerned about it. Because, the economy is actually bringing immense pressure on the little natural resources to have that much of per sq. km of GDP. So, to ensure the optimal use of these scarce resources we should have proper monitoring system like green accounting.

We need to invest more and more for generating same level of growth if we consider the sustainability in the development process. Because to compensate all these natural resource

degradation we need higher than previous level of investment. Therefore, the net national income accounting would be effective one as we need to incorporate the depreciation of natural resources known as social capital in green accounting beside that of economic physical capitals.

Actually, in conventional method, we are over estimating GDP growth rate as we failed to incorporate many environmental costs in our conventional accounting practice. Although they appear like zero cost inputs but they are actually positive cost for the society. It is not only the variable for growth calculation but also a variable for poverty and income inequality. Because the prevailing income inequality causes the poor to face higher level of problem impact due to the depletion of natural resources, as they are the deprived population.

This concept should be practiced parallel to the conventional SNA because the BBS is still lagging behind the traditional SNA. At present the BBS is trying to cope with the SNA 1993, so it would be wise not to contaminate their effort with a new advanced idea like green accounting. Rather it would be better conducting extensive and intensive broad researches to have greater knowledge in green accounting besides the tradi-

tional national accounting. We can merge the new concept with the formal national accounting after the BBS comes to the standard benchmark level. AGAB members would love to help BBS in this regard as professionals. AGAB members also want to collaborate with the Planning Commission in greening the plans.

Green accounting does not mean to put some new figures in the national income accounting rather it means a lot. It should be used to build greater awareness and should help the policy makers to formulate sustainable policies towards the greater prosperity of the present as well as future state of Bangladesh economy. If it really can generate mass awareness and help the Government to formulate appropriate policies then that will be the real yardstick for the success of green accounting initiative of AGAB. We have to go miles ahead in exploring ways of SEEA introduction in Bangladesh.

The writer, secretary general and a founding member of AGAB, is the chairman of Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB). The article is based on his paper presented at the workshop on Greening the National Accounts organised by AGAB at National Press Club on June 16.

Early Monsoon is Part of Global Climatic Change

Lalit K. Jha writes from New Delhi

Monsoon rains arrived in Delhi and adjoining areas on June 16, the earliest on record since 1901, bringing much relief to the people of northern India who were suffering from the unprecedented heat wave this summer which claimed over 1,700 lives all over the country.

THE arrival of the monsoon a fortnight ahead of schedule is part of the global climatic changes and could bring in unprecedented rainfall in India, says an expert. Monsoon rains arrived in Delhi and adjoining areas on June 16, the earliest on record since 1901, bringing much relief to the people of northern India who were suffering from the unprecedented heat wave this summer which claimed over 1,700 lives all over the country.

But if a well-known environment expert is to be believed, then Indians should be prepared for unprecedented rainfall — followed by a record-breaking winter.

"Early arrival monsoon rains is part of the global climatic changes which is the consequence of global warming," says Professor Syed Iqbal Husnain of the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University School of Environmental Studies, New Delhi.

"With average increase in global temperature by one degree Celsius in the last two decades, more evaporation from the earth's surface takes place," said Husnain. The result

is more precipitation in the form of rain. "So we can expect rainfall much above normal this time and in the years to follow," Husnain said.

He said that the cyclone in the western Indian state of Gujarat, which claimed hundreds of lives and destroyed property worth millions of rupees, was an unusual phenomenon. Cyclones are a common phenomenon in the Bay of Bengal and the states on the eastern coast like West Bengal, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, Husnain said.

These sort of climatic changes will become more frequent in the years to come, causing similar devastation if the present trend of increase in global warming continues, Husnain predicted.

Some feel the fears are exaggerated. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicts a normal monsoon for the 11th year running. According to statistics provided by the IMD, the average Indian rainfall for the four monsoon months from June to September is 88 centimetres.

IMD officials debunk the idea that the early arrival of monsoon has to do with global

warming or El Nino. "In fact the monsoon arrived in India as expected on June 2 in the southern Indian state of Kerala," IMD Deputy Director-General S.R. Kalsi told IANS.

On why it arrived in parts of northern India much earlier than expected, Kalsi said: "Interaction of monsoon circulation with the sub-tropical westerly flow resulted in the rapid advance of monsoon to northern India." He termed this interaction as an epochal event, but added that "it has nothing to do with global warming or climatic changes."

S. Das Sarma, former head of meteorological department of the Indian Air Force, too feels that there is nothing exceptional in the phenomenon. "Attempts are being made to attribute every unusual climatic situation to El Nino or global warming," he said.

The date of its arrival varies from year to year depending on a number of factors including movement of wind in the subtcontinent," says Das Sarma. "Due to the formation of a special depression in the region, the monsoon arrived in northern India much faster than usual," he explained.

— *India Abroad News Service*

Planet Campaign, we launched the concept of Gifts to the Earth and waited to see what would happen.

In fact, the sort of response we wanted was not long in coming, with the commitment by the President of the Russian Republic of Sakha, Mikhail Nikolaev, that 70 million hectares of virgin territory — an area twice the size of Germany — would be placed under total protection by the year 2000. This was a very welcome development, but its real significance only began to dawn on me when I realised that Sakha, which used to be known as Yakutia, is a huge country of more 300 million hectares, fully one-fifth of the Russian Federation.

The boreal forests and taiga of Sakha, 40 per cent of which falls within the Arctic Circle, are the largest unbroken forest tracts still remaining on earth. President Nikolaev's announcement, therefore, represented a really dramatic Gift to the Earth. And in spite of the temptations to exploit the natural resources of the country to further economic reconstruction in the post-Soviet era, I soon learned that the President and his ministerial team very seriously about conservation.

When Mr Nikolaev and a 13-strong delegation visited the WWF Secretariat near Geneva, I was almost overwhelmed to be party to one of the most striking land planning exercises I have ever seen.

Sakha's bold initiative was important in other ways, too, because it led to a whole series of commitments by political and business leaders which it has since been the privilege of

WWF to register. Neighbouring Taimyr, in the northern reaches of mainland Eurasia, pledged to protect almost 20 per cent of its territory, which in total forms an area as large as Germany and the Netherlands combined.

Much further south, the American State of Florida joined the movement when Governor Lawton Chiles announced a plan to protect almost 3,000 square nautical miles of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, conserving the endangered Everglades and coral reef system which is home to some of the world's most valuable marine and bird life.

In Europe, Denmark made its commitment by undertaking to build 500 offshore wind turbines by the year 2008. These machines will contribute 8 per cent of the country's electricity supply, helping Denmark to reach its ambitious goal of cutting carbon dioxide emissions in half by the beginning of the third decade of the coming century.

As the concept of Gifts to the Earth began to gather pace, big business joined in, too. Germany's AEG company, a leading producer of domestic appliances, made its commitment by a "Green Line" of electrical goods, increasing energy efficiency in cookers, washing machines, dryers, dishwashers and fridge-freezers to reduce fossil fuel emissions and thus combat climate change.

On a wider front, the B&Q company, the United Kingdom's largest retailer of home improvement products, has committed itself to reducing its environmental impact by reduc-

ing harmful organic compounds in paint, promoting energy efficiency in homes and working with 600 suppliers to improve their environmental profiles. Its special Gift is to buy only timber and wood products that come from certified, well-managed forests.

That last aim will be aided by the World Bank's global commitment to bring 200 million hectares of forests, both temperate and tropical, under independent certification as "sustainably managed" by the year 2005, and also to increase by 50 million hectares the area of forests around the world under formal protection.

So I must confess that my early scepticism was misplaced. Such Gifts to the Earth as I have described represent what is fundamental and widespread change of attitude towards environmental protection and conservation. Of course, there is much, much more to do and there are continuing battles to be fought in many areas.

But the Gifts to the Earth have shown that environmentalists, who once hammered vainly on firmly closed doors, are now being encouraged to enter into partnerships they previously could only have dreamed of in order to tackle the problems confronting the Earth.

At last, it seems, attitudes have begun to change and the logic of conservation, environmental protection and sustainable development is being accepted in quarters where it real counts.

The author is Director General of WWF-International.



Going Fast to Fast Food

The young generation in Bangladesh capital city is going fast to the fast food. As the fast food culture gets popular fast food shops are mushrooming across the city. **Sumon Patwary, Lima Halder, Bilkis Siddequa and Omar Sharif** of News Network look into the new food culture.

IT'S hot and fresh from oven. The eaters get it easy and can take it fast. It's either English, American or Italian. Names are fancy: Jumbo, Thunder Storm or Romance in Beach. It's all about the fast food that has won the palate of the urban children, teenagers and youth.

At the fast food shops along the Bailey Road in Dhaka the crowd is mostly young — boys and girls from schools, colleges and universities. On most days the line of eaters wind outside the small shops. On a rainless sunny day many of the customers just stand on the pavement and eat their food.

The popularity of this western food culture is reflected on the growing number of joints run mainly by young people, smart and educated. Not long ago fast food shops were located mainly in Dhaka's plush areas such as Gulshan, Banani or Dhanmandi. Today, they are found all over the city, including the old Dhaka. Fast food is also competing with the city's traditional restaurants that sell singara, aloo chop or samosa.

"My son is only five years old. He wants hot dogs," says Mariam Begum, a housewife at Purana Palta. Speaking about hot dog Mariam bursts into laughing. "Believe me, I never could realise what my son was talking about when one day he asked me to buy him a hot dog," narrates the 30-year-old woman. "I wondered how a hot dog could be a food item."

Neither hot dog nor other fast food items such as club sandwich, burger or pizza are any more a surprise to Mariam. It has now become a routine for her to take her son to one of the fast food shops at Bailey Road. Teenagers and students form the bulk of fast food eaters. Even though for many of them it's a heady passion for western

food, its simplicity and easy-to-get treat makes the food more popular.

Consider Sohan, a Dhaka University student. One recent day Sohan left the campus only to remember that there would be no cooking at his home. The family was out to their village home and the cook took a day off. Not used to eat at the ordinary rice-selling restaurants Sohan headed to the Bailey Road for a quick bite on the fast food.

"I never worry about my eating when food is not cooked at home. There is this fantastic fast food," enthuses Sohan, a boy from an affluent family living at Dhanmandi.

The only problem I find is that you need to have a pocketful of money. Fast food is getting pricy these days," he says.

How do you these days celebrate a good news? Sweets have been a traditional item. Then came the Chinese food. Today, it's the fast food — a burger or a hot dog along with cold drinks now available in paper cups.

The phenomenon is only a decade-old in Bangladesh. When it started first mid 1980s the response was poor. Parents used to discourage children because it was believed not to be a healthy food. They would rather go for Chinese.

But the skepticism about fast food is melting. Improved quality is one of the reasons why fast food is gaining popularity. The shops are clean, crisp and bright. It provides a platform for chatting with friends. Brave lovers prefer meeting at fast food joints to any Chinese restaurant because it looks more smart and consistent with the modern trend. Fast food is casual too. It goes with the spirit of the young people.

Though international food chain such as McDonalds and Burger King is still to arrive in Bangladesh, some Bangladeshis

entrepreneurs have established their local food chain with help from some foreign food chains. Pizza fast food chain having now 37 outlets is one of them. Mexican El Tore chain has recently come to Bangladesh. Swiss fast food chain Guster Ltd. has opened a shop in Dhaka.

Southern Chicken, a British fast food chain, has come to Bangladesh too. To add attraction to the business fast food shops are luring the young people with computers and internet. Dhaka has now a couple of cyber cafe, where people can eat as well as surf through the internet.

Employment to jobless educated youth is a major plus for the fast food. There is no sense of humiliation in running a fast food shop in contrast to operating an ordinary Dhaka restaurant. The business is brisk too. It does not hurt the status of the upper class youth.

Some innovative entrepreneurs have taken their food mobile. Sajna restaurant is one of them. Sajna food is now available on mobile vans at some points of the city. Fast food has its low points too.

"Fast food provides a high amount of calorie and cholesterol. So, those who have hypertension or diabetes should not take this food," cautions Dr Iqbal Kabir, a medicine specialist.

Thank God, fast food is popular mainly with the young people who have little to mind about cholesterol or high blood sugar. But serious concern has gripped some eaters who have discovered that some chicken sandwiches had inside them magur fish instead of chicken. "This fishy thing from a few chicken hearted businessmen must stop," says Sohan, the university student.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Barisal Public Works Division, Barisal

Tender Notice

No 136/1997-98

Sealed tenders separately in BD Form No 2911 are hereby invited from contractor/firm/civil/sanitary under the directorate of Public works and from contractor/ contractors firm with financial feasibility for the undermentioned work. Tenders can be submitted in all the offices mentioned in serial No 1 till 12-00 Noon on 30-6-98. Tenders will be opened on the day of submitting tender at 12-15 PM in presence of intending participants in tender. Name of work, name of contractor/firm and address and to whom the tender to be submitted will have to be mentioned on to be submitted will have to be mentioned on envelope.


1. Names of offices to sell and : Group no 1 and 2.
receive tender : All Divisions under Public Works Circle, Barisal.
2. Last date of selling tender : 29-6-98 (Till office hours).
3. Date of receiving tender : 30-6-98 (Till 12-00 Noon).
4. Tender group list

Group No	Name of work	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Time for completion of work	Eligibility of contractors
1 (one)	Upward extension on work of third floor on the second floor of staff quarter of staff quarter of Barisal Fire Station.	7,36,126/-	14,725/-	120 (one hundred and twenty) days	Special Class I/Class I/enlisted with Directorate of Public Works/Class II enlisted with Public Works Zone, Khulna/ Class III building contractors/ firms enlisted with Public Works Circle, Barisal.
2 (two)	Work of water supply and sewerage of the extension of third floor on second floor of staff quarter of Barisal Fire Stations	1,30,741/-	2,615/-	do-	Special Class I/Class I sanitary, water supply contractors enlisted with Directorate of Public Works/Contractory firms/Class II sanitary and water supply contractors from enlisted with Public Works Zone, Khulna.

5. Tender schedule including additional terms and conditions, Bangladesh Form No 2911 can be seen at all offices as mentioned in serial No 1 and can be purchased on payment of usual fee of Taka 400/- (four hundred) only and for BD Form No 2911 on payment of Taka 25/- (twenty-five) only (refundable in both the cases). Tender schedule can be purchased by contractor/contractor firm's managing director themselves or his/their representative bearing a letter authorised by then and signature duly attested by contractor/ory managing director of contractor firms on production of original book of enlistment at the time of purchase.
6. Contractor/contractory firm will have to apply at least 3 (three) days prior to last date of selling tender for purchasing tender schedule from the Public Works Divisions as mentioned in serial No 1 except Barisal Public Works Division. No application will be accepted after the expiry of that period.
7. Attested copy of certificate of registration of Value Added Tax and attested copy of TIN certificate regarding payment of income tax and attested copy including signature in blue book of concerned contractors/contractory firms will have to be submitted along with tender.
8. Any kind of attestation must be done by class I gazetted officer.
9. If more than one quotes the lowest price, lottery will be held in the office of undersigned on 9-7-98 Thursday at 11-00 AM to select 1 (one) contractor. All the participants or his/their nominated representatives are hereby requested to be present in the lottery.

Engr Golam Mohammad
Executive Engineer
Barisal Public Works Division
Barisal
Phone NO : 52943

DDP-13618-15/6
G-1451



Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank

Principal Office
Sadharan Bima Bhaban, Greater Road, Rajshahi-6000
Common Services Department

Tender Notice

For Printing various kinds of Ledger, Register, Voucher, Form etc of the Bank

Sealed tenders are invited from experienced, reputed & established bonafide offset printing presses for supply of various kinds of ledger, register, voucher, form etc of the bank after offset printing with paper & binding.

02. Sample, design, schedule with terms & conditions will be available any day during office hours from Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank, Local Principal Office, Rajshahi or Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank, Dhaka Branch, Sena Kalyan Bhaban (Second floor), 195 Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka. Price of each schedule is Tk 200.00 (two hundred) only (non-refundable). Schedule can be collected from the above-mentioned bank branches on cash payment of the price of schedule Tk 200.00 (two hundred) only up to 3:00 PM of 02.07.98. No schedule will be supplied after this date.

03. Tenders can be deposited in tender box kept at Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank, Principal Office, Common Services Department, Sadharan Bima Bhaban, Kazihata, Rajshahi or Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank, Dhaka Branch, Sena Kalyan Bhaban (Second floor), 195, Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka up to 4-30 PM of 06.07.98. Then all tenders received at both the offices will be opened on 12.07.98 at 3-00 PM only at the above-mentioned Principal Office of the bank, Common Services Department, Rajshahi in presence (if any) of the tenderers.

04. Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank reserves the right to accept or reject the lowest or any or all tenders without assigning any reason.

Md. Mobarak Hossain
Deputy General Manager

DDP-13254-10/6
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