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**Ph. D Thesis** : Environmental Degradation and Poverty in  
South Asia: A Case Study of Bangladesh (1991-2010)

### **ABSTRACT**

The present research study entitled “Environmental Degradation and Poverty in South Asia: A Case Study of Bangladesh (1991-2010)” has been carried out to understand the nexus between poverty and environmental degradation in Bangladesh. The research design of the present study is exploratory and analytical in nature. The study has been conducted on the basis of secondary resources of data and information. The research work has been structured into seven chapters including the introductory and concluding chapter.

### **Summary of the Study**

The first chapter is an introductory chapter. The poverty and environmental degradation discourse at international and South Asian levels has been discussed in this chapter in addition to the national discourse on the subject in Bangladesh. The main objectives of the present chapter have been to study the nature, magnitude and causes of environmental degradation and its Nexus with poverty in Bangladesh. Second chapter entitled “Incidence of Poverty and Environmental Degradation in South Asia” focuses on the present situation of poverty and environmental degradation in South Asia. In this chapter the geophysical setting of South Asian region including the physiography, climatic conditions and the status of environmental degradation in South Asia have been discussed. In South Asia key environmental concerns examined are climate change, geophysical setting, ecosystem changes, deforestation, desertification, pollution, biodiversity loss, and land degradation. The main focus of the present chapter has been the constantly increasing air pollution, water contamination and soil pollution due to rapid industrialisation and other human activities. South Asia has more than 44% of the developing world’s poor as near 571 million people in this region survive on less than \$1.25 a day. In South Asia the climate change and human pressure is changing rapidly the daily life style and the natural resources are continuously degrading which have negatively impacted the ecosystems in the region. The South Asian region contributes enormously to the air pollution in the atmosphere and it is very extreme in India (Delhi) and Bangladesh (Dhaka). The third chapter entitled “Environmental Degradation in Bangladesh” is dealing with the problem of environmental degradation in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is indeed a least developed country with an inadequate natural resource base and an excessive population, causing many environmental issues that further affect poor people's lives. Bangladesh's serious environmental

challenges are including natural disasters, wetlands, deforestation, emissions, arsenic, controlling hazardous waste, and changing climate change especially at global level. The Fourth chapter “Incidence of Poverty in Bangladesh” has revealed that the difference between Income and resource usage gaps has grown over the years as a result of which the standard of living people has declined in Bangladesh. Poverty alleviation is a serious challenge for Bangladesh because of the declining monthly household income and growing inflation of food prices in the country. The fifth chapter entitled “Nexus Between Environmental Degradation and Poverty in Bangladesh” deals with the relationship between environmental degradation and poverty in the country. The correlation between different variables of environmental degradation and poverty have been discussed in this chapter. The chapter sixth entitled “Role of Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations in and Poverty Alleviation and Environmental Conservation in Bangladesh” deals with programmes and schemes of environmental conservation and poverty eradication implemented by the international agencies, governmental and non-governmental organisations working in Bangladesh. Environmental management is important for the well-being of all inhabitants, particularly the poor section of the population. There has been tremendous progress in terms of environmental policies and the creation of environmental authorities and international environmental commitments.

### **Main Findings of the Study**

The present study on "Poverty and Environmental Degradation in Bangladesh" has brought to light some important facts regarding the phenomena of poverty and environmental degradation as well as their mutual relationship in Bangladesh. The present study made it amply clear that environmental degradation is a very serious problem in Bangladesh for the country. The incidents of poverty are a very big challenge for the country. The nexus between environmental degradation and in general and rural poverty in particular is an empirical reality of Bangladesh. The relationship between the variables of environmental degradation such as soil erosion, deforestation, desertification, soil salinization, water logging, and climate change, it has not shown any change in relationship with the percentage of poor people in the country because poverty alleviation schemes and programmes launched by the government and non-governmental organisation in the country. However, the number of rural poor is increasing like the area affected by different types of environmental degradation in the country. The rural to urban migration and emigration is also leading to comparatively rise in rural poverty in the country and it is projected that rise in rural poverty will experience stagnation by 2025 due to rural to urban migration in the country. The nexus between environmental degradation and poverty is therefore very much obvious in Bangladesh.