

Environmental governance in Hakaluki Haor, Bangladesh: Managing the commons for ecological restoration and poverty alleviation



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Introduction

- Focus on on-going work in northeastern Bangladesh
- Hakaluki haor region
- Highlight many of the challenges and opportunities in environmental governance



Key points

- The importance of good environmental governance
- What happens when it is defective?
- How are people fixing it?
What is being done?
- What are the current challenges and opportunities?



Key points

- Resource-reliant people very much aware of the impacts of degradation
- Social and political structure is responsible for unequal and often destructive resource use patterns.
- Ecological restoration and conservation initiatives in the area must address the challenging issues of rights, ownership and allocation

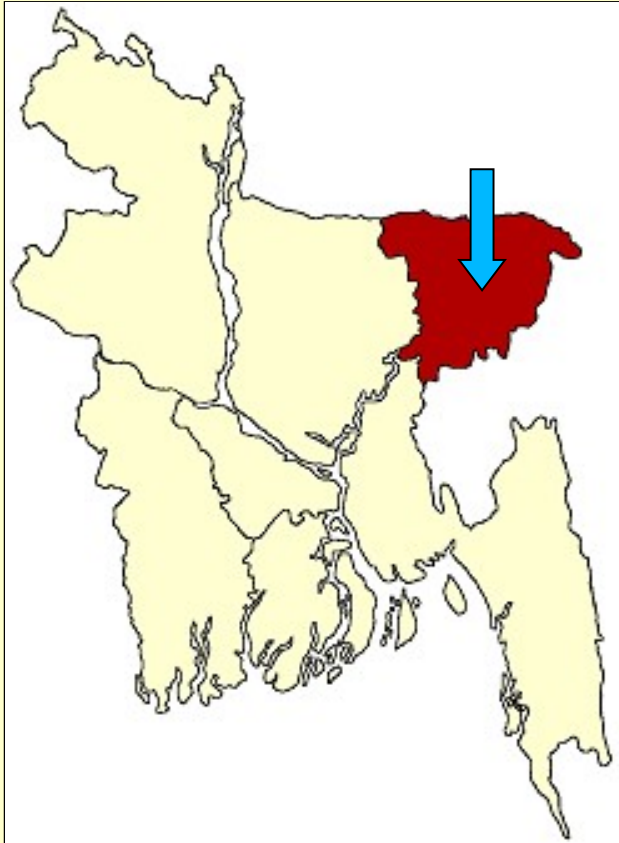


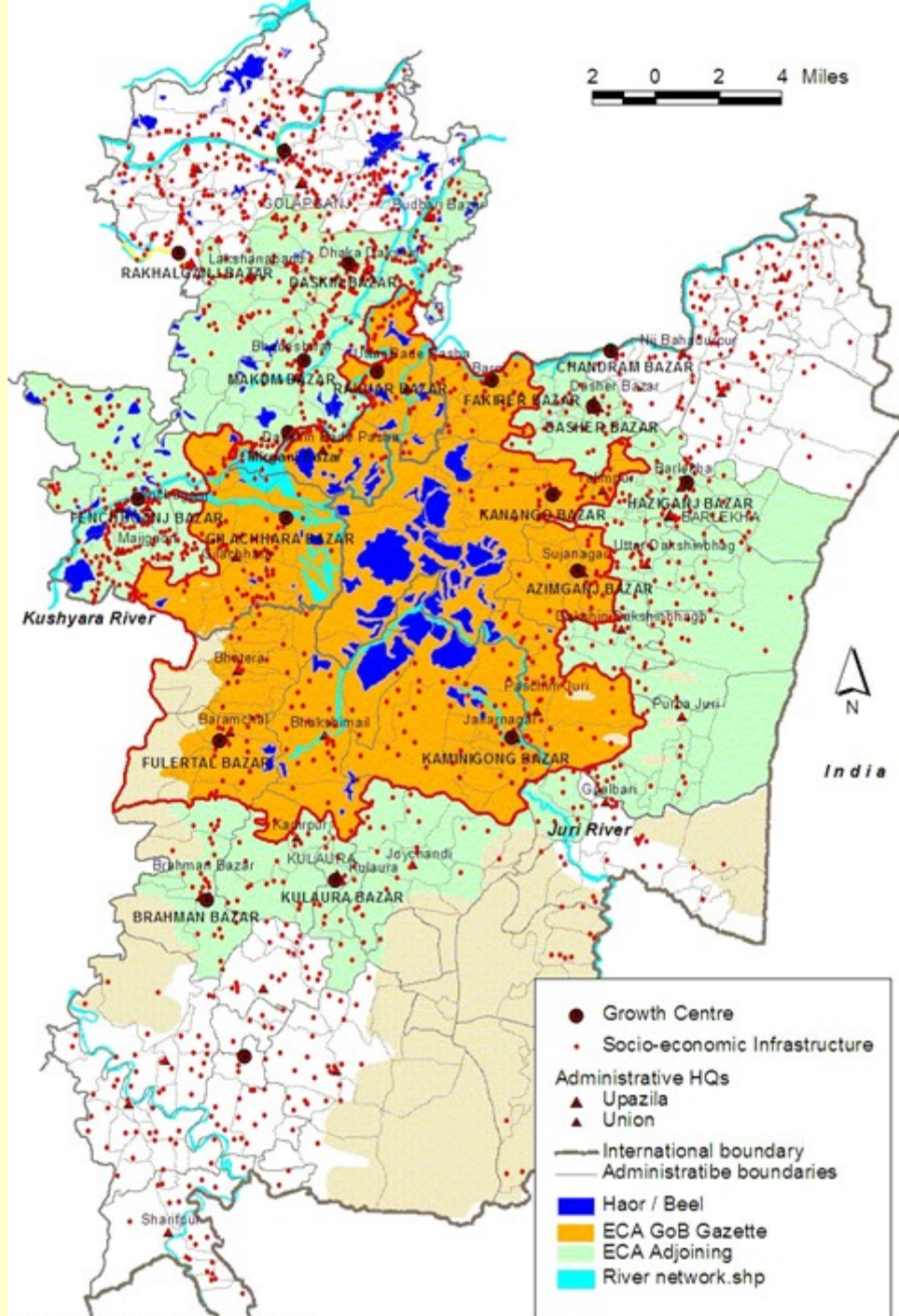
Study Area

- Hakaluki Haor, in northeastern Bangladesh
- During monsoon, it is a large open water body covering over 18,000ha.
- During winter (dry season – October to April) it is a complex of streams, beels (permanent water bodies), surrounded by grazing fields and other croplands.
- Over 230 beels, covering a total area of 64,000 ha in the dry season.



Hakaluki Haor





Hakaluki haor

- Over 200,000 people live in the area, more or less directly supported by haor resources.
- Agriculture, fishing and wage labour.
- Among the most important inland fisheries in Bangladesh
- Habitat for resident and migratory bird, turtles, and other wildlife.



Hakaluki Haor

- Ecosystem undergoing degradation increasing over last decades.
- Overfishing, drying of brooding pools, siltation, etc.
- Unequal access to resources, overexploitation
- No context to foster cooperation for sustainable use of



How did this come about?

Some environmental history

- 1. British Indian period (1757-1947, especially after 1894)
- 2. Pakistan period (1947-1970)
- 3. Bangladesh Liberation (1971)
- 4. Early Bangladesh (1973-199?)
- 5. Toward Hakaluki *Ecologically Critical Area* (1995/1999-)

Indian Period 1757-1947

“In Sylhet great difficulty was experienced from a variety of causes ; the country plane-tabled consists of hills, forest, and swamp, with little open ground or clearing; the rivers, lakes, and streams are swollen abnormally during the rains as, for example, the Hakaluki Howhar, which though passable on foot in winter, assumes during the rainy season the dimensions of a lake about twenty miles by nine, where lives are yearly lost, and which is described by local native officials as " that dangerous stormy sea."

From Indian Survey for the year 1880-81. 1882. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographic Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 4(6): 340-345.



Pakistan period (1947-1971)

- Zamindar system abolished
- Khas land created
- Population and landlessness increase
- Decreasing social stability
- Some forest conversion, expansion of croplands and homestead
- Increasing corruption from forest guards and other officials

Liberation war (1971)



Early Bangladesh period (1973-199?)



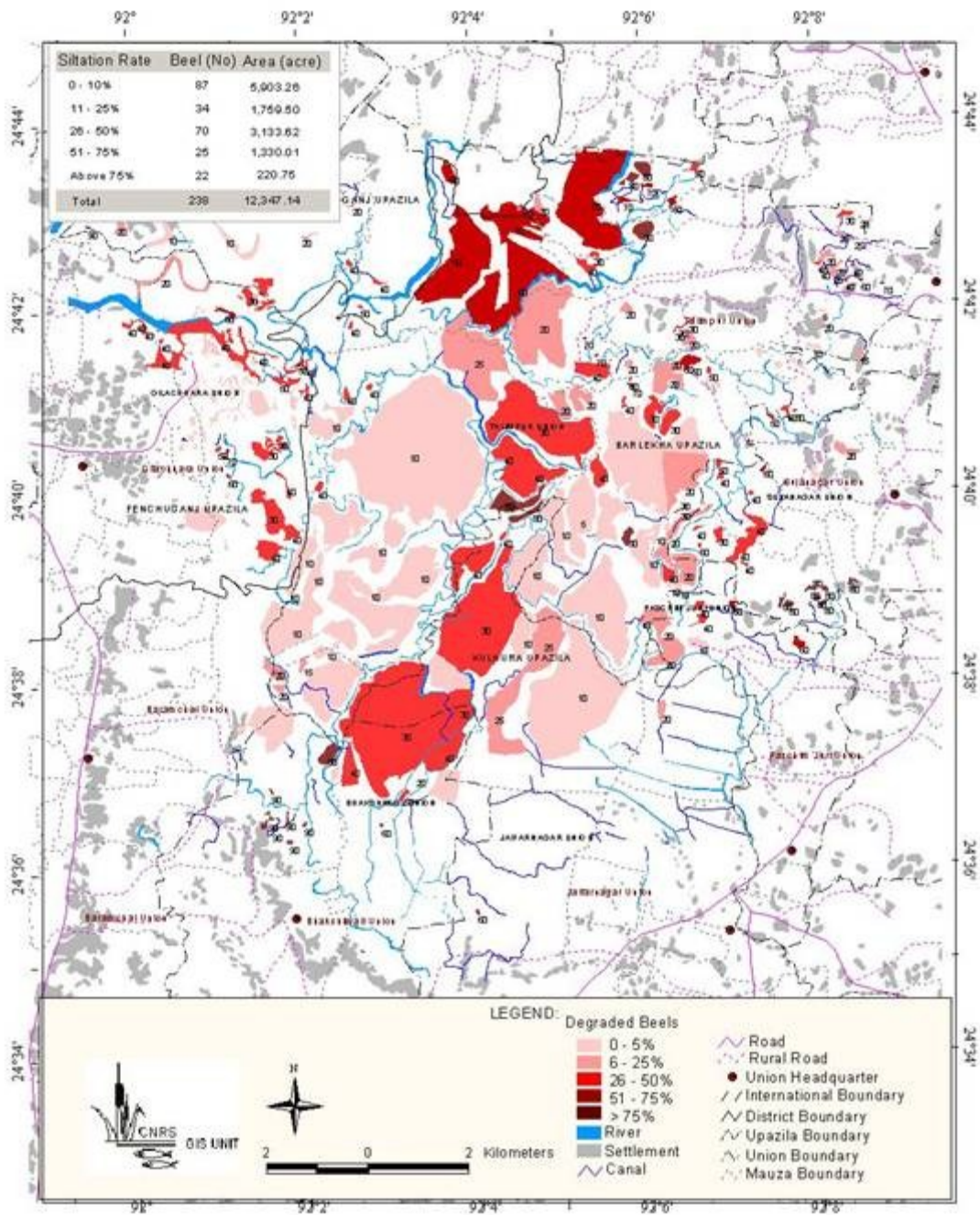
Current situation: tenurial rights I



Current situation: tenurial rights II



Degraded Beels of Hakaluki Haor in comparison of the Siltation Prevalled 30 years back



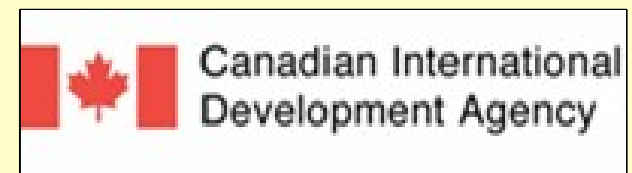
Hakaluki Ecologically critical area (1999-)

- Hakaluki Haor is one of the 8 Ecologically Critical Areas (ECA) by designated by the Government of Bangladesh in 1999.
- Since 1998 initiatives to foster equitable and environmentally sound resource use in the area
- Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP) 1998-2006
- Community-Based Fisheries Management, phase 2
- (CBFM-2) -2006
- Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management Project (CWBMP) 2006-2009

Environmental initiatives in Hakaluki

- These projects share important similarities:
- Financed and designed by international agencies
Implemented by the Bangladesh government
- Partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for community mobilization and facilitation
- Central role for community-based management committees composed of resource-users themselves
- Link between poverty alleviation, participation in decision-making, and sustainable resource management
- Both have strong emphasis on restoration and conservation of resources and livelihood diversification

International organizations



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

- Ministry of Land
- Ministry of Fisheries and Livestocks
- Ministry of Environment and Forests
- Department of forests
- Department of fisheries
- Divisions (Commissioner)
- District (District Commissioner (Chief Administrator))
- Upazila (Deputy commissioner)
- Union Parishad (UP Chairman)

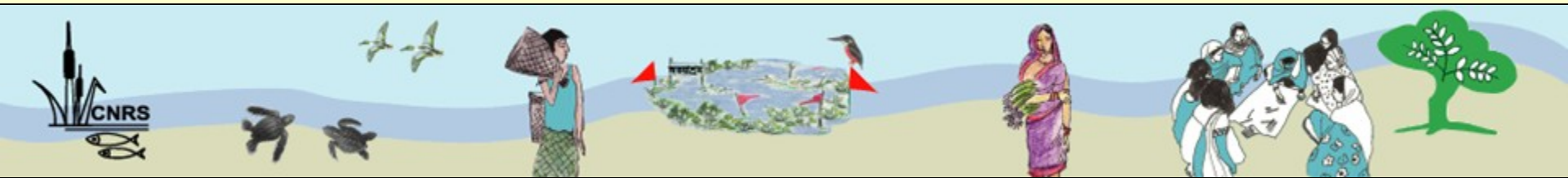


Non-Government Organizations in Bangladesh

- NGO in Bangladesh is one of the main sectors of economy
- Large, locally based, highly professional management
- Some of the largest in the world (BRAC)
- Vaccination programs, schools, business start-up, etc.
- Most are run as non-profit companies operating according to donor's projects and also funded by micro-finance projects.



Center for Natural Resources Studies



- Relatively smaller NGO
- Environment and Development
- Links between poverty and biodiversity
- Community mobilization for restoration and conservation



Community-based organizations



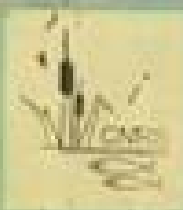
Conservation and restoration initiatives

- Swamp forest restoration
- Sanctuaries
- Awareness campaigns
- Beel management
- Livelihood diversification





IUCN
The World Conservation Union



পাখি শিকার বন্ধ করে সব জাত রক্ষা করি

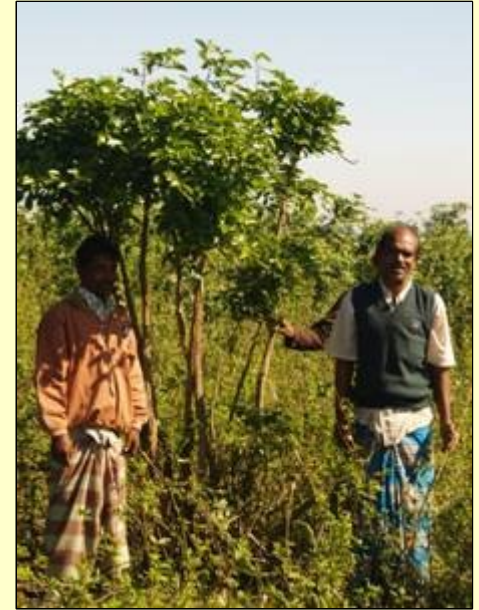


পরিবেশ ও বন মন্ত্রণালয় এবং জাতিসংঘ উন্নয়ন কর্মসূচির সহায়তায় সাসটেইনেবল এনভায়রনমেন্ট ম্যানেজমেন্ট কর্মসূচির অধীনে সি.এন.আর.এস./আই.ইউ.সি.এন. কর্তৃক প্রচারিত।

Swampforest restoration



Swampforest restoration



Beel management



Sanctuaries



Livelihood diversification



What is working?

- Relationship between NGOs and community organizations
- Community organization capacity building and organizations
- Some specific activities when conditions are right
- Importance of focal point, and having the right working relationship with government officials
- Sanctuaries in open access areas (rivers) are enforced

Some remaining challenges

- Ensuring that initiatives continue beyond short term project – valuing continuity
- Interactions between government and CBOs once the project ends and NGO role is ended.
- Income generating initiatives to ensure that there is “something in it” for resource-users and CBO
- Integration between poverty alleviation, genuine participation and resource stewardship.
- Government official do not strive for common good.
- Gender development: must be more than

Conclusions I

Community-based resource management, restoration and conservation involves both social and ecological processes at multiple levels.

Hakaluki was degraded during failure in the social system, especially governance system.

Lack of context for cooperation among resource users prevent the resource system from recovering from degradation, despite the availability of recovery capital, both ecological (high renewal rates), and social (resource users want the recovery).

Conclusions II

- NGOs and community based organizations have good working relationship.
- The limiting factor for environmental governance capacity, at this point is not at either of these levels.
- The various projects over the last 10 years provide lessons and tools.
- How can it move from 'special projects' to sustained effort?



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