

Dynamics of Public Policy Making in Bangladesh: The Case of the Environmental Policy 1992

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Introduction

Public policies are the product of the interactions of many forces and factors within and out the organization; and the policy making process as such is to compromise with various indigenous and exogenous interests (Rahman & Islam 1995: 39). Policy outcome depends on the one hand on nature, interest, capability, technical knowledge, power of the actors and on the other hand on intensity of the importance of the factors, and above all on the dynamics of the role of these factors and actors. These actors and factors are playing a role at different stages of policy making such as: problem identification, policy demand, policy agenda, policy formulation and adoption, policy implementation and policy evaluation. In Bangladesh, an age-old “top down” approach is generally followed in drafting policies and plans of the government. Hired consultants, from home and abroad, draft a policy; views and comments are received from various ministries and agencies; are discussed in a number of inter-ministerial meetings followed by approval of the policy by the cabinet. Unfortunately, there is hardly any mechanism in place within the government machinery to consult the people, the civil society, the professional groups or the NGOs. But gradually the government has realized that popular support and opinion in favor of a policy would ensure better implementation. The government has also acknowledged that policy decisions cannot be eyed as close door activity. Policy is rather a collective one, it is the outcome of the direct or indirect participation of the government and non-government actors and these actors exerted influence on different levels of policy making. From this realization, the government is giving emphasis on to develop a proactive, participatory process to frame national policy. But there is no initiative to identify what is actually happening in policy making, which increased the need for independent research.

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The present paper with the broader objective of assessing the dynamics of environmental policy formulation in Bangladesh makes attempt to analyze the role of different actors and factors involved in the public policy making process with particular reference to the Environment Policy of 1992 .It is assumed that this exercise may add new perspectives to the development debate and understanding of the dynamics of public policy formulation in a typical third world setting like Bangladesh

Since ‘Environment’ is a new research area in social science especially in Public Administration and development management the exploratory research method has been followed for this study. In Bangladesh context, this research is unique and there are not enough past evidences and information to begin with a hypothesis. In this case, the exploratory research will provide sufficient data for formulation of further research hypothesis more precisely.

Primary and secondary both sources were used for the collection of data. Primary data was collected from the former and present officials of Department Of Environment (DOE), Ministry Of Forest Environment (MOFE), persons involved in the formulation process, and NGO officials.

Public Policy and Policy Making Process : A Conceptual framework

Policy making typically involves a pattern of action extending over time and involving many decisions. Public policy therefore must be considered as something much more than simple governmental output. Moreover, there must be types of policy corresponding to distinctive sets of decisions taken within the political system. Thus to focus on output alone may result in a partial and incomplete view of the dynamics and totality of public policy. The narrower definition of public policy focuses on the direct impact of specific governmental decisions. The more comprehensive definition includes not only the specific governmental decisions (Public Policies) reached and the impact of those decisions, but also the governmental and non-governmental factors and ramifications of those decisions (Caputo 1977:1). A public policy may have either macro or micro perspectives. Micro policy is designed for a specific or a local area, but a macro policy has far wider application. It may be employed in the whole policy or the whole economy (Gosh 1992:64). Dye defined ‘Public policy is whatever the government chooses to do or not to do’ (Dye 1984:3).

Anderson summarized the concept of public policy in the following way (Anderson 1976:3-4):

First, public policy is purposive, goal oriented behavior rather than random or chance behavior. Public policies are not acts that just happen, even though not all of their consequences or effects are anticipated.

Second, policy consists of courses of action – rather than separate, discrete decisions or actions - performed by government officials. Policy involves not only the decisions to enact a law but also the subsequent acts regarding implementation, interpretation, and enforcement of the law.

Third, policy is what government does in controlling inflation, cleaning up the environment or distributing income- not what government will do or what government intends to do.

Fourth, public policy may be either negative or positive. Positive policy is involved when the government takes action to resolve a particular problem, negative policy occurs when the government decides not to act in an area where government action is sought. Government in other words, can decide not to act, thus following a hand-off or laissez-faire policy.

Fifth, public policy is based on law and is authoritative. Public policy has an implied threat of legitimate coercion, which is usually lacking in the policies of a private organization.

Finally, public policy is often determined by the politic of public policy.

From the above discussion it is evident that public policy is manifested in laws, public statements, official regulations or widely accepted and publicly visible pattern of behavior. The implementation, interpretation, enforcement and impact of laws and regulations are also part of policy.

Public policy always is the end product of a Policy Formulation Process consisting of various activities (Anderson et. al 1984:5) and means the development of a mechanism for solving a public problem (Peters 1986:51). There are several alternative ways in which one can go about analyzing policy options and making rational decisions. These are all quite similar but each uses different key words to describe their particular framework and each goes into varying amounts of detail.

Several interactive forces are active in the policy making process which in fact shapes the policy outcome. The term ‘force’ refers to a person, thing, belief etc. with considerable power and influence (Oxford University Press 1974). But several kinds of actors are especially important in formulating policies, and several are less important (Peters

1982: 52). Peters identified four policy actors: the public bureaucracy, think tanks and shadow cabinets, interest groups, and congressman. Sapru divided forces in the policy-making process into two divisions, such as: unofficial policy makers and official policy makers. Unofficial policy makers are those who are not the formal part of policymaking process. Unofficial policy makers include: individuals, electoral pledges, influence of the media, pressure groups, and political parties. On the other hand, official policy makers include: legislature, executive, bureaucracy, and judiciary. Official policy makers are those who have the legal authority to formulate policy. This type of policy makers is a member of the legislature, local councilors, ministers, senior officials and judges (Sapru 1994:59). The actors that have a dominant role in the policy-making process may, broadly, be categorized as (Rahman& Islam 1995: 40) internal actors and external actors. Internal actors include the formal policy makers, and the unofficial participants. The formal policy makers cover: parliament, the political executive (the Prime Minister, Cabinet & Ministers), the permanent executive (the secretariat, minister & divisions), the courts, policy staff within the government, and advisory boards. Unofficial participants comprise political parties, service associations, trade unions, professional bodies, clientele groups, and mass media. The donor/funding agencies, foreign investors, regional and international economic & political forums, international pressure groups, international experts/ consultants form the external actors.

Context of the Environment Policy of 1992

Environment pollution and its control, environment protection, environmental management, ecological balances are comparatively new concepts in Bangladesh. It was only in the late sixties that the trend of environmental degradation was first observed with anxiety by various quarters in Bangladesh. With the advent of the 70's a general realization and awareness that human activities, internationally or inadvertently, have been causing modifications, changes and damages to the environment became manifest. However, environment has now been accepted the world over as the key concern for the progress and very survival of the mankind. In the recent years, internationally, the importance of proper environmental protection and management has been duly recognized (Hossain 1999). Bangladesh became independent in 1972 and took the grand opportunity to represent itself in any world forum. Consequently, Bangladesh participated at the Stockholm Conference and attempted to appease the world community. Bangladesh

was also, being a member of the international community, taking steps corresponding to the world over concern and initiatives since its participation in the Stockholm Conference on 5th June 1972, which was organized by the United Nations according to its certain resolutions adopted in the general assembly held in 1968 (Hossain 1999). Since the Stockholm Conference on Environment in 1972, the Government of Bangladesh has been trying to be proactive about various environmental issues and concerns (Mahfuzullah 1999: 41). As a follow up action of the Stockholm Conference, matching the perceptions of the Conference, the Government of Bangladesh had taken up Water Pollution Control (Amendment) Order 1973, Wild Life Preservation Order 1973, Wild Life Preservation (Amendment) Act 1973, Water Pollution Control Project initiated, Territorial Water and Maritime Zone Act 1974, Water Pollution Control (Amendment) Act 1974, Haor Development Board Ordinance 1977, Environmental Pollution Control Ordinance 1977, Environmental Pollution Control Board (EPCB) created, Environment Pollution Control Project initiated, Environment Pollution Control Cell created under the aegis of the Department of Public Health Engineering and with manpower of 27, a project primarily aiming at water pollution control through promulgating Water Pollution Control Ordinance in 1973. After the Stockholm Conference, Bangladesh concentrated mainly on water pollution issues mostly because oil spill, river fire, acidification of lake water, etc. had been hotly debated in the west during that period. But at that time, Bangladesh did not have any comprehensive environmental policy though Stockholm Conference had placed due emphasis on environment policy. The publication of the 'Our Common Future' in 1987 and the decision of the UN general assembly (Resolution 44/228, 1989) to convene United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) on 3-14 June 1992 have brought a new wave not only in Bangladesh but also all over the world. Suddenly whole world became more and more conscious about environmental issues and consequently began to take different measures to face the environmental challenge. Following this trend Bangladesh government moved forward to participate in the Rio Earth Summit, and undertook a number of policy initiatives. Among these initiatives to formulate Ministry of Forest and Environment, Department of Environment and Environment Policy of 1992 are considered as a landmark development in the history of environmental governance in Bangladesh. The conference informally termed as the Earth Summit was held at the Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 3

June to 14 June 1992. This summit was the main impetus for the formulation of environment policy in Bangladesh. Government took the initiative to formulate the policy to attend the Rio Conference. MOFE has taken the decision to formulate the policy and consequently pass the decision to the DOE¹. A number of events prompted the decision of the government to formulate Environment Policy of 1992 which was initiated in 1989:

- After 1972, there has been a consensus regarding the role of government in environmental protection at national, regional and international level;
- In the mid '80s most countries in the world has already recognized the importance of creating an appropriate legal basis for the prevention of continued environmental degradation and for the protection of natural resource base;
- It was in pursuant of the commitment made by the government in various international and regional forums including Stockholm Conference.
- Bangladesh agrees in principle with the approach of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WECD) and with its recommendations published in 1987 (MOFE 1992: 3).
- The government has subscribed to several important environmental conventions, treaties, and protocols.
- The formation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988, which moved to encourage greater LDC participation
- The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which was held in 1992 after three years of preparation

Some Important Points Related to the Rio Conference

The establishment of a PrepCom was an extremely important administrative step in the process of the conference because it refined conference issues in seeking consensus. When world leaders meet at the conference itself, their only task was to approve pre-negotiated documents (Shanna 1992). Bangladesh attended almost every preparatory committee meeting. An opinion expressed from the preparatory committee that one country should formulate environment policy. Government felt enormous pressure to formulate an environment policy to fulfill this commitment². In this context, policy entrepreneurs in Bangladesh felt it urgent to have an environment policy in order to both represent itself in the global forum and intergovernmental negotiation.

1 Opinion expressed by former director general, Department of Environment

2 Opinion expressed by a former deputy secretary of the GoB

Earth Summit was a follow up conference and it was expected that the conference will assess the amount of achievements and failures during the last 20 years after 1972 Stockholm Conference and take decision accordingly (MOFE 1992: 7). Like many other countries Bangladesh had to prepare a country report highlighting development trends and environmental impacts, and response to environmental/development issues. Bangladesh government felt the need to have an environment policy before preparing the final draft of the country report, as the report would be considered as the progress report for Bangladesh since Stockholm Conference. To prepare the country report a taskforce was formed containing three members (MOFE 1992:4).

Along with the national report prepared by government, Bangladesh had to present a report prepared by NGO sector containing NGOs recommendations on 'Environment and Development' to UNCED held in Brazil, June 1992. With this purpose a workshop was organized on 9 November 1991 sponsored by Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB), NGO Affairs Bureau and United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The purpose was to facilitate Bangladeshi NGO's substantive contribution to UNCED. A Task force coordinated the workshop while the Centre of Mass Education in Science (CMES) organized it. A total number of 256 delegates of NGOs from all over the country participated. Representatives from relevant government ministries and some government and semi government organizations also participated. Here they gave their opinions and recommendations as well as summarized their experience in programs related to environment and development. During this session various recommendations were discussed and adopted. Along with many other recommendations they recommended "national policies to be meaningful, should not be framed bureaucratically at the top. These should be the result of the widest possible discussions and consultations among the people and should include inputs from NGOs. Only such policies can be effectively implemented." Recommendations of this workshop had expedited the environment policy formulation process of the government.

According to the recommendation of the UN general assembly Bangladesh also participated at a number of regional meeting and recommendations of these meetings had greatly influenced the environmental policy content and also expedite the process. From inception to approval (1989-1992) environment policy has been changed several times. It has gone through a lengthy modification process and finally took the present shape. The recommendations of these meetings had a positive impact on the environment policy.

At around the same time, Bangladesh's major development partners started showing interest in environmental matters. Most donors became

more and more involved in environmental assistance at government level and side-by-side NGO level (Rahman 1990: 10). These had mostly been initiated due to environmental concerns in home countries or headquarters rather than in the Bangladesh offices (Rahman 1990: 94). Consequently both NGO and government became interested to take environment related projects to fulfill the condition of some loan agreements made with some donor agencies. Even they also framed a Local Consultative Group, which met in Dhaka periodically, coordinated by UNDP, to share information on different donors' activities on environmental issues (Rahman 1990). Donors undertook a wide range of studies both of the state of the environment as a whole and of specific areas of particular concern. There was also a pressure on government to formulate environment policy from the donors, which is reflected in the following quotation, "Ministry sources say if the policy is not approved immediately disbursement of the aid money for many of the development projects will be delayed. Donors are attaching importance to the policy, sources add"³. Government had to comply with the donors' condition; otherwise they will not support us⁴.

Most Donors showed greater interest in the environment field. As a result a number of NGOs had started to work exclusively devoted to protecting environment or facilitating mobilization of people for environment. Some of the NGOs were active in environment related activities. The international NGOs have had sporadic involvement in the country and a number of them have been noted as having undertaken some activities in the environmental field. Local agencies will be an important channel in translating the many issues of conservation and environment into effective action program (MOFE 1992). These NGOs can be divided into several categories with respect to their main activities such as research NGO, awareness/ media NGOs, activist NGOs, and development NGOs.

The emergence of non-government organizations and expert groups and activities undertaken by these environmental NGOs as well as to secure funding from both bilateral and multilateral development agencies the government has introduced a wide range of initiatives. The severe floods of 1987 and 1988, and the countrywide resurgence of concern about environmental issues, have heightened interest in improving environmental management in Bangladesh (Rahman 1990: 11). The government has taken programs and projects in response to environmental/development issues. These are programs/ projects to protect the environment and manage natural resources; promotion of public awareness and public education; research; policy analysis and training and environmental monitoring. The Bangladesh country report

3 Daily Star, 26 June 1992

4 Opinion expressed by a former deputy secretary of the GOB

for UNCED revealed a brief description of the positive programs of the government (up to 1992) and its political will to act effectively towards solving the environmental problems and for achieving sustainable development:

- The government has declared 1990 as ‘the year of the environment’ and the following decade as the ‘decade of the environment’.
- In the fourth five year plan started July 1990, environmental protection has been given due importance to make development projects environmentally sound.
- To deal effectively with the environmental issues and attach them due priority, the government has created a new Ministry called the Ministry of Forest and Environment (MOFE) in August 1989 and renamed earlier ‘Department of Environment Pollution Control’ as ‘Department of Environment (DOE)’ and placed the department under this newly formed Ministry.
- The Minister in charge of MOFE has been made a permanent member of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council, to look into environmental soundness of major projects.
- To make development programs environmentally sound, it has been declared that Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) would be required for all development projects. All new projects relating to development will need environmental examination and clearance from the MOFE.
- Established the ‘International Institute for Environmental Studies and Disaster Management’ in Dhaka,
- Has formulated ‘Coastal Environment Management Plan’ for Bangladesh.
- The government has banned export of frogs as step to protect frogs, which act as a natural pesticide. Government has also banned export of all kinds of birds and animals to preserve the wild life of the country (MOFE 1992).
- Following the devastating floods of 1989, the Government Of Bangladesh (GOB) together with a consortium of donors led by World Bank, prepared a Flood Action Plan incorporating 26 different components to combat the vagaries of floods in Bangladesh (Rahman 1990: 85-86).
- Introduced environment as a separate subject in school (MOFE 1992).

All these efforts were considered as the background for the formulation of environment policy but the formulation of National Conservation Strategy (NCS), National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP), and Fourth Five-Year Plan quickened the process. ‘Political

will' of the government was another important factor. During that period (1989-1992) two parties ruled the country, from 1989 to 1990 Jatiya Party and from 1991-1992 Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Both parties showed appreciable interest about environmental matters. President H.M.Ershad⁵ himself was very enthusiastic, who showed special interest for environmental policy⁶. At that time worldwide consciousness about environmental degradation was increasing. Every country concentrated on taking different initiatives to face environmental problems which, indirectly influenced Bangladesh government. At the national level awareness was also growing. The then governments positively responded to these. President Ershad and his ministers personally attended a number of seminars, conferences, workshop etc. Their enthusiasm was generated among few officers who took very active initiative in that respect⁷.

The final policy document was prepared after many consultation and discussion with different persons and organizations. During the formulation period, different persons and organizations, e.g. concerned ministries, donor consultants, NGOs played an active role. Policy makers had to take into consideration different factors. MOFE was responsible for drafting the policy, which was a group effort. Some officials of the MOFE and DOE prepared the draft with the help of NGOs/civil society. No separate fund was allocated for Environment Policy. It was going parallel with NEMAP, NCS, and other environmental projects of the government and was financially supported by those projects. Interesting enough that the same group of persons⁸ prepared the first draft of Environment Policy, NEMAP, and NCS. Basically those persons were consultants for the NEMAP project and in addition to that, the consultants had to prepare the draft of Environment Policy⁹. Afterwards the responsibility was shifted to many other persons, some officials within the ministry also played an important role in drafting the policy. Later on a 'drafting committee' was formed with one deputy secretary, and two assistant secretaries. The then ministers¹⁰ of the MOFE seriously cooperated with the officers in this respect.

5 The then President of Bangladesh

6 Opinion expressed by a former deputy secretary of GOB and a former director general of DOE

7 Opinion expressed by a former deputy secretary of GOB

8 Dr. Monwar Hossain (chief, Multidisciplinary Action Research Centre), Dr. Harun-Ur-Rashid (head of the Department of environment, Independent University) and some other persons

9 Opinion expressed by M.A.H.Pramanic (director general, DoE)

10 Abdullah Al Noman, Jafar Imam, and Akbar Hossain

Inputs for the contents of Environment Policy were picked from the following sources:

1. Environmental policy, laws, and acts collected from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Singapore, and Thailand, especially Pakistan Five Year Plan.
2. Recommendations of Stockholm Conference 1972.
3. Recommendations of World Commission on Environment and Development.
4. Recommendations of national conferences, seminars, workshops.
5. Media.
6. Individual interests.
7. Research findings.
8. Conditions imposed on the loan agreement.
9. Fourth Five -Year Plan.

From inception to approval (1989-1992), Environment Policy has been changed several times. It has gone through a lengthy modification process and ultimately took the final shape. The policy was drafted at the ministry level, and then it was sent to DOE and other concerned ministries and departments for opinion and recommendations. Several inter ministerial meeting were held. At the inter- ministerial meeting, NGOs and civil society members, e.g. IUCN, Bangladesh Centre for Advance Studies (BCAS), Forum of Environment Journalist Bangladesh (FEJB), ADAB, were invited to give their opinions and were given full freedom to express their opinions¹¹. Following the inter-ministerial meetings, MOFE enlisted the opinions of ministries, divisions, and concerned sections. The draft of Environment Policy and Action Plan was modified on the recommendations of inter-ministerial meetings. After much deliberation at different stages and comments made by different ministries¹² the final draft was prepared.

Policy can be approved at different levels. In Bangladesh, secretaries to the government (basic functional policies), ministers (substantive ministerial), standing committees of ministers, cabinet (major inter-sectoral and policies with inter-ministerial implications), National Economic Council (NEC), National Implementation Committee on

11 Opinion expressed by a former deputy secretary of the GoB

12 Ministry of: Agriculture, Commerce, Industries, Fisheries and Livestock, Jute, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood control, Energy and Mineral Resources, Textiles, Planning, Land, Works, Health and Family Planning, Shipping, Foreign Affairs, Communication, Defense, Public Works, Information, Food, Civil Aviation and Tourism, Labor and Manpower, Women's Affairs, Education, Religion, Social Welfare, Law Justice, and other concerned ministries.

Administrative Reforms (NICAR) are involved at the policy approval level. The Environment Policy 1992 was approved by the cabinet. After preparing the final draft it was placed before the cabinet and discussion was held among the cabinet members¹³. Different comments were passed in favor of and against the policy. Despite difference of opinion, the policy was unanimously approved on April 13, 1992 at the cabinet meeting.

Role of Different Actors and Factors in the Policy Dynamics

From the above discussion a number of actors can be identified who played role at different stages of policy making such as international agencies (United Nations), donor agencies, regional organizations, government organizations, bureaucrats, politicians, NGOs/Civil society, and consultants.

At the same time following factors had a great influence on the 'Environment Policy 1992'

Worldwide Environmental Degradation: Environmental degradation at present is a global problem. These are wide-ranging and all encompassing: deforestation, biodiversity losses, soil erosion, ozone depletion, global warming, sea-level rise, pollution, desertification, and natural disasters. Environmental degradation has become so acute that the future of mankind is threatened with destruction. Against this backdrop, worldwide environmental protection emerged as a noticeable issue in the eighties. The governments of developed and developing countries came forward for protecting the environment. The overall situation suggests that environmental protection is required. Like many other countries, Bangladesh government also felt alarmed by these disturbing trends and came forward with some plans and activities. An important development in this regard was the formulation of 'Environment Policy 1992'.

Participation of NGOs and civil society at the inter-ministerial meeting: Some of the NGOs and civil society members were invited to express their opinions at the inter- ministerial meeting. Most of them were mainly environment activists, and environment experts. In addition to that, those NGOs and civil society members were consulted informally from time to time by the persons who were responsible for drafting the policy.

13 The then cabinet members were: Begum Khaleda Zia, Miza Golam Hafiz, Major General (Ret.) Md. Majidul Haq, A.S.M. Hossain, Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mian, Mannan Bhuyan, Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, Abdullah Al Noman, Hannan Mustafizur Rahman, Md.Saifur Rahman, Abdus Salam Talukdar, Oli Ahmed, Md. Keramat Ali, A.K.M. Anwar, Shamsul Islam Khan, Kamal Ibne Usuf, Tariqul Islam, Shamsul Islam, Barrister Nazmul Huda, Abdul Matin Choudhury, Dr. Khandakar Musarraf Shah, A.M. Jahir Uddin Khan, Akbar Hossain (Information collected from the Cabinet Division)

Political will: The political scenario in the field of environment is interesting in Bangladesh. A party is very serious about environmental issues when it is in power and it becomes obligatory for the elected party to talk about environment as part of governance. Once it is out of power, the promises are forgotten. Following this trend the parties, which were in power during that period, made commendable achievements in the area of environment. Formulation of Environmental Policy was one of those achievements.

Responsiveness to international initiatives: One important point to be mentioned here is that the Bangladesh government is very responsive to the international initiatives. It signed a number of International Conventions, Treaties and Protocols (ICTPs) and participated in all major international conferences on environment, each having a number of commitments and consequent implications. For effective implementation of these commitments a legal basis was needed. From this realization, the government felt the need for formulating a policy on the environment

Enthusiasm: Some officials within the bureaucracy were very much interested about that policy. Those officials positively influenced the government (president, vice-president, ministers) to take a serious initiative about the environment policy.

Personal relations: Personal relations played an important role. Some persons, who were very close to the party in power, convinced the most powerful persons in the government to patronize the activities concerning environment protection. The persons made the government understand that certain steps, to protect and improve the environment, should be taken. Those close to the power center included bureaucrats, Member of Parliament, and NGO personalities.

Different activities related to environment: Since 1972, the government has taken a number of programs, projects, and policies. Not only the government, the NGO sector also undertook different activities to protect the environment. But there was no right direction for their activities. For facilitating NGO initiatives and activities, and to implement its own environment related activities, the government felt the need to formulate a policy.

Certain important decisions: Some important decision at the international and national level greatly influenced the government to formulate an environment policy i.e. to hold the UNCED in 1992, to start the preparatory process of UNCED, to prepare NCS and NEMAP, to incorporate environmental matters in the Fourth-Five Year Plan. The

government realized that without any sound environment policy it was not possible to execute these decisions.

Different seminars/workshops: Recommendations of different forums have enriched the policy document. During drafting policy makers had to take into consideration the recommendations of the seminars, symposiums organized by NGOs. Besides, at the regional level a number of conferences were organized by the regional forums, which also had a positive influence.

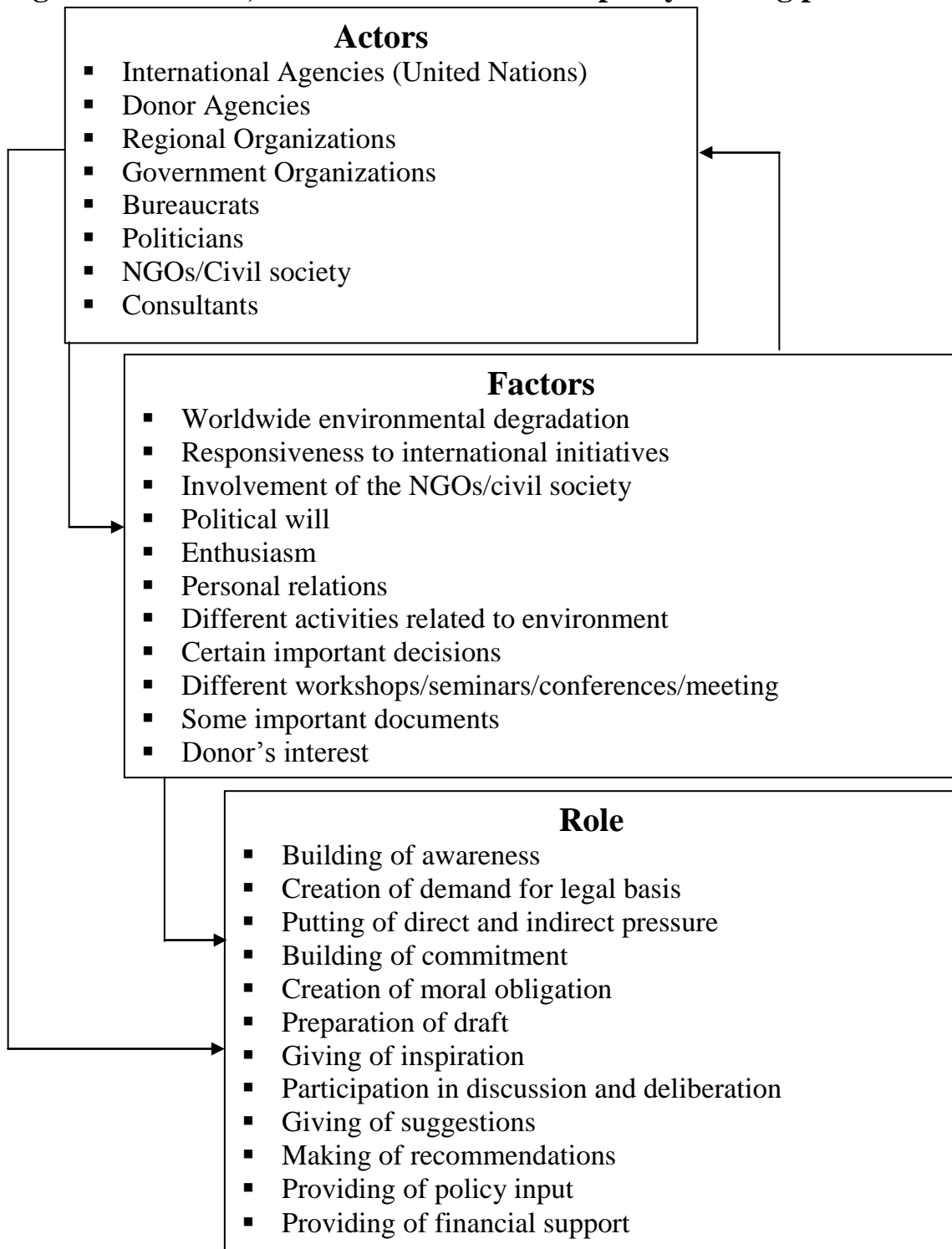
Some important documents: Two important documents, which influenced formulation of an environment policy, were NEMAP and NCS. From initiation to approval those documents had a commendable impact. Ideas were also picked from environment policy, acts, and laws, collected from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Singapore, and Thailand. The Five-Year Plan of Pakistan was another important document. The ‘Country Report’ prepared by GoB for presenting at the Rio conference was one of the major important documents.

Donors’ interest: Donor agencies have shown greater interest about environmental programs/projects and consequently began to finance environment related activities. For mobilizing the fund from donor agencies, the government laid importance on formulation of Environment Policy.

Common categories of roles played by the above mentioned actors and factors were: building of awareness, creation of demand for legal basis, putting of direct and indirect pressure, building of commitment, creation of moral obligation, preparation of draft, giving of inspiration, participation in discussion and deliberation, giving of suggestions, making of recommendations, providing of policy input, and providing of financial support.

Figure 1: depicts the graphical presentation of the actors, factors and their role in the formulation process of ‘Environment Policy 1992’. The actors and factors were both internal and external type. International agencies (UN), donor agencies, regional organizations were external actors whereas government organizations, bureaucrats, politicians, NGOs/civil Society and consultants were internal actors. External actors played the main role at the policy demand and policy agenda level. They also played some role at formulation level too. Whereas internal actors role ranges from policy demand to policy approval level but their main role was at the formulation and approval level.

Figure – I: Actors, factors and their role in policy making process



Responsiveness to international initiatives, political wills, involvement of NGOs/civil society, enthusiasm, personal relations, different activities related to environment are the example of internal factors. Worldwide environmental degradation, certain important decisions, different workshops/seminars, and some important decisions are the mixture of both internal and external components. And donors' interest is the

external type of factor. All the factors had a role in formulating Environment Policy and every stage of policy making is the amalgamation of these factors.

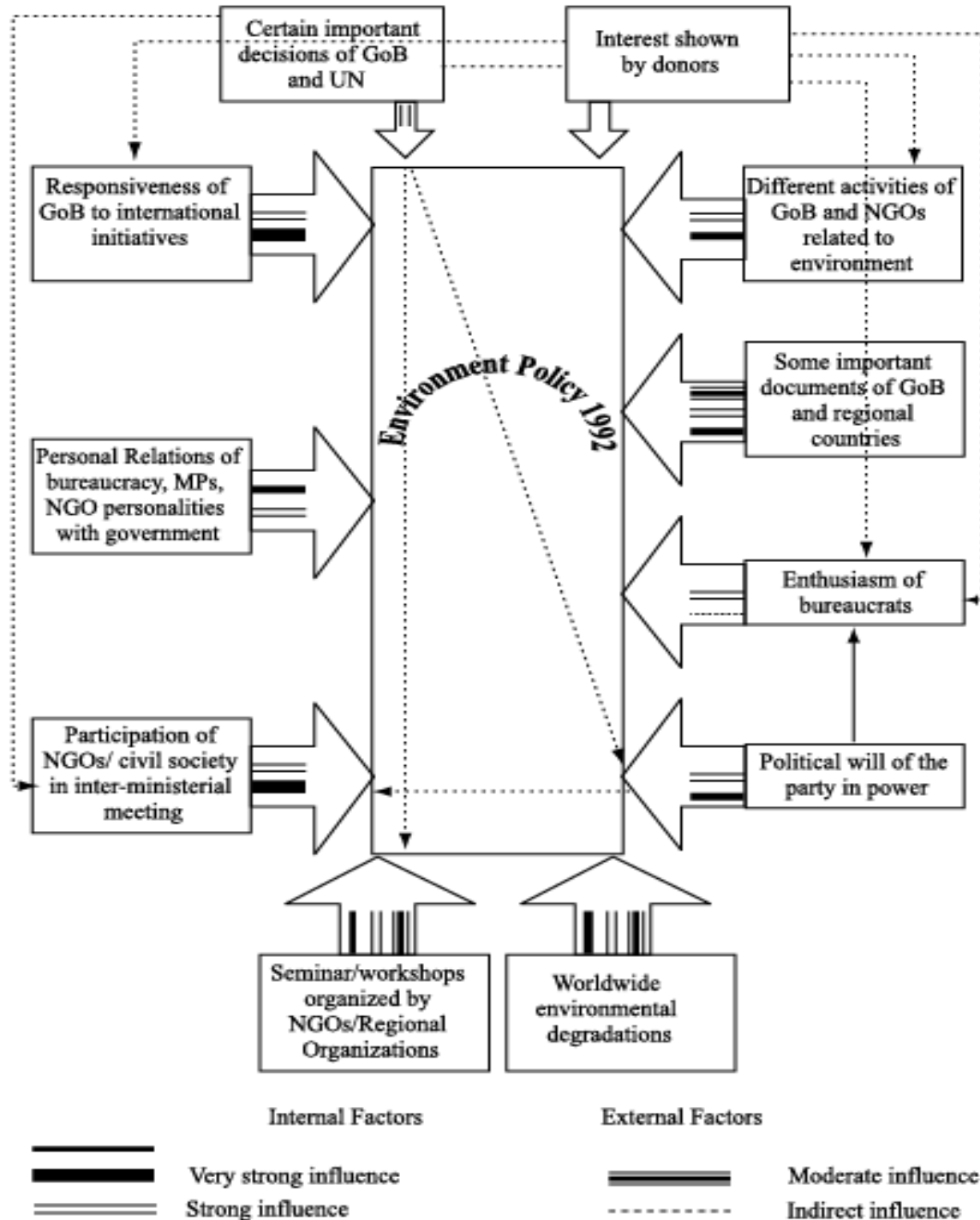
The above-mentioned actors and factors played both formal and informal role.

It has already been discussed that a number of actors were active from initiation to approval of 'Environment Policy'. Among these most important role-played by international agencies (UN) and the GOB (bureaucracy). Environmental issues and predicament are not new in Bangladesh and different initiatives have been taken locally to protect the land, soil and surroundings. But initiatives of international agencies stimulated the serious thinking to save the environment at the national level. Bangladesh responding to the United Nation's initiative, like many other developing countries, adopted 'Environment Policy' along with other environmental activities. The government tried to fulfill its commitment made with the UN. The interesting point to be noted here is that NGOs and civil society also responded to the loud chorus of international groups on environmental issues. Consequently, the member of the sector became conscious about the whole environmental scenario. NGOs are not able to formulate policies, sign treaties, and pass legislation like the government. However, it can lobby for such actions to be taken. It also can pressurize the government to take certain initiatives. NGOs also have a role in an advisory capacity with governments. As a result, NGOs have become the well-organized lobby for Environment Policy. From its inception to adoption, civil society exercised an informal but very strong influence. The influence was informal in the sense that the civil society could not participate in the formal formulation process. Donor agencies and politicians exercised strong influence whereas consultants and regional organizations exerted moderate influence. But the important fact is that the United Nations exerted indirect influence on every actor involved in the policy-making process.

Three types of influence have been exerted by the factors. There were some factors, which influenced very strongly, e.g. some important decisions of GOB and UN, responsiveness to international initiatives, worldwide environmental degradation, and participation of NGOs/civil society in international meeting. There were many other factors, which exercised strong influence and few other factors had moderate influence. Another important point to be mentioned here that is there was "inter-

influence” among and between these factors and it was mostly indirect influence.

Following figure presents the intensity of influence of different actors and factors
 Figure-2: Intensity of influence of different actors and factors



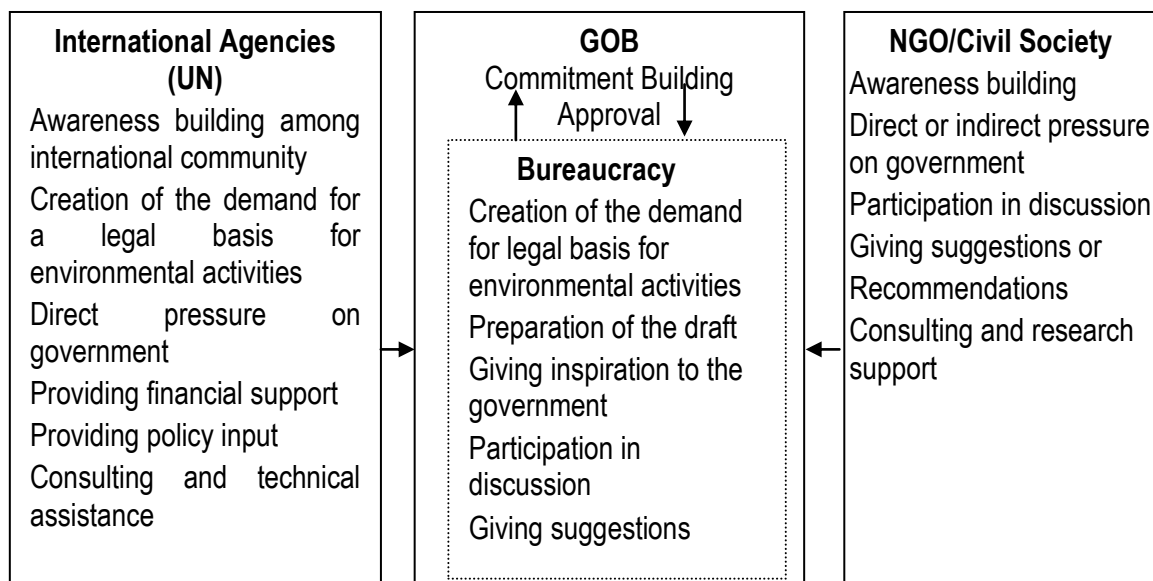
Conclusion

Dynamics of environment policy making in Bangladesh can be explained by group and elite model of policy making. It can also be analyzed by global interdependence theory of development.

Main proposition of the group theory is that policy is the outcome of the interaction among different groups. These groups serve as a media between the individual and the government. After analyzing the whole policy making process, the researcher has identified that Environment Policy is perhaps to a great extent the result of interaction of different groups. A number of groups have played role at policy demand, policy agenda, policy formulation and policy approval stages of policy-making. From initiation to approval UN agencies, donor agencies, regional organizations, environmental NGOs, politicians, bureaucrats, and consultants had contributed to the policy, but at different levels their role was different. In brief, at the policy demand and policy agenda levels, groups outside the government played the major role, whereas at the formulation and approval stage the bureaucracy was the key player. These role ranges from awareness building to policy approval. In the whole environmental policy making process, international agencies especially UN, GOB (bureaucracy) and NGO/civil society played the most significant role. In a sense GOB/bureaucrats played the formal and active role where as international agencies (UN) and NGOs basically played informal but very influential role. Role of the significant groups are presented in figure-3.

Influence of these groups was determined by their organizational strength, expertise, access to decision makers, political will, enthusiasm, personal relation, and international cohesion.

Figure- 3: Role of the significant groups



This policy making process can also be analyzed by elite theory of policy making. Environment policy may be viewed as the reflection of the opinion of the elite. This policy started its journey in 1989. At that time

very few persons inside and out side the government had degree, training, and research experience on environment. Naturally the government officials who were aquatinted with the environmental matters played the leading role. At the same time selective NGOs were working in environmental field. Within the span of time, because of the commitment and expertise, the NGO experts achieved commendable success in promoting environmental issues and could draw the attention of the GOB. Consequently government asked the support of the NGO personalities/civil society members who were working on the environment. This created a small group of 'professional elite' to take a lead role in the policy issues.

This policy can also be explained through the theory of global interdependence. This theory deals with the interdependence between developing countries and industrial countries. It says that no nation can achieve developmental goal without depending on other nations and their activities are also interrelated and interconnected. This theory suggests that the developed countries and international agencies should provide technical and financial support to the developing countries to initiate developmental process, which in turn will bring benefits for developed countries. The new concept of development is sustainable development. It is the economic and social development without destroying or undermining the natural resource base. It says that environmental and development objectives are not contradictory. In other words, the need is to promote a form of development compatible with the assimilative and regenerative capacity of the biosphere. Environment Policy is the prescription of the international agencies for ensuring sustainable development in developing countries. If it is possible to ensure sustainable development in LDCs, then the industrial countries will also enjoy the benefits of this development too.

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