

How important is biodiversity conservation for attaining MDGs?

Wetland ecosystem is one of the important factors for maintenance of sound ecological condition in the country. If wetland biodiversity is depleted because of unscientific and unplanned urbanization then automatically bio-resource sustainability will cause mal-directions in the national programmes of all development attempts. Nearby Dhaka city, the entire Ashulia area is under the wetland ecosystem. But in the name of urbanisation, the characteristic ecology of the wetland habitat is going to be brutally killed and the bio-resource over there has seriously been endangered.

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IN the recent Biennial Conference of the Zoological Society of Bangladesh (ZSB) the theme was "Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Management of Environment". This is the most wanted topic in the present situation of the world. The theme is vitally essential for biologists, ecologists, economists and social scientists. Because they can keep bio-resource active in building economy strong both in the national and global level.

Here we are concerned with biological reference of *environment* which now has at least two different interpretations e.g. natural *environment* and artificial or *techno-environment*. Technological environment is artificial, developed due to the use of various technological know-how, use of insecticides, chemicals fertilizers, pesticides, GMO seeds, HYV, industry expansion, etc. etc.

The millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was derived from the Millennium Declaration adopted in 2000 at the Millennium Summit, which was attended by 156 heads of states or governments. In 2000, the 189 member states of the United Nations agreed to a broad set of goals setting international development priorities for the coming years. Most of the goals are envisaged to be globally achieved by the year 2015. There are eight goals and 18 targets.

The first goal is 'Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger' with two targets: (a) Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day; (b) Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

The second goal is 'Achieve universal primary education' with a single target: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

The third goal is 'Promote gender equality and empower women' with again single target: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably

by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015.

The fourth goal is 'Reduce child mortality' with one target: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.

The fifth goal is 'Improve maternal health' with one target: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.

The sixth goal is 'Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases' with two targets: (a) Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS; (b) Halve halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

The seventh goal is 'Ensure environmental sustainability' with three targets: (a) Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources; (b) Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water; (c) By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

The eighth goal is 'Develop a global partnership for development' with six targets: (a) Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system (includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction-both nationally and internationally); (b) Address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) (includes: tariff and quota free access for LDC exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA (Overseas Development Assistance) for countries committed to poverty); (c) Address the special needs of land locked countries and small island developing states (through the programme of Action for the sustainable development of small Island Developing States and the outcome of the 22nd special session of the UN General Assembly); (d) Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international mea-

sures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term; (e) In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for descent and productive work for youth; (f) In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries; (g) In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.

The first seven goals and the 11 targets under them are the ones to be pursued by the developing countries, while the 8th goal involves action by developing countries in terms of further expansion of the role of market and globalisation but also calls for assistance to be provided to them by the developed countries.

The targets to be achieved have been set for 2015 with reference to 1990 as the base year. The targets set are to reduce the relevant deficit by half or by two-thirds or by three-fourths or to be fully alleviated. In so far as poverty reduction is concerned, for example, the targets are to reduce the proportion of extremely poor people to half by 2015 in relation to 1990, and also hunger by the same proportion.

At least two conditions must be fulfilled, if a country has to achieve or at least make significant progress towards the MDG targets. One relates to the capacity of the country to implement policies and programmes effectively. In most developing countries, governance is poor in terms of human capability on one hand and lack of transparency and accountability on the other. That is, inefficiency and corruption are the two hallmarks of governance in these countries. It is, therefore, essential that the developing countries take necessary steps to establish good governance, including rule of law and improvement in the economic and social management capacity. Obviously, these are involved tasks and cannot be fulfilled quickly. But it is crucial that governance targets are set and solid progress towards those targets made by taking necessary action with determination.

In Bangladesh perspective,

main constraints for the development are the corruption and inadequacy in administration. In a short time it is not possible to describe MDGs and their importance in Bangladesh, nevertheless, here we find that the MDGs could be dealt under the 8 heading as follows: 1. Bangladesh and MDCs. 2. MDGs and promoting gender equality. 3. MDGs, Bangladesh, WTO and TRIP. 4. MDGs, poverty eradication and Bangladesh. 5. Achieving MDGs and constraints in Bangladesh. 6. Attaining MDGs and Bangladesh. 7. Review of PRSP and 8. MDGs and the conservation of biodiversity.

Now, I like to draw attention on how the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are related with biodiversity conservation. It is to be said that, out of 8 goals, the 7th goal deals with ensuring environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability in our planet is prerequisite for all development goals and targets. Accordingly biodiversity conservation or conservation biology is the epicentre of all frontiers of environmental sustainability. Out of two factors (biotic and abiotic factors) of an ecosystem in any region of the world, biotic factor is comprised of two aspects (plants and animals) in that ecosystem. If we fail to maintain environmental soundness in any area of the world we cannot even initiate any plan for any kind of development. Environmental soundness is highly dependent with the species richness of the plant and animal populations in any area of the world. This species richness and the nature of well and proportionate interaction in between the bio-resources and the physical factors there in the ecosystem are highly necessary.

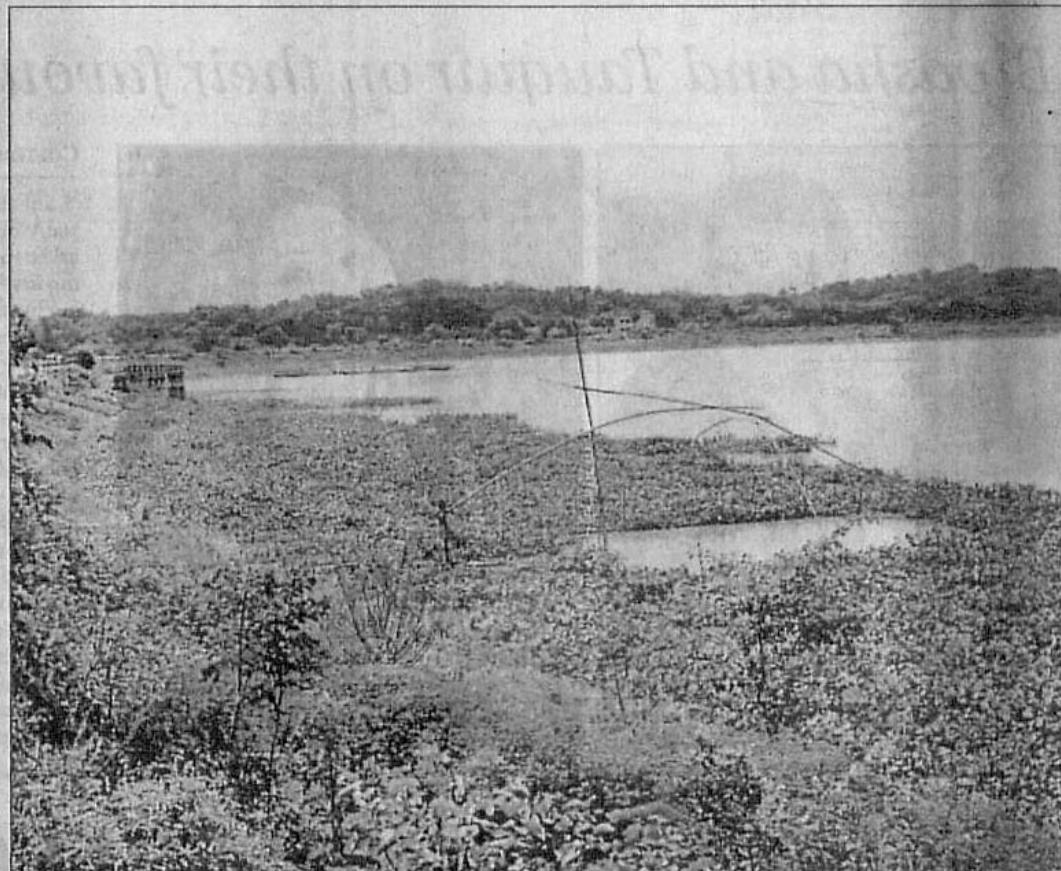
Biodiversity conservation or conservation biology has got great role in the maintenance of species richness and proper functioning of an ecosystem. Conservation of biodiversity means the conservation of biotic and abiotic combination together and their interaction to provide the sustainable situation for living organisms there in an ecosystem. If the normal proliferation and reproduction of all living organisms and their interaction with abiotic factors fail there in an ecosystem, then ecological imbalance remains in its persistence. This is why persisted ecological imbalance makes the environment unfavourable for initiating any kind of development plan or programme. And this is why the biodiversity conservation stands as epicentre for the sustainability of the global developmental goals and targets. In the present world biodiversity conservation is highly associated with the following

aspects and field of development in the global perspectives.

The practice of biodiversity conservation is highly related with the modern world and society under the following headings. 1. Biodiversity and poverty. 2. Biodiversity in Food security. 3. Biodiversity in production of crops. 4. Livestock and biodiversity. 5. Biodiversity in global fisheries. 6. Biodiversity, forests and forestry. 7. Wildlife and biodiversity. 8. Biodiversity and human health. 9. Road construction and biodiversity. 10. Regional approaches and biodiversity. 11. Genetic resources use and biodiversity. 12. Biotechnology and biodiversity. 13. Trade policy and biodiversity. 14. Sustainable use of biodiversity. 15. Maintenance of wetland ecosystem and biodiversity. 16. Tourism and biodiversity. 17. Global change and biodiversity. 18. Environment and biodiversity. 19. Social issues and biodiversity. 20. Biodiversity and religious beliefs. 21. Biodiversity, world history and the human philosophy.

In 2004, the subject of "biodiversity and global change" was analysed by a group of scientists, nature lovers, economists and social scientists. In this analysis some social issues and scientific issues have been identified. According to the participants in the group some significant points and fields of exercise were found to be considered for future environmental development in connection with the biodiversity conservation and global changes. J.D. Vigne pointed out that the outlook for 2010 will be the biodiversity and the expansion crisis in human society. A. Teyssedre indicated that the planet is towards a sixth mass extinction crisis of species. P. Curry and Serge Morand analyzed the 'marine biodiversity and global change'. They pinpointed that this subject is rendering the situation of a dynamic interaction with a human component. J.E. Guegan and F. Renaud gave their attention towards an ecology of health and environmental impact. They emphasized that biodiversity and global changes are significantly related and interdependent. M. Trommter and J. Weber dealt with sustainable development and global change. They critically analysed the sustainable development building and the role of biodiversity conservation for maintaining sound environment around. G.C. Genot and R. Barbault concentrated their attention in the field of conservation policy.

The scientists have found deep association and assemblage among the subject of conservation



A part of Ashulia wetland ecosystem in rainy season where the local people use to trap fresh water fishes; whereas in the dry season the wetland habitat is being filled up for construction and housing extension.

policy, making environment sound, maintenance of ecosystem well-functioning, sustainable development and the strengthening of development different social issues. Under the abstract of the above attempted summaries, it is evident and clear that all development programmes and future projects are deeply associated with the question of biodiversity conservation and bio-resource protection. One addition could be made here with emphasis that the world summit in 2002 was held in Johannesburg. The contributors, scientists and social scientists in the Summit were concentrated on four principal issues. The subjects of the issues were as follows: 1. Economic and social issues in sustainable development. 2. Biodiversity: a heritage under threat, the ruthless pursuit of resources and the very essence of life. 3. Desertification and its relationship to the environment and development: a problem that affects us all. And 4. Climate change. Here it is also found that out of four identified issues for global development and environmental soundness, two were in the subject of biodiversity conservation or/and related to the subject. It goes without saying that association of MDGs and the environmental management is the demand of the new age and it is for the genuine reason of sound protection of

environment and nature.

A part of Ashulia wetland ecosystem in rainy season where the local people use to trap fresh water fishes; whereas in the dry season the wetland habitat is being filled up for construction and housing extension.

Biodiversity depletion can cause environmental devastation and mal-developmental situation in Bangladesh also. Bangladesh is full of rivers and aquatic bodies. In the country (round the year), the typical ecological condition is to be remained wet, otherwise not only the agriculture is hampered, but also other aquatic bio-resources are always in the troublesome survival condition. Existence of bogs and marsh lands is the characteristic ecological feature of the country. Wetland ecosystem is one of the important factors for maintenance of sound ecological condition in the country. If wetland biodiversity is depleted because of unscientific and unplanned urbanization then automatically bio-resource sustainability will cause mal-directions in the national programmes of all development attempts. Nearby Dhaka city, the entire Ashulia area is under the wetland ecosystem. In the rainy season, the area remains under 12 feet water in average and then that entire area could be utilised as fresh water fish breeding ground and also for the increase of other

aquatic bio-resource proliferation site. This will bring economic support and development than more any other attempts if it could be arranged in scientifically planned ways. Moreover, this could be made in more sustainable and environmentally sound way and also for longer time period. But in the name of urbanisation, the characteristic ecology of the wetland habitat is going to be brutally killed and the bio-resource over there has seriously been endangered. So, the biodiversity conservation in the ecosystem is going to be permanently stopped here. This type of brutal attempts to the biodiversity sustainability will seriously threat not only biodiversity conservation but also will create many frontiers of constraints for the sound development of the nation as a whole. Rather this area should be taken under RAMSAR site selection by global declaration. Not only the Ashulia wetland ecosystem, there are many such ecological other areas passing the critical days in such situation. If the situation is not taken under serious consideration by proper authority, definite change of the local ecology will cause the change in ecology and climate for the worse.

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Sound around our everyday life

To further aggravate the situation, every nook and corner of the city sees the unnecessary miking -- meetings, slogans, social, cultural and religious gathering and functions making serious sound by mikes and other easily available means. It seems there is none to look after the matter or there is none who knows the bad effect of sound. Children, pregnant mothers, heart patients and weak people immediately become the victim of this pollution. There is no factual statistics but it is seen that almost every house witness the heart or diabetic patients due to this cause but nobody seems bothered about it.

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SOUND pollution has occupied a significant part of our everyday life contributing a lot to health hazard. It has become almost a normal affair of our urban life in particular and both urban and rural life in general. Our villages are not far from the madding crowd by virtue of the development of science. The situation has proved that we are getting accustomed to it. Again it seems nobody bothers about it and it seems nobody's concern that this seriously continues

causing serious health hazards. The rate of blood pressure, heart disease and diabetic patients are getting higher day by day. It is seriously affecting children. They are becoming restless, losing appetite, weight or becoming overweight, suffering from ocular diseases and many other diseases. These serious diseases can be attributed to serious sound pollution. But who bothers about it?

Julius Caesar banned chariot driving at night as it created sound causing disturbance to the citizens. Definitely it was not so shrieking sound. The wheels of

cart could never make so shrill sound as we experience every moment today. He understood the bad effect of sound more than twenty five hundred years ago. Now being the citizens of a modern and computerised world, we fail to understand this practical fact. Human have the ability to tolerate 30 decibels of sound, whereas we are exposed to about 90 decibels everyday. Quite abnormal situation it poses. The sign of abnormality prevails in human behaviour and attitude due to this abnormal sound pollution. Various professional vie with each other to create generate sound.

See the police van or lorry create unnecessary sirens and horns. Almost everyday I experience. Ambulance carrying dying patients should lie in a soundless atmosphere but get exposed to serious sound.

Our transport of all kinds cause serious and bad sound pollution. The reckless and illiterate drivers unnecessarily make shrill sound by playing hydraulic horns. Actually they don't know the bad and harmful effects of sound.

They just do it because of their normal behaviour. People are getting educated but they don't seem to be so much concerned about the bad effects of sound. Law is there, law enforcing agency members are here, there and everywhere but the pollution continues. Law remains confined between police sergeant and the driver. None of them is so much concerned about it. The police make money and the driver continues to make sounds. Should we allow it to continue? Of course, not. We must not continue for the sake of our existence and for the sake of our posterity.

How can we get rid of this mal-ady? We must make soundless horns. No hydraulic horns will be allowed to use. All the vehicles must be without hydraulic horns. If the vehicle itself doesn't have hydraulic horns, definitely the drivers will not be able to make any harmful sound. The police will have no scope to allow the drivers to continue making sounds though their income may be a little bit less. Shouldn't we allow it?

Kunming, a city of China, just two hours air journey from Dhaka and definitely not a European part of the globe but I got astonished to see how different it is from Dhaka. The whole city seems to be a residential area. Very big vehicles but very meek sound. The private cars and small cars don't make any sound. The whole city seems to be calm and quite. In the evening when we don't hear one another standing on the streets of Dhaka, you will see that Kunming city seems to be almost sleeping. No sound, peaceful silence prevails all around. What has happened to the city of Dhaka? All kinds of vehicles are vying with

each other how shriek they can make sound. Even in the long queue of traffic congestion, drivers make unnecessary sounds causing serious problems to the stranded passengers of different vehicles. Neither these drivers know the harmful effects of sound, nor any law touches them to stop doing this thing. We have Ministry of Environment and Environment Directorate but vehicles continue doing the most hazardous jobs.

To further aggravate the situation, every nook and corner of the city sees the unnecessary miking -- meetings, slogans, social, cultural and religious gathering and functions making serious sound by mikes and other easily available means. It seems there is none to look after the matter or there is none who knows the bad effect of sound. Children, pregnant mothers, heart patients and weak people immediately become the victim of this pollution. There is no factual statistics but it is seen that almost every house witness the heart or diabetic patients due to this cause but nobody seems bothered about it.

When people are not conscious only the government cannot deal with this gigantic problem. Now we have several private TV channels. They can play laudable roles to minimise the pollution of sound. TV serials, dramas and short films can be made which will cover the highest number of population to make them aware of the bad effects of sound pollution. BTV must play the role of leader in this line though people hardly watches BTV.

The owners of industries should arrange a regular session for their workers. Environmentalists must come forward with slogans, banners, festoons and public contact individual to individual, society to society and area to area. The artists of all kinds and levels must perform something which attaches much importance to this issue. Now electronic media stands first to spread any idea, news and ideology. Print media lags far behind in this race. Who reads newspapers now a-days? Whose who read, who reads environmental articles or facts? Even

then, we, the writers feel constrained to produce some articles regarding this matter. Actually, all sorts of professionals must do something to minimise sound pollution as it directly touches all. It should not follow the theory of everybody's business means nobody's business.

On many religious and social occasions young boys and girls of all areas and mohalls play with sound creating devices, which the police must ban without making any delay. The meetings of political leaders not be amplified by using many mikes as people will watch it on TV those who don't attend the meeting. Religious and political leaders' involvement is a must to minimise sound pollution. In many religious functions unnecessary sounds are being made without caring for public health and misinterpreting religion. We must consider that evil of sound is not a political issue rather it is closely related to our peaceful existence which we cannot afford to avoid in any way.

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