

**International
Institute of
Social Studies**

The Erasmus logo, featuring a stylized, handwritten-style script of the word "Erasmus" in a dark blue or black color.

**Towards an Inclusive Climate Governance: Addressing Barriers to Meaningful CSO
Engagement in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Development
Process in Bangladesh**

Research Paper

by

Sarah Farheen Khan (670132)
Bangladesh

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Major:

Agrarian, Food and Environmental Studies (AFES)

Members of the Examining Committee:

Dr. Sylvia Bergh

Prof. Dr. Murat Arsel

The Hague, The Netherlands
November 2024

Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the International Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

Inquiries:

International Institute of Social Studies
P.O. Box 29776
2502 LT The Hague
The Netherlands

t: +31 70 426 0460

e: info@iss.nl

w: www.iss.nl

fb: <http://www.facebook.com/iss.nl>

twitter: [@issnl](https://twitter.com/issnl)

Location:

Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX The Hague
The Netherlands

Contents

List of Figures	iv
List of Tables	iv
List of Acronyms	v
Abstract	vii
Relevance to Development Studies	vii
Keywords.....	vii
Chapter 1: Contextualizing the Research Problem.....	1
1.1 Background and contextualization of the research problem	1
1.2 Relevance and Justification	6
1.4 Research aims and objectives.....	6
1.5 Research questions	7
1.6 Structure of the Thesis.....	7
Chapter 2 Background: CSOs and the NDC process in Bangladesh	8
2.1 Historical Background of CSOs in Bangladesh	8
2.2 Role of International Donors in Shaping the NDC Agenda.....	10
2.3 Key Climate Governance Frameworks in Bangladesh.....	10
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	13
3.1 Research Design	13
3.2 Data Collection Methods.....	13
3.3 Data Analysis Strategy	15
3.4 Ethical Considerations.....	15
3.5 Positionality.....	15
3.6 Limitations of the Research	16
Chapter 4 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework.....	18
4.1 Defining the Role of Different Stakeholders in Climate Governance.....	19
4.2 Social Accountability as a Tool to Enhance Governance	22
Chapter 5: Stakeholder Perception and Experiences in Bangladesh's NDC Development Processes	26
Chapter 6 Overcoming Institutional and Political Barriers for an Inclusive Climate Governance in Bangladesh.....	32
6.1 Opportunities for Improved Inclusivity	35
Chapter 7 Conclusion.....	39
References.....	40

Appendix- A	50
-------------------	----

List of Figures

Figure 1 Maps indicating different extreme climatic events vulnerable regions of Bangladesh....	2
Figure 2 Ambition mechanism according to the Paris Agreement	3
Figure 3 Social Accountability as the interplay of five elements	23

List of Tables

Table 1 List of respondents	14
-----------------------------------	----

List of Acronyms

ASK	Ain o Salish Kendra
BCCSAP	Bangladesh Climate Strategy and Action Plan
BCCSAP	Bangladesh Climate Strategy and Action Plan
BELA	Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BUP	Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad
CBO	Community-Based Organizations
CEGIS	Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Service
COP	Conference of Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DoE	Department of Environment
ETF	Enhanced Transparency Framework
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GHG	Greenhouse gases
ICCCAD	International Centre for Climate Change and Development
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MoEFCC	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SA	Social Accountability
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TAN	Transitional Advocacy Network
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WRI	World resources Institute
YLO	Youth-Led Organization
YOUNGO	Youth NGO (UNFCCC)

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Sylvia Bergh, whose invaluable guidance, support, and expertise have been instrumental in shaping this research. Her encouragement and constructive feedback throughout the research process have significantly enhanced the quality of my work. I would also like to thank my second reader, Dr. Murat Arsel, for his insightful comments and suggestions, which helped me refine the overall thesis.

I am deeply grateful to my respondents who participated in this research. Their willingness to share their experiences and perspectives offered essential insights that have enhanced the study. This research would not have been possible without their collaboration and cooperation.

A special thanks go to my parents for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout my academic journey. Their faith in my abilities always motivated me to strive for excellence.

Finally, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to my husband, Md Asif Al Imran Sujoy, for his love, patience, and understanding during the many hours I dedicated to this work. His unwavering support has been a source of strength and inspiration, and I am profoundly grateful for his presence in my life.

Thank you all, for your contributions and support, which made this journey a fulfilling and rewarding experience.

Abstract

This research explores the participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) during the development process of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in Bangladesh, under the Paris Agreement. The paper is framed within the imperative for a participatory governance structure using the theoretical context of Social Accountability Theory, which focuses on transparency, participation, and responsiveness in climate governance that actively includes multiple stakeholder perspectives, particularly the marginalized populations, that disproportionately bear the brunt of climate change. Through qualitative interviews with relevant stakeholders in climate governance, key barriers to effective stakeholder engagement were identified, including, centralized consultations, tokenistic involvement, rushed policy timelines, and social and cultural norms. The findings indicate that the existing practices often undermine genuine participation and accountability, resulting in a disconnect between governmental actions and public knowledge.

Opportunities for improving inclusivity were identified, including promoting inter-ministerial collaboration, creating stronger transparency frameworks, and executing capacity-building efforts for both civil society organizations and government bodies. The research recommends the implementation of the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) to enable effective feedback mechanisms and enhance communication through less technical language. Ultimately, this study underscores that by aligning the NDC process with the principles of Social Accountability Theory, Bangladesh may formulate climate policies that are more attuned to the needs and viewpoints of all stakeholders, thereby promoting resilience and equity in its climate governance.

Relevance to Development Studies

This research is highly relevant to Development Studies as it focuses on CSO engagement, and highlights how inclusive governance and participatory processes can ensure climate justice and enhance climate resilience. Engaging CSOs in developing NDCs ensures that diverse perspectives are heard and considered, which is essential for designing effective and equitable climate policies. This is particularly important as not involving key stakeholders, such as youth, can perpetuate cycles of marginalization, weakening long-term resilience and sustainability. Therefore, this research contributes to Development Studies by critically analysing so-called “inclusive” climate practices meant to strengthen the institutional and social foundations necessary for sustainable development.

Keywords

Inclusion, Participation, Civil Society Organization, Youth, Climate Action, Climate Justice, Nationally Determined Contributions, Bangladesh

Chapter 1: Contextualizing the Research Problem

1.1 Background and contextualization of the research problem

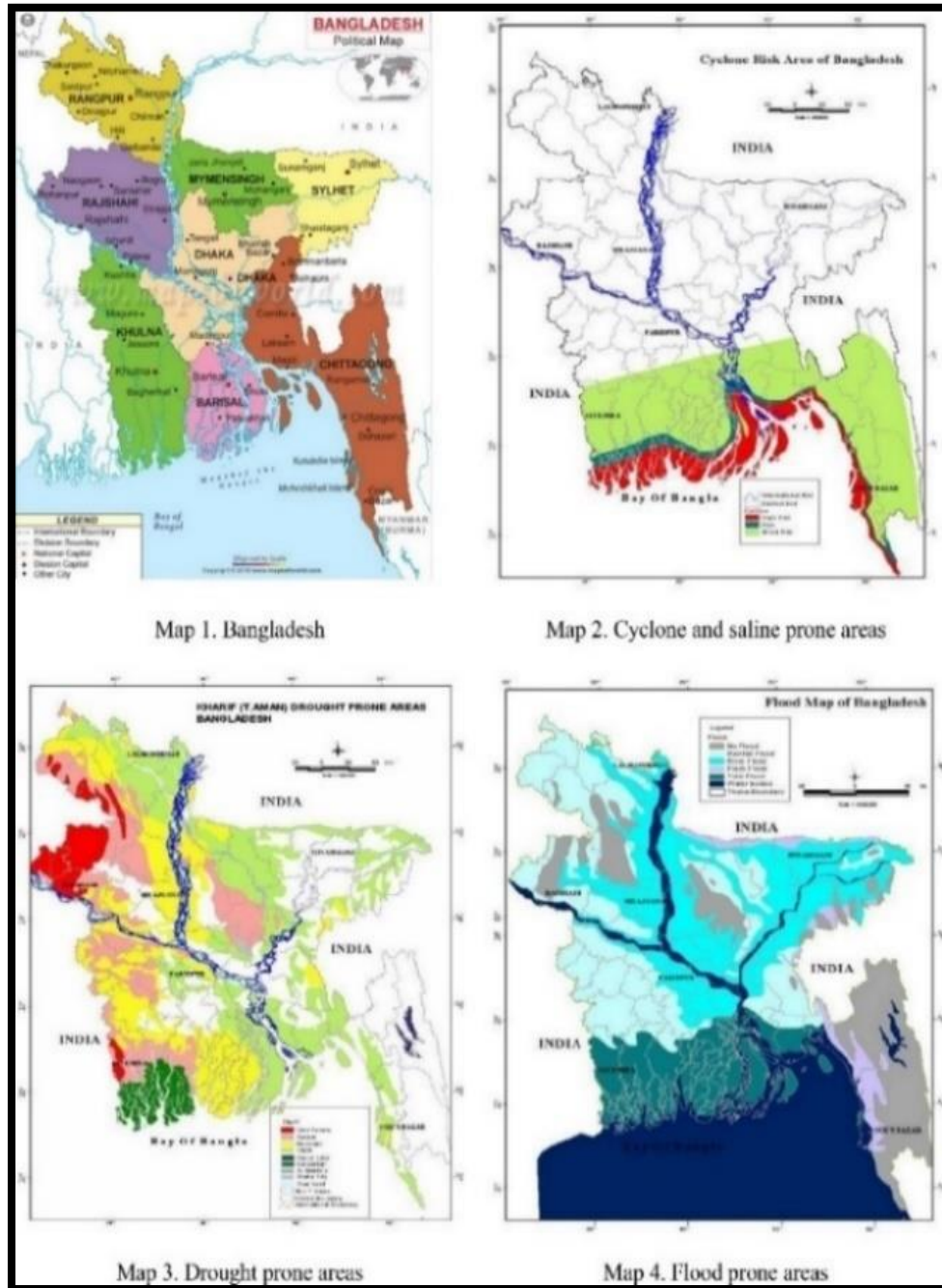
It is not new that climate change is a global challenge that manifests differently across various regions, with developing countries often bearing the brunt of its impacts. Bangladesh is one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change particularly because of its low-lying delta topography. Amongst the least developed countries (LDC), Bangladesh is seen to encounter several natural calamities such as floods, flash floods, droughts, cyclones, storm surges and salinity intrusion (Huq et al., 2004; Islam et al., 2022)¹. The repercussions of climate change jeopardize both the environment and the lives of millions, particularly among vulnerable and marginalized communities as the coastal parts of the country are highly susceptible to the rise in sea levels, which has the potential to submerge 15% of the land area and could result in the displacement of approximately 30 million individuals. Bangladesh incurs an annual average expenditure of approximately \$1 billion on damages and mitigation efforts related to tropical cyclones (World Bank, 2022a). Such disasters impact important sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and infrastructure, and pose a significant threat to Bangladesh's economic growth (Biswas, 2013; Islam et al., 2022).

Globally, the increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions has led to a need to cut emissions to prevent further catastrophic climate-induced events, with an urgency to address climate change and the challenges in limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels (United Nations, 2023). To meet this target, carbon emissions must be reduced by 42% of 2017 levels by 2030 and achieve the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 (UNEP, 2021, p.5).

¹ The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are an officially recognized group of what are considered to be the world's poorest 49 countries (Huq et al., 2004).

Figure 1

Maps indicating different extreme climatic events vulnerable regions of Bangladesh.



Source: (Islam et al., 2022, p.4)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), established in 1988, plays a critical role in assessing the scientific knowledge on climate change and its effects. Through comprehensive, peer-reviewed scientific assessments, the IPCC provides governments with vital information and recommendations to guide global climate policies, such as the Paris Agreement. The agreement adopted by 196 parties at COP21² held in 2015, established Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) which has been a significant milestone in terms of global climate action (United Nations, 2015). These NDCs are expected to outline robust targets to address greenhouse gas emissions mitigation, with stronger commitments anticipated in its future climate plans by 2025³. However, achieving these targets will require significant changes in government policies, industries, and societies (Tollefson, 2018).

Figure 2

Ambition mechanism according to the Paris Agreement



Source: (WRI, 2017, p.7)

Effective implementation of NDCs is crucial as the adverse effects of climate change are not equal for all. For instance, vulnerable groups including women, children, the elderly, and disabled individuals are the most vulnerable and at risk due to climate change (Garai, 2014). These groups face difficulties in successfully coping with the impacts of climate change. This inequality reinforces a cycle of

² “The COP is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention. All States that are Parties to the Convention are represented at the COP, at which they review the implementation of the Convention and any other legal instruments that the COP adopts and take decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention, including institutional and administrative arrangements.” (UNFCCC, 2019).

³ According to the European Environmental Agency, “Adaptation means anticipating the adverse effects of climate change and taking appropriate action to prevent or minimise the damage they can cause, or taking advantage of opportunities that may arise. Mitigation means making the impacts of climate change less severe by preventing or reducing the emission of greenhouse gases (GHG) into the atmosphere.” Available at: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/about/contact-us/faqs/what-is-the-difference-between-adaptation-and-mitigation>

disadvantage, as climate change intensifies existing vulnerabilities, creating further inequalities and violation of human rights (Islam and Winkel, 2017; United Nations, 1948). There is thus an urgency for more responsible and representative institutions, that initiate an inclusive approach in climate policymaking, ensuring that marginalized communities are not left out. This highlights the need for more representative institutions and greater participation from civil society in international environmental governance (UNFCCC, 2023; Mojumder and Panday, 2022; UNFCCC, 2023).

In Bangladesh, the government has thus far developed several versions of its NDCs, beginning with the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) in September 2015, followed by the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) in 2020, and it subsequently updated the NDC in 2021 as mandated by the Paris Agreement. However, concerns have also been raised about the comprehensiveness and inclusivity of the NDCs (UNFCCC, 2021; Hari et al., 2020). Marginalized populations, often the most susceptible to climate impacts, possess limited representation in formal decision-making processes. This exclusion undermines the effectiveness of NDCs, as they neglect local insights and requirements. However, the NDCs intended to steer national climate ambitions to mitigate climate impacts may become ineffective if they do not integrate the insights and perspectives of marginalized communities that disproportionately endure the impact of climate change (Pruett and Hill, 2024; Devic, 2020; IPCC, 2014). This is because the effectiveness of the NDC commitments is largely based on the inclusivity of the policy-making process, which should integrate diverse stakeholder perspectives, particularly from vulnerable communities.

The role of Civil Society Organizations in addressing climate action has been crucial. CSOs operate independently from the government and market, representing a realm of voluntary association and social engagement, and their advocacy is pivotal in promoting human rights, and contributing to democratic governance (Scholte, 2011). CSOs generally support government efforts by fostering an environment that encourages industries, transportation, and agriculture to lower their greenhouse gas emissions (Haque et al., 2019). However, while CSOs in Bangladesh have historically been involved in contributing to grassroots mobilization, environmental activism, and development initiatives and have since expanded to address a range of social issues, their participation in official climate policy-making processes, particularly in the NDC development, has been limited (Lopa and Ahmad, 2016; Islam and Winkel, 2017; White, 1999).

Although state regulations permit CSOs, particularly NGOs, to carry out initiatives relying on their resourcefulness, they are often restricted from participating in political decision-making. Some states only allow a small number of CSOs to participate; yet they frequently exhibit arbitrary and coercive attitudes toward them, which limits the amount of joint decision-making that occurs while formulating such policies (Bhuiyan, 2015; Lopa and Ahmad, 2016; IGES, 2008). This hinders the effective engagement of certain groups who are at the forefront of climate change impacts. The urgency of the global climate crisis as emphasised by IPCC and reiterated in the Global Stocktake at COP 28, underscores the necessity for more participatory approaches in climate governance (UNFCCC, 2023). The NGOs' limited to no presence in the NDC process also creates gaps between national climate strategies and local realities.

Nonetheless, CSOs offer invaluable local expertise and practical insights which are vital to shaping climate policy and ensuring its alignment with the requirements of local communities. Global challenges related to climate governance reflect a broader need for inclusive and participatory decision-making processes. Countries like Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia and South Africa have

embraced participatory approaches, while others including Bangladesh, face significant challenges to ensure inclusivity in their climate planning processes because of shortcomings in the institutional and systemic framework (OECD, 2016; Department of Environmental Affairs, Republic of South Africa, 2019). In Bangladesh, the presence of centralized decision-making structures by the government, coupled with a lack of transparency and limited opportunities for public engagement, leads to the sidelining of essential perspectives in climate conversations, undermining the objectives and legitimacy of the NDC process and risks perpetuating systemic inequalities within Bangladesh's climate governance process (Islam and Winkel, 2017, UNFCCC, 2015).

The country's experience with climate governance reflects a broader global challenge of the necessity for mechanisms that enhance public accountability, legitimacy, and participation. Therefore, it is important to develop alternative notions of accountability and legitimacy compatible with the contemporary global governance structures (Bäckstrand, 2006). Social Accountability is a vital mechanism in this context, as it denotes the process in which citizens ensure governmental accountability about its activities, especially in matters impacting rights and livelihoods through democratic systems, such as public participation, transparency, and oversight, intended to guarantee that governmental choices are made in the public interest (Malena et al., 2004; Pelling, 2010)⁴. SA allows structured opportunities to engage in monitoring, decision-making, and feedback processes (Fox, 2015). By integrating SA frameworks into Bangladesh's NDC process, the government could potentially create more transparent, inclusive, and participatory climate policies. This may help transform the current "tokenistic" inclusion into genuine participation, ensuring that policies genuinely reflect the realities and needs of local communities.

Moreover, inclusion remains a fundamental principle for achieving social justice as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlight the critical importance of inclusion, particularly through SDG 10 and SDG 16, to reduce inequality within and among countries, emphasizing the need for inclusive societies with accountable and inclusive institutions that ensure no one is left behind⁵. In addition, everyone has the right to take part in the government of their country, directly or through freely chosen representatives therefore including CSOs in NDC development is not just beneficial but also recognized as a fundamental human right under international law⁶. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) of the Bangladesh Government plays a key role in formulating the NDCs for Bangladesh (Government of Bangladesh, 2021). However, effective climate policies should extend beyond state-led initiatives, integrating contributions from multiple social actors (Gaventa, 2006; Fox, 2015). Therefore, their increased collaboration with the private sector, academia, civil society, youth and other groups could foster holistic thinking and generate innovative solutions to the challenges posed by climate change (Greenwood, 1993; Fraser, 2009; Castle, 2022; Hormio, 2023; Gupta and Vegelin, 2016; ICCA 2019, 2019; (United Nations, 2015b). Evidence shows that meeting societal and planetary crises without collaborative action may be impossible (Castle, 2022; Hormio, 2023). When such collaboration is effectively coordinated, it can help tackle systematic difficulties that

⁴ Social Accountability Mechanisms are discussed further in Chapter 4.

⁵ United Nations SDG Goals, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

⁶ Article 21, Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Art 25, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Art 12, Convention on the Rights of the Child; Art 7, Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women; Art 29, Convention of the rights of the persons with disabilities; Also mentioned in the Fourth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Aarhus, 23-25 June 1998)

prevent marginalized groups from engaging on an equal footing with the influential actors, often termed as ‘elites’ (Fraser, 2009, p.139; Van Boven and Sherman, 2021).

Therefore, this research aims to understand the current state of CSO engagement in Bangladesh’s NDC development process, providing crucial insights into the barriers and opportunities for meaningful participation.

1.2 Relevance and Justification

The significance of this research lies in its focus on Bangladesh, a country acutely vulnerable to the multifaceted impacts of climate change, due to its geographical exposure and socio-economic challenges (Huq et al., 2004). The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) represent the cornerstone of Bangladesh’s commitments to climate action, underscoring the necessity for these policies to reflect the perspectives of a broad spectrum of stakeholders, particularly marginalized and at-risk populations.

While the Paris Agreement advocates for the engagement of civil society organizations in climate initiatives, especially articulated in Article 7(5), which encourages the involvement of a diverse array of stakeholders, there remains a noticeable gap in the scholarly literature concerning the specific role of CSOs in the NDC formulation process in Bangladesh (UNFCCC, 2015). Therefore, this research seeks to address this deficiency by systematically investigating the barriers that impede CSO participation and exploring viable pathways to enhance their involvement in climate governance.

1.4 Research aims and objectives

This paper aims to comprehensively assess the level and effectiveness of civil society organization engagement in the formulation process of Bangladesh’s Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) under the Paris Agreement and help least developed countries, particularly Bangladesh government to enhance their climate policies and commitments to accelerated action in the current decade by revising and reforming their next round of updated NDCs to be submitted by 2025 adopting participatory governance strategies.

In particular, this research seeks to:

- Examine the institutional and policy frameworks that shape the participation of CSOs
- Explore stakeholder perspectives, including those of government officials, youth representatives, climate academicians, and donor agency representatives on the current state of inclusion
- Identify the barriers and opportunities encountered by CSOs when engaging in the NDC development process

Ultimately, this study aims to address the critical gap in inclusive governance, examining the institutional, socio-political, and practical barriers that limit inclusive participation. Situating Bangladesh’s experience can further enrich the broader discourse on social accountability, reinforcing the critical importance of effective stakeholder engagement in strengthening climate governance frameworks.

1.5 Research questions

To what extent and how have civil society organizations been involved in formulating the NDCs within the context of Bangladesh?

Sub-questions

- a) How do different stakeholders perceive and experience their current involvement in the country's NDC process?
- b) How do the existing institutional and policy frameworks in Bangladesh affect the participation of CSOs in climate change decision-making processes?
- c) What are the opportunities and challenges on the side of the government and CSOs that enable or prevent the meaningful inclusion of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Bangladesh's NDCs?

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

The research paper is composed of seven chapters beginning with an introduction that sets the context of the research problem, objectives, and research question. The second chapter provides a historical overview of CSOs in Bangladesh and the climate governance landscape in Bangladesh. The third chapter discusses the research methodology, describing the data collection techniques, and the data analysis strategy employed. Chapter four provides a comprehensive review of the conceptual and theoretical framework for understanding the role of CSOs in Bangladesh's Climate governance, particularly in the NDC process. It examines the role of key stakeholders involved in the NDC process while articulating the theoretical framework of Social Accountability theory. Chapter 5 illuminates the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders regarding their engagement in consultations and decision-making. Building on the insights gathered from stakeholder interviews, chapter 6 delves into the specific institutional and political barriers that impede inclusive climate governance. It examines systemic challenges and identifies opportunities for enhancing inclusivity in the climate governance structure. The concluding chapter synthesizes the key findings of the research, reflecting on the implications for policy and practice in Bangladesh's climate governance framework.

Chapter 2 Background: CSOs and the NDC process in Bangladesh

This chapter lays the foundational background for understanding the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Bangladesh and its climate governance. It sets the stage for exploring the research questions in the subsequent chapters by introducing the key climate governance frameworks that shape the NDC process in Bangladesh.

2.1 Historical Background of CSOs in Bangladesh

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a vital role in Bangladesh's economic and social progress as well as policy development, especially in areas like human rights, environmental conservation, and sustainable development. Their work covers a wide array of issues, including poverty reduction, climate change advocacy, providing services, conducting research, and rallying communities to solve urgent social problems (Asian Development Bank, 2008). Their history in Bangladesh dates back to the pre-independence period (before 1971), evolving through various political, social, and environmental changes. The inception of CSO operations in Bangladesh can be attributed to grassroots movements focused on tackling concerns including poverty, education, and healthcare. Over the years, the focus and role of CSOs have broadened to encompass various developmental and governance domains, including climate change and environmental sustainability.

Origins and Early Years (pre-1971)

Many unofficial and grassroots groups were formed in the region when it was still a part of British India, then East Pakistan, before gaining independence in 1971. These were mostly intended to address social issues like education and rural poverty. The provision of fundamental services and social assistance was largely facilitated by religious and voluntary organizations such as “Maktabs” (local elementary schools) and “Gram Sarkar” (village government) (Lewis, 2011, p.83). However, formal civil society participation was restricted during the oppressive colonial and post-colonial regimes.

Post- Independence (1971-1980)

Following independence in 1971, Bangladesh as a newly established nation confronted formidable challenges of widespread poverty, natural calamities, and post-war recovery. CSOs started taking on a bigger part in initiatives related to development and rehabilitation. The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) one of the most prominent development organizations was founded in 1972 to assist in rehabilitating people impacted by the war. BRAC expanded over time to become one of the biggest and most influential NGOs globally by entering the fields of microfinance, health, and education (Shuvra, 2022). Proshikha, founded in 1976 has been engaged in formal and non-formal education and skill-based training to empower the poor⁷. Similarly, Dr. Muhammad Yunus (Nobel Peace Prize winner of 2006, and the chief Advisor of Bangladesh in 2024) established Grameen Bank in 1983. The bank pioneered the idea of microcredit which sought to empower impoverished rural communities by providing access to small loans⁸.

⁷ Proshikha website. Available at: <https://www.proshika.org/>

⁸ Grameen Bank website. Available at: <https://grameenbank.org.bd/about/introduction>

The 1980-1990s: Expansion in Governance and Human Rights

Following the end of military rule in 1990, Bangladesh experienced a democratization of its political environment, facilitating the involvement of CSOs in extensive governance and human rights matters. Entities such as Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), founded in 1986, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) founded in 1997, and Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (translation: Citizens for Good Governance) (SHUJAN), founded in 2002, emerged concentrating on corruption, human rights advocacy, and legal assistance (Ain o Salish Kendra, 2013; Khair, 2018)⁹. Additionally, Trinamul Unnayan Sangstha, established in 1997 has been dedicated to community development, specifically aiding disadvantaged and marginalized populations in the Chittagong Hill Tracts¹⁰.

During this period, civil society organizations emerged as prominent proponents of openness, social justice, and effective government, connecting with international movements and treaties. They greatly influenced governmental and international policies on key issues like gender rights, child labour, education and human rights (UNDP, 2002). Their advocacy efforts led to significant changes in social policy and governance structures. Moreover, the decade signified a transition towards more professionalized NGOs capable of securing international donor money, resulting in the institutionalization of numerous local and grassroots organizations (Hassan, 2015).

2000s to Present: Involvement in Climate Change and Sustainable Development

In the 21st century, Bangladesh's increasing vulnerability to climate change has pushed its CSOs to shift their focus towards environmental sustainability, climate adaptation, and disaster resilience. The nation confronts escalating sea levels, recurrent cyclones, and catastrophic floods, rendering climate change mitigation a top priority for numerous groups. Entities like the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), established in 1993 and the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), established in 2009 have emerged as crucial advocates for climate action. These CSOs have influenced national climate policies and participated in international discussions on climate governance and advocacy. BELA has employed legal frameworks to champion environmental justice, assuring compliance of development projects with environmental legislation, whereas, ICCCAD has concentrated on climate research, capacity building, and formulating community-based adaptation solutions, especially in at-risk coastal regions¹¹.

Alongside BELA and ICCCAD, the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) has played a crucial role in formulating climate policies through research and advocacy on national and international platforms. BCAS has collaborated with international organizations, including UNFCCC, to formulate Bangladesh's climate adaptation strategies, notably the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) and the Bangladesh Climate Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP). The Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Service (CEGIS) has similarly contributed by providing geographic and environmental data to facilitate disaster management and policy formulation¹². Additional entities, such as the Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) and Caritas Bangladesh also participate in sustainable development initiatives (Huq and Rabbani, 2011). Caritas Bangladesh

⁹ SHUJAN website. Available at: <https://shujan.org/>

¹⁰ Trinamul Unnayan Sangstha website. Available at: <https://www.trinamulchtd.org/about/>

¹¹ BELA website. Available at: <https://belabangla.org/about-us/about-bela/>

ICCCAD website. Available at: <https://icccad.net/>

¹² CEGIS website. Available at: <https://www.cegisbd.com/>

collaborates directly with local people in disaster-prone areas providing disaster management and advocating for sustainable farming techniques to enhance community resilience against climate impacts¹³. Similarly, youth movements have emerged as formidable proponents of climate action in Bangladesh in recent times. Youth-led Organizations (YLO) like Youth for NDCs, Fridays for Future Bangladesh and YouthNet for Climate Justice have mobilized the younger generation to raise awareness for more ambitious climate policy. These initiatives, in conjunction with global climate action networks, seek to ensure that the perspectives of Bangladeshi youth are represented in international climate policies (O'Brien, et al., 2018).

The evolution of CSOs in Bangladesh illustrates the country's changing priorities and challenges over the years. From grassroots movements aimed at addressing rural poverty and education in the pre-independence era to their current involvement in global governance and climate resilience, hence, becoming an integral part of Bangladesh's development trajectory. The growing influence of these organizations in formulating national policy, especially regarding climate change and sustainability, will be pivotal in guiding the nation's direction toward sustainable development. Such institutions promote climate change knowledge and adaptation techniques, connecting local entities with macro-level climate change adaptation efforts (Sharma, 2023, p.2). Despite the important role they play in shaping policies, they often struggle to have a real impact on high-level climate decisions (Islam and Winkel, 2017). Therefore, the increasing global focus on climate change necessitates the ongoing involvement of Bangladeshi CSOs in global policy frameworks.

2.2 Role of International Donors in Shaping the NDC Agenda

International Donor Organizations¹⁴ have been key in supporting CSOs and strengthening Bangladesh's climate governance, with external finance propelling various climate initiatives. Notably, UNDP's Climate Promise Program acts as the largest support for over 120 countries in meeting the Paris Agreement goals. It focuses on Nationally Determined Contributions and aims for a net-zero emissions transition. Through this initiative, UNDP organizes consultations and technical support empowering CSOs to participate actively in increased climate policies relevant to local contexts while also meeting global standards (UNDP, 2022). Similarly, the World Resources Institute's (WRI), Climate Program called the NDC Partnership is another initiative that encourages sustainable and inclusive climate action plans. NDC Partnership aims to accelerate NDC implementation and enhance ambition by mobilizing over 100 implementing partners to support over 70 developing countries, including Bangladesh. The partnership provides various programs and initiatives, including the country engagement strategy, climate action enhancement package, and economic advisors to 32 developing countries (WRI, 2023).

2.3 Key Climate Governance Frameworks in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's climate governance is supported by numerous governmental policies and initiatives designed to mitigate and adapt to climate change. These policy frameworks are essential for commitments under the Paris Agreement and are closely intertwined, bringing together carefully

¹³ CARITAS Bangladesh website. Available at: <https://caritasbd.org/goals/ecological-conservation/>

¹⁴ More information on donor influence and dependence in Chapters 4 and 6.

crafted strategies, plans, and regulatory instruments to tackle the challenges of climate change. They aim to reduce emissions, adapt to climate impacts, and ensure that these efforts align seamlessly with Bangladesh's development goals, paving the way for sustainable development. Therefore, this section outlines the key climate governance frameworks, that shape the country's climate governance, setting up the stage for understanding the background needed to answer the sub-question, "How do the existing institutional and policy frameworks in Bangladesh affect the participation of CSOs in climate change decision-making processes?", later in chapter 5.

- **National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)**

The NAPA was submitted to the UNFCCC in 2005 and represented one of Bangladesh's initial efforts to tackle its climate vulnerability, concentrating mostly on adaptation strategies to reduce the hazards of climate-induced disasters. The NAPA recognized critical priority sectors, including agriculture and water resources, although the formulation of this plan was predominantly influenced by government officials and international development partners (Government of Bangladesh, 2005).

The exclusion of local stakeholders and CSOs from the formulation of the NAPA illustrates a wider pattern in climate policy, wherein the perspectives of underprivileged community-level populations are frequently overlooked in favor of 'technology-based' interventions (Ayers et al., 2013).

- **Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP)**

The BCCSAP was published in 2009 and expanded upon the NAPA by integrating mitigation and adaption methods and establishing a 10-year action plan. The BCCSAP is recognized as a thorough framework for tackling climate problems via adaptation, mitigation, and capacity building (Government of Bangladesh, 2009). This strategic method emphasizes the importance of incorporating climate action into national development agendas.

Nonetheless, its development also exhibits a top-down methodology, offering limited opportunities for non-state actors to impact policy goals (Huq and Rabbani, 2011). The centralized structure of the BCCSAP prompts apprehensions over the marginalization of local expertise and community-driven initiatives in the development of climate plans.

- **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)**

Bangladesh has emerged as a climate champion in the Global South developing various methods to address its significant susceptibility to climate change. Building on to the BCCSAP, the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are a crucial component of Bangladesh's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement requiring to submit updated commitments to the UNFCCC every five years. Each new submission of an NDC is expected to show greater ambition, pushing the applicant country to build on its past efforts and establish its way ahead. For instance, Bangladesh presented its first NDC in 2015 (also known as Intended NDC), which included a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 5% unconditionally and 15 % conditionally by 2030, based on international assistance (Government of Bangladesh, 2015). The revised NDC, presented in 2021, expanded its focus to encompass sectors like transport, energy, industry, and agriculture, reaffirming the country's commitment to reducing GHG emissions while improving climate resilience (Government of Bangladesh, 2021).

- **Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100**

The Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 published in 2018, sets a long-term vision for enhancing Bangladesh's climate resilience through water resource management, flood mitigation, and coastal defence. The plan highlights the significance of climate adaptation and has received recognition for its ambition, yet it lacks substantial involvement from vulnerable communities and grassroots organizations. The formulation of the Delta Plan 2100 entailed elite decision-making processes, where international development experts and government officials were involved in planning the document while local stakeholders had limited influence (General Economics Division, 2018). This reflects a wider pattern in Bangladesh's climate governance, where global expertise and selected stakeholders are prioritized over conventional knowledge.

- **Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan**

The Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan was launched by the government of Bangladesh in 2021. The plan seeks to combine climate resilience with economic development in response to persistent climate challenges. Its central objective is to enhance the nation's ability to adapt to climate change while promoting sustainable development. It outlines long-term goals for improving disaster risk management, scaling up renewable energy, and promoting climate-resilient infrastructure. Additionally, the plan underscores the necessity of aligning Bangladesh's climate action with the United Nations' SDGs. Moreover, it seeks to strengthen international cooperation and secure financial and technical support for climate adaptation and mitigation, in line with Bangladesh's commitments under the Paris Agreement (Government of Bangladesh, 2021).

Conclusion

This chapter provides a thorough overview of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and their evolving role in Bangladesh's development, followed by the role of donor organizations in the NDC process, continued by the key climate governance frameworks, that shape the country's NDCs.

It is observed that, while CSOs have made significant contributions to climate adaptation and resilience, their meaningful involvement in shaping the policies remains limited due to substandard decision-making procedures. The disparity between policy formulation and implementation persists, despite the ambitious targets. Bangladesh's national climate policies often show a top-down approach, where decisions are made by elite institutions with minimal involvement from non-state actors. Climate policies such as the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) and Delta Plan 2100 provide frameworks for addressing climate adaptation and mitigation, however, the lack of meaningful engagement with local communities and non-state actors compromises the long-term success and stability of these initiatives.

This exclusion hinders CSOs' ability to fully contribute to shaping policies, particularly in incorporating local knowledge into national climate strategies. While national climate plans establish the structural basis for Bangladesh's NDC process, its top-down approach constrains the involvement of CSOs (Huq et al., 2024). Therefore, by identifying the gaps in CSO participation, this study aims to understand how the NDC process can be reformed to more effectively integrate the knowledge and perspectives of the marginalized communities in Bangladesh.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Bangladesh's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) process forms the core field of this research because it represents the framework through which commitments to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions under the Paris Agreement are represented. Specifically, the country's NDC process involves a series of complex engagements between Government agencies, CSOs, Donor agencies and other stakeholders, aiming to align national climate goals with global climate objectives (Huq and Rabbani, 2011, p.2). The presence and influence of CSOs in policy development are analyzed to assess their impact on policy formulation particularly during the NDC process (Dodman and Mitlin, 2011).

This study aims to do so by adopting a qualitative research design to analyze the inclusiveness of CSOs in the development of Bangladesh's NDCs. Qualitative methods based on both primary and secondary data were employed, considering the need to understand the complex social phenomena, power relations, and challenges to effective participation in climate governance (Harwell, 2011; Bryman, 2016; Patton, 2014).

The study utilizes a combination of Key Informant Interviews (KII) and secondary data analysis to capture the perspectives of stakeholders important in the NDC process. A purposive sampling method was used to conduct KII from July to September 2024 with a diverse range of stakeholders, including representatives from civil society organizations, governmental organizations, youth representatives, academicians involved in Climate Change advocacy in Bangladesh, and representatives from donor organizations (Guarte and Barrios, 2006; Campbell et al., 2020).

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Key Informant Interviews (KII)

Key Informant Interviews (KII) serve as the primary data collection method as they allow in-depth insights into stakeholders' experiences and could provide information related to NDC formulation which is not visible externally (Kibuacha, 2024; Rutledge and Hogg, 2020). The interviews were semi-structured allowing flexibility in exploring key themes while maintaining consistency in addressing the core research questions (Bryman, 2016).

The respondents included representatives from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, non-profit organizations, academicians, youth and donor organizations involved in funding climate change initiatives. They were selected from my professional network and through snowball sampling, based on their work experiences (Roulston, 2010). The one-to-one interviews were conducted mostly via online meetings, due to the political unrest in the study area, Bangladesh. Each interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes. The sample included five categories of climate action stakeholders. 13 stakeholders were interviewed including 2 Government Officials, 4 Non-Profit Organization Representatives, 3 academicians engaged in climate advocacy and governance, 2 Youth- Climate Activists, and 2 Donor Agency Representatives.

The interviews were based on using guiding questions while allowing flexibility to explore emerging topics (Appendix 1). Moreover, the data findings from the interviewees were analysed and cross-referenced with previous literature.

Table 1 List of respondents

Sl. No.	Stakeholder type	Affiliation	Date of interview	Code
1	Government Official	Department of Environment (DoE)	28.08.2024	GO1
2	Government Official	Department of Environment (DoE)	19.09.2024	GO2
3	Development Practitioner	NGO Representative	18.08.2024	DP1
4	Development Practitioner	NGO Representative	4.09.2024	DP2
5	Development Practitioner	NGO Representative	10.09.2024	DP3
6	Development Practitioner	NGO Representative	14.09.2024	DP4
7	Academician	Academia and Research	8.09.2024	A1
8	Academician	Academia and Research	25.09.2024	A2
9	Academician	Academia and Research	26.09.2024	A3
10	Youth Representative	Climate Activist Group	9.09.2024	Y1
11	Youth Representative	Climate Activist Group	13.10.2024	Y2
12	Donor agency Representative	Funders of Climate Action Initiatives	26.09.2024	D1
13	Donor agency Representative	Funders of Climate Action Initiatives	27.09.2024	D2

Document Analysis

The documents reviewed focus on both formal and grey literature to gain a comprehensive understanding of the national and international frameworks guiding climate governance, as well as complement the interviews by providing context and secondary data to cross-reference with the interview findings (Bowen, 2009). Reviewed documents include:

- Bangladesh's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) submissions to the UNFCCC
- Websites, unpublished reports and data sets of CSOs and donor agencies engaged with climate governance to assess the on-ground realities that are not readily available in academic publications
- International laws about climate governance and CSO inclusion
- Grey literature like Policy briefs, press releases and media briefings were also reviewed to get a better understanding of the different programmes each organization offer

3.3 Data Analysis Strategy

The research employs a thematic analysis of the qualitative data identifying key themes and patterns (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The first process was a thorough literature review analysing existing studies and documents. The second step was to collect data, for which 13 stakeholder interviews were conducted. During each interview, I tried taking notes and keeping a voice record of it (with consent). Later, after transcribing the recordings, I added points which might have been missed during the simultaneous notetaking. Upon completion of the transcriptions and field notes, a preliminary highlighting process was conducted manually (with multi-coloured stationary highlighters), identifying initial themes and patterns that emerged in the interviews. The manual coding was done while going through the transcripts' multiple times. After the sections were annotated, along with my handwritten notes, I divided them keeping my research objective and questions in consideration, which resulted in the emergence of themes through open coding.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The interviews aimed to accommodate the needs and wishes of interviewees, respecting the cultural norms within their community (Roulston, 2010, p.101). The interviewees were valued and provided with an 'ethic of respect' in all manners and were given the liberty to answer the discussion questions. Their answers were not pre-determined by others' perspectives and were based on their personal opinions and experiences (Holmes, 2020, p.9; Govil, 2013, p. 18). Written consent was obtained through a consent form prior to each interview. Moreover, confidentiality and anonymity have been maintained with the data collected, recording, transcription and translation of the interview, especially given the potential risks of discussing climate governance in a politically charged environment (Roulston, 2010, p.96; Bryman, 2016).

3.5 Positionality

As an Environmental Science graduate and researcher with over five years of experience in climate change and development, my position is shaped by both my academic background and professional experiences. Having worked extensively on climate-related projects and with climate-vulnerable communities, I try to bring a nuanced perspective of climate governance complexities, informed by

firsthand experiences, interactions with stakeholders, and a commitment to promoting inclusive and equitable climate action.

My immersion in the role of CSOs and the potential of youth engagement positions me to critically analyze the implications of their involvement in NDC processes. However, I understand and acknowledge that my background and experience as a development practitioner may predispose me to certain biases or assumptions, therefore, I am committed to maintaining reflexivity and transparency throughout the research process, continually interrogating my positionality and acknowledging the diverse voices and experiences that contribute to a more comprehensive and impactful exploration of inclusive climate governance in Bangladesh (Thapar-Björkert and Henry, 2004). As a researcher, I tried to stay transparent about my positionality and strove not to let that reflect on this research through the shaping of the research design, data collection, or data analysis (Holmes, 2020, p.1). Moreover, my prior experience has helped me build rapport with the key informants, which made our conversations pleasant (Sultana, 2007).

3.6 Limitations of the Research

The research encountered several substantial limitations, both practical and contextual, which affected the overall extent and depth of the findings. Starting with the political and violent turmoil in Bangladesh from July to August 2024, this unprecedented event left everyone disturbed and unsure of what would happen next¹⁵. Getting in touch with the key informants during that time was out of the question which severely hindered the data collection process, necessitating the postponement of interviews. Even after the political unrest, many of the potential respondents were either inaccessible or had resigned from their positions because of political affiliations. Moreover, some of the potential respondents seemed reluctant to participate in conversations regarding the NDC process due to the existing tensions. Additionally, the politically sensitive context of the research influenced participants' willingness to express themselves freely, due to concerns about possible repercussions. For this, all participants were assured that their identities would be kept anonymous while reporting this research. It was made sure not to disclose any personally identifiable information. Moreover, it was assured that general descriptors like Youth Representative and Government Official will be used while quoting them. This approach has been adopted to protect participants from any potential political or professional repercussions that may arise from the discussions. In addition, the catastrophic floods in August significantly hindered gathering the data with many NGOs and voluntary agencies engaged in emergency response operations, consequently diverting focus from climate policy discussions. The flooding not only postponed interviews but also restricted access to specific areas, complicating the logistics of fieldwork. The delays, together with violence in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in September, greatly restricted interviews with Indigenous community leaders and community-level CSOs thereby diminishing the diversity of perspectives incorporated in the research.

¹⁵ The 2024 Bangladesh Quota Reform Movement, commenced following the supreme court's reinstatement of a controversial job quota system, lead to widespread protests, primarily among students. The government's aggressive reaction, including police brutality, curfews, internet shutdown, intensified public anger. As it led to multiple fatalities, demands for accountability and resignation of officials grew. The movement garnered significant public and political support, compelling the Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina to step down amid escalating frustration. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/july-revolution-and-gen-zs-march-mass-political-awareness-3675326>.

The overall political context in Bangladesh frequently resulted in self-censorship, with participants refraining from critiquing government policy, thus limiting the depth of the data. Furthermore, the research was limited by a relatively small sample size, especially among Government officials and representatives of Donor organizations, which affects the generalizability of the findings. Lastly, the limited availability of academic literature on the NDC process in Bangladesh made it challenging to contextualize the findings within a broader academic framework. Which restricted the literature review and hampered comparisons with prior studies, highlighting a key gap in existing scholarship on climate governance in Bangladesh. Despite these limitations, the research offers some relevant insights into the inclusivity of CSOs in the NDC process, though future studies must address these limitations to deliver a more thorough analysis of the groups.

Chapter 4 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

This chapter offers a critical review of key concepts and theoretical frameworks that frame this research. Exploring the role of CSOs, youth participation, grassroots movement and the importance of policy advocacy in climate governance. These concepts are crucial for understanding the dynamics of participatory and inclusive governance works, particularly in the context of climate policy and the NDC process. By exploring these ideas concerning social accountability, the chapter lays the theoretical groundwork for the study, setting the scope to explore how CSOs can be effectively engaged in overcoming their tokenistic participation in climate governance.

- **Inclusion**

Inclusion is a fundamental concept in governance, social policymaking, or development. It is a deeply held belief among many academics and policymakers that underrepresented communities or individuals should have an active role and ability to voice themselves in the decision-making processes which affect their lives and well-being (Sen, 1999). This concept has gained traction in recent years, especially in the context of development studies, where inclusive governance is seen as key to achieving sustainable and equitable development outcomes (Cornwall and Gaventa, 2000). Similarly, The World Bank defines ‘inclusive governance’ as ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their social, economic or political status can access opportunities and influence national policies (World Bank, 2006).

Inclusion in climate governance denotes the active involvement of a diverse array of stakeholders, especially historically marginalized groups such as climate-vulnerable populations in the development, execution, and oversight of Climate policy (Gaventa, 2006). This is deemed essential for ensuring that policies are fair and responsive to the requirements of people most impacted by the brunt of climate change. Including diverse perspectives in climate governance also fosters social justice by ensuring that policies are developed not solely at the top level but are also shaped by the lived experiences of individuals and communities directly affected by climate change (Chambers, 1983; Fraser, 2009). CSOs and particularly community-based organizations (CBOs) operating at the grassroots level frequently possess critical insights into the specific vulnerabilities of local populations, including those in coastal areas imperilled by rising sea levels, salinity intrusion or severe weather phenomena. Omitting such groups can jeopardise the formulation of policies aligned with the actual conditions, hence diminishing their efficacy and compromising the objectives of social justice.

- **Policy Advocacy**

Policy advocacy refers to the collective effort to shape public policies and decisions in ways that promote specific social interests (Mosley, 2012, p.841). Individuals, organizations, and coalitions join together in these efforts to support and advocate for policies that reflect their priorities (Jenkins, 1983). In the context of climate governance, political advocacy plays a pivotal role in democratizing the climate policy processes. This is done by creating regulatory frameworks and fostering global cooperation to address the urgent challenges of climate change (Andonova et al., 2009). A significant component of this process is employed by the “third party government” a concept that highlights the growing role of non-state holder actors such as NGOs, private organizations and civil society groups, in areas traditionally managed by government institutions (Salamon, 1987). These third-party players bring valuable expertise, resources and networks highlighting and filling gaps in government capacity

and offering innovative solutions. They highlight and amplify the voices of grassroots movements, activists and other marginalized communities that are disproportionately affected by influencing government policies in ways that uphold sustainability and equity. Moreover, by integrating third-party actors, political advocacy ensures an inclusive governance model and strengthens the development of climate policies, bringing together public, private, and CSOs to work towards shared sustainability goals and more effective climate policies.

4.1 Defining the Role of Different Stakeholders in Climate Governance

Civil society Organizations are a key subset of third-party government particularly when it comes to shaping policy. Woodley and Gilsenan (2019), describe CSOs as “voluntary, non-state actors that represent a wide array of interests and ties, formed to advance the interests and values of their members and society at large”. This broad category includes non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Community-based organizations (CBO), Youth-led organizations (YLO), religious organizations, professional associations and several other entities. Moreover, Foley and Edwards (1996, p.39) focus on the *advocacy* role of CSOs, describing them as “organizations that articulate, mediate, and defend social, political, and cultural interests” on behalf of their association. CSOs serve as vehicles for civic participation, providing citizens with a means to engage with public affairs outside of formal political institutions.

Hence, the role of CSOs in Climate Governance particularly in policy making is indispensable as they engage with local, national, and international groups to address public interest and voices that may not be adequately represented by the government alone. By engaging with local, national, and international stakeholders, CSOs advocate for sustainable policies, drive local climate initiatives, and hold governments accountable for their climate commitments (Oxfam International, 2015; World Bank, 2022b; MacLean, 2020; Nipa and Hasan, 2023). Their involvement in global climate negotiations ensures that policies are not only technically feasible but also equitable, taking into account the diverse experiences of those who are at the greatest risk from climate impacts. With their presence in national delegations to global climate negotiations, governments encourage these organizations to contribute their expertise, perspectives, and advocacy efforts to policymaking, contributing to socially sustainable policy mechanisms. This participation also promotes good governance by fostering transparency, effectiveness, openness, responsiveness and accountability in the policy-making process. (Böhmelt et al., 2013; Misra and Panigrahi, 2014; Mathew et al., 2021). Moreover, through lobbying, information dissemination, and employing symbolic politics using tools like public demonstrations, media and community-based campaigns, they challenge unjust policies and call attention to the injustices perpetuated by the status quo, bringing forward key issues into public discussions and acting as a bridge between citizens and policymakers (Van Wessel et al., 2020).

The advocacy power of CSOs is further amplified when local and global efforts align, as seen in the transitional advocacy network (TAN) model, which is based on the idea that collective action is more effective when different actors from local to international level join forces to challenge deep-rooted power structures and push for alternative approaches to governance (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Betsill and Bulkeley, 2021; Andonova et al., 2009). Through such models CSOs have been able to amplify calls for justice and equity in climate policy, frequently positioning themselves as vocal critics against policies that disproportionately benefit wealthier nations while leaving poorer countries such as Bangladesh to bear the brunt of climate impacts.

Despite their significant contributions, climate governance structures at both national and international levels often lack transparency and have poor accountability mechanisms and ineffective policy implementation, all of which erode public trust and support. CSOs play a critical role in addressing these issues by advocating for broader participation, ensuring government accountability, and raising awareness about the needs of marginalized communities (Biermann et al., 2009). Furthermore, when involved in policy development, CSOs and other non-state actors can ensure that governments stay true to their commitments, strengthening social accountability by monitoring government actions, ensuring that climate policies are implemented as promised and that those most affected by climate change benefit from the solutions developed.

Yet, in many emerging democracies, policymaking has historically been controlled by elites, which has often led to policies that do not adequately address the needs of the commoners (Korkut, 2007; Pruett and Hill, 2024). This concentration of power tends to prioritize the interests of the powerful while neglecting or excluding the needs of the broader population. As a result, the policies shaped by this elite dominance often reflect the agendas of a few, rather than the real needs of the affected. This imbalance of power deepens inequality and disempowerment, creating a failed governance structure.

Youth and Grassroots Movement in Climate Governance

Youth groups have emerged as a driving force in global climate movements, with young people not only being present stakeholders but also future stewards of the climate and its policy outcomes (Taft and Gordon, 2013). Defined by the UN as individuals between 15 and 24 years old (United Nations, 2018), youth represent a substantial portion of the global population and their advocacy for urgent climate action has gained significant momentum in recent years. They are at the forefront of climate action, which is why their thoughts and feedback are crucial components in formal climate governance structures. The significance of incorporating youth in climate advocacy is not just echoed by the younger generation but also is underscored by international accords like the Paris Agreement and the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which both highlight the necessity for inclusive and participatory methods in climate action¹⁶. Internationally, youth activists have started to mobilize through emerging movements and platforms like Fridays for the Future, YOUNGO, and Eco-Network, to demand more ambitious climate policies (Han and Ahn, 2020). Such youth movements are driven by the recognition that current policy frameworks are insufficient to address the urgency of the climate crisis and need reformation because of their non-inclusive governance structures (O'Brien, Selboe and Hayward, 2018).

However, despite their growing influence, youth participation in climate governance often operates within '*constrained democracies*', where youth are included in governance structures but are simultaneously limited by institutional boundaries which limit their influence. These limitations manifest in the form of *tokenism* or '*decoration*', where they are given the floor to voice concerns but lack genuine decision-making power (Taft and Gordon, 2013). This type of tokenism undermines the legitimacy and effectiveness of climate policies, resulting in solutions that do not address the long-term needs of future generations. Genuine youth engagement goes beyond mere presence in governance spaces, it

¹⁶ United Nations, All about NDCs, <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/all-about-ndcs>
United Nations SDG Goals, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

requires intergenerational equity, where contemporary decisions consider the long-term impact on younger generations (Roy and Ayalon, 2022).

Similarly, grassroots movements are defined as “self-organized local-level efforts to encourage other members of the community to participate in activities, such as fundraising and voter registration drives, in support of a given social, economic, or political cause. Rather than money, the power of grassroots movements comes from their ability to harness the effort of ordinary people whose shared sense of justice and knowledge about a given issue can be used to influence policymakers” (Longley, 2022, para.1). These community-level groups can play a crucial role in overcoming tokenism by empowering youth, regional and Indigenous communities to engage in direct action, by raising awareness and advocating for fair policies. They offer scope for community mobilization where local members come together to identify and tackle key challenges fostering a sense of ‘ownership’ within the community reflecting their lived experiences (Chawla and Cushing, 2007, p.439; Ingaruca, 2022). Radical grassroots groups like Extinction Rebellion, often call for sweeping systemic changes and urgent measures using bold tactics such as civil disobedience, to draw attention to the climate crisis, whereas non-radical movements work within existing systems, focusing on gradual progress through collaboration, education and community-led initiatives¹⁷. Both approaches complement each other by building momentum for ambitious climate policies and support establishing social accountability frameworks that hold service holders and policymakers responsible for meeting the community’s needs, ensuring that interventions are both effective and sustainable. Moreover, these movements contribute to more accurate, inclusive climate data, complementing official statistics and better capturing the lived experiences of the community by providing alternative insights through data collection and community-led monitoring. This bottom-up approach ensures that interventions are culturally sensitive and tailored to the specific context, bridging the gap between underserved populations and formal systems, all while working to advance the SDGs in a way that is inclusive and equitable (Flores and Samuel, 2019).

Despite their constant efforts, youth activist groups and grassroots movements, often find themselves held back by significant barriers that prevent them from fully participating in shaping policies. These obstacles as identified by Pellegrini-Masini, et al. (2019) include difficulties in accessing decision-makers, financial and technical struggles, and a lack of skills needed for effective advocacy. Without direct access to policymakers, these groups are often invited to consultations only to have their voices ignored, reducing their roles to a mere formality. Limited funding and expertise further hold them back, making it hard to attend conferences, run advocacy campaigns, or produce well-supported policy recommendations. On top of that, many lack the necessary skills for lobbying, producing draft policies, or navigating complex institutions, which are inevitable tools of policy advocacy to influence government decisions and help address inequalities created by the gap between grassroots voices and policymakers.

Donor Agencies’ Influence on Climate Policy and Participation

While donor funding has facilitated crucial climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives, it might as well affect the dynamics of CSO inclusion in government processes. Reliance on foreign funding can sometimes lead to ‘accountability capture’, wherein CSOs become more accountable to donors than to the communities they represent (Scholte, 2004; Porter, 2003). This relationship complicates climate

¹⁷ Extinction Rebellion website, <https://rebellion.global/>
The Transitions Network website, <https://transitionnetwork.org/>

governance as donor agendas may not consistently align with the local needs that CSOs intend to serve (Banks et al., 2012, p.13). In current times, the dependence on donor funding has led to a situation where CSOs must manage intricate expectations, reconciling grassroots accountability with donor-imposed conditions. This tension further constrains the autonomy of CSOs and consequently, their capacity to freely advocate for marginalized groups (Rahman, 2020). Moreover, the donor-driven focus on measurable outcomes may limit CSO focus to specific project-based initiatives rather than a systemic change in climate governance (Henderson, 2002). This approach raises questions about the level of genuine inclusion in collaborating for such partnerships. Therefore, this phenomenon necessitates establishing funding mechanisms that emphasize local accountability, ensuring CSOs can advocate effectively for inclusive climate policies.

4.2 Social Accountability as a Tool to Enhance Governance

The role of various stakeholders in climate governance is crucial for creating a truly inclusive system and the Social Accountability Theory, offers a lens for achieving this by emphasizing *transparency*, *responsiveness* and *accountability* through civic engagement. The SA mechanisms help to hold governments accountable for their commitments, ensuring that the commitments reflect public interests and highlight the essential relationship between citizens, CSOs and government in ensuring accountability for national commitments. Moreover, the acts and decisions are monitored, especially in governance and policy-making processes by addressing systemic inequalities and ensuring that public policies align with the diverse requirements of citizens. Promoting transparency, allows citizens to access information around government plans, developing an informed electorate capable of advocating for their rights (Ackerman, 2005). Unlike traditional top-down accountability mechanisms, where formal state institutions carry out oversight, SA theory emphasizes civic engagement as a direct means of enforcing transparency, participation, and responsiveness from their governments to ensure that public officials are responsive to the needs and interests of the people they serve (Ackerman, 2005; Fox, 2015; Gaventa, 2006; Goetz and Jenkins, 2001). SA mechanisms are particularly relevant for addressing governance challenges in settings where political, social, and economic barriers prevent marginalized populations from influencing public policies (Fox, 2015; Gaventa, 2006). CSOs are crucial intermediaries between the government and the populace within this framework. They facilitate communication and amplify the voices of marginalized communities by ensuring that their requirements are integrated during policy development (Gaventa, 2006). They advocate and pursue redress for the establishment of institutional accountability procedures holding government officials accountable through monitoring and reporting procedures, and compelling to prioritize citizen voice thereby, improving governmental responsiveness to citizen needs (Fox, 2022, p.54; Scholte, 2004).

The World Bank defines social accountability as:

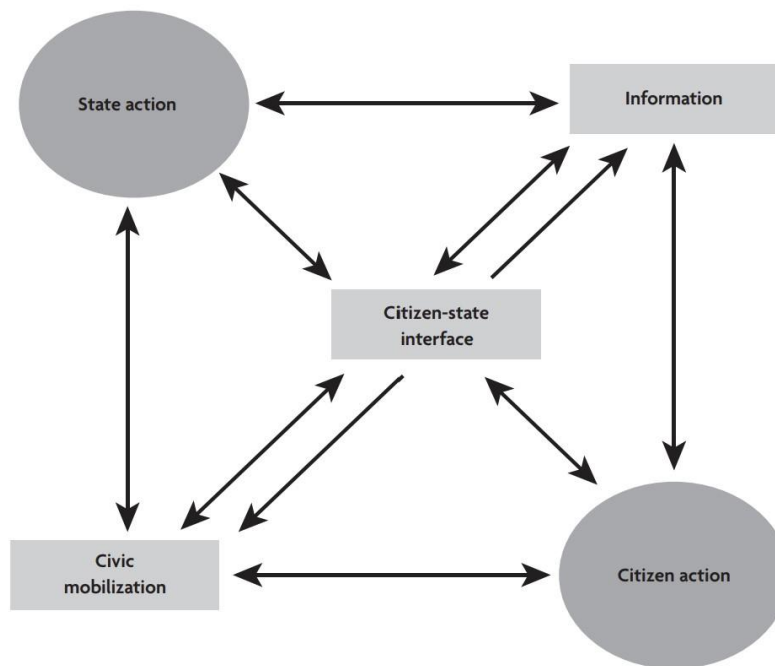
“Approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, i.e., in which it is ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations who participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability. Mechanisms of social accountability can be initiated and supported by the state, citizens or both, but very often they are demand-driven and operate from the bottom-up” (Malena et al., 2004, p.3).

According to Fox (2015), SA mechanisms can be categorized as either tactical or strategic. Tactical accountability mechanisms are immediate, short-term efforts targeting specific issues or policies, whereas SA mechanisms pursue long-term, systemic reforms in governance. Gaventa and McGee (2013) argue that for accountability to be sustainable, it should exist within an enabling environment,

one that allows citizens to participate legitimately and that fosters state responsiveness to citizen demands. However, the term ‘social accountability’ is rather deceptive as it does not refer to a distinctive kind of accountability, but rather a distinct method or collection of instruments for enforcing accountability. This collection of instruments can be better understood from the model “Social Accountability as the Interplay of Five Elements”, developed by Grandvoinnet et al (2015) where the authors frame SA as an interconnected and adaptive process involving five principal elements: state action, citizen action, the citizen-state interface, civic mobilization, and information. Each component functions both individually and in coordination with the other elements, shaping a dynamic environment for accountability.

Figure 3

Social Accountability as the interplay of five elements



Source: (Grandvoinnet et al., 2015, p.5)

The model illustrates that the interdependence of the elements is vital, as it allows SA to evolve dynamically within governance systems. For instance, ‘citizen action’ is fundamental to SA but relies heavily on the accessibility and transparency of ‘information’ to be effective. Without robust information channels, citizen initiatives can lack the necessary data to support substantiate claims and create actionable demands (Fox, 2015). The roles of specific “levers” - ‘information’, ‘the state-citizen interface’, and civic mobilization are interpreted as catalytic elements that intensify the effectiveness of SA by bridging gaps between state and citizen actions. These levers become essential in situations of challenging governance, where formal mechanisms of accountability may be absent or compromised. On the other hand, the ‘citizen-state interface’ is another essential element as it creates structured channels for communication and negotiation between the citizens and the state. This channel, whether in the form of public consultation, grievance mechanisms, or participatory dialogues, serves as a “widget” that institutionalizes and legitimizes citizen participation (Joshi and Houtzager, 2012). By creating such channels, the interface facilitates citizen integration into government

processes, enhancing reciprocal accountability and allowing the state to address public concerns in a systemic and transparent manner (Gaventa and McGee, 2013). Civic mobilization further amplifies this “widget” role by organizing collective efforts and allowing citizens to pressure state actors to respond to community demands, especially in contexts where power imbalances limit individual efforts (Joshi and Houtzager, 2012). Relating this to the topic of this research paper, this can be achieved when grassroots movements and youth groups are empowered to bring unique perspectives to the table by advocating for solutions that consider present and future generations and push for climate justice that addresses intergenerational equity.

Moreover, what makes the model more insightful is its acknowledgement of inherent power differences between state actors and citizens, a factor that often restricts effective SA initiatives. This imbalance is indicated by positioning civic mobilization and civic action as necessary “watchdogs” against the authority held by the state. This dual role of SA as both “widgets” and “watchdogs” in governance systems, reinforces how it functions not only within but also alongside formal mechanisms (Joshi and Houtzager, 2012). It makes SA unique because of its ability to be effective even when formal institutions resist change. Therefore, the theory posits that good governance depends on transparency, public participation, and oversight, allowing citizens, especially marginalized communities to meaningfully engage in the policy-making process. Collective action when supported by strong information networks, truly empowers citizens to hold governments accountable, providing a form of bottom-up oversight ensuring governmental adherence to their obligations (Fox, 2015).

Building on these ideas, a conceptual model for enhancing SA in climate governance can be developed to show the relationship between CSOs and policy advocacy. At its core, the model envisions CSOs forming advocacy networks that collaborate with SA mechanisms to challenge outdated approaches and push for equitable climate policies. Advocacy networks as described by Keck and Sikkink (1998) are essential for questioning dominant narratives and proposing fresh, inclusive strategies for climate action. These networks arise when local communities join forces to advocate for policy changes that align with global climate goals.

A New Approach to Climate Governance

To create a more inclusive and effective model for social accountability, I propose a framework that blends key elements from the World Bank model (Grandvoinnet et al., 2015) with strategic insights from Fox’s framework (2015) and by adding tools that prioritize inclusivity, this approach creates a system where climate policies can evolve to meet the needs of diverse communities. At its heart, this framework ensures that climate action is fair, participatory, and responsive. As seen in (Grandvoinnet et al., 2015), accountability is achieved through the interaction of information, citizen action, state action, intermediaries, and the surrounding Context. This model in addition, adds features like continuous feedback loops, robust monitoring systems, and platforms that amplify marginalized voices by creating a more dynamic and lasting process to make the policies adapt and improve over time.

At the core of the model is **information**, this for climate governance means to make sure the information is not only available but also accessible and easy to act on. For instance, the government can share data about carbon reduction target projects through digital dashboards and community

workshops¹⁸. Moreover, when the internet is inaccessible, simplified information about rainfall patterns or irrigation schemes could be shared via community radio or through farmer groups. However, the aim has to be presenting information in ways that are practical and understandable by even the most vulnerable communities, with scopes to play an active role in shaping decisions. The next step is **citizen action**, which would shift from radical, sporadic protests and personal initiatives to a broader and structured process. The framework also focuses on **state action**, ensuring governments are both responsive to citizen feedback and able to adjust policies as circumstances change. This approach is informed by Fox's (2015) idea of aligning "voice" (citizen demands) with "teeth" (the state's ability to act). This ensures the relationship between citizens and the state isn't reactive but part of a continuous dialogue. Moreover, **intermediaries** – Civil Society Organizations play an important role in making this framework work. In Climate governance, where technical knowledge is often essential, CSOs – NGOs, CBO, grassroots organizations, youth groups, etc. act as bridges between citizens and the state. By translating local concerns into actionable insights, intermediaries ensure that grassroots voices influence broader policy decisions. Moreover, they help marginalized groups build the skills and confidence needed to engage effectively in climate discussions. A standout feature of the framework is to use of **feedback** loops and public **consultation** that create spaces for marginalized groups to interact directly with policymakers. **Monitoring systems** serve as another crucial pillar of this model by enabling local actors to provide feedback mechanisms, track whether the policies are implemented effectively and identify the areas that need to be reformed. This can be done by reporting gaps and demanding corrective actions when needed. This openness and interactive feedback can ensure that policies remain **accountable** to the citizens and adapt to the changing realities making climate governance more effective. It creates a structured platform to make sure historically excluded groups such as Indigenous communities, women, youth, and children have a voice in climate governance bringing them to the table. This shall not only lead to fairer policies but also ensure the solutions are more sustainable because they account for the perspectives of the vulnerable.

This adaptive and inclusive social accountability framework reimagines how citizens, governments and intermediaries can work together to address the urgent challenges of climate change. This chapter lays the groundwork for this research by exploring key ideas such as policy advocacy, CSOs, youth engagement, grassroots movement, and donors influencing climate governance. These concepts are linked to social accountability theory, which highlights the importance of involving citizens and ensuring governments are responsible for their needs. This chapter also introduces a conceptual model tailored to enhance social accountability, particularly in the domain of climate governance in developing countries. By connecting social accountability mechanisms with advocacy efforts, the research underscores the potential of all relevant stakeholders to shape effective climate policies. In the following chapters 5 and 6, I will apply this conceptual discussion to my findings in order to structure and deepen the analysis.

¹⁸ Note: this was previously established by Paris Agreement and will be discussed again in the coming chapters.

Chapter 5: Stakeholder Perception and Experiences in Bangladesh's NDC Development Processes

As emphasized in the previous chapters, effective stakeholder engagement is foundational to achieving robust climate governance. Therefore, this chapter addresses the sub-research question, 'How do different stakeholders perceive and experience their current involvement in the country's NDC process?' Using the research findings, the chapter explores a multi-dimensional view of how different stakeholders perceive their involvement in Bangladesh's NDC development process through the lens of Social Accountability, which stresses the need for participatory governance processes. The findings are structured based on the main challenges that limit participation including rushed consultations, lack of accessibility, tokenistic involvement, and the engrained power dominance in Bangladesh's governance system.

“Short-Term Planning Limits Genuine Involvement”: Rushed Consultations and less meaningful engagement

Numerous stakeholders indicated that the government often executes NDCs at the last moment, with consultations often scheduled toward the end of the policy development process constraining stakeholders to provide meaningful and impactful feedback. It seems as if the priority is to meet a deadline rather than to genuinely incorporate feedback. According to a government official, interviewed in September 2024, *“The upcoming NDC is being drafted and will be shared through consultation with CSOs”* (Interview with GO1). However, considering the upcoming NDC to be published in February 2025, and the Conference of Parties-29 (COP 29) happening in November, it is quite challenging to believe adequate consultations would be possible in the meantime. Indeed, development practitioners feel that these rushed consultations offer them little scope to provide meaningful input. A development practitioner pointedly noted, *“They do not want to do the extra work and want CSOs to reiterate their plans”* (Interview with DP1; DP4). *“We are reached for consultations at the eleventh hour when there is no scope to include our feedback”* (Interview with DP4). This highlights a concerning dynamic in which government agencies expect CSOs to validate pre-drafted policies rather than engage in collaborative dialogue to enhance those ambitions and plans. This expectation places an undue burden on CSOs, which may already be operating with limited capacity. Instead of being seen as vital partners in the policy-making process, CSOs are relegated to a role wherein their input is not utilized to the fullest. This perpetuates a cycle of superficial consultations leaving out the interests of unrepresented communities that the CSOs voice for.

On the other hand, a Governmental official interviewed acknowledged:

“Wider consultation is indeed needed however decision-making often remains centralized, because of the limited duration to produce NDCs” (Interview with GO1).

Alongside obligatory reporting, the government has instituted formal channels for engaging with stakeholders, however, these are done at the last minute which reinforces that the government is aware of the need for broader CSO engagement, but structural constraints such as centralized decision-making and tight timelines hinder genuine participatory processes which align with Fraser's (2016) critique of *short-termism*, as a structural flaw of capitalism, where the focus is more on quick profits and temporary fixes over caring for the environment, supporting social well being, and addressing

root causes of systemic issues. This affirms that tight deadlines often prioritize checking procedural boxes over fostering meaningful engagement. This approach diminishes social accountability by undermining both accountability and genuine public involvement, leaving little room for meaningful participation with CSOs and other non-state actors, as the focus shifts to quick fixes rather than long-term, inclusive plans and solutions. It often overshadows the desire for inclusivity with practical limitations, and leading governance practices failing to represent all stakeholder voices adequately. Moreover, this situation reflects the institutional lethargy prevalent in the public consultation processes as there remains scope for initiating the planning and development process much earlier, given the five-year-long cycle discussed in Chapter 2. This can be assumed as many countries including Bangladesh submit their NDCs close to the reporting deadlines, tending towards last-minute preparation (UNFCCC, 2022). This tendency to delay consultations contradicts government narratives and establishes that the issue lies not in the length of the timeline but in the failure of structured planning.

Lack of Accessibility: Challenges in Inclusive Stakeholder Consultations

One of the recurring issues raised by stakeholders was the limited accessibility of consultations, which are often centralized in Dhaka, the country's capital, excluding rural and marginalized voices. This centralization creates a significant participation gap, particularly for the communities directly affected by climate change however unable to participate in policy dialogues. A youth activist shared:

“Most consultations happen in Dhaka. Rural representatives are excluded. These consultations should not be done at the district level but at the sub-district level as the most climate-impacted populations reside in coastal areas and are not invited to consultations and workshops in the city” (Interview with Y2).

The prevalence of policy dialogues, consultations and workshops in metropolitan cities corresponds with Gaventa's (2006) analysis of power dynamics, wherein centralized processes perpetuate structural power disparities, systematically leaving out communities to affect policy decisions. It serves as a gatekeeping mechanism favoring established actors while devaluing lived experiences and grassroots knowledge (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007; Cooke, 2001).

Engaging a diverse array of stakeholders might impede decision-making processes and make it difficult to achieve consensus, especially in scenarios where urgent action is needed (Dryzek, 2002). However, in countries like Bangladesh, where the integrity of government functionaries is always questionable (Quddusi, 2014), its frequent climate-induced calamities necessitate prompt policy responses, and the possible delays resulting from inclusive approaches may be seen as a barrier to effective governance. Nonetheless, while inclusive processes may be lengthy, they address accessibility barriers and enrich policy processes with localized knowledge, crucial for developing adaptable and sustainable climate plans (Bäckstrand, 2006). This can be established from a recent study, which demonstrates that countries engaging in stakeholder consultations with diverse stakeholders such as CSOs, private businesses and labour groups before revising NDCs are more likely to enhance GHG emissions reduction targets. Such countries not only increase their NDC ambition but also benefit from stronger domestic ownership and accountability of climate action (Peterson et al., 2023).

However, a government official interviewed justified the limited outreach by stating, *“Including everyone in consultations is not possible, so we keep going back to parties who are well informed about the national ambitions, so we do not need to repeat the same process from scratch every time”* (Interview with GO2). This approach indicates

a preference for collaborating largely with established, predominantly urban organizations that align with government agendas and narratives, rather than incorporating a broader spectrum of voices, especially from rural regions. By concentrating primarily and repeatedly on these “mainstream organizations” officials establish a dynamic wherein the opinions and interests represented, strengthen governmental objectives, while sidelining those who contest governmental activities (Devine, 2006; Kramarz and Park, 2016). This limited participation illustrates the political dynamics in which only organizations that maintain good relationships with the government are allowed a seat at the table, constraining the diversity of perspectives in climate governance.

Moreover, in authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes, CSOs are often viewed as a threat to political stability or as representatives of foreign interests, especially when these entities advocate for transparency or critique governmental activities. This viewpoint corresponds with a “winner takes all” governance model, where only CSOs speaking in favor or are neutral with the government policies are permitted in official proceedings eventually limiting their participation in governance (Huntington, 1991, p.137; Bratton and Walle, 1997; Kramarz and Park, 2016). Such governments often suppress opposing viewpoints, viewing CSOs as opponents rather than partners. As a result, CSOs often face funding constraints and institutional barriers that hinder their capacity to participate effectively in climate governance activities, including NDC formulation. This exclusion in these contexts fulfils political objectives, ensuring that climate policies align with the interests of the political elite rather than the wider population (Newell, 2008; Atia and Herrold, 2018).

Such practices can be aligned with Cornwall’s (2002) critique of *selective inclusion*, when participation is limited to individuals considered “knowledgeable” or “qualified”, thus accepting inclusivity just to show, while perpetuating the vicious cycle of sidelining essential viewpoints from underprivileged groups in reality. This tendency mostly marginalizes grassroots-level, rural and community-based organizations offering different, localized perspectives that may not match state priorities.

Moreover, multiple respondents interviewed highlighted limited awareness regarding NDCs with a development practitioner noting, “*The previous NDCs are online and available for all but very few people know about this public document or how they can contribute to it*”, (Interview with DP2). This disparity between governmental actions and public awareness illustrates the inadequacies of top-down transparency initiatives where information is technically accessible, yet the lack of effective communication strategies and outreach means only a limited population is aware of the important public document. The lack of awareness further limits the potential for meaningful participation, as many are not informed about engaging or even knowing that they can and have full rights to engage in decision-making processes. Tornquist, Stokke and Webster (2009) argue that the limited ability of governments to involve citizens meaningfully frequently arises from a misalignment between formal representation mechanisms and the lived experiences of excluded groups. This lack of engagement is apparent in Bangladesh’s NDC process, where stakeholder consultations often seem to be a procedural event rather than a sincere attempt to engage CSOs and citizens affected in the decision-making process.

“Form over substance”: Tokenistic Involvement of CSOs

Three out of four CSO representatives (working in NGOs) expressed frustration and dissatisfaction over the NDC consultation process, which seems to be a procedural formality with limited scope for real influence on policy outcomes. They echoed, “*The consultations are conducted more for show than for genuine involvement, our comments are not always documented on paper*” (Interview with DP1).

“We are invited to consultations, but after the NDC is finalized and published on the website, we get no chance to review it, and our input rarely makes it into the final policies. These are the elite organizations who [are supposed to] represent us as well as the community level groups” (Interview with DP4).

This sentiment underscores the superficial nature of consultations, which are often designed to focus on fulfilling obligations imposed by climate treaties rather than a genuine effort to include everyone’s voices. This illustrates the wider detachment of CSOs from substantive engagement in climate governance. Such circumstances weaken participatory governance, as policies are shaped primarily by voices that align with government perspectives (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2002; Khan and Huq, 2023; Islam et al., 2022; Ishtiaque et al., 2021). This tokenism in consultation practices, as noted by Taft and Gordon (2013), exemplifies the concept of ‘constrained democracy’, where such organizations and groups are invited to participate but have little to no influence on the final outcomes.

The tokenistic participation in the NDC process can be further highlighted by the experience of a youth activist who notes, *“It is not possible to attend regional and international dialogues without connections to government bodies”* (Interview with Y1). This points to a broader issue where it is required to have pre-existing connections, with influentials in the field, limiting opportunities for those without institutional backing. This practice contradicts the inclusive ideas found in SA theory, which argues for open and accessible participation mechanisms to empower grassroots communities (Fox, 2015). By creating barriers based on ‘links’, the NDC process inherently favors those within established networks, effectively marginalizing certain groups from shaping the policy outcomes and reinforcing an “insider-outsider” dynamic.

Consultations with predetermined government agendas fail to embody true participatory governance, resulting in climate ambitions that may appear comprehensive on paper, but often fall short of addressing the practical needs of the general public. This can be established, by the updated NDC of Bangladesh, which mentions the importance and intention of enhancing resilience and reducing vulnerabilities in key sectors such as agriculture, water resources, and urban development (Government of Bangladesh, 2021). But lacks clarity on how these actions will be carried out at the local level or how will the local challenges be addressed. This leaves those most affected by climate change with unanswered questions and uncertain pathways for meaningful support. Therefore, it is necessary that the government transition from tokenistic consultation towards a more open engagement that values and integrates feedback from groups represented through CSOs (Cornwall, 2011).

“Youth Voices are considered ‘inexperienced’”: Dismissing innovative perspective

In South Asian countries like Bangladesh, a longstanding generational divide influences how youth are perceived and included or excluded in critical areas like climate governance. This division stems from broader hierarchical and cultural systems that automatically designate older generations’ wisdom over the insights of the younger generation. Despite being one of the largest demographic groups, with over 45.9 million individuals, young people often find their voices sidelined, particularly in formal governance and decision-making structures (Rahman, 2022; Hubbard and Williams, 2021).

This generational hierarchy derived from the adult-led, patriarchal nature of the society results in older individuals being labelled ‘decision-makers’, often resulting in the systemic marginalization of youth

from national climate planning (Shephard, 2017). During the interview, youth activists echoed the perspective of being excluded from the consultation and policy-making process. A youth representative highlighted the perceived technical inadequacy, stating:

“We are sidelined because we are not considered to have technical knowledge, but all young people cannot be classified in the same category, they should rather screen the working papers and policy briefs we develop in our youth-led climate groups. We possess innovative ideas and want to share them with the higher officials, yet we are seldom invited to the policy-making discussions. They consider us as a homogenous inexperienced group, whereas we have a diverse range of expertise. We are not only [demonstrating] on the streets but also excelling as climate researchers and scientists” When invited to a workshop, (Y1) was also disheartened by a government official’s remark, stating, *“You are young, what will you know about technical stuff?”* (Interview with Y1).

This perception of youth as inexperienced or lacking expertise reflects an institutional and societal bias that excludes innovative and non-traditional perspectives from policy discussions where older elite-dominated institutions maintain control over decision-making processes and always have the final say in decision-making (Neas, Ward and Bowman, 2022). Such marginalization limits the breadth of contributions to climate policy and stifles opportunities for intergenerational knowledge sharing. Older generations frequently hold significant experiential knowledge, especially on historical climate trends and community resilience techniques, whereas younger generations bring innovation and willingness to contest established norms with visible change. Therefore, the interplay of generational viewpoints cultivates more nuanced and flexible policies that reconcile heritage with contemporary methods. By obstructing this interchange, climate governance may become too insular and less responsive to the concerns of all impacted groups. This negligence makes young people frustrated towards the governance system and may unknowingly create a wall to limit exploration of encompassing past lessons and progressive tactics. To address this, participatory governance can advocate for decentralized decision-making, making room for local voices across all categories, despite their age, socioeconomic class or gender, and without grouping or categorizing anyone to be meaningfully included in the NDC process. This could be fostered by holding regular consultations at the community level and closely inspecting the essential action needed from the government’s end.

“Selective Transparency Limits Accountability”: Limited Information Sharing with CSOs

The present condition of accountability and transparency in Bangladesh’s climate governance is questionable as it illustrates a complicated interplay between formal mechanisms for public participation and the practical limitations of these mechanisms. While the government has pledged transparency in its climate governance structures, including the public availability of the NDC, the degree of public awareness and engagement remains constrained. The disparity between formal accountability structures and actual practice is not uncommon in developing contexts, where transparency measures remain more symbolic than substantive. The same can be articulated from the perspectives of different stakeholders relevant to formulating Bangladesh’s NDC.

Selective transparency emerged as a significant barrier, this limited access to information constraints CSOs’ capacity to hold the government accountable, a donor agency representative, stated:

“Although the government complies with reporting requirements, the shared information is often selective, which limits CSO’s ability to hold the government accountable.” (Interview with D2)

On a similar note, a development practitioner, involved in climate consultancy work mentioned,

“We have constantly advocated for more robust climate commitments, yet NDC remains a closed-door document, where consultations are done in an ad-hoc manner, with quite limited and well-established NGOs only” (Interview with DP4).

This sentiment underscores shared concern and frustration felt among stakeholders regarding the inadequacy of information provided for effective oversight as the SA theory suggests. Ideally, the formulation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) includes a national consultative process incorporating contributions from all stakeholders, however, the tokenistic participation (previous section) and limited transparency inhibit effective monitoring, a key tenet of the SA theory, as partial information obstructs comprehensive public scrutiny and restricts CSOs’ ability to engage in meaningful monitoring, which weakens accountability and diminishes the inclusivity of the policy framework (Government of Bangladesh, 2021; Gaventa, 2006; Cornwall, 2002). Without complete information, CSOs cannot challenge government actions or advocate for necessary challenges, undermining the goals of participatory governance essential for addressing the complex challenges posed by different stakeholders making it difficult for communities to comprehend and evaluate policies that directly affect them (Joshi & Houtzager, 2012; Dryzek, 2002). In this regard, a development practitioner suggested a potential solution to enhance transparency in the NDC process:

“Incorporating the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) could provide a more structured information sharing and accountability. This can ensure that all relevant stakeholders have access to necessary information.” (Interview with A3)

Though social accountability mechanisms should ideally be integrated within Bangladesh’s climate governance framework, however, their implementation and effectiveness vary significantly. One such mechanism is the requirement for mandatory reporting as outlined in the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement (Article 13) which obliges nations to provide regular updates on their climate initiatives and advancements in achieving their NDC targets (Dal Maso, 2019, p. 8)¹⁹. This framework aims to enhance transparency and provide independent verification of government commitments. However, the biased reporting as mentioned by other stakeholders compromises the basic concept of transparency and diminishes the efficacy of the ETF in promoting public accountability.

Transparency in government climate commitments can be ensured when the government facilitates such systems where its actions can be tracked and scrutinized by general citizens through CSOs. This access to information fosters active public participation in NDC and other national climate policy formulation enabling them to understand what the Government pledges to do. Through monitoring and evaluation, the non-state actors can hold governments accountable, safeguarding the commitments to be followed through. By tracking progress and checking for discrepancies between what was promised and what has been implemented, the CSOs can advocate for improved climate policies providing suitable feedback and suggesting necessary adjustments where required to strengthen implementation of climate policies.

¹⁹ More discussion on ETF in Chapter 6 and also available in ‘*Transparency of support under the Paris Agreement*.’ Available at: <https://unfccc.int/topics/climate-finance/workstreams/transparency-of-support-ex-post/transparency-of-support-under-the-paris-agreement>

Chapter 6 Overcoming Institutional and Political Barriers for an Inclusive Climate Governance in Bangladesh

Building on the findings on how different stakeholders experience their involvement in the NDC process, this chapter delves into the institutional and political barriers that prevent the meaningful participation of CSOs in Bangladesh's NDC process. Drawing on the research findings, the chapter critically highlights institutional and political obstacles while exploring how social accountability mechanisms can help bridge the gaps experienced by CSOs. Specifically, by addressing the research question, 'What are the challenges and opportunities on the side of the government and CSOs that prevent or enable the meaningful inclusion of CSOs in Bangladesh's NDCs?' To answer this, the findings are organized to first cover the institutional and political challenges that limit meaningful CSO engagement. Continuing to the opportunities to strengthen their participation, through the lens of social accountability theory, based on academic literature and insights from the respondents.

“Fragmented Ministries, Fragmented Policies”: Lack of Cohesion in the NDC process

The interviews identified a significant barrier was the lack of coordination among different ministries involved in the NDC development and implementation process. For instance, the Department of Environment under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Agriculture. These ministries are expected to collaborate to ensure a comprehensive approach to achieving Bangladesh's climate goals as outlined in the NDC. However, they lack cooperation, and this fragmentation results in a disjointed approach, with each ministry often pursuing its agenda without sufficient alignment with other ministries. In this regard, a donor agency representative noted, *“The ministries are cooperative towards us; however, they do not communicate with other ministries. They are working in silos, which complicates the development of a cohesive strategy.”* (Interview with D1).

The institutional fragmentation reflects broader governance challenges in the country's governance structure where ministries frequently function independently, focusing on their individual sector-specific goals, leading to ineffective coordination (Huq et al., 2024). This fragmentation within the ministerial institutions obstructs the advancement of inclusive climate policies, as different ministries may pursue conflicting agendas or fail to collaborate effectively on cross-cutting issues like climate change adaptation and mitigation (Scholte, 2004; Gerring and Thacker, 2004). Moreover, the centralized decision-making process, combined with a lack of transparency, further hinders CSOs from effectively participating in the NDC formulation process. Important information such as climate data, policy drafts, and implementation plans, are often withheld or shared too late with CSOs. Without access to this crucial information, CSOs are unable to contribute meaningfully to policy discussions or advocate for changes in climate policy (Goetz and Jenkins, 2001). This creates a system, which undermines the potential for inclusive involvement from CSOs and other relevant stakeholders. The power dynamics inherent in these institutional structures illustrate the influence of elite interests on climate policymaking in Bangladesh. Decision-making is predominantly held by senior officials and development partnerships, while non-state actors are sidelined in the policy formulation process (Pelling, 2010).

Another interviewee a climate academician, highlighted the consequences of this disjointed approach, *“Without a shared strategy, the efforts of implementing climate initiatives become piecemeal. The efforts are duplicated*

each time, where no one is addressing the critical issues at all” (Interview with A3). This fragmented governance is a critical issue as the complexity of the institutional landscape creates challenges in understanding which agencies are responsible for specific aspects of the climate policy, who to engage with and how to influence policy decisions effectively. This situation aligns with Scholte’s (2004) observation of the challenges posed by fragmented governance structures, which undermine comprehensive and cohesive policymaking. This piecemeal approach can lead to duplicated efforts where multiple entities might unknowingly work on similar projects, wasting valuable resources and time and ultimately leading nowhere. Such structure limits the CSO’s capacity to contribute to a holistic and well-coordinated climate policy concerning the potential for critical issues to go unaddressed altogether. When they get a chance to participate in the NDC development process, instead of engaging effectively, they have to navigate a maze of institutions, often dealing with bureaucratic inefficiencies. As a result, their voices remain un-influential.

“Lack of a Clear Framework: Absence of Coherence and Monitoring Systems”

The formulation of NDCs is primarily driven by the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC), the ministry is responsible for overseeing the development and submission of the country’s climate ambitions. However, the institutional frameworks overseeing Bangladesh’s NDC process demonstrate fragmentation and bureaucratic ineffectiveness, which hampers the formulation of cohesive and inclusive climate policies. The execution of climate policies necessitates the collaboration of various ministries, including the Ministry of Finance, the Minister of Power and Energy along with other sectoral agencies and involves consultation with multiple stakeholders including voices from marginalized communities (Huq et al., 2024; World Bank, 2020). However, not having a definite framework for ensuring public engagement leaves CSOs and the voices they represent in a position of being underrepresented, limiting their influence on policy decisions.

Regarding this situation, a development practitioner raised their concern stating, *“There is no clear framework that ties everything together. The policy direction lacks consistency, and the government does not have an established mechanism to track its commitments made in the NDCs”* (Interview with DP3)

Without a structured mechanism for progress monitoring, the NDC process risks being limited to the planning phase without adequate attention to implementation and outcomes. This absence of transparency significantly obstructs accountability and undermines public trust in climate governance (Lopa and Ahmad, 2016, p.782; IPCC, 2023; Rajamani, 2016). Therefore, CSOs often struggle to access the necessary information to hold the government accountable, particularly in the absence of clear transparent standards. Necessitating for an inclusive governance framework, incorporating various societal stakeholders is crucial for making climate policy contextually relevant and socially responsive (Bäckstrand, 2006; Hickey & Mohan, 2004).

“Adaptation Prioritization Over Mitigation”: leading to neglected NDC commitments

A key observation from the findings was that adaptation is often prioritized over mitigation in Bangladesh’s climate policies, particularly within the NDCs. Numerous respondents observed that the government initiatives revolve around enhancing climate adaptation strategies, including disaster preparedness and infrastructure resilience, over mitigation efforts intended to reduce GHG emissions.

Regarding this, a Youth representative shared, *“The focus is consistently on adaptation, though it is important, mitigation seems to get less attention. Even the NDCs receive less attention compared to the NAP”* (Interview with Y2). This statement highlights a major challenge for Bangladesh’s climate strategy. While adaptation is crucial for addressing the immediate impacts of climate change, effective mitigation measures are equally important for reducing future climate risks. The predominant emphasis on adaptation within the NDC process may impede Bangladesh’s capacity to engage effectively in global initiatives aimed at reducing emissions and mitigating global warming.

In the context of Bangladesh, the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) is frequently regarded as a more prioritized document by both government and development professionals, thereby overshadowing the NDCs in the policy landscape. NAPs are essential for enhancing adaptation and resilience strategies however, if NDCs are continued to take a backseat to the NAP, Bangladesh’s ability to achieve climate objectives as outlined in the Paris Agreement may be disintegrated. This necessitates a more balanced approach that draws attention to both mitigation and adaptation for long-term climate resilience and meeting the targets set under international climate agreements (UNFCCC, 2015). CSOs like Climate Justice Alliance Bangladesh advocate for comprehensive long-term low-emission development strategies that establish a distinct roadmap towards achieving net-zero emissions by 2040, including ensuring a sustainable future for all (Dhaka Tribune, 2023). The government must also ensure adaptation and mitigation receive equal attention and investment in future climate planning to rectify this imbalance.

“Accountability Capture: The Influence of Donor Priorities”

‘Accountability capture’ as discussed previously, remains a significant challenge for CSOs, particularly when they rely heavily on donor funding. This dependency often compels CSOs to prioritize donor agendas over the real needs of the local communities they intend to serve. As a result, their focus can shift away from addressing pressing issues faced by the vulnerable population to prioritizing the goals set by donor organizations. In this regard, a climate academician pointed out his concern saying *“Our priorities are often shaped by what the donors want, not necessarily what our communities need. We end up focusing on issues that are important by donors, but not always to the people on the ground”* (Interview with A2). Such misalignment weakens the effectiveness of CSOs and undermines their role as advocates for vulnerable communities. Porter (2003) highlights how accountability capture sidelines local voices and knowledge, exacerbating power imbalances between CSOs, donors and the community they aim to represent. Scholte (2004) adds to this concern, pointing out that globalization further complicates this dynamic, as CSOs in developing countries often require navigating donor expectations shaped by translational networks. This can make it difficult for them to maintain local ownership of their projects, leading to programs that reflect donor priorities. This is specifically concerning for Bangladesh as the role of donor funding has profoundly shaped the country’s development efforts over the past years. Multi-lateral donors such as European Union Institutions, the International Development Association, and UN organizations have become major players, providing nearly 50% of the external funding received (LightCastle Partners, 2022). Among bilateral donors, Japan led with USD 71.2 billion in funding between 2000 and 2020, followed by the UK (USD 44.8 billion), the US (USD 31.9 billion), Germany (USD 14.6 billion), and the Netherlands (USD 11.6 billion). These funds supported key sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, energy, and infrastructure development (LightCastle Partners, 2022, p.19).

This significant reliance on external funding can come at the expense of local ownership and sustainability, with donor-driven policies which often fail to address the specific needs of the communities they intend to serve.

Therefore, when donors put pressure on such initiatives, having to follow a specific criterion, the results may disconnect from the realities on the ground.

To counter these challenges, SA mechanisms like community-driven monitoring and feedback systems provide an effective solution by helping CSOs refocus their priorities on community-driven needs. These mechanisms can support local capacity building and foster autonomy, authorizing communities to move away from donor dependence and take charge in such initiatives by actively overseeing development projects, identifying inefficiencies, addressing issues, and ensuring the development funds are utilized effectively, ultimately strengthening local ownership and ensuring advocacy and policies are not conducted under external dominance (Fox, 2015). By doing so, local leaders and communities are not just empowered into effective decision-making but also enhance the legitimacy of the efforts they make.

Despite such solutions, the regulatory framework governing CSOs in Bangladesh also presents a substantial impediment to accountability. Legislation like the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act restricts the funding and operational autonomy of CSOs, particularly those receiving foreign aid²⁰. Scholte (2004) suggests that the ability of civil society to hold the government responsible is significantly reliant on its financial and operational autonomy, as resource limitations hinder lobbying efforts and the capability for monitoring activities. In Bangladesh, restrictive funding policies limit the sustainability of CSO-led initiatives, as organizations are obligated to comply with laws and regulations which limits their capacity for independent monitoring and ability to hold the government accountable (Hasan, 2015, p.159-160). This paradigm upholds a top-down structure of climate governance as CSOs dependent on foreign support may face increased scrutiny, compromising their capacity to participate critically in governmental matters.

In conclusion, the findings highlight a concerning gap between formal inclusion and real influence when it comes to genuine CSO participation in the NDC process. While CSOs such as NGOs, youth and community-based organizations are officially a part of the process, their impact to date is often limited by superficial participation impeding their scope to effectively monitor and contribute to climate policy development. However, the findings also suggest that though the institutional and political challenges are ingrained in the governance system, they are not impossible to overcome. There are clear opportunities to improve the involvement of stakeholders using social accountability mechanisms, which are discussed in the next section.

6.1 Opportunities for Improved Inclusivity

In Bangladesh, where socio-economic disparities are firmly rooted, enabling meaningful inclusion of CSOs in the NDC process necessitates tackling the institutional challenges that restrict their

²⁰ Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act, 2016 (Act No. 43 of 2016). Available at: https://ngoab.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/ngoab.portal.gov.bd/page/c2b974f0_dfd2_4013_8deb_90fd2d36759b/2024-06-02-05-01-8b0892067f464033c41631c8c436159d.pdf

involvement. As the Government usually has final control over the agenda and has scope to favour the policies according to their needs as well the ones they favour. Such approaches not only restrict the representation of marginalized voices in climate governance but also undermine the accountability mechanisms necessary to ensure that NDC policies are inclusive and effective. Despite the numerous barriers to stakeholder engagement identified in the NDC process of Bangladesh, there are several viable avenues for enhancing CSO inclusion. The research respondents highlighted the need for strategic improvement in interministerial coordination, regular transparency frameworks such as open data initiatives in public reporting, and capacity-building initiatives tailored to CSOs and government officials.

Strengthening Stakeholder Collaboration

The first critical area for improvement is to enhance coordination among stakeholders, particularly governmental ministries. At present several ministries operate in silos, resulting in disjointed strategies for climate policy. By improving communication and coordination among ministries, the government may formulate a cohesive climate policy that integrates various aspects of climate action, such as social and environmental protection, public health, and economic development. A coordinated approach is needed, involving formal consultation platforms that bring together government agencies, CSOs, and other non-state actors. Such multilevel governance platforms could foster dialogue, co-create solutions and come up with comprehensive climate strategies (Scholte, 2004).

Similarly, involving private sector entities, particularly financial institutions like banks, may improve resource management by aligning financial mechanisms with advancing national mitigation goals. These entities can oversee financial matters, such as facilitating green investments, funding low-carbon projects, and supporting sustainable initiatives that align with national priorities (ILO, 2023). Moreover, such public-private partnerships can ensure that financial strategies are strictly allocated for climate priorities, helping to accelerate policy ambitions (World Bank, 2013). This is especially important as securing funds often takes two to three years and involves complex funding application and approval procedures (Zaman, 2022). Additionally, involving the private sector opens up opportunities to scale up solutions addressing gaps, that might otherwise question the legitimacy of public sector efforts (Georgieva, 2023).

Enhancing Transparency Frameworks

Second, strengthening transparency entails the availability of information regarding the NDC process and for ensuring that the information is accessible and understandable to stakeholders. Creating a transparent public database with essential documents, feedback systems, and periodic monitoring reports would enable CSOs and citizens to engage actively in the governing process. This corresponds with the necessity for frequent progress reports to guarantee that the perspectives of CSOs are sufficiently reflected in climate policies. Another strategy to make the information accessible and understandable to a wide array of stakeholders is to use less technical language in policy documents and consultations. Translating the NDC into the local language, simplifying complex terminology and avoiding jargon can make it less complicated and understandable to the general audience.

A key component of strengthening transparency is the re-establishment of the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF), under the Paris Agreement, which can facilitate robust feedback mechanisms by creating structured opportunities for stakeholders to raise concerns and provide feedback regarding climate policies. For instance, implementing frequent feedback sessions for CSOs

to share views and thoughts of community representatives, youth and other groups and contribute to climate efforts would ensure that policies are attuned to public demand and requirements. It establishes an institutionalized process for countries to report their progress, making this information accessible for public review. This is particularly relevant in the NDC development process, as the NDC sets a goal to cut emissions by 6.73% on its own and up to 15.12% with international support by 2030. While these targets are commendable there is no clear mention of how these reductions will be achieved in ways that directly involve and benefit the public (Government of Bangladesh, 2021, p.7). Without clear localized plans or mechanisms to engage communities in the process, the commitments underscore the lack of a participatory framework that could make these goals more concrete and relatable for the public. This is where Social Accountability Mechanisms like those enabled in ETF allow CSOs to assess how government actions align with international climate commitments and advocate for more informed climate policies, promoting a decentralised governance process (Fox, 2015).

Capacity Building Initiatives

Third, capacity-building initiatives are essential for providing both CSOs and government officials with the skills and knowledge required for effective engagement in the NDC process. Training programs for CSOs should prioritize simplifying technical language while enhancing their understanding of climate policy, advocacy techniques, and data analysis. This approach enables more effective engagement with government bodies. Additionally, offering financial and technical assistance to train CSOs will boost their ability to significantly engage in climate governance and empower indigenous and neglected groups.

The development of dedicated platforms to capacitate all parties involved including policymakers, youth activists, development practitioners and community representatives can enhance engagement significantly. Moreover, actively engaging diverse stakeholder groups, especially local communities, women, youth, and indigenous populations, is crucial for ensuring that the NDC process encompasses a broad spectrum of opinions and expertise.

Furthermore, instituting explicit protocols for regular discussions between the government and CSOs can promote ongoing dialogue and collaboration, reinforcing the importance of a bottom-up approach in the NDC development process. Another important mechanism is the need for public awareness campaigns that aim to build the capacity of the public about NDCs, their outcome and ambitions. However, Cornwall (2011) argues, that public awareness alone cannot achieve meaningful social accountability. Without substantial means for involvement, public awareness initiatives may become a one-way communication mechanism, wherein information is disseminated from the government to the public but not reciprocated in terms of citizen engagement. This is why it is best to share capacity development initiatives through social media, community radio or at social gatherings aside from mainstream media, which can further expand involvement and engagement.

Finally, a donor agency representative highlighted that *“International partnerships can indeed create pathways for more robust youth engagement, but local institutional frameworks need to be strengthened first.”* (Interview with DP1). This highlights the dual need for global support and the strengthening of local systems. Although international partnerships such as those facilitated by the UNDP’s Climate Promise, can provide crucial funding and technical assistance like bringing expertise, resources, and best practices, the sustainability of the initiatives mostly relies on local governance structures which are capable of

efficiently adapting and implementing those efforts. Therefore, capacity building should not be limited to the development of CSO's skills but also to fortifying local institutions to support collaboration between government and other non-state actors.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

This research has taken a close look at how Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are involved in the development of Bangladesh's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), unveiling the barriers that limit their meaningful engagement and the avenues for improving inclusivity in the process and the potential of Social Accountability mechanisms to enhance their engagement. It is seen that while CSOs are formally included in the consultations on climate policies, their involvement often lacks genuine participation and real decision-making power. Institutional fragmentation, limited transparency, and centralized decision-making further exclude CSOs representing vulnerable voices from contributing effectively to the policy formulation process.

While Bangladesh has made notable progress in addressing climate challenges, the research findings the other hand, indicate substantial deficiencies in the inclusivity and accountability of the NDC process. The NDC process in Bangladesh is hindered by the centralized nature of decision-making, restricting civil society engagement, especially at the local level where communities are particularly vulnerable to climate impacts. The findings further indicate that consultations with CSOs are happening. However, their involvement tends to be superficial, and their input seldom impacts the final policy decisions. This tokenistic participation reflects broader challenges in Bangladesh's climate governance system, characterized by limited transparency and access to information, which undermines the capacity of CSOs to hold the government accountable. Furthermore, numerous CSOs encounter institutional limitations that impede their capacity to participate effectively in climate policy processes. Moreover, feedback and comments from youth activist groups amongst CSOs are hindered by the entrenched ageist and patriarchal attitudes in the governance system. This exclusion remains especially concerning given that youth will face the long-term effects of climate change, and the national decisions made in current times. Additionally, donor-driven priorities pose another challenge as CSOs reliant on donor funding sometimes align their agendas more than donor expectations on the needs of local communities. This disconnect reduces the authenticity of CSO advocacy and weakens their role of representing grassroots and vulnerable communities.

Despite these limitations, significant opportunities exist to improve the involvement of CSOs in the NDC development process. If effectively integrated within the system, Social Accountability mechanisms can create avenues for feedback, decentralized consultations, and transparent information-sharing, which are mandatory for an effective NDC. Strengthening interministerial coordination, refining transparency frameworks, streamlining technical language and capacitating everyone involved in policy formulation are critical measures for advancing inclusive climate governance. Moreover, the implementation of the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) as outlined by the Paris Agreement may establish a more organized mechanism for feedback, enabling CSOs and local communities to genuinely take part in policy formulation and public oversight.

Given the findings and the theory used, the study highlights the importance of inclusive climate governance and offers a pathway to creating more equitable and effective NDCs that not only mitigate the impacts of climate change but also prioritize and adapt to the evolving needs of affected communities. Therefore, ensuring meaningful stakeholder engagement particularly, CSOs with similar motivation is not just important, but vital in overlooking and ensuring a promising NDC. Thus, this study identifies a notable gap in the existing literature, which is largely focused on government-driven climate action strategies. By focusing on the role of CSOs in the NDC development process, this

research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of inclusive governance which can help fill the vacuum left out by the state.

Looking ahead, this study identifies key topics for further research that might expand upon the existing findings related to CSO involvement in Bangladesh's NDCs process. This research offers insights into the role of CSOs in climate governance, although deficiencies necessitate further exploration. Broadening the geographic and sectoral scope through comparative studies in the Global South, concentrating on the engagement of CSOs with sectors like energy or agriculture, may yield a more nuanced comprehension of their involvement. The role of youth as agents of accountability also requires further exploration, especially about how digital platforms and grassroots movements might facilitate their participation in climate governance. Additionally, evaluating the effectiveness of current monitoring and evaluation frameworks could offer valuable insights into how accountability mechanisms can be strengthened in the climate governance system. Addressing these research gaps could enable further studies to enhance the development of inclusive, effective and resilient climate policies in Bangladesh and similar vulnerable nations.

References

- 26 May. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/private-sector-engagement-unlocking-climate-finance-3032046> (Accessed 23 Nov. 2024).
- Ackerman, J. M. (2005) *Social Accountability in the public sector*. The World Bank. Available at: <http://library.mstcdc.ac.tz:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/50/1/social%20accountability.pdf> (Accessed: 05 September 2024).
- Ain o Salish Kendra (2013) *About Us | Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK)*. [online] Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK). Available at: <https://www.askbd.org/ask/about-us/> (Accessed: 3 November 2024).
- Andonova, L.B., Betsill, M.M. and Bulkeley, H. (2009) 'Transnational Climate Governance', *Global Environmental Politics*, 9(2), pp.52–73. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1162/glep.2009.9.2.52>.
- Asian Development Bank (2008). *Overview of NGOs and Civil Society: Bangladesh*. [online] www.adb.org. Asian Development Bank. Available at: <https://www.adb.org/publications/overview-ngos-and-civil-society-bangladesh> (Accessed: 7 November 2024).
- Atia, M. and Herrold, C.E. (2018) 'Governing Through Patronage: The Rise of NGOs and the Fall of Civil Society in Palestine and Morocco', *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, [online] 29(5), pp.1044–1054. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-9953-6>.

- Ayers, J.M., Huq, S., Faisal, A.M. and Hussain, S.T. (2013) 'Mainstreaming climate change adaptation into development: a case study of Bangladesh', *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 5(1), pp.37–51. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.226>.
- Bäckstrand, K. (2006) 'Democratizing Global Environmental Governance? Stakeholder Democracy after the World Summit on Sustainable Development' *European Journal of International Relations*, 12(4), pp.467–498. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066106069321>.
- Banks, N. and Hulme, D. (2012) 'The role of NGOs and civil society in development and poverty reduction', *Brooks World Poverty Institute Working Paper*, (171). Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2072157 (Accessed: 2 November 2024).
- Betsill, M.M. and Bulkeley, H. (2021) 'Cities and the Multilevel Governance of Global Climate Change', in K. Mills and K. Stiles (eds) *Understanding Global Cooperation*. BRILL, pp.219–236. doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004462601_014.
- Bhuiyan, S. (2015) 'Adapting to Climate Change in Bangladesh', *South Asia Research*, 35(3), pp.349–367. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0262728015598702>.
- Biermann, F., Pattberg, P., van Asselt, H. and Zelli, F. (2009) 'The Fragmentation of Global Governance Architectures: A Framework for Analysis', *Global Environmental Politics*, 9(4), pp.14–40. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1162/glep.2009.9.4.14>.
- Biswas, M. (2013) 'Climate change & its impacts on Bangladesh', *Planned Decentralization: Aspired Development*, pp.86–95. Available at: <https://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.bip.org.bd/admin/uploads/bip-publication/publication-8/paper/20140128164211.pdf> (Accessed: 7 November 2024).
- Böhmelt, T., Koubi, V. and Bernauer, T. (2013) 'Civil society participation in global governance: Insights from climate politics', *European Journal of Political Research*, 53(1), pp.18–36. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12016>.
- Bowen, G.A. (2009), 'Document analysis as a qualitative research method' *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), pp.27–40. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3316/qtrj0902027>.
- Bratton, M. and Van de Walle, N. (1997) *Democratic experiments in Africa: regime transitions in comparative perspective*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139174657>.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp.77–101. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.
- Brinkerhoff, J.M. and Brinkerhoff, D.W. (2002) 'Government-nonprofit relations in comparative perspective: evolution, themes and new directions', *Public Administration and Development*, 22(1), pp.3–18. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.202>.
- Bryman, A. (2016) *Social research methods*. 5th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D. and Walker, K., (2020) 'Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples', *Journal of research in Nursing*, 25(8), pp.652–661.
- Castle, M. (2022). *Collaboration – the secret weapon to tackle climate change! – Impact 17*. IMPACT 17. Available at: <https://impact17.net/collaboration-the-secret-weapon-to-tackle-climate-change/> (Accessed 27 May 2024).
- Chambers, R. (1983) *Rural development: putting the last first*. Harlow, Essex: Longman Scientific & Technical.
- Chawla, L. and Cushing, D.F. (2007) 'Education for strategic environmental behavior', *Environmental Education Research*, 13(4), pp.437–452. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504620701581539>.
- Cooke, B. and Kothari, U. (eds.) (2001) *Participation: The new tyranny?* London: Zed Books.

- Cornwall, A. (2002) 'Making spaces, changing places: situating participation in development', in *IDS Working Paper 170*. Brighton, Sussex: Institute of Development Studies. Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.powercube.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/making_spaces_changing_places.pdf (Accessed 4 August 2024).
- Cornwall, A. (2011) *The participation reader*. London: Zed Books.
- Cornwall, A. and Coelho, V.S.P. (2007) *Spaces for change?: The politics of citizen participation in new democratic arenas*. London, New York: Zed Books.
- Cornwall, A. and Gaventa, J. (2000) 'From Users and Choosers to Makers and Shapers: Repositioning Participation in Social Policy', *IDS Bulletin*, 31(4), pp.50–62. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2000.mp31004006.x>.
- Dal Maso, M. and Canu, F.A. (2019) *Unfolding the reporting requirements for Developing Countries under the Paris Agreement's: Enhanced Transparency Framework*. Available at: https://backend.orbit.dtu.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/197298069/ICAT_MPGs_publication_final.pdf (Accessed on 25 October 2024).
- Department of Environmental Affairs, Republic of South Africa (2019). *National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy Republic of South Africa*. Available at: https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/nationalclimatechange_adaptationstrategy_ue10nove mber2019.pdf. (Accessed 15 October 2024).
- Devic, O. (2020) 'Why aren't young people involved in decision-making processes that affect their lives?' www.unicef.org. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/eca/stories/why-arent-young-people-involved-decision-making-processes-affect-their-lives> (Accessed: 16 October 2024).
- Devine, J. (2006) 'NGOs, Politics and Grassroots Mobilisation', *Journal of South Asian Development*, 1(1), pp.77–99. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/097317410500100104>.
- Dhaka Tribune (2023) 'COP28: Bangladeshi CSOs demand urgent action to combat climate emergency'. Available at: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/333022/cop28-bangladeshi-csos-demand-urgent-action-to> (Accessed: 23 November 2024).
- Dodman, D. and Mitlin, D. (2011) 'Challenges for community-based adaptation: Discovering the potential for transformation', *Journal of International Development*, 25(5), pp.640–659. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.1772>.
- [Dryzek, J.S. \(2002\) *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press. doi: https://doi.org/10.1093/019925043x.001.0001.](https://doi.org/10.1093/019925043x.001.0001)
- Fatemi, M., Okyere, S., Diko, S., & Kita, M. (2020) 'Multi-Level Climate Governance in Bangladesh via Climate Change Mainstreaming: Lessons for Local Climate Action in Dhaka City', *Urban Science*, 4 (2) doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/urbansci4020024>
- Flores, W. and Samuel, J. (2019) 'Grassroots organisations and the sustainable development goals: no one left behind?' *BMJ*, (Clinical research ed.), 365, l2269. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.l2269>.
- Foley, M.W. and Edwards, B. (1996) 'The Paradox of Civil Society', *Journal of Democracy*, 7(3), pp.38–52. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1996.0048>.
- Fox, J. (2022) *Accountability Keywords*. Accountability Research Center Working Paper, No. 11. Available at: https://aura.american.edu/articles/online_resource/Accountability_keywords/23858118/1/files/41855169.pdf (Accessed: on 30 October 2024).
- Fox, J.A. (2015) 'Social Accountability: What Does the Evidence Really Say?' *World Development*, 72, pp.346–361. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.03.011>.
- Fraser N. (2016) 'Contradictions of capital and care', *New Left Review*, (100), pp. 99–117.
- Fraser, N. (2009) *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Garai, J. (2014) 'The Impacts of Climate Change on the Livelihoods of Coastal People in Bangladesh: A Sociological Study', *Climate Change Management*, pp.151–163. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-04489-7_11.
- Gaventa, J. (2006) 'Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', *IDS Bulletin*, 37(6), pp.23–33. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2006.tb00320.x>.
- Gaventa, J. and McGee, R. (2013) 'The Impact of Transparency and Accountability Initiatives', *Development Policy Review*, 31(1), pp.s3–s28. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.12017>.
- General Economics Division (2018) *Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100: A Long-Term Strategy for Water Resource Management, Flood Control, and Coastal Protection*. Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh.
- Georgieva, K. (2023). *Bangladesh and its Partners are Launching the Bangladesh Climate and Development Platform to Leverage Adaptation and Mitigation Investments*. [online] IMF. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2023/12/03/bangladesh-launch-climate-development-platform-to-leverage-adaptation-and-mitigation-investments>.
- Gerring, J. and Thacker, S.C. (2004) 'Political Institutions and Corruption: The Role of Unitarism and Parliamentarism', *British Journal of Political Science*, [online] 34(2), pp.295–330. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4092365> (Accessed: 8 September 2024).
- Goetz, A.M. and Jenkins, R. (2001) 'Hybrid Forms of Accountability: Citizen engagement in institutions of public-sector oversight in India', *Public Management Review*, 3(3), pp.363–383. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616670110051957>.
- Government of Bangladesh (2005) *National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)*. Ministry of Environment and Forests. Available at: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/napa/ban01.pdf> (Accessed: 10 September 2024).
- Government of Bangladesh (2009) *Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP)*. Ministry of Environment and Forests. Available at: <https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/Bangladesh%20Climate%20Change%20Strategy%20and%20Action%20Plan%202009.pdf> (Accessed: 17 September 2024).
- Government of Bangladesh (2015) *Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC)*. Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. UNFCCC. Available at: https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Bangladesh/1/INDC_2015_of_Bangladesh.pdf. (Accessed: 12 September 2024).
- Government of Bangladesh (2021). *Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan*. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bangladesh. Available at: https://moef.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/moef.portal.gov.bd/publications/f6c2ae73_30eb_4174_9adb_022323da1f39/Mujib%20Climate%20Prosperity%20Plan%202022-2041.pdf (Accessed: 10 November 2024).
- Government of Bangladesh (2021). *Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) (Updated) Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*. UNFCCC. Available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/NDC_submission_20210826revised.pdf (Accessed 12 September 2024).
- Govil, P. (2013) Ethical considerations in educational research. *International Journal of Advancement in Education and Social Sciences*, 1(2), pp.17-22.
- Grandvoinnet, H., Aslam, G. and Raha, S. (2015) *Opening the black box: The contextual drivers of social accountability*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Available at: <http://site.ebrary.com/id/11047446> (Accessed: 13 November 2024).
- Greenwood, D.J., Whyte, W.F. and Harkavy, I. (1993) 'Participatory Action Research as a Process and as a Goal', *Human Relations*, 46(2), pp.175–192. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872679304600203>.

- Guarte, J.M. and Barrios, E.B. (2006) 'Estimation under purposive sampling', *Communications in Statistics-Simulation and Computation*, 35(2), pp.277-284.
- Gupta, J. and Vegelin, C. (2016) 'Sustainable development goals and inclusive development', *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics*, 16(3), pp.433–448. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10784-016-9323-z>.
- Han, H. and Ahn, S.W. (2020) 'Youth Mobilization to Stop Global Climate Change: Narratives and Impact', *Sustainability*, 12(10), p.4127. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12104127>.
- Haque, A.K.E., Lohano, H.D., Mukhopadhyay, P., Nepal, M., Shafeeqa, F. and Vidanage, S.P. (2019) 'NDC pledges of South Asia: are the stakeholders onboard?', *Climatic Change*, 155, pp.237-244.
- Hari, V., Rakovec, O., Markonis, Y., Hanel, M. and Kumar, R. (2020) 'Increased future occurrences of the exceptional 2018–2019 Central European drought under global warming', *Scientific Reports*, 10(1). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-68872-9>.
- Harwell, M. R. (2011) 'Research design in qualitative/quantitative/mixed methods', *The Sage handbook for research in education: Pursuing ideas as the keystone of exemplary inquiry*, 2, pp.147-164.
- Hasan, M.B. (2015) 'Civil Society and Democratic Governance in Bangladesh: Opportunities and Challenges', *Bangladesh Political Science Review*, 11, pp.141–163. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Muhammad-Hasan-11/publication/345769519_Civil_Society_and_Democratic_Governance_in_Bangladesh_Opportunities_and_Challenges/links/5fad5072a6fdcc9389ab7143/Civil-Society-and-Democratic-Governance-in-Bangladesh-Opportunities-and-Challenges.pdf (Accessed: 29 October 2024).
- Hassan, A.E. (2015) 'NGOs and Their Implications in Promoting Social Development in Bangladesh: An Overview', *Sociology and Anthropology*, 3(1), pp.24–36. doi: <https://doi.org/10.13189/sa.2015.030104>.
- Henderson, S.L. (2002) 'Selling Civil Society: Western Aid and the Nongovernmental Organization Sector in Russia', *Comparative Political Studies*, 35(2), pp.139–167. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414002035002001>.
- Hickey, S. and Mohan, G. (2004) *Participation, from tyranny to transformation?: Exploring new approaches to participation in development*. London: Zed Books. Available at: https://books.google.nl/books?hl=en&lr=&id=CrDnCCymayYC&oi=fnd&pg=PR10&dq=hickey+and+mohan+participation&ots=Y74Ub8lOvO&sig=dUbaa8FEk2locQSEgG_e4h78RoA&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=hickey%20and%20mohan%20participation&f=false.
- Holmes, A.G.D. (2020) 'Researcher Positionality: A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research: A New Researcher Guide', *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8(4), pp.1-10.
- Hormio, S. (2023) 'Collective responsibility for climate change', *WIREs Climate Change*, 14(4). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.830>.
- Hubbard, A. and Williams, R.M. (2021) 'Who's Missing from Climate Governance? Global South Youth Participation and Mobilisation'. *STG Policy Briefs*, 2021/18. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2870/508676>.
- Huntington, S.P. (1991) *The third wave : democratization in the late twentieth century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Huq, S. and Rabbani, G. (2011) 'Climate Change and Bangladesh: Policy and Institutional Development to reduce vulnerability', *Journal of Bangladesh Studies*, Volume 13, pp 1-10. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251571877_Climate_Change_and_Bangladesh_Policy_and_Institutional_Development_to_reduce_vulnerability (Accessed: 3 October 2024).
- Huq, S., Khan, M., Islam, A.S. and Mirza, A. B. (2024) *Climate change impacts in Bangladesh: What climate change means for a country and its people*. Available at: <https://www.iccad.net/wp->

- Huq, S., Reid, H., Konate, M., Rahman, A., Sokona, Y. and Crick, F. (2004) 'Mainstreaming adaptation to climate change in Least Developed Countries (LDCs)', *Climate Policy*, 4(1), pp.25–43. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2004.9685508>.
- ICCA (2019) *Heidelberg Outcomes*. ICCA2019. Available at: <https://icca2019.collaborative-climate-action.org/icca2019-outcomes/heidelberg-outcomes/> (Accessed: 28 May 2024).
- IGES (2008) *Institutional Changes in Asia in Response to Climate Change*. Available at: https://www.iges.or.jp/en/publication_documents/pub/books/en/796/10_chapter8.pdf (Accessed 17 March 2024).
- ILO (2023). *Banks and insurers can play major role in creating just climate transition – new report says*. [online] International Labour Organization. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/banks-and-insurers-can-play-major-role-creating-just-climate-transition-new> (Accessed 25 Nov. 2024).
- Ingaruca, M. (2022) *Elevating Meaningful Youth Engagement for Climate Action MARCH 2022*. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-05/UNDP-Elevating-Meaningful-Youth-Engagement-for-Climate-Action-2.pdf> (Accessed 19 November 2024).
- IPCC (2023) *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report*. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, pp. 35-115. doi: 10.59327/IPCC/AR6-9789291691647
- IPCC, (2014) 'Summary for Policymakers'. In: *Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Edenhofer, O., R. Pichs-Madruga, Y. Sokona, E. Farahani, S. Kadner, K. Seyboth, A. Adler, I. Baum, S. Brunner, P. Eickemeier, B. Kriemann, J. Savolainen, S. Schlömer, C. von Stechow, T. Zwickel and J.C. Minx (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA.
- Ishtiaque, A., Eakin, H., Vij, S., Chhetri, N., Rahman, F. and Huq, S. (2021) 'Multilevel governance in climate change adaptation in Bangladesh: structure, processes, and power dynamics', *Regional Environmental Change*, 21(3). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-021-01802-1>.
- Islam, M.S., Samreth, S., Islam, A.H.M.S. and Sato, M. (2022) 'Climate change, climatic extremes, and households' food consumption in Bangladesh: A longitudinal data analysis', *Environmental Challenges*, 7, p.100495. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envc.2022.100495>.
- Islam, N. and Winkel, J. (2017). *Climate change and social inequality*. UN DESA. Available at: https://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2017/wp152_2017.pdf (Accessed 10 Sep 2024)
- Jenkins, J. C. (1983) 'Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 9, pp.527–553. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2946077> (Accessed: 20 November 2024).
- Joshi, A. and Houtzager, P.P. (2012) 'Widgets or Watchdogs?', *Public Management Review*, 14(2), pp.145–162. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2012.657837>.
- Keck, M.E. and Sikkink, K. (1998) 'Transnational advocacy networks in the movement society', in D. S. Meyer and S. Tarrow (eds.) *The social movement society: Contentious politics for a new century*. Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield, pp.217-237.
- Khair, S., (2018). 'UNCAC and civil society activism against corruption in Bangladesh'. *Asian Yearbook of International Law, Volume 20 (2014)* (pp. 115-162). Brill Nijhoff.
- Khan, M. and Huq, S. (2023) *A just and green transition in Bangladesh*. Coilink.org. Available at: <https://coilink.org/20.500.12592/jrpz4p> (Accessed: 15 November 2024).
- Kibuacha, F. (2024). *Key Informant Interviews: An In-Depth Guide for Researchers*. GeoPoll. Available at: <https://www.geopoll.com/blog/key-informant-interviews/> (Accessed: 12 November 2024).

- Korkut, U. (2007) 'Participatory Policy-Making, Participatory Civil Society: A Key for Dissolving Elite Rule in New Democracies in the Era of Globalization', *World Futures*, 63(5-6), pp.340–352. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02604020701402723>.
- Kramarz, T. and Park, S. (2016) 'Accountability in Global Environmental Governance: A Meaningful Tool for Action?' *Global Environmental Politics*, 16(2), pp.1–21. doi: https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00349.
- Lewis, D. (2011) *Bangladesh: Politics, economy and civil society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- LightCastle Partners (2022). *Bangladesh Donor Funding Outlook*. Available at: <https://lightcastlepartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Bangladesh-Donor-Funding-Outlook.pdf> (Accessed 23 Nov. 2024).
- Longley, R. (2022). "What is a grassroots movement? Definition and examples", ThoughtCo., 29 July. Available at: <https://www.thoughtco.com/grassroots-movement-definition-and-examples-5085222>. (Accessed on 24 Nov)
- Lopa, F.G.R. and Ahmad, M.M. (2016) 'Participation of CSOs/NGOs in Bangladeshi climate change policy formulation: co-operation or co-optation?', *Development in Practice*, 26(6), pp.781–793. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2016.1200536>.
- MacLean, J. (2020) 'Rethinking the Role of Nonstate Actors in International Climate Governance', *Loyola University Chicago International Law Review*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp.21-43. doi: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3628890.
- Malena, C., Forster, R. and Singh, J., (2004) *Social accountability: An introduction to the concept and emerging practice* (No. 31042, p. 1). The World Bank.
- Mathew, M., Ramesh, S. and Balamurugan, J. (2021) 'Civil society organizations in good governance', *IJARIIIE*, 7(2), p.2021. Available at: https://ijariie.com/AdminUploadPdf/CIVIL_SOCIETY_ORGANIZATIONS_IN_GOOD_GOVERNANCE_ijariie13871.pdf?srsltid=AfmBOoprZsTLetRmxcTAxDF-Y4fcfmL5BSiAQm7UudGg3u_9_h1ji6U3 (Accessed: 16 November 2024).
- Misra, H. and Panigrahi, S.K., (2014) 'E-Governance and Rural–Urban Continuum: Study in Indian Context', *E-Governance and Urban Policy Design In Developing Countries*, p.220. (Accessed: 12 September 2024).
- Mojumder, M.J.H. and Panday, P.K. (2022). 'GO–NGO Teamwork for Strengthening Local Governance: A Review of Extant Literature in the Context of Bangladesh', *South Asian Survey*, 29(1), pp.81–102. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/09715231211069957>.
- Mosley, J.E. (2012) 'Keeping the Lights On: How Government Funding Concerns Drive the Advocacy Agendas of Nonprofit Homeless Service Providers', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 22(4), pp.841–866. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mus003>.
- [Neas, S., Ward, A. and Bowman, B. \(2022\) 'Young people's climate activism: A review of the literature', *Frontiers in Political Science*, 4. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2022.940876>.](#)
- Newell, P. (2008) 'The political economy of global environmental governance', *Review of International Studies*, 34(3), pp.507–529. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0260210508008140>.
- Nipa, M.N. and Hasan, M. (2023) 'The role of civil society in promoting good governance: a qualitative inquiry into Bangladesh's experience', *Deleted Journal*, 3(2), pp.91–97. doi: <https://doi.org/10.26480/seps.02.2023.91.97>.
- O'Brien, K., Selboe, E. and Hayward, B.M. (2018) 'Exploring Youth Activism on Climate change: Dutiful, Disruptive, and Dangerous Dissent', *Ecology and Society*, 23(3). doi: <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-10287-230342>.
- OECD (2016) 'A focus on citizen participation in Costa Rica: From information and consultation to active involvement', *OECD public governance reviews*, pp.171–220. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264265424-9-en>.

- Oxfam International (2015) *Extreme Carbon Inequality: Why the Paris climate deal must put the poorest, lowest emitting and most vulnerable people first*. Oxfam International, p.14. Available at: <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/582545/mb-extreme-carbon-inequality-021215-en.pdf?sequence=9>. (Accessed: 11 November 2024).
- Patton, M.Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Pellegrini-Masini, G., Corvino, F. and Pirni, A. (2019) *Climate justice in practice: adapting democratic institutions for environmental citizenship*. Edward Elgar Publishing eBooks. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788118170.00014>.
- Pelling, M. (2010) *Adaptation to Climate Change*. Routledge. Available at: <https://talos.unicauca.edu.co/gea/sites/default/files/Adaptation%20to%20Climate%20Change%20From%20Resilience%20to%20Transformation.pdf> (Accessed: 20 September 2024).
- Peterson, L., van Asselt, H., Hermwille, L. and Oberthür, S. (2023) 'What determines climate ambition? Analysing NDC enhancement with a mixed-method design', *NPJ Climate Action*, 2(1), pp.1–7. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44168-023-00051-8>.
- Porter, G. (2003) 'NGOs and poverty reduction in a globalizing world: perspectives from Ghana', *Progress in Development Studies*, 3(2), pp.131–145. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1191/1464993403ps057ra>.
- Pruett, D. and Hill, C. (2024) 'Climate Plans for the People: Civil society and community participation in national action plans on climate change', *oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.21201/2024.000019>.
- Quddusi, K.S.K.A. (2014) 'Bangladesh in the fifth decade: A balance sheet', *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues*, 18(4), pp. 152–167.
- Rahman, A. (2022). "Bangladesh, a country of over 45 million youths", *Prothomalo*, 29 July. Available at: <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/o9i009reql>.
- Rahman, M. (2020) 'Role of Civil Society in Democratic Consolidation Process in Bangladesh', in Momen, M.N., Baikady, R., Sheng Li, C., Basavaraj, M. (eds.) *Building Sustainable Communities*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-2393-9_6
- Rajamani, L. (2016) 'Ambition and differentiation in the 2015 Paris agreement: Interpretative possibilities and underlying politics', *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 65(2), pp.493–514. doi: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24762361>
- Roulston, K. (2010) *Reflective interviewing: A guide to theory and practice*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Roy, S. and Ayalon, L. (2022) 'Intergenerational Relations in the Climate Movement: Bridging the Gap toward a Common Goal', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(1), p.233. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20010233>.
- Rutledge, P.B. and Hogg, J.L.C. (2020) 'In-Depth Interviews', in *The International Encyclopedia of Media Psychology*, pp.1–7. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119011071.iemp0019>.
- Salamon, L.M. (1987) 'Of Market Failure, Voluntary Failure, and Third-Party Government: Toward a Theory of Government-Nonprofit Relations in the Modern Welfare State', *Journal of Voluntary Action Research*, 16(1-2), pp.29–49. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/089976408701600104>.
- Scholte, J.A. (2004) 'Civil Society and Democratically Accountable Global Governance', *Government and Opposition*, 39(2), pp.211–233. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00121.x>.
- Scholte, J.A. (2011) 'Towards greater legitimacy in global governance', *Review of International Political Economy*, 18(1), pp.110–120. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2011.545215>.
- Sen, A. (1999) *Development as Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Sharma, R. (2023) 'Civil society organizations' institutional climate capacity for community-based conservation projects: Characteristics, factors, and issues', *Current Research in Environmental Sustainability*, 5, pp.100218–100218. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crsust.2023.100218>.
- Shephard, D. D. (2017). *How Young People Influence Policy: A Literature Review*. Oxfam.
- Shuvra, F.R. (2022) *Evolution of BRAC*. [online] www.brac.net. Available at: <https://www.brac.net/events/evolution/> (Available at: 23 October 2024).
- Sultana, F. (2007) 'Reflexivity, positionality and participatory ethics: Negotiating fieldwork dilemmas in international research,' *ACME: An international journal for critical geographies*, 6(3), pp.374–385.
- Taft, J.K. and Gordon, H.R. (2013) 'Youth activists, youth councils, and constrained democracy', *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 8(1), pp.87–100. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197913475765>.
- Thapor-Björkert, S. and Henry, M. (2004) 'Reassessing the research relationship: Location, position and power in fieldwork accounts', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 7(5), pp.363–381. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1364557092000045294>.
- Tollefson, J. (2018) 'IPCC says limiting global warming to 1.5 °C will require drastic action', *Nature*, 562(7726), pp.172–173. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-018-06876-2>.
- Tornquist, O., Stokke, K. and Webster, N. (2009) *Rethinking popular representation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- UNDP (2002) *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*. Available at: <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-2002> (Accessed: 19 October 2024)
- UNDP (2022) *UNDP's Climate Promise Explainer*. [online] UNDP Climate Promise. Available at: <https://climatepromise.undp.org/research-and-reports/undps-climate-promise-explainer> (Accessed: 18 October 2024).
- UNEP (2022). *Annual Report 2021*. [online] UNEP - UN Environment Programme. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/resources/annual-report-2021> (Accessed: 28 October 2024).
- UNFCCC (2019). *Conference of the Parties (COP)*. unfccc.int. Available at: <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/supreme-bodies/conference-of-the-parties-cop>. (Accessed: 12 August 2024).
- UNFCCC (2021). History of non-party stakeholder engagement. Available at: <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/introduction-climate-action/> (Accessed 10 Sep 2024)
- UNFCCC (2022) *Nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement. Synthesis report by the secretariat*. [online] Available at: <https://unfccc.int/documents/306848> (Accessed: 20 October 2024).
- UNFCCC (2023) *Technical dialogue of the first global stocktake: Synthesis report by the cofacilitators on the technical dialogue*. Available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sb2023_09_adv.pdf (Accessed 14 Oct 2024).
- United Nations (1948) *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. [online] United Nations. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>. (Accessed: 20 October 2024).
- United Nations (2015) *The Paris Agreement*. [online] United Nations Climate Change. Available at: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>. (Accessed: 20 October 2024).
- United Nations (2015b). *Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015*. Available at: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf. (Accessed: 12 October 2024).
- United Nations (2018) *Youth and the 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development World Youth Report*. [online] Available at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/WorldYouthReport-2030Agenda.pdf>. (Accessed: 21 October 2024).
- United Nations (2023) *Climate Change*. [online] United Nations. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/climate-change>. (Accessed: 16 September 2024).

- Van Boven, L. and Sherman, D.K. (2021). 'Elite influence on public attitudes about climate policy', *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 42, pp.83–88. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2021.03.023>.
- Van Wessel, M., Hilhorst, D., Schulpen, L. and Biekart, K. (2020) 'Government and civil society organizations: Close but comfortable? Lessons from creating the Dutch 'Strategic Partnerships for Lobby and Advocacy'', *Development Policy Review*, 38(6), pp.728–746. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.12453>.
- White, S.C. (1999) 'NGOs, Civil Society, and the State in Bangladesh: The Politics of Representing the Poor', *Development and Change*, 30(2), pp.307–326. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00119>.
- Woodley, K. and Gilsenan, C. (2020) 'Breaking down barriers to co-production between research teams and civil society organisations', in Berg, M. L., and Nowicka, M. (eds.) *Studying Diversity, Migration and Urban Multiculture: Convivial Tools for Research and Practice*. UCL Press, pp.186-191.
- World Bank (2006) *World Development Report 2006*. [online] The World Bank. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-6249-5>. (Accessed: 29 October 2024).
- World Bank (2013) *A Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Approach to Climate Finance*. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/03/13/a-public-private-partnership-approach-to-climate-finance> (Accessed: 10 October 2024)
- World Bank (2020). *World Bank Reference Guide to Climate Change Framework Legislation*. Available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/267111608646003221/pdf/World-Bank-Reference-Guide-to-Climate-Change-Framework-Legislation.pdf> (Accessed: 10 October 2024).
- World Bank (2022a). *Urgent Climate Action Crucial for Bangladesh to Sustain Strong Growth*. [online] World Bank. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/10/31/urgent-climate-action-crucial-for-bangladesh-to-sustain-strong-growth#:~:text=Climate%20change%20will%20hit%20poor>. (Accessed: 5 November 2024).
- World Bank (2022b). *Civil Society*. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/partners/civil-society/overview>. (Accessed: 7 November 2024).
- WRI (2017) 'Enhancing NDCs by 2020: Achieving the Goals of the Paris Agreement.', *www.wri.org*. [online] Available at: <https://www.wri.org/research/enhancing-ndcs-2020-achieving-goals-paris-agreement> (Accessed: 18 June 2024).
- WRI (2023) *NDC Partnership*. World Resources Institute. Available at: <https://www.wri.org/initiatives/ndc-partnership> (Accessed 12 May 2024).
- Zaman, M.A. (2022) "Private sector engagement for unlocking climate finance", *The Daily Star*. The Daily Star,

Bibliography generator:

MyBib (2018). *MyBib bibliography generator*. [online] MyBib.com. Available at: <https://www.mybib.com>.

Appendix- A

Questionnaire guidelines

a) Government Officials

Theme	Subtopic	Probe Questions
Demographic information	Name, occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of organization affiliated with/ Role • Department • Years of experience in climate governance/ policy making
Access	Knowledge on NDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you aware of your country's NDCs? • Have you read and reviewed your country's NDCs? • How would you describe your role in the NDC formulation process • What were the key challenges faced during the NDC development?
Civil society inclusion in NDC development	How has it been after the 1st NDC (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were civil society organizations actively involved in the development of your country's NDCs? • How were they included? What mechanisms were in place to facilitate their participation? / (If so)

		<p>Why do you feel they were absent in the decision-making?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you access the level of inclusion of civil society organisations in the NDC development process? Tokenistic or extensive? • Were civil society inputs and recommendations adequately considered and integrated into the NDCs? • How will gender justice and equability be strengthened in the revision process of NDC?
Quality of Civil Society Inclusion	Process and how many CSOs were consulted? What were the outcomes? Was it sufficient?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do current policies and institutional frameworks support or hinder inclusive participation during NDC formation? • Do you think there are specific policies that do not prioritise inclusion and need to be reformed? • To what extent were civil society organizations provided with

		<p>opportunities for meaningful participation and engagement in shaping the NDCs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were civil society organizations able to voice their concerns regarding environmental and social justice issues in the NDCs? • If yes, what were the challenges?
Recommendations for improvement	Possible solutions to aid this gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What measures can be taken to enhance civil society and community organizations' inclusion in the development and implementation of NDCs? • How can the government better support CSOs and youth involvement in the upcoming NDC?

b) NGO/ Development practitioners

Theme	Subtopic	Probe Questions
	Name, occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupation

Demographic information		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of organization affiliated with (NGO/INGO/Gov.) • Years of experience, field of expertise
Access/ knowledge of NDCs	Level of knowledge on NDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you aware of your country's NDCs? • Have you read and reviewed your country's NDCs? • How easily accessible are the NDCs to civil society organizations and the general public?
Civil society inclusion in NDC development	How has it been after the 1st NDC (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were civil society organizations actively involved in the development of your country's NDCs? Was your organization asked for inputs/ consultations? • How would you rate the level of inclusion of civil society organizations in the NDC development process? • Were civil society inputs and recommendations adequately considered and integrated into the NDCs?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will gender justice and equability be strengthened in the revision process of NDC?
Quality of Civil Society Inclusion	Process and how many CSOs were consulted? What were the outcomes? Was it sufficient?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe the transparency of the NDC development process? • To what extent were civil society organizations provided with opportunities for meaningful participation and engagement in shaping the NDCs? • Were civil society organizations able to voice their concerns regarding environmental and social justice issues in the NDCs? • If yes, what were the challenges?
Role of Donors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you aware of any donor programs to support civil society involvement in NDC development? • If so, did you participate?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why/why not? if yes, what was your experience?
Recommendations for improvement	Possible solutions to aid this gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What measures can be taken to enhance civil society and community organizations' inclusion in the development and implementation of NDCs? • How can the transparency and accountability of the NDC process be improved to ensure effective civil society participation? • Are there any best practices or successful examples of civil society inclusion in NDCs from other countries that can be used as an example for other countries?

c) Academicians in Climate Governance

Theme	Subtopic	Probe Questions
Demographic information	Name, occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupation • Type of organization affiliated with (University/ Research/ NGO/INGO/Gov.) • Years of experience as pracademician

Access/ knowledge of NDCs	Level of knowledge on NDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you aware of your country's NDCs? • Have you read and reviewed your country's NDCs? • How have you been involved in the NDC formulation process? • How easily accessible do you think NDCs are to civil society organizations and the general public?
Civil society inclusion in NDC development	How has it been after the 1st NDC (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were civil society organizations actively involved in the development of your country's NDCs? • Were civil society inputs and recommendations adequately considered and integrated into the NDCs? • How will equability be strengthened in the revision process of NDC?
Quality of Civil Society Inclusion	Process and how many CSOs were consulted? What were the outcomes? Was it sufficient?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you quantify the transparency of the NDC development process?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent were civil society organizations provided with opportunities for meaningful participation and engagement in shaping the NDCs? • Were civil society organizations able to voice their concerns regarding environmental and social justice issues in the NDCs? • If yes, what were the challenges? / What barriers do you think exist for CSOs and youth in participating in climate policy making?
Role of Donors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you aware of any donor programs to support civil society involvement in NDC development? • If so, did you participate? • Why/why not? if yes, what was your experience?
Recommendations for improvement	Possible solutions to aid this gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What measures can be taken to enhance civil society and community organizations' inclusion in the

		<p>development and implementation of NDCs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can the transparency and accountability of the NDC process be improved to ensure effective civil society participation? • Any recommendations for bridging the gap between academia, policy-making and CSOs?
--	--	--

d) Youth climate activists

Theme	Subtopic	Probe Questions
Demographic information	Name, occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupation • Type of organization affiliated with (Youth/ NGO/INGO/Gov.) • Years of experience
Access/ knowledge of NDCs	Knowledge on NDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you aware of your country's NDCs? Years of experience? • Have you read and reviewed your country's NDCs? • How easily accessible are the NDCs to civil society organizations and the general public? • What specific actions or campaigns have your group undertaken to influence climate policy?

Civil society inclusion in NDC development	How has it been after the 1st NDC (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were civil society organizations (Youth activist groups) actively involved in the development of your country's NDCs? • How would you describe the level of inclusion of youth activist groups in the NDC development process? • Were their (your youth group's) inputs and recommendations adequately considered and integrated into the NDCs? • If so, how?
Quality of Civil Society Inclusion	Process and how many CSOs were consulted? What were the outcomes? Was it sufficient?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What challenges have you faced in trying to engage with government officials or influence NDCs? • To what extent were civil society organizations provided with opportunities for meaningful participation and engagement in shaping the NDCs? • Do you think civil society organizations can voice their concerns regarding environmental and social justice issues in the NDCs? • If yes, what were the challenges?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How responsive have policymakers been? • Do you feel youth perspectives are adequately represented in the NDC process? Why/Why not?
Role of Donors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you aware of any donor programs to support civil society; particularly youth involvement in NDC development? • If so, did you participate? • Why/why not? if yes, what was your experience?
Recommendations for improvement	Possible solutions to aid this gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What measures can be taken to improve youth engagement and representation? • How can the transparency and accountability of the NDC process be improved to ensure effective participation in civil society? • How can young people be better supported in making the process inclusive?

e) Donor organizations

Theme	Subtopic	Probe Questions
Demographic information	Name, occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of organization affiliated with/ Role • Department

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years of experience in funding NDC related projects
Access	Knowledge on NDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you read and reviewed your country's NDCs? • How would you describe your role in the NDC formulation process/involvement in the NDC process • What are the prime considerations for funding an NDC or Climate action-related project? • What were the key challenges faced during the NDC development? • What role do you see for donor agencies in promoting inclusive NDC development?
Civil society inclusion in NDC development	How has it been after the 1st NDC (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were civil society organizations actively involved in the development of your country's NDCs? • How were they included? What mechanisms were in place to facilitate their participation? • How do you evaluate the inclusiveness of the projects you fund?

		<p>especially regarding the involvement of CSOs, youth representatives and marginalized groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tokenistic or extensive? • (If so) Why do you feel they were present/absent in the decision-making? Are there any specific criteria you use to assess inclusivity? • Were civil society inputs and recommendations adequately considered and integrated into the NDCs? Do you think donor agencies are playing a role in expanding CSO contributions? • How will gender justice and equability be strengthened in the revision process of NDC?
Quality of Civil Society Inclusion	Process and how many CSOs were consulted? What were the outcomes? Was it sufficient?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do current policies and institutional frameworks support or hinder inclusive participation during NDC formation? • Do you think there are specific policies that

		<p>do not prioritise inclusion and need to be reformed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent were civil society organizations provided with opportunities for meaningful participation and engagement in shaping the NDCs? • Were civil society organizations able to voice their concerns regarding environmental and social justice issues in the NDCs? • If yes, what were the challenges?
Recommendations for improvement	Possible solutions to aid this gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What improvements would you suggest for ensuring that funded projects promote inclusive participation? • How can the donor agencies better support CSOs and youth involvement in the upcoming NDC?