



The Green Politics of Hope: Youth Activism and the Struggle for Deepor Beel

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Abstract

The article explores the convergence of green politics and youth activism in the campaign to protect Deepor Beel, Assam's only Ramsar-designated wetland. The movement emerged after the Assam Cabinet's controversial move to denotify the Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary, which threatened to open ecologically sensitive zones to fishing and urban expansion. By following a qualitative case study approach, including desk research, policy review, and media content analysis, the study investigates how youth-led activism has become a driver of ecological justice and sustainable governance.

Findings reveal that youth activism in Assam draws heavily on the principles of ecological sustainability, participatory democracy, and social justice. (Sharma, P (2020), Green politics and youth participation in Northeast India, *International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 12(4), 112.) Activists employ social media campaigns, community alliances, and grassroots mobilization to pressure policymakers and defend community rights. (Baruah, A (2022, October), *Petitions and protests: The youth-led campaign to save Deepor Beel. Down To Earth*. <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/wildlife-biodiversity/deepor-beel-youth-campaign>; The Wire Staff, (2023, February 12), *Assam cabinet decision on Deepor Beel draws protests, The Wire*). However, they face challenges such as state resistance, limited financial resources, and socio-economic vulnerabilities among local residents (Sharma, S, & Sarma, K (2023), Socio-economic vulnerabilities of communities at Deepor Beel, *Indian Journal of Community Development*, 17(1), 35). The Gauhati High Court's intervention halting denotification underscores the fluid political dynamics of environmental governance.

Ultimately, the Deepor Beel campaign demonstrates how youth-led green politics can influence conservation policy, linking wetland protection to justice-oriented sustainable urban growth. The article emphasizes the need for inclusive conservation, balancing ecology with livelihoods, ensuring legal safeguards, and amplifying youth engagement for a sustainable future in Assam.

Keywords:

"Deepor Beel, Green Politics, Youth Movement, Wetland Conservation, Environmental Activism"

1. Introduction

Deepor Beel, a Ramsar-designated wetland on the outskirts of Guwahati, exemplifies the fragile balance between ecological preservation, development pressures, and community survival. Meaning "lake of elephants," it holds immense cultural and ecological significance as a habitat for elephants, migratory birds, and aquatic species, while sustaining over 1,200 indigenous families who rely on it for fishing, grazing, and plant harvesting—livelihoods deeply tied to tradition and ecological care.

However, this equilibrium is breaking down due to rapid urbanisation, industrial encroachment, and municipal waste dumping, which have degraded biodiversity and livelihoods. While marginalized communities are often blamed, the real drivers are large-scale urban and industrial expansion. Nevertheless, inclusive response of the local communities, particularly women in Deepor Beel who have played an active role in various projects of eco-innovations and eco-enterprises for example: they produced sustainable products by using water hyacinth for sustenance is worth mentioning and needs recognition at the global platform. Further, though local conservation on one hand call for adoption of conservative approaches, but certain conservation policies like fishing ban may alienate the communities from their inherent right as well as tend to ignore their traditional knowledge and expertise. So far as international legislation is concerned, the Ramsar Convention had recognised Deepor Beel's ecological significance only on the aspect of Hydrological Balance, carbon and fisheries storage, thereby implying the need to correlate local conservation strategies with global agenda for achieving sustainability and promote climate. Indeed, such disharmony had accelerated youth activism, leading local struggle to a fight for global ecological justice.

The protest to save Deepor Beel by youth or the local communities through various social through various social media campaign, community alliance and environmental justice program and the urge of the Assam Cabinet to denotify parts of the Wildlife Sanctuary and the intervention by the Judiciary to halt the process signifies GreenPolitical resistance and positive youth -led initiatives. Moreover, Deepor Beel's power struggle not only represents socio-economic movement, but also the local communities' ways to defend their diverse cultural identities, pattern of living and a multifarious push to achieve ecological and economic welfare.

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2. Objectives and Methodology

1. To examine how Green Political Ideologies that influences environmental policy- making and Governance, guides the youth movement concerning Deepor Beel.
2. To examine the impact of youth movement on sustainable development, ecological justice, and participatory governance.
3. To offer proposed recommendations and ways forward to strengthen Wetland conservation and community lives through participatory governance.

The study is purely based on doctrinal methodology through comprehensive examination of secondary sources like journals, articles, e-book, relevant publications and websites.

3. Findings, Analysis, and Discussions

3.1. Ecological Significance of Deepor Beel:

3.1.1. Context and Challenges:

Once spanning over 6,000 hectares in the 1980s, Deepor Beel has now diminished to less than 500 hectares due to rapid environmental degradation. Located in the Kamrup district near Guwahati, it is Assam's only Ramsar-designated wetland (recognized in 2002) and part of the Burma monsoon forest biogeographic region, formed from an old Brahmaputra channel. The wetland harbours rich biodiversity—over 220 bird species, including the endangered Greater Adjutant Stork and Spot-Billed Pelican, 50 fish species, and seasonal elephant migrations from the Rani and Garbhanga forests—making it vital for regional ecological connectivity.

Apart from the rich biodiversity, Deepor Beel further acts as Guwahati's natural stormwater reservoir while receiving run-offs from nearby rivers along with providing essential eco-system services like flood control, carbon sequestration, purification of water and its active role in maintaining nutrient cycle. Further, the Beel also assists in the livelihood sustenance of various communities like Rabha, Keot and Karbi by carrying out various activities through fishing, grazing and harvesting aquatic plants etc. that are essential both economic and cultural.

However, this sensitive ecosystem has turned vulnerable as it faces mounting challenges from siltation, toxic water effluents from nearby Boragaon land fill areas, urban pressure and encroachments, resulting in growth of invasive species like water hyacinth. Such continuous threats tend to endanger Biodiversity, deteriorate health of local communities and put their livelihood at risk. Although Deepor Beel was declared a Bird Sanctuary in 1989 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and legal measures such as Section 144 CrPC orders and National Green Tribunal directives have sought to curb harmful activities, poor enforcement, cultural conflicts, and urban development pressures have undermined their effectiveness.

3.1.2. Contextualizing the Struggle for Deepor Beel:

Since 2002 Deepor Beel was designated as Assam's only Ramar Site, being home to more than 200 bird's species, rare aquatic fauna and migratory birds supporting biodiversity richness. This Beel have been safeguarding the ecological and socio- economic conditions by regulating floods, recharging ground water as well as by providing sustenance or source of livelihood to more than 1200 indigenous families from Rabha, Karbi, Keotribes, whoare totally depended on the Beel since ancestral days.

Despite such multifaceted importance, rapid urbanisation, industrial pollution, encroachment, and poor municipal waste dumping had caused severe degradation and damage to the wetland. In addition, when in 2022 the Assam Cabinet proposed to denotify parts of the Sanctuary for commercial and urban development, this crisis reached its threshold point, thereby inviting widespread resentment from local communities, activist and scientists converting Deepor Beel as a battleground of political and socio-economic struggle for the people of Assam. Rapid Urban Development and pollution caused by Guwahati municipal Corporation landfills had not only caused livestock deaths but also had adverse impact on reduction of fish stocks, health hazards, mainly the fisherman community, and simultaneously triggered risk to food security, and livelihoods.

Despite innumerable effort by National Green Tribunal (NGT) and campaign by activist's groups like Deepor Beel Suraksha Manch, no vital progress could be seen in tackling issues like untreated waste, recurrence of fire, less importance to restoration initiatives at the cost of cosmetic development projects that tend to ignore local participation and poor governance. In the midst of such environmental crisis, the concept of 'Green Politics' was taking its own shape through various channels like social media, digital advocacy, protests, legal interventions and community alliances by youth communities like activists like Rohit Chaudhary, Pramod Kalita, and NGO's

seeking transparency in Government mechanisms and sustainable solutions. Their activism has resulted in generating legal awareness, environmental consciousness, and conscious leadership that would demand integration of traditional knowledge with the principles of ecological justice and participatory governance.

To sum up, the struggle for Deepor Beel is no longer limited only to Wetland Conservation but also reflects the ‘Green Politics of Hope’ that integrates environmental science, youth-led legal campaign, indigenous leadership for a fair, inclusive and ecologically sound future for Assam.

3.1.3. Green Politics, Youth Activism, and the Movement of Deepor Beel

In Assam, Green politics have gained momentum by youth movement to uplift its very principles of ecological sustainability, social justice, grassroots democracy and participatory governance as emphasised by *Sarma 2020*. The young activists by resorting to various methods like social media, grassroots campaign and community alliances had brought about a paradigm shift in the outlook of the movement from wetland conservation to political and moral issues as also emphasised by *Baruah 2022, The Wire Staff 2023*. Deepor Beel movement is no longer merely a community protests but a systematic change to connect restoration of the environment with the welfare of the community at large.

3.2 Youth-Led Innovation and Grassroots Solutions

Innovative initiatives like the Simang Collective, Kumbhi Kagaz, and Akshar Foundation demonstrate how youth-driven actions unite ecology with livelihoods.

- Simang Collective, led by young women from Keotpara, converts invasive water hyacinth into eco-handicrafts, empowering women and restoring degraded wetland areas (Adhyapak, 2023).
- Kumbhi Kagaz engages youth in turning water hyacinth into biodegradable paper, blending eco-innovation with job creation (DownToEarth, 2023).
- Akshar Foundation, located near Deepor Beel, accepts plastic waste as tuition fees, connecting education with waste management.

In 2022, youth groups gathered over 10,000 signatures opposing the government’s plan to denotify parts of the Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary, reframing the issue as one of environmental justice and sustainable development. Their activism heightened public awareness and pressured policymakers to acknowledge the ecological costs of unchecked urbanisation.

3.3 Denotification Controversy and Legal Interventions

In 2024, the Assam Cabinet’s attempt to denotify part of the sanctuary—citing fishing rights—provoked legal resistance. The Gauhati High Court halted the move, and the National Green Tribunal directed the government to establish an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) restricting polluting industries while promoting organic farming, green technology, and eco-tourism. Despite these legal safeguards, enforcement remains weak, and Deepor Beel continues to face degradation from waste dumping, encroachments, siltation, and infrastructure projects like the railway line disrupting elephant migration. NGOs such as (Nature Environment and Wildlife Society of India (NEWS) India have responded through education and livelihood diversification to reduce ecological pressure.

3.4 Youth Activism and the “Green Politics of Hope”

Confronted by visible ecological decline—pollution, landfill fires, and declining fish stocks—youth activists have mobilised through digital campaigns, protests, clean-up drives, and policy advocacy. Collaborating with scientists and community leaders, they highlight governance lapses in implementing the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and ESZ directives. Drawing inspiration from other Ramsar sites, they advocate for community-managed no-take zones that replenish fish stocks and ensure livelihood security, reinforcing that conservation must rest on social equity.

3.5 Community-Based Fisheries Management (CBFM) as a Model

Successful CBFM initiatives in Dora Beel in Kamrup and Sone Beel in Karimganj demonstrate how communities can co-manage wetlands through secure tenure, local decision-making, and sustainable fishing practices. These models promote seasonal fishing bans, gear restrictions, and reinvestment in habitat restoration and welfare projects. Youth activists play crucial roles by conducting training, digital monitoring (GIS, mobile apps), and eco-tourism development, bridging traditional ecological knowledge with modern conservation science.

3.6 The Green Politics of Hope

The Deepor Beel struggle signifies that environmental activism extends beyond resistance—it builds inclusive, solution-oriented governance. By aligning ecological restoration with community empowerment and justice, Assam's youth have turned a local conservation battle into a movement of democratic renewal and environmental resilience. This embodies the “Green Politics of Hope”—a vision where ecological crisis becomes a catalyst for a sustainable, participatory, and equitable future.

4. Legal and Policy Dimensions: Institutional Responses

The struggle for Deepor Beel has been shaped as much in courtrooms as in community meetings. Responding to mounting public and youth-led pressure, the Gauhati High Court issued a landmark order halting the Assam Cabinet's attempt to denotify parts of the Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary and restricting new construction in its vicinity. The court's emphasis on safeguarding ecological integrity alongside community rights reflects how public mobilisation can influence judicial responsiveness in Assam's volatile political landscape (Sharma & Sarma, 2023). Parallely, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) stepped in, directing authorities to act under the Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017, and to address the wetland's degradation as a matter of urgency. These interventions show how youth and community movements have learned to strategically use judicial and quasi-judicial forums—not just as spaces for redress, but as tools to reshape conservation discourse (Deka, 2022).

The declaration of an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) and adoption of a Zonal Master Plan (ZMP) around Deepor Beel under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, created a formal conservation framework encompassing 38.84 sq km. The ESZ bans destructive activities like commercial mining, polluting industries, and large-scale construction, while regulating potentially impactful sectors such as tourism and small-scale industries. It also promotes conservation-aligned activities—organic farming, renewable energy, eco-tourism, afforestation, and environmental awareness.

For youth movements, this is not just bureaucratic paperwork; it is a ready-made platform for action. The ESZ and ZMP provisions:

- **Provide a Legal Basis for Activism:** Activists can align their demands with statutory conservation mandates, making it harder for authorities to dismiss them as “anti-development.”
- **Encourage Sustainable Livelihoods:** By promoting eco-friendly tourism, organic agriculture, and skill development, these policies open space for youth-led entrepreneurship.
- **Mandate Community Involvement:** The ESZ's Monitoring Committee explicitly calls for local participation, giving young environmentalists a foothold in official oversight and planning.

The Gap Between Law and Reality

India's wetland protection framework—anchored in the Ramsar Convention, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017, and the Municipal Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016—appears comprehensive on paper, yet the persistent degradation of Deepor Beel exposes serious implementation failures. Each wetland has its own ecological and socio-economic demography and a Wetland Legislation is supposed to provide all protection, conservation and preservation measures irrespective of any Wetland's peculiar trait. But Deepor Beel is a living example to demonstrate that despite of having explicit prohibitions in 2017 Rules, dumping of toxic wastes from nearby Boraogaon site persists, as such transforming the Rules merely to an umbrella legislation where enforcement measures remain weak.

In addition, Administrative Inertia further accelerates this problem where lack of local participation, delay or partial compliance of any Judicial Directives is mostly seen. Also, provisions of penalty being too minimal under ‘Polluter Pays Principle’ have less deterrent effect on repeated violations. Therefore, it is apparently clear that exclusion of key stakeholder who on one hand are the ones directly affected by any administrative or judicial decision, and on the other hand, are also the one who are potentially instrumental for wetland protection is one of the prime reasons for weak enforcement mechanism of any legislation and so, inclusion of youth or the local communities in monitoring and enforcement process is of utmost importance.

How Legal Gaps Contributes to Youth Mobilisation:

Presence of loopholes in any Act or Rules result in creation of structural vacuum and in the context of Deepor Beel, this structural vacuum has been filled by youth movement. The Youth's with its own socio-economic and

ecological crisis have resorted to activities like filing of PIL and exerted immense pressure on having a dedicated Wetland Authority and effective municipal waste regulation. By conducting their campaign with significant emphasis on laws and conventions along with shortcomings, the youth tend to use legal awareness as both shield and sword. Studies suggest that the youth-led movement had expanded the very horizon of ‘Green Politics’ to a level that led to the proposal of community-led ‘Green Police’ for the protection of wetland. By embedding local youth and activists in environmental monitoring, data collection, and enforcement, the idea merges participatory democracy with green political ideals—ensuring protection is not just top-down, but co-managed with those who depend on the wetland.

The legal framework, despite its flaws, offers youth activists a tangible set of tools. Institutional legitimacy strengthens youth activism when demands are grounded in existing legal frameworks, as such claims carry greater political weight and credibility. The push for site-specific, restoration-oriented legislation aligns closely with the regenerative focus of youth movements, which seek not merely to preserve ecosystems but to actively restore them. By leveraging Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) provisions on eco-tourism, organic farming, and skill development, activists can bridge the gap between livelihoods and conservation, advancing solutions that benefit both people and nature. In this way, legal advocacy becomes a cornerstone of the “green politics of hope,” enabling youth movements to move beyond simply opposing flawed governance and instead using the law as a constructive framework to propose—and, in some cases, implement—sustainable, community-driven alternatives.

5. Challenges Facing Youth-Led Green Politics

While youth activism has given strong visibility to the Deepor Beel movement, it faces deep-rooted structural, political, and socio-economic barriers. The government often resists community-led conservation, restricting protests and conducting surveillance (Sharma & Sarma, 2023), creating fear among marginalized fishing and farming families who worry about eviction or loss of livelihood. The dominant urbanisation narrative, which equates infrastructure with progress, sidelines ecological priorities, while activists themselves struggle with burnout, limited funding, and emotional fatigue from long-term advocacy.

5.1 The Waste and Infrastructure Crisis

Deepor Beel’s decline stems largely from poor municipal management and infrastructure planning. Despite environmental laws such as the Solid Waste Management Rules (2016) and Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules (2017), the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) continues to dump and burn waste at the Boragaon landfill, releasing toxins into the wetland. Untreated sewage from nearby rivers worsens water pollution, leading to fish deaths, biodiversity loss, and public health hazards. The Deepor Beel Suraksha Mancha has demanded urgent action—relocating the landfill, stopping contaminated inflows, and cancelling the Azara–Tetelia railway project, which threatens biodiversity and indigenous livelihoods. For youth activists, these failures serve as rallying points for legal, digital, and public campaigns promoting enforcement of environmental laws and protection of eco-sensitive zones.

5.2 Fisheries Under Threat: Ecological and Livelihood Impacts

The fisheries of Deepor Beel, vital for both biodiversity and community sustenance, are collapsing due to siltation, encroachment, pollution, and overfishing. Sediment from deforestation in the Rani–Garbhanga hills and urban sprawl reduces water depth and breeding areas, while continuous waste dumping and industrial effluents contaminate the ecosystem. Overfishing with fine-mesh nets prevents stock regeneration, and hydrological barriers such as embankments and railways fragment habitats and block migration routes. These crises blend environmental and social justice issues, as protecting fisheries means protecting food security, culture, and livelihoods.

5.3 Youth Responses and the Politics of Hope

Youth activists are countering these threats through:

- **Citizen Science:** Engaging local residents in documenting fish diversity decline, mapping pollution sources, and monitoring illegal fishing.
- **Public Campaigns:** Linking overfishing, encroachment, and pollution to broader calls for fair, sustainable management that balances conservation with livelihood needs.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Using ecological data to press for community-managed fishing zones and seasonal bans to allow stock recovery.

Despite political resistance and weak governance, youth-led green politics persists as a “politics of hope.” It represents civic vigilance, intergenerational solidarity, and innovative community engagement, transforming the struggle for Deepor Beel into a continuing movement for ecological democracy and sustainable development in Assam.

6. Critical Insights and Contributions to Knowledge:

The Deepor Beel movement demonstrates how youth-led green politics operates within complex social, political, and ecological constraints—ranging from governmental resistance and livelihood insecurity to waste mismanagement and habitat degradation. These challenges have shaped innovative, community-based strategies where ecological survival intertwines with social justice and participatory governance. Rather than opposing development outright, youth activists are reframing conservation as a democratic, inclusive, and justice-oriented process, shifting from short-term resistance to long-term ecological stewardship.

6.1 Transformative Role of Youth Activism

Youth activism has redefined environmental governance by moving from top-down management to participatory, community-driven sustainability. By blending indigenous knowledge and scientific methods, activists have produced new ecological data—documenting biodiversity trends, pollution levels, and restoration outcomes—thus contributing to adaptive policymaking and ecological jurisprudence. Their engagement through Public Interest Litigations links grassroots advocacy to formal legal frameworks, highlighting the need to democratize environmental governance and recognize civil society as a legitimate ecological actor.

6.2 Development vs. Conservation: The Cycling Track Controversy

The Assam government’s proposal to build pedestrian and cycling tracks around Deepor Beel reveals the tension between eco-tourism and ecological integrity. While promoted as sustainable development, local communities and conservation groups argue it would cause habitat disturbance, obstruct elephant corridors, and degrade wetland ecology. This opposition—part of a broader “Green Politics of Hope”—reflects community-driven resistance to greenwashed development and reinforces an intergenerational alliance for ecological preservation.

6.3 Fisheries Governance and Sustainable Solutions

Youth activism also contributes practical governance models. Proposals for sustainable fisheries management emphasize regulated mesh sizes, seasonal bans, and rotational fishing zones, supported by the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017, and Ramsar Convention obligations. Empowering fishers’ cooperatives, diversifying livelihoods, and strengthening community decision-making are central to achieving ecological and social balance. Youth activists enhance this process through citizen science, awareness drives, and mediation between communities and policymakers.

6.4 Broader Implications and Knowledge Contributions

The Deepor Beel movement’s impact extends beyond Assam. In the ecological aspect, factors like enhanced climate adaptability, flood regulation and carbon sequestration are the major areas where restoration of wetland have a huge implication. So far as social aspect is concerned, the vital impact is on the circular economics and encouragement of community-led eco-enterprises while educational initiatives as that carried out by Akshar Foundation, where they accept plastic bags as fees for education tend to link awareness with civic responsibilities. Apparently, these youth-led movement also had a great impact on the policy and research area as it enlightened participatory methodologies and also advocated how grassroot democracy can shape law and governance.

Thus, ultimately the struggle for Deepor Beel stresses on the need of an authentic sustainable development model that is based on participatory eco-system centric and also community responsive. The youth at Deepor Beel through various ways especially by collaborating themselves with science, traditional knowledge, civic responsibilities are not only aiming to restore Wetland, but also redefining environmental governance based on these ideals and advocating for a transformative model of Green Politics based on hope, justice, and democratic reformation.

7. Case study

Interview with Pramod Kalita Secretary Deepor Beel Suraksha Maanch.

At the very onset of the interview, Kalita stressed on the conservation of Deepor Beel, owing to its vital role in carbon sequestration. Also, the Beel received international recognition in 2022 as a migratory route for birds, thereby elevating its importance and that any adverse effect on the Beel shall also lead to disturbance on the pathways of the birds of that particular region.

His activism movement started since 2014 witnessing gradual deterioration of the Beel and one of the tragic incidents followed in 1980's when ample fish died due to a project of connecting Guwahati drainage system with Deepor Beel. Currently the Deepor Beel Suraksha Maanch carry activities like migratory bird count in collaboration with various universities, NGO's, Forest and other Departments etc, for example in 2023 the bird count 28000. Due to Government sponsored, "rising sun water festival", many birds population declined though presently such activities are not healed the current bird population is around 16000.

As the Assam Cabinet time and again emphasised on having walking and cycling tracks to promote tourism, Kalita opined that if those tracks fall outside the flood prone area of Deepor Beel, then it is welcoming as it would act as an embankment and contribute to ecological restoration, but on the contrary, if it happens to be inside the flood prone area (wetland) then the Ramar Rule, which also contains provision about no construction inside wetland shall be violated as well as it shall contribute to ecological disturbance in that region.

Regarding the impact of the movement on policy changes is concerned, he stated that in the present time stakeholder participation are given much important and are always taken into account, and in that view, the earlier experts report may not be considered accurate as it was prepared on their surveys carried out in a particular season and time as well as devoid of any local consultation but in wetlands, seasonal changes keep occurring and accordingly results also vary. Kalita also mentioned about the recent Integrated Management Plan wherein the communities were consulted while in preparation of the Plan and henceforth, they could provide appropriate and effective solution. This is a positive step towards effective conservation process.

Some ground challenges that poses a threat to the conservation efforts were also highlighted by Kalita like absence of scientific ways to solve the problem of solid waste management, inaccurate data in case of high flood prone area, weak implementation process, conflict of interests amongst community groups in term of declaration of eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) of Wildlife Sanctuary and delineation of elephant corridor as some section of society might want to conserve Deepor Beel but not the Wildlife as stated.

According to Kalita, the possible solution could be active community participation scientific analysis, EIA Like in case of tourism activities, homestay in place of hotels, traditions boats in places of boat houses, live fish aquarium, museums promoting fisherman's tools and techniques and karbi communities traditional items to attract tourist and uplift knowledge and lastly, that traditional knowledge of fisherman's should be preserved and additional but not alternative livelihood should be encouraged.

Kalita states that Effective outcome of their movement is that it could bring stability in the ongoing denotification or government action which is assumed to be detrimental to the ecological significance of Deepor Beel. Also, multiple layer protection is expected by Court's intervention.

8. Recommendations for Future Conservation Practice:

Effective conservation of Deepor Beel requires an integrated approach that connects ecological restoration, community welfare, and youth engagement. Government programmes such as Assam Science Technology and Environment Council (ASTEC)'s wetland initiative provide opportunities for collaboration through de-silting, alternate fishing grounds, weed and waste control, and afforestation—activities where youth can play active roles via eco-tourism, citizen science, and habitat management.

8.1 Protecting Boundaries and Integrating Urban Planning

Establishing buffer zones using GIS mapping and crowd-based monitoring is vital to curb encroachment. Youth can help report violations and lead advocacy for enforcement. Additionally, as urban expansion threatens the wetland, its ecological needs must be embedded in Guwahati's urban planning through zoning controls, green infrastructure, and participatory consultations to promote wetland-sensitive development.

8.2 Pollution Control and Waste Management

Persistent pollution from the Boragaon landfill, sewage, and industrial waste demands strict enforcement of waste disposal laws, creation of sewage treatment plants, and community awareness on waste segregation. Youth can catalyse change through water testing, RTI monitoring, and clean-up campaigns, making pollution control a community-driven effort.

8.3 Sustainable Fisheries and Livelihoods Diversification

To prevent overexploitation, regulated fishing, seasonal bans, and rotational zones should be combined with alternative livelihoods such as eco-tourism and craft-based enterprises. Youth can partner with fishers' cooperatives to ensure ecological and economic sustainability.

8.4 Public Awareness and Environmental Education

Building a conservation ethic through education, workshops, and creative outreach (art, music, storytelling) can strengthen stewardship. Integrating wetland ecology into school curricula ensures long-term awareness and community responsibility.

8.5 Institutional Coordination and Youth Participation

Multi-stakeholder coordination among government, NGOs, academics, and communities is essential. Youth-led groups should bridge communication gaps, join Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) committees, and document violations to strengthen governance and accountability.

8.6 Green Politics and Governance Reform

The Deepor Beel movement reflects that green politics extends beyond resistance—it builds inclusive, justice-oriented governance. Future conservation must embrace socio-ecological systems thinking, recognising wetlands as living landscapes that sustain both biodiversity and livelihoods. Policy priorities include participatory land-use planning, recognition of ecosystem services, and institutionalised youth-led activism. Therefore, sustainable conservation must rest on these pillars specifically, ecological restoration in restoring hydrology, controlling silt and pollution and economic sustainability through eco-tourism, sustainable fisheries, and diversified livelihoods.

8.7 Social inclusion and governance reform – through community leadership and youth empowerment.

Ultimately, protecting Deepor Beel is not just an environmental task but an investment in Assam's climate resilience, food security, and cultural continuity. The youth-led movement embodies the "Green Politics of Hope," proving that creativity, solidarity, and civic action can transform ecological crises into opportunities for sustainable, democratic governance.

9. Conclusion

The youth-led movement for Deepor Beel exemplifies how environmental politics can evolve into a model of ecological justice, participatory democracy, and sustainable governance. Far from being a reactionary protest, it represents a strategic, forward-looking approach integrating conservation with livelihood security, community education, and legal activism. Youth activists in Assam have played a decisive role in influencing policy, halting ecologically harmful projects, and fostering public engagement through coordinated efforts combining legal action, media advocacy, and local alliances.

Their interventions have successfully resisted destructive initiatives—such as the Azara–Tetelia railway line and Boragaon waste expansion—and pushed for wetland-sensitive urban planning that aligns biodiversity protection with community welfare. The movement's innovative strategies, including citizen science-based water monitoring, community-based fisheries management (CBFM), eco-tourism, and eco-entrepreneurship using invasive species, illustrate how environmental activism can also be a source of economic resilience and creative problem-solving.

Though strong legal instrument like the Ramsar Convention, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Wetland Rules 2017 exists, yet weak enforcement mechanism has undermined its effectiveness as issues like waste dumping, encroachment and pollution continues to prevail. As such, a consistent administration that encourages community participation and an accountable Governance are of utmost necessity to secure Deepor Beel's ecology as well as for economic sustainability. Law and Legal Awareness play two individual roles in the present context, it serves as a battleground for safeguarding of ecological rights and also, that it presents a blueprint of a participatory and regenerative future that rests on the philosophy that legal victories can only be achieved through sustained grassroot engagement and intergenerational leadership.

To sum up, there are 3 (three) pillars for effective conservation of Deepor Beel:

1. Restoration of ecology through rehabilitation of habitats, control of pollution and renewal of hydrology.

2. Security to the economic condition of living of the people through sustainable fisheries, eco-tourism, and diversify livelihood opportunities.

3. Inclusion of the local communities in decision-making and youth capacity- building, so asked to bring a sustainable reform in the Governance and effective policies. Conclusively, the movement for Deepor Beel protection should not be understood merely as an environmental necessity, but as an investment to safeguard Assam's climate resilience, security of food and cultural continuity. Further, the movement also exemplifies the 'Green Politics of Hope' by transforming the ecological emergency into a vision of democratic, inclusive and sustainable governance that would value wetland not just a resource of exploitation but a living socio-ecological system whose conservation is of utmost importance for a progressive and biodiversity rich future of Assam.

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