

Abstract

Climate change effects are the worst in Bangladesh stalling her economic growth and putting substantial barriers on her way to become a middle income country by 2021. Policies focusing mainly on adaptation as means of tackling challenges of climate change have been adopted. As flow of foreign assistance is nominal in this sector, Bangladesh, despite budget deficit, has allocated a block grant of \$300 million from its own treasury for implementing climate change projects. Adaptation to climate change and enhancing resilience of the people at the grass-root level are targeted through such projects. Therefore, the effectiveness of such expenditure as a whole and involvement of stakeholders in ensuring such effectiveness in particular are required to be justified. The study reviews the general fund allocation practice and procedure of BCCTF as well as it identifies the factors that determine effective utilization of climate change adaptation programs. It also examines the role, nature and extent of stakeholder engagement in the use and management of the fund in the implementation of climate change adaptation projects and points at the associated problems and prospects of effective utilization of the fund. In literature on public spending effectiveness in climate change adaptation and stakeholder participation, critics have opined that stakeholder participation produces normative benefits like inclusion of the marginalized, public trust, empowerment, fair decisions, transparency, etc. and pragmatic benefits like ownership creation, conflict resolution, sustainability, etc. Provided that proper participation is ensured, barriers like knowledge gap, political biasness, group conflict, etc. can be overcome. In climate change adaptation programs, stakeholder participation is suggested as an unalienable component as such programs directly influence the concerned people's very life and existence. Critics like Reed suggest psychological underpinning of stakeholder participation, early (continued to the end) engagement, clear knowledge of the objectives, adoption of appropriate methods, high degree of facilitation, local and scientific knowledge integration and institutionalization of participation as best practices. Again, better outcomes and value for money are proposed as determinants of effective spending. Besides, effective delivery of climate change finance is said to involve principles of legitimacy, coherence, transparency, ease of implementation, coordination, innovation and local anchorage. Studies conducted in climate change projects have found that low level of awareness, bypassing of the local people, top-down policies, lack of synergy among stakeholders, low level of information flow, political influence, etc. contribute to make climate change adaptation projects ineffective. Keeping in view the objectives and findings from the literature review, the analytical framework of nine independent variables (determinants of stakeholder participation) and seven outcomes has been drawn. The dependent variable is effectiveness of public spending in adaptation projects by BCCTF. The sample size is sixty of three projects executed by WDB, DOF and SSUS - an NGO in three upazilas of Cox's Bazar, Tangail and Noakhali districts. The study finds that a set guideline supported by acts, rules and policies promulgated in recent years is in place for the allocation and disbursement of climate change trust fund. A Trustee Board, Technical

Committee and Sub-committees and BCCT manage and govern the overall fund allocation. Projects are segmented according to six thematic areas as spelled in BCCSAP'2009. Out of 270 projects, 23% is being implemented by NGOs. Of the projects implemented by GoB departments, it is WDB that implements maximum number. Allocation volume has been experiencing a gradual decline recently. Implementing ministries, BCCTF, IMED, CA &AG mainly perform their respective part of the monitoring, evaluation and auditing of the projects. The study also finds that informal media rather than formal medium like stakeholder meetings are more effective regarding project related information dissemination in projects implemented by government departments. An early engagement of the stakeholders acts as a lifter of generally prevailed suspicion among the community people about the successful completion of the project. It is also found that people consider that stakeholder participation is important more for the sound implementation of the projects rather than ownership creation. Again, such meetings might have nothing to do with projects with many technicalities. Then, stakeholders are inclined to get instant benefits like training, assistance in cash and kind, etc. as they also like to see that the project is successfully completed. Opinion inclusion functions as important tool for earning trust and satisfaction of local people though in technical projects satisfaction is less dependent on it. Rather, the lifesaving tangible outcomes of climate change projects on their own create satisfaction among the stakeholder. In addition, lack of transparency prevails in the projects as authorities generally do not inform the participants about the project cost in many stakeholder meetings. In most cases, local elites exert considerable influence over project implementation. Such influence might have both positive and negative results. Furthermore, problems like insufficient funding, decline of allocation volume, absence of feasibility study in many projects, late completion, political biasness, lack of sufficient project personnel especially in projects by government departments, weak culture of information flow and loopholes of monitoring deter proper implementation of climate change adaptation projects. In this backdrop, feasibility study in all such projects should be made compulsory. Then, projects should be less supply driven than as present they are. A holistic approach to all climate change projects should be adopted. In addition, availability of all kinds of information in every possible format should be in place. The practice of curtailing funds or insufficient funding should be avoided. For strengthening sound use of project allocation, third party monitoring and evaluation can be introduced. Besides, allocation in climate change adaptation projects should be included in the regular budgetary framework. Finally, as stakeholder participation exerts substantial influence over creation of people's ownership, their satisfaction, proper implementation of projects, transparency in fund utilization and thus over sustainability of projects, participation should be institutionalized.
