

SECTION III I:  
Promoting Culture and Traditional  
Lifestyles in Bangladesh as Tools  
for Enhancing Eco-efficient  
Consumption Behavior



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Second Green Growth Policy Dialogue:  
The Role of Public Policy in Providing Sustainable Consumption  
Choices: The Resource-Saving Society and Green Growth

Green  
Growth



**Second Green Growth Policy Dialogue: “Role of Public Policy in Providing Sustainable Consumption Policies: Resources Saving Society and Green Growth”**

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**Promoting Culture and Traditional Lifestyles in Bangladesh as Tools for  
Enhancing Eco-efficient Consumption Behavior**

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## Introduction

Bangladesh is characterized by the richness of its culture, which has given both cohesion and diversity to social life and human interaction. The majority of the population are moderate Muslims, who have a common language, similarities of dress, and shared traditions of literature, drama and music, which have been unifying forces in enhancing eco-efficient consumption and sustainable development. On the other hand, the expressions of a multi-faceted heritage of folk culture have contributed to diversity, as exemplified in the production of crafts like weaving, pottery, basketry, and terracotta sculpture. Varieties of folk culture like these have functioned as means of articulation and income generation for the poor people, and for tribal and other minority groups in particular.

## Traditional lifestyle

In the ancient civilization of Bangladesh, sustainability and moderation in consumption has always been a way of life. This pattern has been respected and left largely undisturbed by Bangladeshi consumers who consider themselves a part of the cycle of nature. An interactive relationship with nature and the natural environment is a part of every Bangladeshi's life. Rapid and unplanned urbanization has created an enormous population of urban poor. This group consists of unskilled laborers that have been pressured out of their traditional habitats by environmental, social and economic changes. Their traditional lifestyles evolved out of the responsible use of natural resources and, as a result, sustainable practices have been in circulation for centuries. Their lifestyles, though dependent on the environment, never sought to damage or deplete it in any far-reaching way. Mutual nurturing was the subtext of this human/nature relationship. The culture that emerged from this dual dependence is under severe stress in a new urban milieu that is a poor copy of the Northern pattern of living. The present Bangladesh urban scenario seeks to replicate lifestyles saline to its context, without necessary infrastructural support. As a result, all service sectors in the towns and cities of Bangladesh are under tremendous stress. While the markets over-flow with glitzy new products, and advertisers have a field day selling incongruous cultural icons and lifestyles to Bangladeshi consumers, the Bangladeshi consumer culture is rapidly undergoing behavioral shifts that adversely impact the environment. Middle class Bangladeshi homes have become gadget junkyards. Cars sales in cities are on the upward swing, but there are no roads to run these cars on. Fuel prices keep spiraling, as does the resultant pollution from these consumption patterns. While Northern cultures embrace organic food and alternative healing, Bangladeshi satiate themselves with colas and burgers; while the U.S. scrambles to patent Bangladesh's biodiversity, Bangladesh are glued to their TV sets. Sitting in Dhaka, with telephones that don't work, PCs on the blink because of erratic power supplies, postal strikes and polluted rivers, activists in consumer and environmental organizations have their task cut out for them. It is not just the quantity of consumption and spending that has undergone a change but also the attitude of consumers towards consumption and the reasons to consume. Advertising strategies have effectively influenced consumers to accept products without questioning their use or viability. Health scares, safety, and beauty consciousness are just some of the tactics used to encourage sales. From tap water to bottled mineral water, from herbal options to international cosmetics brands, and from clay pots and cups to plastics, the change has been far too obvious to ignore and of superior quality due to clever advertising. The cosmetic sector in Bangladesh is now undoubtedly on a new plane, with slick advertising and the creation of new paradigms of beauty and celebration. Herbal remedies that were part of every Bangladesh household have also acquired commercial overtones.

## Population growth

Population growth is commonly assumed to be a key cause of unsustainable consumption. The world's population is now 6 billion people and growing by 220,000 each day. At the present rate it is estimated to reach 8 billion by the year 2030. Two examples, however, show that consumption is not simply determined by population growth, but also by economic activity, technology choices, social values, institutions and policies.

First, compare Bangladesh and Britain. Bangladesh's annual increase in population is about 2.4 million, while that of Britain is about 100,000. However, per capita carbon dioxide emissions (an indicator of consumption of fossil fuels) in Britain are 50 times higher than in Bangladesh. Consequently the 100,000 extra British residents cause more than twice the amount of carbon dioxide emissions than do the 2.4 million Bangladeshis.

Secondly, since 1950 the world's richest 20% has raised its per capita consumption of meat and timber two-fold, its car ownership four-fold, and its use of plastics five-fold. Over the same period, the poorest 20% has increased in number, but has hardly raised its consumption at all.

Take waste as an example. Environmental and consumer campaigns against one-way and over-packaged goods have been instrumental in both raising recycling rates and forcing the implementation of new waste management regulations.

Yet, sustainable consumption is still a technocratic term with little popular resonance and distinctly different meanings. Part of the problem lies in a fog of imprecision that clouds the consumption debate.

Environmentalists use the word to describe resource use. Economists, however, use it to describe total spending on the economy on goods and services. This leads to inevitable and somewhat pointless disputes, such as when environmentalists call for reduced consumption (meaning a cut in resource use) which economists interpret as taking away people's income. Over the years, a compromise position has emerged that views consumption as the economic activity of purchasing and using goods and services, which, if it is to be made sustainable in the sense defined by the Brundtland Commission, has to both regenerate natural capital and meet needs, particularly those of the poor<sup>1</sup>. In this way, sustainable consumption can be seen not as a goal in itself, but as a means to an array of different ends. For individuals and households, consumption is one way of fulfilling material needs and cultural aspirations; for producers, consumption is a necessary step to serve end-users; and for the public sector, consumption is the means to provide collective services, such as education, health and security.

Looking across the wide array of civil actions under the sustainable consumption umbrella, it is clear that there is only a vague sense of a common vision uniting often disparate initiatives; there is certainly no 'movement' for sustainable consumption. And out in the real world, only marginal progress has been made either in reducing environmental stress or in improving the quality of life since the Earth Summit. What is now required is a re-evaluation of the goals, strategies and tactics of civil action in six critical areas: ethics; lifestyles; markets; communities; patterns and global linkages.

## Sustainable Consumption

Sustainable consumption builds on the concept of sustainable development, which was defined by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Consequently, the core idea of sustainable consumption is to meet our own consumption needs in such a way that we do not deprive future generations' ability to meet their consumption needs. It is important to understand that sustainable consumption does not automatically translate into "less consumption" but rather to more efficient, better informed and less

resource intensive consumption. This is especially true for people living in poverty, often having a real need to increase their consumption of products and services. Sustainable consumption is directly linked with many other development priorities, such as poverty alleviation, economic growth, health and education, and environmental protection, all of them contributing to an improved quality of life

### **Economic growth**

The real GDP growth rate has been provisionally estimated at 5.38 percent in FY2004-05 propelled mainly by an increase in production in the industry and service sector. According to the projection of Medium Term Macroeconomic, the real growth of GDP will rise from 6.0 percent in the next fiscal year FY2005-06 to 6.5 percent in FY2006-07. It is widely recognized the acceleration of the growth of GDP is largely dependent on the flow of investment in the country. Attaining projected growth of GDP as set in the MTMF would therefore require an investment level to the tune of 26.5 percent and 27.5 percent of GDP in the FY 2005-06 and FY 2006-07 respectively.

Due to the huge increase in production in the agriculture, industry and service sector, real GDP grew at 6.27 percent in FY2003-04 and the rates of national savings and investments stood at 25.44 percent and 24.02 percent respectively. Despite various constraints including political unrest, the achievement of such a rate of growth demonstrates the fundamental resilience of the economy. Despite the irretrievable damages of crops due to massive floods, the real GDP growth rate has been provisionally estimated at 5.38 percent in FY 2004-2005 caused by an increase in production in the industry and service sector. In the current fiscal year per capita national income and per capita GDP stood at US\$ 470 and US\$445 respectively.

### **Poverty Alleviation**

Since independence, the Government and the NGOs have been working in unison for poverty alleviation in Bangladesh. According to the statistics of the Poverty Monitoring Survey Report 2004, released by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the rate of poverty in 1999, calculated using the direct calorie intake (DCI) method was 46.2 percent, which declined to 40.9 percent in 2004. Using the same method the hardcore poverty at national levels in 1999 stood at 24.9 percent, which came down to 18.7 percent in 2004. It would be observed from this survey that in the case of Division wise poverty situation, Rajshahi Division has the highest incidence of poverty scoring 61.6 percent while the Sylhet Division has the lowest incidence of poverty of 28.04 percent. According to family size, at the national level, families having the size of 1-2 members have the lowest incidence of poverty (26.4 percent) while families consisting of 7-8 members have the highest incidence of poverty (46.3 percent). In the case of monthly per capita income, in 1999 monthly per capita income at the national level was TK.948, which grew to tk.1114 in 2004. There is an overall improvement in health service during 1999-2004. In 1999, the rate of sick population was 18.4 percent, which has rapidly declined to 15.8 percent in 2004. To bring about an overall improvement in the lot of the poor, a range of implement and income generating programs is being employed both at the governmental and non-governmental level. In particular, in order to create employment opportunities for the ultra-poor and the unprivileged class of the rural population and to alleviate poverty directly, social safety net programs are continuing. Included among them are case assistance programs for self-employment generation. Under these programs there are a number of beneficiaries receiving direct financial assistance. Among them, in the case of the old age allowance program the number of beneficiaries is 12 lakh, in the case of widowed and women deserted by their husbands allowance program the beneficiary coverage is 6 lakh and in the case of honorarium for insolvent freedom fighter the number of beneficiaries is 60 thousand. Besides these the primary stipend program 53 lakh ultra poor children, above 40 lakh girl students within the financial assistance,

programs for the female students at secondary level and 42 thousand women under the rural maintenance program. Under the Abashan Prokalpa (Poverty alleviation and Rehabilitation Project) 65 thousand landless,

homeless and rootless families are receiving the benefits of health and family welfare services and other facilities including income-generating activities. Up to June 2005, nine major NGOs of the country disbursed micro credit to the tune of 34,124.79 crore. Up to June 2005, Grameen Bank, PKSF and BRDB disbursed credit amounting TK.23, 504.92 crore. TK.2, 212.40 crore and 3,207.16 crore respectively. During the same period, the scheduled banks disbursed TK.10, 765.81 crore while other specialized commercial banks disbursed TK.9, 983.94 crore. The administrative department of the Government disbursed credits amounting TK.6, 067.05 crore up to December 2004 respectively.

### **Food and Agriculture**

Agriculture has been playing a vital role in socio-economic progress and sustainable development of the agrarian economy of Bangladesh through improvements of the rural economy ensuring food security by attaining autarky in food grains production alleviation of poverty and so on. In FY2004-05, the combined contribution of all sub - sectors of agriculture (crop, livestock, forestry and fisheries) to GDP was about 21.91 percent, of which fisheries sub-sectors accounts for 5.03 percent and the crop sub-sectors alone is projected to contribute 12.10 percent to GDP of the total labor force in Bangladesh, 51.7 percent are engaged in agriculture (BBS Labor Force Survey 2002-2003).

According to the final estimates the volume of food grains production in 2003-04 was 274.43 lakh metric tons of which Aus accounted for 18.32 lakh metric tons, Aman 115.21 lakh metric tons, Boro 128.37 lakh metric tons and Wheat 12.53 lakh metric tons. The food grains production target for FY 2004-05 has been estimated at 300.49 lakh metric tons of which Aus accounts for 20.45 lakh metric tons, Aman 127.88 lakh metric tons, Boro 137.53 lakh metric tons and Wheat 14.63 lakh metric tons.

To fulfill the food and nutritional demand to the growing population of the country and to ensure and sustain dependable food security, special emphasis has been given on building a modern agriculture system based on appropriate technology. Against this background, various reform measures have been taken which include ensuring the availability of agricultural inputs including fertilizer at the doorsteps of the farmers' implementation of the agricultural extension policy, simplification of the disbursement procedures of agricultural credit, creating opportunities for incitement in agriculture, modernization of research methods for quality improvement of agro-products the utilization and extension of the integrated technologies derived from research.

An Action Plan is in place for proper implementation of national Agriculture Policy. Included among the objectives of the Action Plan are; to take the extension service to the grass root level to ensure the decentralization of administration in this sector, mobilize external assistance to strengthen and popularize the trading of agricultural commodities and to encourage profit making comprehensive reform programs to facilitate the extension of the activities of NGOs and other development partners.

Measures have been taken to put in place more robust and effective national agriculture research arrangements. At the same time, emphasis has been laid on increased coordination between research and extension. Efforts are underway to bring about an overall improvement in agriculture by taking a range of steps like protection of ever-increasing erosion of soil, assessing the utility of irrigation water, monitoring any abuse of the land and preventing crop nutrition deficiencies.

During FY2004-05, a total of Tk.1315.77 crore has been provisioned for agriculture subsidies on TSP, DAP and MOP fertilizer including Urea as well as for providing other forms of assistance to the agriculture sector. In addition a 30 percent case incentive is being provided to agriculture exports. The Government has waived interest on classified agricultural loans up to TK.5000. This is going to make a far-reaching contribution towards augmenting agricultural production. The repayment period of the principal amount will be extended from 30<sup>th</sup>, March 2005, as fixed earlier, to 30<sup>th</sup>, March 2006. During FY 2004-05, disbursement stood at TK. 4956.78 crore against the target of TK. 5537.91 crore. In 2003-04, the export earning amounted to TK 2363.47 crore from the export of 54,141 metric tons of fish and fish products.

According to available date, in 2004, there are 112 fish hatcheries in the public sector and 696 hatcheries in the private sector. Altogether 808 hatcheries and farms are there in the country. About 517 crore of fingerlings and 297.78 metric tons of fish spawn were produced from private farms and hatcheries in 2003. In a bid to develop livestock resources the government has set up a number of livestock and poultry farms through implementation of ADP projects in order to alleviate poverty. The livestock and poultry farms set up are self-initiated while making a substantial contribution to this sector by also generating self-implement opportunities for the unemployed youth and attracting huge investment. A total of 8-project have been taken up by the Department of Livestock (DOL) in 2004-05 for which TK.77.04 crore has been allocated.

## Industry

The contribution of the industrial sector to the Bangladesh economy is extremely critical. Its contribution is on the increase. As percentage of GDP, that was 14.92 percent in 1998-99, which grew to 16.58 percent having a growth rate of 8.43 percent in FY 05. The contribution recorded an increase of 0.24 percent compared to previous fiscal year while the growth rate registered and increases of 1.33 percent. This trend of growth in the manufacturing sector has added future momentum to the dynamics of economic development. The driving force that worked behind achieving this growth was ready made garments and the knit wear industry. To meet the challenges of the free market economy and globalization, the government is pursuing a policy of establishing industries under private sector initiatives and divesting the state owned enterprises in phases. The Government has also taken up appropriate rehabilitation programs by providing training and loans to the retrenched employees.

The government has declared encouraging policies in respect of establishing industries under private investment and exporting produced commodities. The Government has identified the SMEs as a priority sector to accelerate the process of industrialization. In order to provide strategic support to establishing SMEs across the country, the Government has taken initiatives to formulate aspirate SME policy. In the current industrial policy, due emphasis has been laid on creating women entrepreneurs and ensuring the participation of women entrepreneurs in the process of industrialization. For rapid expansion of SMEs, the Government, with the assistance of the World Bank and ADB, has financed through Bangladesh Banks a total of TK.123.73 crore. It is expected that this would result in the much faster growth of SMEs. Industrial term loans disbursed up to June 2005 amounted to TK. 9114.9 crore implying an increase of 36.53 percent over the same period of the previous fiscal year.

Following the above steps taken by the Government, a congenial investment climate has been created. As a result, a good number of investors, both local and foreign, are demonstrating their interest in investing and establishing industries in Bangladesh. In FY 2004-05, local investment registration with the BIO grew by 3.4 percent. During this period, there was an investment proposal of US\$ 2,319 million for 1,469 registered local projects. In addition, 221 industrial enterprises were in operation in 6 EPZs with an investment of US\$ 1,548.68 million. Besides, projects for establishing a further 108 industrial entities in different EPZs are being implemented.

During FY 2003-04, commodities worth US\$ 1354 million have been exported from the EPZ industrial enterprises, which accounts for 18 percent of total national exports. In the current fiscal year, the export target has been fixed at US\$1400 million. Given that the current level of development continues, the contribution of the industrial sector of GDP in the coming decade will be 30-35 percent and the sector will absorb 30 percent of the total labor force. In order to achieve the establishment of agro-based and agricultural product processing industries, adopting SMEs and cottage industries as the prime movers of industrialization, establishing economic and export processing zones in different parts of the country, enhancing quality of products and providing support for marketing. This would result in a planned expansion of industrialization, which in turn would help to achieve continued and sustained development within the industrial sector. Combined these will accelerate overall economic growth by reducing poverty, generating employment and improving the quality of life.

### **Environment and Development**

The environment is inseparably linked with development. In the context of the recent realization of this aspect, it is seriously felt that striving for achieving economic prosperity is commensurate with the deliberate efforts in keeping the environmental and ecological balance. Belatedly, it is now appreciated that environmental problems are also an economic issue. For these reasons, there is no scope to visualize economic and environmental activities in isolation. An integrated approach is, therefore needed for the sake of efficient management of environmental resources.

#### **Economic Growth and Environment:**

Economic growth in the traditional sense implies the growth of goods and services produced in an economy. Economic Growth has been considered as the precondition of human welfare and development. But the traditional system of estimating economic growth on the basis of goods and services does not consider environmental effects. Recently the emergence of the concept of sustainable development made it clear that alternative methods are needed for estimating physical and economic development appropriately to measure standard of living of human beings. In this method the depletion of natural resources and environmental issues that has impacted sustainable development are taken into account.

In 1993, the United Nations Statistical Offices (UNSO) first considered sustainable development as an important variable and developed the System for Environment and Economic Accounts (SEEA). In this system an attempt has been made to integrate environmentally data with the existing national accounts information. Using this, an Environmental Adjusted Net Domestic Product (EDP) and an Environmentally Adjusted Net Income (ENI) are calculated. In calculating SEEA, environmental assets such as land, forest, water, biodiversity etc. are considered as productive assets relating to consumption and production. Similarly, other additional costs are also included in SEEA. Included among them are costs of imputed changes for the depletion of minerals and other natural resources and costs of degradation of land, water, and air caused due to the production and consumption activities.

### **The Major Environmental Problems of Bangladesh:**

Because of its geographical location Bangladesh suffers from a range of environmental problems, arising from droughts, floods and other natural hazards. The frequency of hazards is on the increase day by day. The quality of soil has deteriorated due to wanton use of agrochemicals, unplanned land use, undesirable encroachment on forest areas for agriculture and settlements and the indiscriminate disposal of hazardous industrial wastes. Unplanned land use and intrusions of saline water are causing degradations of soil in the coastal areas.

The surface water of the country is polluted through capricious disposal of untreated industrial effluents and municipal waste water, runoff pollution from chemical fertilizers and pesticides and oil and lubes spillage in the coastal area from the operation of sea and river ports and ship wreckage. The arsenic concentration in the ground water in many areas is a major problem in Bangladesh now. The problem is acute in tube wells extracting groundwater from 10m to 100m depths in the Southeast, South Central (the northern part only), and Southwest regions, which creates problems for getting safe drinking water in rural life.

Bangladesh has 57 international boundary rivers of which 54 are shared with India and 3 with Myanmar. A significant amount of water flow is withdrawn and diverted upstream by neighboring countries for irrigation and other purposes and thereby reducing normal water flow. Desertification prevails in some northwestern areas of Bangladesh due to the withdrawal and diversion of upstream water in the dry season by India. Besides, the proposed Inter-basin River Link Project of India, if implemented, the yearly water flow of Bangladesh will be drastically decreased which will have profound negative impacts on the economy, society and environment of Bangladesh.

Air pollution is one of the manmade environmental disasters that are taking place all over the world. There are two major sources of air pollution in Bangladesh, vehicular emissions and industrial emissions, which are mainly concentrated in the cities. There are also numerous brick making kilns all over Bangladesh, which is another form of air pollution. Almost all of the kilns use coal and wood as their source of energy, resulting in the emissions of sulfur-dioxide and volatile organic compounds. An emerging issue of great concern in the cities and towns is the high concentration of lead in the air from vehicular exhausts.

The depletion of biodiversity is the result of various kinds of human interventions that impinge on it through the destruction and degradation of land, forest and aquatic habitats. These activities encompass the sectors of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, urbanization, industry, transport, tourism, energy, chemicals and minerals etc. In the fisheries sector, shrimp cultivation has become a major concern during the past decade. It has caused

serious environmental damage that has significantly harmed fish and other aquatic biodiversity. It is projected that the climate of Bangladesh may get warmer and wetter owing to global warming. The most serious consequences of climatic change for Bangladesh will be a rise in sea level along the Bay of Bengal coast, causing inundation and submerging of 10 to 20 percent of the coastal land including the Sundrabans as well as saline intrusion in the rivers.

### **Control of Air Pollution:**

There are a number of laws and regulations in the country to confront air pollution. In view of the heightened awareness of the dangers of lead pollution the Government executed the decision of providing only lead-free gasoline in July 1999. To control air pollution the Government has amended the Environment Conservation Rules 1997 with new rules under which the use of catalytic converters, oxidation catalysts and diesel particulate filters have been made mandatory respectively in petrol, diesel and CNG driven vehicles. Plying of buses, minibuses, microbuses, taxis, which are more than twenty years old and trucks, mini trucks, tank lorries and vans which are more than twenty five years old has been banned since 1st January 2002. Plying of two-stroke three wheeler has been banned in Dhaka City since 1st January 2003. The Government has introduced CNG driven four stroke three wheelers and is encouraging CNG driven automobile.

A continuous Air Quality Monitoring Station has been set-up in the premises of National Parliament under the Air Quality Management project with the financial assistance of the World Bank. From this station vehicular emissions are being monitored regularly against different parameters to get various information on the status of the air quality of Dhaka City. Initiatives have been undertaken to setup a continuous air quality monitoring station in Chittagong City. Under this programme a number of satellite air quality monitoring stations will be set-up in other cities. In addition, procurement of two mobile air quality monitoring station is underway to monitor local air quality regularly. An office has been opened for giving information and creating awareness to the people about air pollution. A draft vehicular emission standard has been formulated. Draft air pollution standards and an air pollution index have also been formulated.

### **Control of Pollution from Brick Klins:**

To protect against air pollution, compressed system environment friendly 'Block Brick' are encouraged instead of traditional bricks. In the mean time, installing permanent chimney with the height of 120ft. has been made mandatory for traditional brickfields. Setting up of traditional brickfields (120ft. height permanent chimney) along with zigzag chimney brickfields and Vertical Shaft Brick Klin Chimney brickfields are encouraged. To implement Brick Burning Control Act 1989, the activities are underway to formulate Brick Burning (Control) Rules 2004.

**Conservation of Ecology:**

Considering the importance of hills to protect the ecology of the country, the Government issued a notification in March 2002 banning hill cutting. From now on, one has to receive a clearance certificate from the Government if hill cutting and/or razing becomes necessary for the sake of public interest. To motivate people against hill cutting and/or razing mass awareness campaign were carried out with the help of public representatives and the local administration in Chittatgong and Sylhet hill areas. People from all walks of life took part in the awareness campaigns. The level of awareness about the importance of hills in protection of ecology is increasing and the illegal attempts to hill cutting/razing are decreasing.

**Industry Pollution Control:**

In compliance with the Environment Conservation Act 1995 and the Environment Conservation Rule 1997, the Government now issues environmental clearance certificates for new industries or projects after assessing project area and pollutants to be emitted. For the highly polluting industries, environmental clearance is given after setting up effluent treatment plants. Initiatives have been undertaken to setup effluent treatment plants for the existing industries with the support of Chamber and concerned sector association. 'Programs to Save Dhaka have been undertaken to save the surrounding rivers of Dhaka. As part of the implementation, of the programs the existing tanneries of Hazaribagh will be shifted to Horindhara a place in between Saver and Keranigonj Upajila. A central effluent treatment plant shall be setup in the said leather industry. A demonstration project to treat liquid industrial waste by using low cost resources has been completed at Madhbdi, Narshingdi which drew attention of the industrialists.

**Banning of Polythene Shopping Bags:**

Widespread use of Polythene shopping bags brought about massive environmental disasters. The Government banned the production and use of Polythene and its marketing in Dhaka city since 1 January 2002 to prevent such a disaster. Latter, since 1 March 2002, the ban was extended throughout Bangladesh. The effective monitoring and close supervision of the Government made this program a success.

**Control of Noise pollution:**

Following the existing Environment Conservation Act 1995 where there is a set limit on noise pollution, the Government drafted the Noise pollution (Control) Rules 2004 and sought opinion on the draft rules from all walks of life. The rules are now in the process of finalization in the light of the comments. Once the proposed rules are in place it will be easier for the Government to control noise pollution particularly the use of microphone and high level horns.

**Conservation of Biodiversity:**

Bangladesh signed the Biodiversity Convention at Rio in 1992. A focus on Biodiversity has been emphasized in the forest and environment policy. However, a separate policy on Biodiversity is yet to be formulated and until then various departments of the Government will be working for conservation of Biodiversity within the existing rules and regulations. Some of the important rules and regulations are the Protection and Conservation of Fish Act and Rules, the Marine Fisheries Ordinance, Wildlife Preservation Act, Forest Act, the Environment Conservation Act and Rules etc. The Bangladesh National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan are under preparation as a national obligation to the Convention on Biodiversity.

Under the Bangladesh Wildlife Preservation Act, 1974 (amendment Act 1994), three categories of protected areas have been established as national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. With an aim to conserve the Biodiversity, conserve and develop natural environmental and eco-tourism and to develop education and research, the Government of Bangladesh has declared 16 protected areas constituting about 245 thousands hectares of forest in different parts of the country. Moreover, the Government of Bangladesh has declared of forest in different 6 area viz. Cox's Bazar, Teknaf Sea Beach, St. Martin's Island, Sonadia Island, Hakaluki Island, Tanguar Haor Marjat Boar as Ecologically Critical Area (ECA) under Environment Conservation Act, 1995.

As per, Ramsar Convention, the Government has undertaken major development activities to conserve the Biodiversity of wetland including Tanguar Haor. The Department of Environment with the assistance of Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and UNDP is implementing a project titled Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management at Cox's Bazar and Hakaluki Haor for conservation, management and sustainable development of coastal and wetland Biodiversity at Cox's Bazar, Saint Martin, Island and Hakaluki Haor.

Beside, a part of the Sundarbans (east, west and south sites) and the Tanguar Haor have been designated as Ramsar sites in the country. In addition, considering the importance of protecting biological diversity of the world, UNESCO has declared the Sundarbans, the largest single mangrove forest, as World Heritage Site in December 1997.

**Culture and Development Strategy for Bangladesh 2005-2009: Danida Project (a case study)**

The Danish strategy for development cooperation with Bangladesh 2005-2009 stresses the cultural dimension as one of the issues that need to be further explored. Theatre and drama have previously been

used as a communication and empowerment tool within the fisheries sub-sector programme of the Agricultural Sector Programme (ASP), in the Water Supply and Sanitation programme (WSSP) and in the Human Rights and Good Governance Programme (HRGG). The Embassy of Denmark in Bangladesh (“the Embassy”) has also supported cultural activities and events directly.

It is in this context that the Embassy has taken the initiative of formulating a coherent strategy for culture and development with assistance from The Danish Centre for Culture and Development.

### **Vision**

“Contribute to poverty reduction in Bangladesh with an emphasis on improvement of livelihood, democratic development and promotion of cultural diversity”.

### **Mission**

“Increase cultural co-operation between Denmark and Bangladesh to support the development of contemporary arts, and public participation in arts in Bangladesh, as well as mutual understanding and inspiration between the two countries”.

### **Objectives**

- Improve the performance of organizations working with community theatres through training, networking and interaction with professional theatre groups and artists
- Improve health and sanitation practices in rural communities through an integrated approach that uses participatory drama performances as a tool
- Enhancement of human rights knowledge, attitudes and practice at the community level through interactive drama performances and other cultural tools for communication
- Strengthen the income generating potential of small scale craft producers in rural areas through skills, design and marketing development
- Development of contemporary art productions in Bangladesh through exchange and support to artists and events.

### **Strategy**

The strategy for culture and development follows an integrated approach that is based on mainstreaming culture in the existing sector programmes - primarily HRGG, WSSP and ASP. Mainstreaming has two dimensions: 1) Culture is seen as a cross cutting issue that is taken into account throughout the programme cycle, for example in identification studies, appraisals and evaluations of sector programmes to uncover or plan to avoid negative cultural side effects, and 2) Culture is used proactively as a special effort in the respective sector programme that contributes to its overall objectives. This means that part of the cultural interventions outlined in this strategy, will take place within the sector programmes.

The cultural strategy applies a multi-level approach. While project implementation will focus on the district and community level, institutions, networks and associations that operate on a national level will also be involved in capacity building activities both to serve as resource persons and to gain more experience from the field.

The strategy focuses on the geographical areas where Danida already work. In order not to spread resources too thinly and to minimize external risk factors, the project activities will be concentrated in Noakhali district, eventually supplemented with Pathuakali district. During the course of the strategy, it may also be considered to carry out specific activities in Dhaka or Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) – depending on the security situation there.

**Areas of support**

The Embassy has decided to focus the culture and development strategy on two major themes: theatre & drama and craft & design – both with a focus at the community level. Danida already has positive experience within those areas, which constitute a strong tradition and development potential in the Bangladeshi society. This will be supplemented with a special fund for cultural development and exchange.

**The interventions are the following:****1. Networking and capacity support for organizations working with theatre**

Bangladesh has developed a strong tradition of “theatre for development”, which has moved from message-led forms of “campaign theatre” to more sophisticated forms of community theatre. This works with a series of sensitization and discussion events based on strong community ownership and often builds on the traditional folkloristic performances in the village. Yet, there is still limited interaction between “stage theatre” or mainstream theatre on the one side and “theatre for development” or NGO theatre on the other. This means that the possibilities for the development theatre to improve impact, by upgrading its artistic quality, its use of interactive methods and its range of dramatic expression have not been really explored.

**The overall aims of the project are:**

- Strengthen networks and collaboration among professional theatre practitioners, theatre institutions and organizations working with theatre as a tool for community development
- Capacity development of community theatre organizations to use alternative media, interactive methods and innovative stage and performance techniques
- Increased recognition of the culture and development potential of community theatre among culture institutions at the national level

The project will be implemented by the Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts (BITA). BITA is based in the Chittagong area where it has its office and training centre.

**2. Theatre for development in water and sanitation (under Danida WSS programme)**

Theatre and drama has been used successfully as an integrated part of an entertainment and education package for community awareness and behavioral change in WSS programme phase one. As one of the activities under the sub-component for NGO and Civil Society Networking in phase two, the WSS programme will examine in detail the possibilities of supporting local theatre groups that includes sanitation, hygiene and good governance promotion.

Among the key project objectives are the following:

- Awareness raising and behavioral change in rural communities through an integrated cultural approach that combines participatory theatre and drama performances on WSS issues with adequate follow-up activities and monitoring mechanisms
- Capacity development of local theatre practitioners and groups to address WSS issues at their own initiative and with their own means
- Strengthening the gender perspective through interactive role plays that addresses the responsibilities of both men and women for improvement in the WSS situation

The project will be implemented by the NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, which has

### **3. Theatre for development in human rights and good governance (Under Danida HRGG programme)**

Theatre has been used in the HRGG programme phase one as a tool for sensitizations of communities on human rights, democracy and gender issues as well as the promotion of cultural diversity. Theatre and drama will be incorporated as a specific area of intervention under the component for promotion of human rights in phase two of the HRGG programme.

Among the key objectives are the following:

- Increase information, disclosure and debate on human rights issues at community level through a cultural approach that combines participatory drama performances with adequate follow-up activities and monitoring mechanisms
- Empowerment of children, women, ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups in rural areas to better understand and claim their basic rights
- Sensitization and mobilization of the communities to carry out advocacy activities on democracy and good governance issues

The project will be implemented by BITA, which is presently implementing a project linked to the HRGG programme. BITA has previously participated in the “Images of Asia” festival organized by the Danish Centre for Culture and Development (DCCD).

### **4. Support to small craft producers (with funding from ASP window for agricultural production)**

Bangladesh has a strong tradition in the field of craft and design, which builds on unique products of ethnic minority groups, traditional craftsmanship and abundance of raw material in rural areas. In total, more than 50 different craft items are produced in Bangladesh. Among the small scale producers are found some of the most marginalized groups in the Bangladesh society such as rural poor, women and minority groups. Yet, the small craft producers are also facing a number of barriers and obstacles. The value of most local products is very close to their basic production cost due to little added value from the design part, which is mainly seen as decoration and not in functional terms. Moreover, the small producers are usually not organized, they lack information about market opportunities, product quality and delivery is not standardized and the promotion of their craft items at fairs is irregular. This hampers the market potential and it means that there is a large untapped demand, especially at the domestic market.

Among the key project objectives are the following:

- Support small craft producers in rural areas to obtain a higher and more reliable income from production of traditional craft items and sale to the domestic market
- Capacity development of small craft producers through practical training, improved organization and project planning and management support to obtain funding from ASP facility
- Design and product development of selected craft items that are made from local raw material and has a market potential at the district level
- Exploring and increasing the market demand for the respective craft items through promotion at trade fairs, festivals and other relevant venues

The core project will be implemented by the NGO Noakhali Rural Development Society (NRDS), which is marketing and selling crafts from approx.1000 producer-groups in Noakhali and has a long track record with Danida. The long-term perspective is to approach the international market with support from the Danida Private Sector programme. Thus, it is crucial to involve stakeholders from the national level such as private entrepreneurs and craft organizations, and preferably also the international level, e.g. Danish designers.

### **5. Cultural Fund for development and exchange**

The fund will mainly be used strategically to support the core components, theatre & drama and craft & design, for example through exchange with Danish specialist in interactive theatre. Yet, it may also provide seed money for other arts events that are linked with the overall objectives of the cultural strategy. When concrete partnerships and exchange activities with Denmark are proposed it is because Denmark will have something to offer – a comparative advantage in those fields - and it also reflects needs and potential on the Bangladeshi side.

The key objectives of the Fund are:

- Strengthen pluralism, cultural diversity and freedom of expression in the Bangladeshi society through support to modern artists and contemporary art events
- Stimulate inspiration, reflection and development of identity of the Bangladeshi people through active participation in- and use of modern, contemporary art
- Increased collaboration, mutual inspiration and understanding between art sectors in Bangladesh and Denmark through exchange

The fund will be administrated by the Embassy. DCCD will be co-funding the fund through a framework agreement with the Embassy, in which DCCD sources will be earmarked for exchange activities with Denmark. The agreement will set the overall objectives and administrative procedures. Each year, the Embassy and DCCD will make an annual action plan with a budget that will be approved by the DCCD board.

### **Organisation**

To tie the activities of the cultural strategy together, a core group will be established. The group will take care of the co-ordination of cultural activities within the Danida programmes. It will be composed of a cultural coordinator from the Embassy as well as cultural focal points in sector/thematic programmes HRGG, WSSP and ASP. Such focal points need not necessarily come from the sector programme offices. It could be a representative from one of the key partner organizations working with culture, e.g. BITA for HRGG, NGO Forum for WSSP and Noakhali Rural Development

The Danish Strategy for Culture and Development from 2002 sets the overall priorities and principles for the work with culture as an integrated part of Danish development assistance. The strategy applies a wide understanding of culture encompassing not only artistic expressions but also the total complex of mental structures and shared values, beliefs, knowledge that underpin behavior and characterize a society or a social group. Thereby, cultural support has a clear link to democratization and poverty reduction, which are the overriding goals of Danish development assistance.

## **Concluding Remarks**

With globalization sweeping across the developing world, it is unlikely that there will be a turn around in the current trend of growing market influence. What, then, we need to focus on is making consumption and production patterns as sustainable as possible without sacrificing the present lifestyle or comforts. The Bangladesh urban middle-class will have more and more disposable income in the future and it will be hard to put a cap on consumption. Assimilation and acceptance have been integral features of Bangladesh's development. Its cultural bonds are so strong that it is able to accommodate change with certain modifications to suit its needs. It is this resilience and flexibility that is needed today to control and redress environmental degradation and social upheaval. Consumers need to hark back to traditional knowledge and absorb its good practices into their urban lives.

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