

# Preface

Although for many years protected areas have proved to be important for conservation, because of the multifarious anthropogenic pressures, their implementation faces difficult challenges. The creation of many protected areas has led to the exclusion of local people who previously have had access to the resources therein. Conservation strategies commonly conflict with local livelihoods when local people are forced to use resources outside the conservation areas. Such incidence develops rivalry between protected area managers and local communities that ultimately results in ineffective implementation of the strategies and/or failure of the whole program of biodiversity conservation. Realizing the situation, local people's access to protected areas and incorporation of their needs in conservation efforts have been recognized worldwide by conservationists. Therefore, considering the logicity, the concept of collaborative management approach with the active participation of local communities has been developed. The Bangladesh government also adopted and implemented the concept in its protected areas, preliminarily in five forests as pilot projects. This book deals with a number of issues under the broad subject matter of protected area focusing on the policy of collaborative management as a means to augment forest conservation activities and enhance community development in some of these pilot sites.

The book is based on the findings of my Ph.D. research under the direct guidance and supervision of Prof. Masao Koike and Prof. Shigeyuki Izumiyama. With an overall goal of assessing the impact of co-management policy on rural community development, initially, the studies were conducted only in one protected area—Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary—in order to examine the program activities precisely. Later, when the plan for book publication was made, studies from two other protected areas—Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary and Lawachara National Park—were included by inviting two prominent protected area researchers—A. Z. M. Manzoor Rashid and Sharif Ahmed Mukul. However, to be honest, the readers should not expect an attempt to condense everything known about protected area co-management in Bangladesh; this book is not written with an encyclopedic mindset. We just tried to present a critical examination of our current knowledge and ideas regarding protected area co-management, with a highlight on the areas of policy progress, community involvement, community livelihoods and improvement, governance evolvement, and prevailing threats and constraints.

The book begins with introducing Bangladesh, its forest settings, and protected area systems in [Chap. 1](#) with a brief reference to protected area and collaborative management in the global context. [Chapter 2](#) describes conceptual frameworks, research methods, and approaches that were followed both in the field and laboratory during data collection and data analysis, respectively. [Chapter 3](#) deals with the evolutionary history of and periodical changes in the forest policy of Bangladesh, with highlights on the conservation aspects, the development of protected areas, and the gradual adoption of their collaborative management.

[Chapters 4](#) and [5](#) articulate the major resource utilization by the local communities from protected areas in Bangladesh. Although local communities living in and around the forested regions of protected areas of Bangladesh traditionally extract various products from neighboring forests, here emphasis was given only on two products that are importantly involved with everyday life—fuelwood and medicinal plants. The huge rural populations that are further characterized as energy-poor, having no access to modern energy services, rely on biomass fuels, primarily fuelwood in Bangladesh for cooking everyday meals. Similarly, being poor and having less or no access to modern healthcare services, the rural people in Bangladesh heavily depend on medicinal plant-based traditional healthcare practices. These very basic needs, curbing the extraction that seems somewhat unethical in our opinion, are overlooked by many conservationists.

[Chapter 6](#) evaluates the efficacy of co-management approach in community development. A significant level of development has occurred in the socioeconomic conditions of the community as an impact of this new management strategy of protected areas in Bangladesh. The provision of incentives significantly contributed to the increase in the community's annual income and a drastic change was observed in their primary occupation—agriculture/farming became the primary occupation for most of the people from that of day-laborer. Empowerment and improved social dignity of women participants signifies the initiation of co-management approach in protected area.

While protection of nature is the primary concern in protected areas, it is also recognized that meeting the needs and priorities of local communities is vital to guarantee the long-term survival of those areas. To define and identify the problems properly in local context, there is no substitute for ensuring the accurate participation of the local stakeholders. [Chapter 7](#) deals with the assessment of the local stakeholders' participation level in and attitudes toward co-management program.

[Chapter 8](#) deals with exploring the potential of traditional agroforestry systems of three ethnic communities in conserving biological diversity in and around Lawachara National Park, while [Chap. 9](#) deals with the assessment of the role of co-management organizations on protected area governance in Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary. There are repeated arguments by conservation biologists that the application of wildlife-friendly farming methods could potentially reduce the impact of agriculture on biodiversity. In such contexts, examining the potential of traditional agroforestry systems is a highly time-demanding issue, especially when

such systems may act as refuges for many species in a society suffering from poverty, unemployment, and high population density.

**Chapter 10** presents a critical review of the state of protected area co-management in the global context. An attempt was made to correlate it with that of Bangladesh by presenting the results of a case study of local people's views about the co-management impacts on wildlife status in a Bangladeshi protected area. While co-management has both success and failure stories in different parts of the world, it came out with a story of success in Bangladesh, in terms of community development, and in terms of biodiversity conservation.

**Chapter 11** deals with the exploration of potential threats to protected areas and constraints of conservation efforts in Bangladesh. Although protected area-based biodiversity conservation efforts through co-management programs show upbeat impacts in Bangladesh, the protected areas are still subject to a range of threats, making the country's biodiversity conservation programs fragile. Most of the threats are anthropogenic and should be taken into thoughtful consideration by the authority.

The book concludes with the presentation of a general metaphysical model, namely 'Spider-web model of protected area co-management' in **Chap. 12** that has been developed based on lessons from the studies discussed in other chapters. The conclusion was made with an inference that the model can be potentially applicable in countries where local communities rely heavily on protected areas.

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