

Children and young peoples' engagement in climate change adaptation policy in Bangladesh: An understanding from current activities in the reformation process of interim government

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Context

A lack of coordination among the stakeholders and weak policy interaction and interlinkages in adaptation processes (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Mickwitz et al., 2009).

Children and young people are particularly vulnerable stakeholders to disasters (Martin, 2010) but their voices are less heard in policy making.

UNCRC shows that youth have the rights to participate, and policy makers and through activism youth have shown their concerns about saving this planet (Doshi et al.).

Objective

This paper reports on the author's study of ways to include children and young people in climate change adaptation policy in Bangladesh, to inform the new Bangladesh reform government.

Methodology

The research methods reported include a literature review and interviews with Bangladeshi government officials, experts and youth about approaches to urban planning and implications for climate change adaptation in Bangladesh conducted between 2018-2021.

Bangladesh- facing the environmental challenges now

Natural

Sea level rise, cyclone, heatwave, precipitation and flooding

Man-made

Unplanned city management, pollution, carbon emission

Lack of integration among organizations



Policies related to Climate Change Adaptation in Bangladesh

- Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP), 2009
- National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), 2005 (updated in 2009)
- Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100
- Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
- Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCPP), 2021

Findings

“Our policy making, processing and implementation are in the hands of government officials (top level), the Secretariat prepares drafts of documents, and the Minister only approves that. Then where is the involvement of young people here? In fact, if you consider government as a policy maker. There is no engagement of young people in the biggest policy environment. Then what? Young people are ignored totally.” (Urban Planning expert)

“There is no option or space for young people in the rules (planning policies/act). (Real Estate Developer)”

“No one has the power to change the system of a country. Everything is getting worse in our country. So, we should broaden our outlook (for future change).” (N, Male, Ward 33, Int-11)

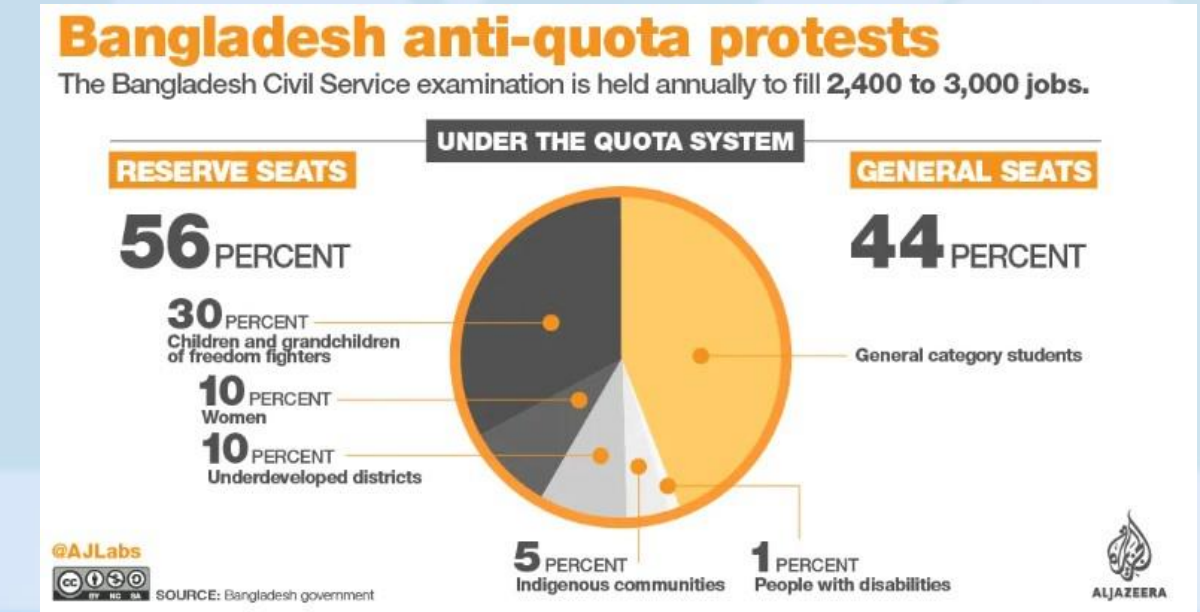
I think the Prime minister can do anything in Bangladesh. (R, Male, Ward 33, Int-12)

Reform – “Change the system”

In May 2018

- Quota reform in government recruitment (i.e. BCS)

[Bangladesh students demand abolition of job quota system | News | Al Jazeera](#)



In July 2018

- Transport safety

[Bangladesh protests: How a traffic accident stopped a city of 18 million](#)



Youth Engagement in Changing the System- Reformation- Bangladesh 2.0

July Uprising (The Daily Star), in July 2024



Youth Engagement in Changing the System (cont.)

Street and wall paint, graffiti.

Electronic media:

BBC, Al-Jazeera, Channel 24, BDNews 24

Facebook, YouTube, Instagram

Print media:

The Daily Star, The Daily Prothom-Alo, The Business Standard



Current Reformation Process

In August 2024

- Country reform in all sectors by the interim government
- Three young people were engaged in the interim government for the reformation process.
- Main focus is corruption free and effective institutional system.

The interim government can recommend a new system but will need an elected government to implement that.

Youth Voices in Climate Change Adaptation Policy Priorities

Nature Based Solutions (NbS)

Heatwave – greenspace



Precipitation, flooding – drainage

Low- carbon – walking, cycling and rickshaw

Pollution – waste management



PLAY model

The PLAY model encourages a democratic 'bottom-up' approach (Isidiho & Sabran, 2016) where youth participation helps government organizations by prioritising emergent problems duties and identifying responsibilities in a high-density city.

Young people who are identified as a citizens-in-training by Frank (2006), have a chance to observe the problem and try to find an immediate solution rather waiting for the delay of the particular city authority to lead the process.

Youth are not only citizens in the making, they are citizens in the city now, with rights and demands and opportunities to participate (Hayward, 2020).

PLAY model (cont.)

Capacity for **'leadership'**, learning and leading the community from the front by vigorous engagement in policy making processes (Checkoway et al., 2005) and learning to listen to a variety of others' views and concerns.

- **Learning by doing** (sharing ideas- local community-social movement- combination with government)
- **The capacity development** (supported by senior peers, teachers, local knowledgeable decision makers)

The capacity for youth leadership can be supported by senior peers or by teachers and local decision makers but the next step of the model **'activism'** which is led by the empowerment of young people in the city about their issues and concerns.

Gaining knowledge and experiences to tackle future urban problem (Horelli, 1997).

PLAY model (cont.)

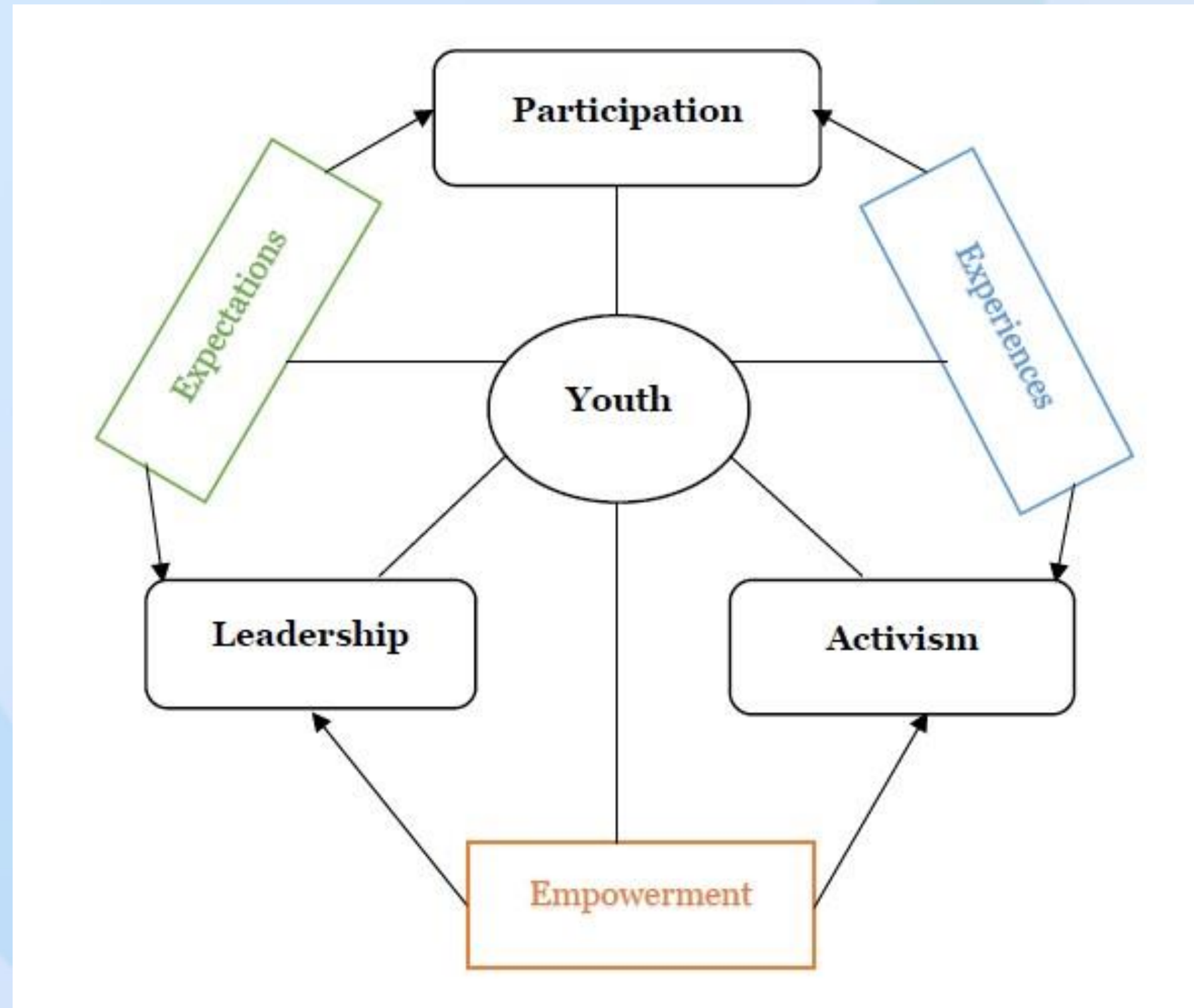
Activism- empowerment of young people

Formal- Institutional, youth-led community

Informal- form groups and support each other
(example: Transport Safety Protest, 2018)

Reflection- change the city planning system, future engagement in planning activities

PLAY model (cont.)



Future implications/recommendations

- **Youth and Community Engagement Framework**
- Decision-making: Using youth energy and trained skills
- Caring for nature: “We” feeling
- BRAC, Save the Children
- UNESCO- climate change curriculum
- **Climate data systems** and local knowledge integration
- **Bangladesh NDC 3.0**

Thank you so much for your patience.

Q & A

Any feedback, please reach me by:
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