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Protected Area Co-Management Initiatives and Policy Change through Foreign Donor in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Protected areas are seen as central instruments for the conservation of biological diversity as well as wild resources for local livelihood security. Following the 4th World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA) announcement, Earth Summit in Rio, and the ratification of the Biodiversity Convention, Bangladesh achieved to transform about 10.72 % of the total country's forest area under protected forest area like other developing countries. In 2004, US Agency for International Development (USAID) introduced forest co-management approach that sustains both local livelihoods and the conservation of natural resources. The analytical framework combines concepts derived from policy change process, global governance theorem of direct access to the domestic policy-making process, and the bureaucratic politics theory to explain the access of non-domestic actors and their influence in policy making process of a particular sector. A qualitative-qualitative case study of USAID induced forest co-management development initiatives including a process tracing method was employed to recognize the influence of a foreign donor for policy changes in a recipient country. USAID as a foreign donor has initiated forest co-management development concepts altering or initiating important policy and institutional settings in Bangladesh. The changes were the result of a combination of development inputs and policy instruments including funding, technical assistance, capacity building, training and advisory programs approached from the donor. The study concludes that simultaneously with their formal interest, foreign donors tend to pursue their informal political interests such as policy changes in a sovereign country.

Keywords: Bangladesh, bureaucratic politics, co-management, livelihood, policy change, the protected area