

# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HIGHER STUDIES (1992-2009)

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## ABSTRACT

*Bangladesh faces the constant challenges of rampant poverty, high population density, and increasing population rate. Poor people are arsenic contaminated and urban people are mostly exposed to the polluted air, recurring natural disasters and a dwindling natural resource base. It is one of the poorest country of the developing world, with a low resource base, a very low land-man ratio, and is threatened by both natural hazards and overexploitation. However this resource base is under see threat and environmental planning is necessary to signal any hope for survival with dignity and sustainability. Therefore, Bangladeshi people need awareness, protection and education of the environment. Moreover, in order to maintain a modern, scientific and effective education system including environmental education, Bangladesh Government attaches highest priority to the improvement of education sector. The environmental education is largely taught in the country at all levels but which lack in the higher education. Recently there is in fact a new discourse to include environmental education in the higher education policy. With this objective, the Government of Bangladesh had establish several Education Commissions and Committees since the independence of the country. So it is necessary to consider that a well-arranged framework for a historical analysis is important in respect of environmental education in higher studies up to current situation.*

## INTRODUCTION

Environmental education is the most discussed subject in the present time. It becomes the central issue not only for Bangladesh context as well as in the international debate in the early part of twenty first century. The land, water, air, sea, ocean, hill, mountain, roads, transport, industry and its sound, human, animals, insects, trees etc. consisting of whole environment. The development & survival of human fully depend on the peaceful and balanced coexistence of the environment. But most regretfully, the human society is destroying the equilibrium of nature by changing and mishandling the mineral resources. As a result the human society is facing the natural disasters with certain intervals. Therefore it is essential to rethinking that a good-arranged structure for a historical study is significant in respect of environmental education in higher studies Though there were environmental education at the higher level in a scare and scattered way since 1970s, however, it was structured and developed after 1992. That's why the paper emphasizes a historical overview of the environmental education in higher studies in Bangladesh from 1992 to 2009.

## OBJECTIVE

The prime objective of this paper is to address the problems, progress and prospects of the environmental education in higher studies in Bangladesh. The specific objectives of this study have been stated below that will be followed in this context.

- Background of environmental education in Bangladesh.
- Needs of environmental education to the country
- Governmental and non-governmental policy and its effectiveness.
- State of environmental education in higher studies
- Research and training activities towards higher environmental education.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research mainly historical methodology has been followed. Moreover scientifically aspects of natural environment with distinguished features of its structure shall be analysed and reviewed. In respect of source-materials of research in this paper mainly considered the references in the official and demo-official records, published reports, newspapers and journals and various private organizations reports to related in environmental education. Secondly, some of the useful literatures related to environmental education in Bangladesh written by prominent scholars have been taken to compare, cross and justify against the objectives. The above mentioned source-materials have been collected in governmental and non-governmental and different university libraries in Bangladesh and Malaysia etc. We have also utilized modern technologies like internet, website, email etc. to collect facts and figures about our research field which was help us to reach a further-more accurate decisions and opinions.

Bangladesh had a principally habitual, pre-industrial economy since a long. In spite of their low productivity, an important virtue of traditional methods of production is that they are less polluting and more environmentally sustainable. To obtain higher productivity and growth, Bangladesh has striven toward industrialization for about two decades. However, accessible industries tend to be environmentally harmful. The early industrializing countries (EIC), now in their post-industrial stage, are trying to refurbish the damage done to their environments and rotating to environmental sustainability. Even newly industrializing countries (NIC) experience the polluting capable of industrialization. Therefore, as Bangladesh proceeds towards industrialization, it needs to be careful of the environmental impacts of industrial growth. So, there are enough justifications of why the country like Bangladesh is in urgent needs to take a serious action about the impact of industrialization and why the peoples of country require superior knowledge and awareness of environmental issues:

- Bangladesh is mostly susceptible to environmental damage.
- Diversity of fish species and fish catch has decreased, reducing the income of the very poor that depend on fish for livelihood.

- Inadequate information on the status and functioning of critical ecosystem has lead to poor environmental policies.
- Massive deforestation has also taken place, with negative consequences for both diversity and production of tropical forest resources.
- Once natural resources are degraded, there is limited opportunity for alternative income activities.
- Public awareness of environmental issues is limited.
- Rapid expansion of dry season irrigation for rice cultivation has resulted in the loss of over 50% of the dry season perennial portions of the country. Seasonal drawdown of the water table is also a problem, causing some tube wells to run dry.

The environmental education has become an important issue due to present global agenda of sustainable development. How to develop environmental awareness among us? It is necessary for the people of Bangladesh to know the issues of climate change and global warming and begin tackling them with the limited resources. The government of the country should develop public awareness strategy so that an effective and sustainable education can be ensured at the tertiary level. This is to be estimated, given the low level of environmental awareness and the negligible level of environmental education offered to people through schools and higher institutions. It can be disputed however that progress of the state of the Bangladesh environment through environmental learning is a precondition for wealthy economic development.

Environmental education is essential not merely to make a payment to rule construction, but also to create a civil society that demands environmental responsibility of its government and works with government in completion. Government can effortlessly plan and modify nationwide strategy for environment and sustainable development, using local or imported capability. The distant superior challenge is to efficiently incorporate communication and education both for the short and longer term outcomes. The general aim of environmental education and statement is to support and make powerful the community to preserve the integrity and diversity of nature, and to ensure that natural resources are used in an equitable and ecologically sustainable manner. Education is commonly perceived as a one-way flow of information, consistently in educational institutions, particularly schools. On the other hand, environmental education can be two-way communication with full contribution and awareness by people of all ages.

#### Environmental Courses in different public universities

Name of University	Department	No of Env. Course
Bangladesh Agricultural University	Agriculture and Management	4
	Crop Botany	1
	Entomology	2
	Fisheries Biology and	3
	Limnology	4
	Irrigation and Water	

	management Soil Science	5
Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology	Chemical Engineering	5
	Civil Engineering	13
	Institute of Appropriate Technology	3
	Water Resources Engineering	11
University of Chittagong	Botany	4
	Chemistry	1
	Bio Chemistry	1
	Institute of Environment and Forestry	15
	Institute of Marine Science	5
	Physics	3
	Sociology	1
University of Dhaka	Anthropology	1
	Applied Chemistry	1
	Botany	2
	Economics	1
	Geography	12
	Microbiology	1
	Sociology	1
	Soil Science	9
	Zoology	11
Shahjalal University	Chemistry	1

Source: Ross, Lisa and Khan, Lopa(ed.), Environmental Education in Bangladesh at the Tertiary Level, Dhaka: BCAS.

From the above table, it is easily understood that total eight public universities offered environmental related courses under different departments. However, after 1995 the curricula of the environmental studies in the higher education system have comparatively developed rather than previous two decades. In 1996, the environmental science discipline was established at Khulna University, and full session courses (four years undergraduate courses) started in 1997. Although there were two institutes on environmental affairs at the University of Chittagong and the University of Rajshahi, Prof Salequzzaman claimed that Department of Environmental Science Discipline of the Khulna University is the first complete individual department of environmental discipline in higher education Bangladesh. However, the attempt of the Khulna University can be regarded as the mile stone in turning of environmental studies at the tertiary level in the country. At this moment, the environmental science discipline is running only as a four years undergraduate BSc Honors course. The aims of the environmental science discipline are to provide teaching of the highest possible

standard, and it offers a challenging syllabus in which students can develop their full academic potential.

### Environmental Department in different private universities

Name of the Universities	Name of the Environmental Department
International Islamic University Chittagong	Department of Environmental Sciences
Stamford University Bangladesh	Environmental Studies
Independent University Bangladesh	School of Environmental Science & Management
United National University	Natural Sciences and Business and Economic Research.
North South University	Institute of Development, Environment and Strategic Studies
Daffodil International University	Department of Environmental studies
The University of Asia Pacific	Department of Business and Environmental Sciences
Bangladesh University	Environmental Science
Bangladesh University of Business and Technology	Environment and development Economics
University of South Asia	Bachelor of Environment Science

**Source:** Universities Websites

The environmental laws and policies are taught as a part of tertiary education in the private and the public universities of the country. Reportedly, the environmental laws in the different titles such as the International Environmental Law, International Environmental Developments and Legal Issues, Issues in International Environmental Institutions and Regional Environmental Developments, Environmental Law, Protocols and Ethics etc., are taught in the 15 Private Universities at the undergraduate and postgraduate level programs. In the Public Universities, it is found that the environmental laws in the titles of the Environmental Laws of Bangladesh and the International Environmental Laws etc; are taught at the undergraduate and post graduate students in the four universities out of 32 in Bangladesh. There are some research institutes and centers in the different public and private universities where the Environment Law research may be done. Among the institutions, the Institute of Bangladesh Studies is internationally recognized as advanced research institute in the University of Rajshahi.

## CONCLUSION

Historically Bangladeshi peoples are, in general, articulate and perceptive. They have traditional or local knowledge and a feel for environmental issues, particularly, as the affect their daily life and also in agricultural farming in rural areas. For this reason, several natural crops such as rice, jute, vegetables, and fruits grew here in abundance. Bangladesh was very attractive region due to it's fertile soil, bumper crop production and availability of cheaper basic foods. Resultantly, the inhabitants apart from other sites in India and Pakistan even in middle Asia have been migrated here for better life. For that reason, population growth is high in comparison to other country of the sub-continent. In this context, recently Bangladesh faces number of environmental problems due to its high density of population, poor socio-economic development and inefficient resources management and institutional framework. Climate change and frequent natural disasters created an unbearable misery to the inhabitants of Bangladesh..

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