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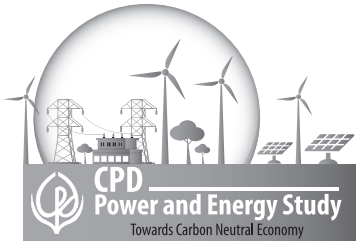

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Abstract

As Bangladesh approaches its 2024 national election, the power and energy sector takes a prominent position in political manifestos. This research, undertaken by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), aims to explore the expectations and pledges of Civil Society Organisation (CSO) members regarding power and energy sector-related policies. The study employs a comprehensive methodology, blending news article analysis and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Amid changes in local and global power and energy dynamics, the upcoming government needs plans to fulfil Bangladesh's commitments for renewable and green energy, with the goal of reaching 40 per cent by 2041.

This makes it crucial for this year's electoral promises on power and energy to be backed by evidence and be technically sound. Civil society's views are vital in shaping effective policies, ensuring alignment with the government and meeting citizens' real needs. The power and energy sector greatly impacts daily life, and civil society's involvement sheds light on challenges, preferences, and expectations. Integrating their insights fosters a holistic approach to policymaking, creating a sense of ownership among the public. Civil society's diverse perspectives can contribute to practical, community-centric energy solutions in Bangladesh.

The study highlights critical concerns in the power and energy sector, such as fossil fuel dependence, environmental impacts, and financial challenges. It emphasises a shift towards sustainable practices, with renewable energy, particularly solar power, gaining prominence. The importance of robust policies, transparency, and regulatory frameworks has been underscored in this study. CSO pledges present a roadmap for sustainable energy, focusing on capacity charge phase-outs, reduced import dependency, and strategic policy reforms. The news article analysis, spanning the past year, delves into 50 articles to capture a diverse range of opinions and discussions on power and energy policies.

The KIIs involve seven experts, activists, and thought leaders in the field, ensuring a balanced representation of perspectives. Thematic analysis is employed for qualitative insights, and findings from both methods are cross-referenced for validation. KIIs reveal CSOs' core concerns, emphasising sustainable development and reduced reliance on fossil fuels.

CSOs advocate for policy shifts, legislative reforms, and a move towards renewable energy, emphasising transparency and efficiency in power generation. The promotion of renewable solutions in rural development, infrastructure, and attracting foreign investment has also been a consistent point of discussion.

In conclusion, this study offers a comprehensive insight into CSOs' expectations and recommendations for Bangladesh's power and energy sector. The collective vision underscores the urgency of sustainable and equitable development, advocating for transformative changes, including moving away from fossil fuel dependency through robust policy reforms and a steadfast commitment to renewable energy.

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Acronyms

BAU	Business as Usual
BERC	Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission
BGEF	Bright Green Energy Foundation
BPDB	Bangladesh Power Development Board
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EU	European Union
EV	Electric Vehicle
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FIT	Feed-in Tariff
GHG	Green House Gas
IEPMP	Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan
KII	Key Informant Interview
LDC	Least Developed Country
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MCPP	Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan
MoPEMR	Ministry of Power Energy and Mineral Resources
$MtCO_2e$	Metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent
MW	Megawatt
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PSMP 2016	Power System Master Plan 2016
PV	Photovoltaic

RSF	Resilience and Sustainability Facility
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SREDA	Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority
UGC	University Grants Commission
USA	United States of America

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

As the national election of 2024 looms, political parties in Bangladesh, including the ruling party, are expected to begin formulating their electoral pledges. This year, the power and energy sector is anticipated to take the centre stage in these manifestos for two significant reasons. Firstly, the incoming government will face the daunting task of managing the power and energy sector amidst an ongoing economic crisis while simultaneously meeting the country's total power demand.

Secondly, in light of evolving local and global power and energy dynamics, the future government will be required to devise and execute plans to fulfil Bangladesh's national and international commitments towards renewable and green energy. This includes the ambitious target of achieving 40 per cent renewable energy by 2041. Given these circumstances, it is imperative that this year's electoral manifestos targeting the power and energy sector are evidence-backed, well-informed about all policy options, and technically sound. The insights and opinions of civil society play a pivotal role in shaping comprehensive and effective power and energy policies in Bangladesh. The involvement of diverse voices from civil society ensures that policies and strategies reflect the government's perspective and resonate with the real needs and concerns of the citizens.

The power and energy sector significantly impacts the everyday lives of people, and their participation in policy discussions can shed light on ground-level challenges, preferences, and

expectations. Incorporating civil society insights offers a more inclusive, holistic approach to policy formulation, fostering a sense of ownership and legitimacy among the public for the resulting policies. Their participation brings diverse perspectives to the table and contributes to the creation of pragmatic and community-centric energy solutions in Bangladesh.

1.2. Objective

In the aforementioned context, the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) has undertaken a study titled 'Citizen's Manifesto on the Energy Transition'. The objective of the study is to take into account the expectations and pledges of Civil Society Organisation (CSO) members regarding power and energy sector-related policies, with a focus on the broader energy transition in Bangladesh.

This study aims to provide insights into the expectations of CSO members and subject matter experts in Bangladesh's power and energy sector regarding the election manifestos of the country's political parties, specifically focusing on power and energy sector policies. It seeks to contribute to a more informed and constructive dialogue on these critical issues as Bangladesh prepares for its upcoming national election.

2. Methodology

Data analyses of this study are based on information published in the newspaper and data drawn from selected Key Informant Interviews (KIIs).

2.1. News Article Analysis

Scope: A systematic examination of 50 news articles was conducted to capture a wide spectrum of opinions and discussions related to the power and energy sector.

Time Frame: The analysis covered a period of one year, ensuring a current and relevant representation of CSO members' sentiments leading up to the upcoming elections.

Data Categories: Articles, opinion pieces, and editorials about power and energy policies were scrutinised. Special attention was given to diverse viewpoints, critiques, and recommendations put forth by CSOs.

2.2 Key Informant Interviews

Selection Criteria: Seven key informants, comprising experts, activists, and thought leaders in the power and energy sector, were purposively selected based on their profound knowledge and experience in the field.

Interview Structure: A primary questionnaire-based semi-structured interview were conducted, allowing for a flexible yet focused exploration of the informants' expectations from power and energy sector. The interviews also sought recommendations for policy improvements.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: Informants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses to encourage open and candid discussions. Their identities remained undisclosed in the final report. Table 1 presents a summary of the news article analysis process used in the study.

Table 1 Summary of News Article Analysis and KII

News Article Analysis	KIIs
Analysis of 50 news articles	Seven KIIs were conducted
Time frame: Last one year	Questionnaire-based semi-structured interview
Focus: CSO opinions, study, comments, critiques and editorials	Confidentiality regarding CSO information has been strictly maintained

Source: KIIs conducted during this study.

2.3. Data Analysis

Qualitative Analysis: Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and nuances within the collected data. This facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the spectrum of opinions and expectations.

Triangulation: Findings from newspaper analysis and KIIs were cross-referenced to ensure a triangulated and validated representation of CSO perspectives.

3. Influence of CSOs on Government and Political Parties for Policymaking: Exploring Effective Tools and Strategies

The CSOs hold a significant sway in the policy landscape of developing nations, with research studies underscoring their substantial influence. A supportive legal framework and active participation bolster their role (Scherer and De Ville, 2022). Abdulai and Quantson (2009)

spotlight the burgeoning influence of CSOs on public policies in Ghana, while Flores (2019) underscores the importance of grassroots organisations in Malawi's policymaking process, emphasising citizen inclusion. Bowen's (2013) study delves into the developmental contributions of CSOs in Caribbean countries, spanning social services, community development, and sustainability. Ridell (2014) further examines the broad impact of CSOs and suggests opportunities for enhancing their influence through strategic approaches.

For this study, the modes of policy influencing by the CSOs in the power and energy sector of Bangladesh have been divided into four broad categories.

3.1. Civic Engagement and the Evaluative Lens of CSOs on Energy Policy Dynamics

CSOs play a pivotal role in monitoring and evaluating existing policies and their implementation. By scrutinising policy processes and their outcomes, CSOs provide valuable feedback to political parties and government bodies. These evaluations often highlight areas for improvement or policy changes, thus shaping the reform agenda and influencing future policies (Pollard and Court, 2005). Civic engagement ensures that the diverse and evolving needs and expectations of communities are addressed. It serves as a bridge, connecting policymakers with the public, allowing for open dialogue and transparent decision-making processes.

The CSOs and Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Bangladesh have a long history of engaging in policy advocacy and policy formulation. Climate change, environmental sustainability and the energy sector have been focal points of their policy advocacy related activities. The participation of CSOs/NGOs in Bangladeshi climate change policy formulation is a complex issue, characterised by a mix of cooperation and co-optation (Lopa, 2016). While there is a high level of political commitment to addressing climate change, the public's awareness of these efforts is limited (Bahauddin, 2016). At the national and sectoral levels, climate change mainstreaming is strong, but there is room for improvement at the sub-national level, particularly in Dhaka (Fatemi, 2020). The NGOs play a crucial role in promoting social development in Bangladesh, particularly in poverty alleviation, gender issues, education, health, and environmental sustainability (Hassan, 2015).

By involving communities and individuals in these policy discussions, the resulting decisions and frameworks better represent the diverse needs and concerns of the society they intend to serve. This engagement empowers individuals and communities, creating a sense of ownership and responsibility, ultimately leading to more sustainable and widely accepted policy solutions.

3.2. Public Engagement and Awareness Building by CSOs through Seminars, Campaigns, Newspapers, and Other Public Modes of Engagement

Engaging the public through forums, civic interactions, and awareness campaigns plays a pivotal role in the process of energy policy formulation. Various energy policy areas, such as capacity charge, import dependency, energy infrastructure, rural energy development, energy models, and other related discussions underscore the significance of public engagement and awareness in policy formulation of the power and energy sector.

For example, discussions around capacity charges necessitate raising awareness about energy policy reformation and the gradual phasing out of inefficient power plants (IEEFA, 2023).

Similarly, import dependency topics focus on educating the public about incentives for renewable energy (TBS, 2022). Energy infrastructure debates require active public engagement, particularly in ensuring environmental safety in solar project placements and nationwide adoption of renewable energy technologies.

Rural energy development discussions highlight the importance of public platforms and civic engagements in implementing solar home systems and improved cookstoves in rural areas (TBS, 2023). Shifting from profit-driven models to sustainability-focused ones is an essential aspect of the energy model that demands public engagement. Power plant location and institutional reform discussions centre on public awareness of various topics related to energy mapping, institutional restructuring, and judicial oversight.

3.3. Insights of Power and Energy through Research and Analytical Perspectives

Research and analysis stand as the bedrock for shaping effective energy policies. This crucial segment dives into the intricate depths of energy issues, demanding thorough examination and informed decision-making.

The data-driven evaluation regarding the exploration of the social benefits associated with using clean energy (Uddin et al. 2023), offshore wind potential (Zakir et al. 2023), the status and prospects of renewable energy in Bangladesh (M.N. Uddin et al. 2019) and the oversight of regulatory bodies (ADB, 2020) ensures an informed understanding. This enables policy architects to tailor initiatives in alignment with sustainable and economically viable practices. Not only does this analytical approach help in understanding current challenges, but also in forecasting and planning for future energy needs, ensuring the development of robust, future-ready policies.

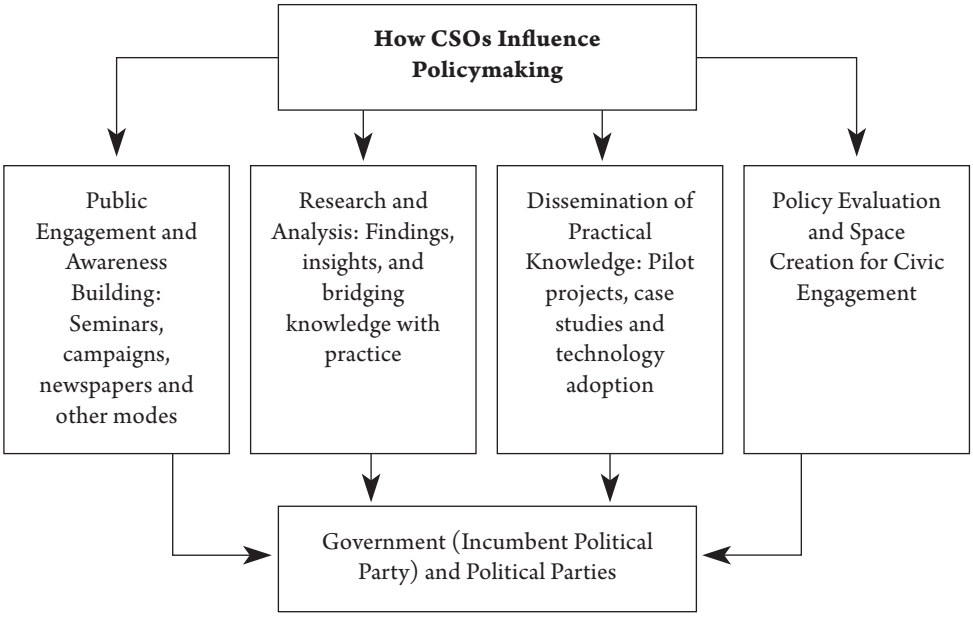
3.4. Pilot Projects, Case Studies, and Use of Technology to Disseminate Practical Knowledge and Recommendations

Implementing pilot projects and conducting comprehensive case studies play a pivotal role in guiding the transformation of energy policies. These initiatives provide tangible, real-world evidence to shape future directions. Pilot projects, such as rooftop solar systems by Friendship, various renewable energy interventions and solar irrigation viability projects by a number of NGOs, offer practical insights that reveal the possibilities and constraints of different strategies.

Furthermore, in-depth case studies focusing on household-level biogas plants and solar home system (such as the projects implemented by Bright Green Energy Foundation (BGEF)) present practical insights that not only influence policy decisions but also demonstrate real-world impacts.

This comprehensive understanding derived from case studies ensures that policy alterations are not just theoretical but are grounded in empirical evidence, thus paving the way for more impactful and realistic strategies. Figure 1 illustrates the process of CSO's influence in policymaking.

Figure 1 **CSOs' Influence in Policymaking**



Source: Author's illustration from section 3.

4. Insights from Newspaper Analysis

The objective of this month-by-month review of the preceding year's power and energy sector related news was to gain perspective on the most frequent topics on which the CSOs have provided their insights. The findings have been divided into three broad clusters:

1) Fuel Concerns
2) Energy Focus
3) Institutions and Policy

Each cluster contains the frequency of different subjects that have been observed by analysing 50 news articles. The illustrations on the findings refer to the frequency (in percentage) of the topics mentioned. A sizeable overlap of opinions on topics has been found in the discussion by the CSOs in these newspapers.

4.1. Insights on Fuel Concerns

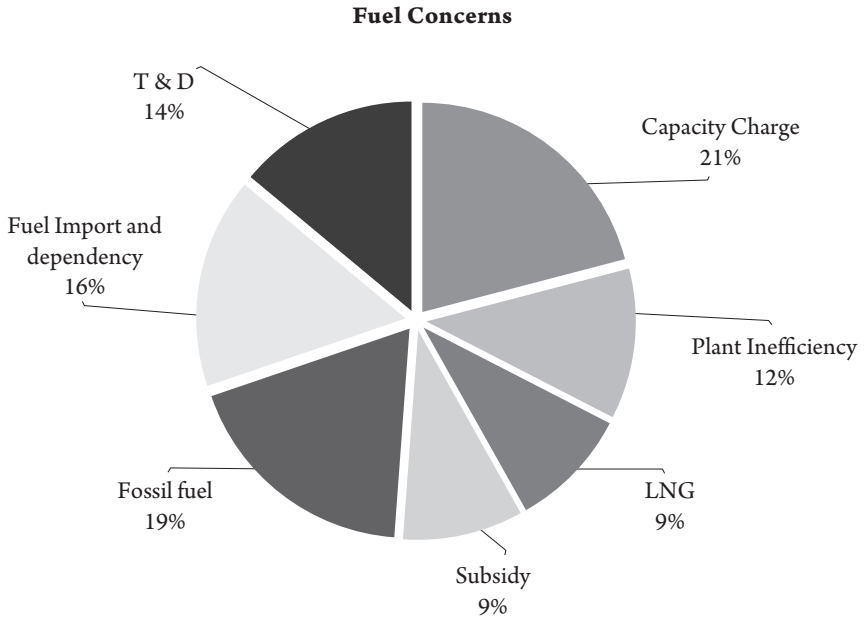
Among the array of topics, capacity charge and fossil fuels emerged as the most prevalent subjects, showcasing the sector's current financial issues and CSO's concern on traditional energy sources. Currently capacity charge concerns rightly point out the most critical issue regarding the power and energy sector of Bangladesh. The consequences of high-capacity charge burden have far-reaching implications for broader macroeconomic health of Bangladesh.

CSOs and experts have repeatedly voiced their concerns regarding the over reliance on fossil fuels, its environmental impact, current financial difficulties associated with fossil fuels, and lack of long-term planning to transition away from fossil fuel-based energy. Import dependency on fuel and issues related transmission and distribution formed the basis of many conversations, shedding light on critical concerns influencing the sector's trajectory.

Additionally, Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), plant inefficiency, and aspects related to subsidy were recurrently discussed in these narratives, adding depth to the multifaceted discourse around the nation's energy landscape. Figure 2 depicts the frequency of various topics related to fuel concerns.

Figure 2 **Frequency of Topics under Fuel Concerns**

(in per cent)



Source: Various news articles.

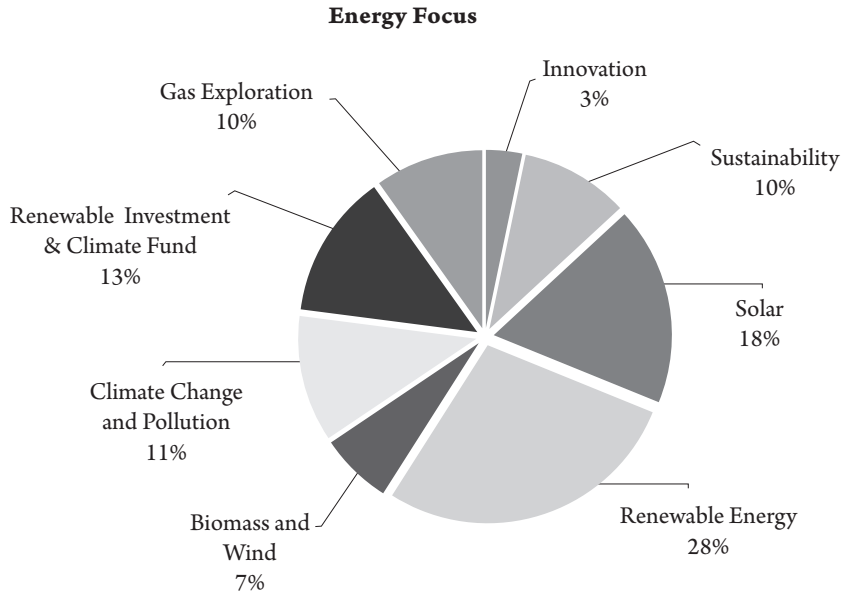
4.2. Energy Focus

Delving into the focus of the CSOs regarding energy, renewable energy surfaced as the most recurrent and compelling topic, indicating a substantial focus on sustainable energy practices. CSOs and experts have discussed about topics such as the call for a shift to renewable energy in the energy mix, devising an integrated renewable energy plan, reducing tariffs on renewable energy related machinery and so on.

Solar energy closely followed, reflecting a significant interest in harnessing solar power as a viable energy source. Pledges, such as creating large ground level solar panels to replace fossil fuel-based energy have been made, as well as reducing tariffs on solar panels and inverters and technology related discussions such as floating solar Photovoltaic (PV) solutions have also surfaced through their discussion. Increasing renewable energy related investments and the urge to secure global climate funds for renewable energy projects have also been focal points of their discussions.

Figure 3 **Frequency of Topics under Energy Concerns**

(in per cent)



Source: Various news articles.

Notably, discussions around sustainability, gas exploration, biomass, and wind energy recurred regularly, underlining the sector's multifaceted approach toward varied energy sources and environmental commitments.

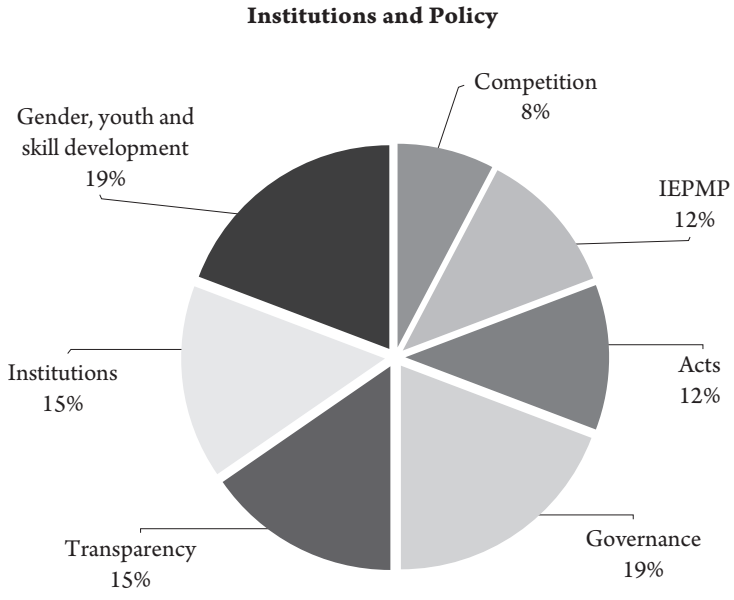
Although the need for innovation in technology within the energy sector appeared relatively infrequently in the discussions, its importance surfaced only occasionally. This aspect perhaps warrants more attention and discussion within the narrative around Bangladesh's energy landscape. Figure 3 illustrates the frequency of various topics under energy focus.

4.3. Institutions and Policy

Under the institutions and policy cluster, a number of issues take the stage in terms of CSO perspectives. Foremost among these considerations is the ongoing discussion surrounding energy sector governance. This topic stands at the forefront of debates, hinting at the central role of good governance, well-structured policies and institutional frameworks in shaping the country's energy landscape. Institutions such as Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC), Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), Sustainable and Renewable Energy

Figure 4 **Frequency of Topics under Institutions and Policy**

(in per cent)



Source: Various news articles.

Development Authority (SREDA) and the energy ministry have been discussed in detail. CSOs have repeatedly urged to make energy related institutions more independent and publicly accountable.

Gender, youth, and skill development related issues have been presented together in this cluster as these three issues are closely related. The discussions surrounding these topics reflect the existing opportunities for improvement, inclusion, and development at a policy level, aiming to realise the true demographic potential in the power and energy sector.

Closely trailing this pivotal discourse is the matter of transparency. The focus on this aspect underlines the necessity of open and clear operational practices within the sector, essential for fostering trust and effective governance. Additionally, the frequency of discussions related to competition and Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (IEPMP) highlight their significance within the energy sector's narrative.

The mentions of various acts associated with the power and energy domain at a notable frequency suggest a prevalent emphasis on the legal and regulatory framework governing the

sector. This focus on regulatory acts underscores the sector's concerns about ensuring lawful and impactful policies in the field of power and energy. The 'Power Sector Indemnity Act' and the 'Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply Act' have been at the forefront of their discussions. Figure 4 illustrates the frequency of various topics under institutions and policy section.

5. Citizen's Manifesto on Power and Energy: Pledges and Expectations

The summary outcomes of the KIIs from the CSOs have been organised into five distinct clusters, each addressing a unique aspect of the sector. The five clusters are:

1. Policies and Planning
2. Fuel Production, Import and Supply
3. Electricity Production, Supply and Distribution
4. Renewable Energy Production, Supply and Distribution
5. Power and Energy Policies of Tomorrow

Within each cluster, several key issues have been explored which present a series of pledges that are proposed by the CSOs to address these issues. These pledges represent the collective vision of the CSOs for the future of Bangladesh's power and energy sector, providing a roadmap for sustainable and equitable development. From renewable energy infrastructure to policy reforms, these insights offer a comprehensive overview of the aspirations and recommendations of Bangladesh's civil society for the power and energy policies of tomorrow.

Table 2 shows some broad pledges made by the KII participant CSOs. It can be seen from the table that all the participants have individually emphasised on some major broad issues

Table 2 **Frequency of Broad Pledges by CSOs**

(*in per cent*)

Broad Pledges	**Frequency (in%)**
Import dependency reduction through renewables.	100
Facilitating FDI in renewables	71
More funding allocation for power and energy research	71
Energy sector institutional reform	100
Grid modernisation	57
Rural energy sector oversight and reform	100

(Table 2 contd.)

(Table 2 contd.)

Broad Pledges	Frequency (in%)
Capacity charge phase-out	57
Unified renewable energy target	100
Beneficiary cross border energy deals	43

Source: KIIs conducted during this study.

regarding the power and energy sector, such as reducing import dependency through renewables, institutional reform, rural energy sector development and so on. There are also large overlapping pledges regarding attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for renewables and increasing research funding for energy sector research. Majority of the CSOs think grid modernisation and capacity charge phase-out is needed. They have also focused on implementing beneficiary cross-border energy agreements. Table 2 shows the frequency of broad pledges made by the CSO members.

5.1. Policies and Planning

Issue: Capacity Charge

- **Pledges:**

1. There should be a complete phase-out of capacity payments, and funds such as the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF) and other international climate funds should be used to facilitate the phase-outs and compensations.
2. Payments to local producers should be made in the local currency to avoid further depleting foreign reserves.
3. Energy policy should be reformed to incorporate renewable energy at the core of policy.
4. Policies should be incorporated to conduct demand forecasting and planning regarding the energy sector to avoid future potential of overgeneration.
5. Competitive bidding should be introduced and implemented for power plants by repealing the 'Speedy Power Supply Act' for fair energy pricing.
6. There should be a complete phasing-out of inefficient power plants at both governmental and private level for efficient management of financial and distributional resources.
7. Demand-side management should be promoted for devising long-term power generation plans.

Issue: Policy Integration Regarding Renewables

- **Pledges:**

1. Single integrated energy policy with specific targets should be adopted rather than having different energy targets in different governmental plans, especially regarding renewable energy.
2. There should be political commitments with defined roadmaps for achieving renewable energy targets.
3. Feed-in Tariffs (FITs) should be implemented at the household level for renewable energy.
4. National campaign should be introduced for influencing public behaviour towards renewable energy positivity.
5. Specified national training programmes should be launched for engineers in renewable energy sector.
6. Promoting women's involvement in leadership roles in renewable energy for achieving growth and participation should be a core target.

Issue: Legislation and Acts

- **Pledges:**

1. The 'Power Plant Indemnity Act' should be abolished immediately to address corruption and regulatory failure.
2. The 'Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provision) Act 2010' should be repealed to address the overgeneration and capacity charge issue.
3. Legislative reforms should be introduced to promote competition, transparency, and sustainability in the energy sector and related instructions such as BERC, SREDA and BPDB.

Issue: Tariffs on Solar Panels and Inverters

- **Pledges:**

1. Tariffs on solar panels and inverters should be lifted or lowered to promote renewable energy implementation on household and enterprise level.
2. There should be incentives for integrating large-scale solar panels into businesses.

Table 3 below summarises the pledges from the policies and planning section.

Table 3 Summary of Pledges from Policies and Planning

Specific Policy Pledge	Description
Complete phase-out of capacity payments	Use international climate funds to facilitate phase-outs and compensations.
Payments in local currency	Avoid depleting foreign reserves.
Incorporate renewable energy at policy core	Reform energy policy
Conduct demand forecasting and planning	Avoid future potential of overgeneration.
Introduce competitive bidding for power plants	Repeal 'Speedy Power Supply Act' for fair energy pricing
Phase-out inefficient power plants	Efficiently manage financial and distributional resources
Promote demand side management	Devise long-term power generation plans
Adopt single integrated energy policy	Consolidate energy targets across plans
Define political commitments and roadmaps	Achieve renewable energy targets
Implement FITs at household level	Promote renewable energy adoption
Introduce national campaign	Influence public behaviour towards renewable energy
Launch national training programmes	Train engineers in renewable energy sector
Promote women's involvement in leadership roles	Achieve growth and participation
Abolish 'Power Plant Indemnity Act'	Address corruption and regulatory failure
Repeal 'Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provision) Act 2010'	Address overgeneration and capacity charge issue.
Introduce legislative reforms	Promote competition, transparency, and sustainability in the energy sector.
Lift or lower tariffs on solar panels and inverters	Promote renewable energy implementation
Provide incentives for integrating large-scale solar panels	Encourage businesses to adopt renewable energy

Source: Author's illustration.

5.2. Fuel Production, Import, and Supply

Issue: Reducing Import Dependency

- **Pledges:**

1. Government should utilise governmental non-agricultural Khas lands for implementing solar power plant projects.
2. Countrywide mapping project should be undertaken for renewable energy project placement for future projects.
3. Incentives should be introduced on a priority basis for renewable energy at the commercial level to create a level-playing field with fossil fuel-based energy.
4. Virtual power purchase agreements should be introduced for small renewable power plants (1-5 Megawatt (MW)) to uplift administrative burden and address corruption in project procurement management.
5. There should be accelerated land acquisition provision for renewable power plants to avoid bureaucratic bottlenecks from the land ministry.
6. Government should offer incentives to encourage household-level renewable energy consumption.
7. Exploring new gas fields, especially at the trans-border level, should be further mobilised to get the first mover's advantage.
8. Government should set a cap (15 per cent) on import-based energy to promote and develop domestic power generation.

Issue: Importing Fuel

- **Pledges:**

1. Spot market buying should be ceased, and government should shift to hedge fund purchases at set prices to avoid higher fuel prices.
2. Commissions from spot market fuel buying should be discontinued to disincentivise fossil fuel-based energy purchases.
3. Bilateral fuel agreements with oil-exporting countries should be taken to avoid supply chain shocks.

Table 4 below summarises the pledges from the fuel production, import and supply section.

Table 4 Summary of Pledges from Fuel Production, Import and Supply

Specific Policy Pledge	Description
Utilise government non-agricultural *Khas* lands	Implement solar power plant projects on government *Khas* lands
Conduct countrywide mapping	Identify potential sites for future renewable energy projects
Provide commercial-level incentives	Create a level playing field for renewable energy
Introduce virtual power purchase agreements	Simplify procurement and reduce corruption for small renewable power plants
Streamline land acquisition	Expedite land acquisition for renewable power plants
Offer household-level incentives	Encourage renewable energy adoption at the household level
Explore new gas fields	Secure access to new gas sources, including trans-border fields
Set an import cap	Limit reliance on imported energy to promote domestic power generation
Transition to hedge fund purchases	Stabilise fuel prices by buying fuel at fixed prices
Eliminate spot market commissions	Discourage spot market buying and reduce incentives for fossil fuel purchases
Secure bilateral fuel agreements	Establish long-term fuel supply agreements with oil-exporting countries

Source: Author's illustration.

5.3. Electricity Production, Supply, and Distribution

Issue: Energy Infrastructure

- **Pledges:**

1. Modern transmission facilities should be implemented for distributional efficiency.
2. Environmental safety standards should be maintained in solar project placement in order to protect the environment and natural lives.
3. Nationwide post-service support should be provided for solar panel projects to avoid post solar implementation challenges and ensure futureproof renewable energy consumption.

4. Regular audits should be carried out for transparency and accountability in the energy sector.
5. Demand response programmes should be implemented for the consumer energy sector to ensure data driven consumer energy policy.
6. Net metering should be introduced in the grid for efficient energy resource allocation and promoting renewable energy.

Issue: Power Buying Model

- **Pledges:**

1. Multi-buyer mode should be introduced for BPDB to streamline energy buying process and reduce administrative bottlenecks.
2. Auction market for renewable energy should be introduced for competitive pricing.

Issue: Rural Energy Development

- **Pledges:**

1. Polli Biddyut should be given jurisdiction for renewable energy purchase for achieving better distributional coverage at the rural level.
2. Rural sector solar market should be developed with post-service facilities to ensure long-term consumer level renewable energy consumption.
3. Post-servicing should be facilitated for solar irrigation to ensure viability of solar irrigation and avoid re-transition to fossil fuel-based irrigation in the future.
4. Mini-grid and micro-grid technology should be introduced in the rural sector, especially in the remote areas to bring them under consistent electricity coverage.
5. Biomass and biogas technology should be implemented at the household level as the technology is both environmentally and economically feasible.
6. Land acquisition should be made efficient for rural power plant setup to avoid delay in project implementation.
7. Rural power infrastructure should be enhanced for energy reliability and availability.
8. Integrated household renewable energy models should be introduced for household-level energy independence which will help reduce the subsidy given in the power sector.
9. International climate funds should be secured to strengthen rural renewable energy infrastructure and access.
10. Planning should be done with vulnerable group representation in implementing energy projects to achieve climate justice.
11. Viable household-level renewable energy finance plans should be developed for household level renewable energy adoption.

Table 5 summarises the pledges from electricity production, import and supply section.

Table 5 Summary of Pledges from Electricity Production, Import and Supply

Specific Policy Pledge	Description
Implement modern transmission facilities	Improve energy distribution efficiency
Enforce environmental safety standards for solar projects	Protect the environment and natural habitats
Provide nationwide post-service support for solar projects	Ensure long-term sustainability of solar energy adoption
Conduct regular audits for power plant efficiency	Enhance transparency and accountability in the energy sector
Implement demand response programmes	Optimise consumer energy consumption based on data insights
Introduce net metering	Facilitate efficient energy resource allocation and promote renewable energy
Implement a multi-buyer model for BPDB	Streamline energy procurement and reduce administrative burdens
Establish an auction market for renewable energy	Promote competitive pricing for renewable energy
Grant Polli Biddyut jurisdiction over renewable energy purchases	Expand renewable energy access in rural areas
Develop rural sector solar with post-service facilities	Ensure long-term viability of solar energy adoption in rural areas
Provide post-servicing for solar irrigation	Sustain the transition to solar-powered irrigation in rural areas
Implement mini-grid and micro-grid technology	Provide reliable electricity access to remote rural communities
Utilise biomass and biogas technology at the household level	Promote environmentally and economically feasible renewable energy solutions
Streamline land acquisition for rural power plants	Expedite project implementation in rural areas
Enhance rural power infrastructure	Improve energy reliability and availability in rural areas
Introduce integrated household renewable energy models	Promote household energy independence and reduce power sector subsidies
Secure international climate funds	Strengthen rural renewable energy infrastructure and access

(Table 5 contd.)

(Table 5 contd.)

Specific Policy Pledge	Description
Engage vulnerable groups in energy project planning	Achieve climate justice by considering the needs of marginalised communities
Develop viable household-level renewable energy finance plans	Facilitate household-level adoption of renewable energy

Source: Author's illustration.

5.4. Renewable Energy Production, Supply, and Distribution

Issue: Renewable Infrastructure

- **Pledges:**

1. Authority of transmission facility should be given to renewable power plants for their projects which is currently restricted and causing additional administrative burden.
2. Renewable energy mapping should be done and companies like Tesla should be commissioned to set up large solar panel projects to achieve efficiency in renewable project implementation.
3. The public transport system should be converted to electric vehicles which will drastically reduce environmental pollution and will have multiple positive improvements in related sectors such as health.
4. Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations should be established by setting up planned charging infrastructure. Licensing and incentivising existing petrol pumps to install charging stations can accelerate the adoption of EVs.
5. Facilitating technology transfer and encouraging multilateral cooperation in renewable energy projects are essential for building renewable energy infrastructure projects.
6. Emphasising the establishment of biogas facilities for rural households and irrigation is another feasible approach to harnessing renewable energy.

Issue: Attracting FDI for Renewables

- **Pledges:**

1. There should be participatory planning between the ministries and a location-based renewable energy-focused integrated FDI plan should be established.
2. Action-plan should be devised on seeking support and funding from major carbon-emitting countries to aid in renewable energy transition.
3. Effective one stop service for investors should be provided and current bureaucratic process should be restructured to avoid procedural inefficiency.

4. Negotiation skills and subject matter knowledge of bureaucrats should be enhanced to build up pressure on securing international climate funds.
5. Set up agreements, as a climate vulnerable Least Developed Country (LDC), with European Union (EU) and United States of America (USA), to buy proprietary renewable energy technology at a cheaper rate with northern renewable technology companies.

Issue: Energy Research

- **Pledges:**

1. Government should invest in energy research projects at universities, focussing on the feasibility of ideas within the local context to develop domestic solutions.
2. Establishing collaborative research investments among ministries and the University Grants Commission (UGC) for university-level research is essential to allocate higher grants.
3. Phased investments should be made for research, development, and implementation of solution-based energy research.
4. Private tech company investments should be facilitated in renewable energy projects to further accelerate innovation and solutions.
5. Separate government funds should be allocated for renewable energy research.

Table 6 summarises the pledges from the renewable energy production, supply, and distribution section.

Table 6 Summary of Pledges from Renewable Energy Production, Supply, and Distribution

Specific Policy Pledge	Description
Empower renewable power plants to manage transmission facilities	Streamline project implementation and reduce administrative burdens
Partner with renewable energy companies like Tesla	Expedite the development of large-scale solar panel projects
Electrify the public transportation system	Reduce environmental pollution and improve public health
Expand EV charging infrastructure	Set up planned charging stations, license existing petrol pumps, and incentivise EV charging station adoption
Foster technology transfer and multilateral cooperation	Facilitate the development of renewable energy infrastructure projects
Promote biogas facilities for rural households and irrigation	Explore alternative renewable energy sources

(Table 6 contd.)

(Table 6 contd.)

Specific Policy Pledge	Description
Implement participatory planning	Collaborate with ministries to develop a location-based renewable energy-focused integrated FDI plan
Seek support and funding from major carbon-emitting countries	Secure financial assistance for renewable energy transition
Establish a one-stop service for investors	Streamline bureaucratic processes and enhance investor access
Strengthen the negotiation skills of bureaucrats	Effectively secure international climate funds
Negotiate agreements with EU and USA	Access proprietary renewable energy technology at a discounted rate
Prioritise university energy research projects	Develop domestic solutions based on feasible local ideas
Increase collaborative research funding	Enhance university-level research through joint investment among ministries and UGC
Implement phased investment for energy research	Support solution-based energy research through a phased investment approach
Encourage private tech company investment	Promote innovation and solutions through private sector engagement
Allocate dedicated government funds	Establish a separate funding mechanism for renewable energy research

Source: Author's illustration.

5.5. Power and Energy Policies of Tomorrow

Issue: Energy Model

- **Pledges:**

1. Environmental conservation and renewable energy should be incorporated at the core of the energy model to develop sustainable energy policy for the future.
2. Energy policy should be shifted from profit-driven models to sustainable and household-focused models to achieve efficient resource allocation and transparency in the energy sector.
3. Policies should be focused on people's demand and accessibility for electricity to devise power plant projects.
4. Differentiated models should be introduced for urban and rural household electricity access for efficient resource allocation and energy distribution.

Issue: Renewable Policy

- **Pledges:**

1. Renewable energy infrastructure should be built with climate justice principles to address the needs of environment and climate affected populations.
2. Renewable energy mix target should be set with an emphasis on climate justice rather than focusing on crude target numbers for renewable energy generation.

Issue: Gas Sector as an Interim Solution

- **Pledges:**

1. The priority emphasis should still be on renewable energy sector.
2. Domestic gas sector exploration should be increased to reduce imported fuel dependency.

Issue: Institutional Reform and Cooperation

- **Pledges:**

1. Separate renewable energy cell should be established to coordinate between ministries for projects to achieve accelerated project implementation rate.
2. Empowerment of SREDA through necessary reformation should be initiated as a priority basis, proper budget should be allocated, and bureaucratic barriers should be uplifted to run it independently.
3. A separate renewable energy division should be created that will lead to eventual establishment of renewable energy ministry to avoid conflict of interest with the ministry of power.
4. Ministry's jurisdiction over BERC should be shifted to the Supreme Court to ensure independence and regulatory power of BERC.
5. Ministry of Finance should allocate yearly budget for BERC separately and give them freedom to invest in energy sector-related research projects.
6. Training programmes for BPDB staff should be provided to improve their skills and knowledge.
7. Regular publication of financial reports and audits should be mandated to increase transparency and accountability in institutions regarding the power and energy sector.
8. Capacity building of the bureaucrats and ministerial cooperation should be a major focus in devising long-term and people-focused power plans.
9. A long-term action plan should be devised to enhance the capacity, skillsets and human resource potential of the energy sector personnel that would align with country's long-term energy target.

Table 7 summarises the pledges from the power and energy policies of tomorrow section.

Table 7 Summary of Pledges from Power and Energy Policies of Tomorrow

Specific Policy Pledge	Description
Redefine the energy model	Integrate environmental conservation, renewable energy, and sustainability into the core of energy policy
Shift from profit-driven to sustainability-focused models	Prioritise resource efficiency, transparency, and household-level energy needs
Align power plant projects with people's needs	Prioritise electricity accessibility and demand-driven power generation
Implement differentiated models for urban and rural electricity access	Optimise resource allocation and energy distribution based on specific needs
Incorporate climate justice principles	Address the needs of environment and climate-affected populations in renewable energy infrastructure development
Set climate justice-focused renewable energy targets	Prioritise impact over arbitrary generation numbers
Prioritise renewable energy	Emphasise renewable energy development as the primary focus
Expand domestic gas exploration	Reduce reliance on imported fuel
Establish a separate renewable energy cell	Enhance coordination and accelerate project implementation
Empower SREDA	Allocate adequate budget, remove bureaucratic barriers, and promote independent operations
Create a dedicated renewable energy division	Establish a separate renewable energy ministry to avoid conflicts of interest
Transfer BERC's jurisdiction to the Supreme Court	Ensure independence and regulatory power
Allocate an independent budget for BERC	Empower BERC to invest in energy-related research projects
Provide training for BPDB staff	Enhance skills and knowledge to improve energy sector management
Mandate regular financial reports and audits	Increase transparency and accountability in energy institutions
Prioritise capacity building and ministerial cooperation	Develop long-term, people-focused power plans
Formulate a long-term action plan for human resource development	Align energy sector personnel with long-term energy targets

Source: Author's illustration.

6. Implementation, Financing and Government Timelines

This study incorporates three key tables to enhance clarity and strategic planning. Table 8 outlines the allocation of responsibilities, establishing a connection between issues, corresponding authorities, and the associated tasks. This structured approach ensures that each issue is addressed by the relevant authorities, streamlining the implementation process and promoting accountability.

Table 9 outlines financial strategies alongside their designated funding sources. This financial roadmap is crucial for the practical realisation of policy objectives, echoing the collaborative efforts envisioned in this study. The strategic allocation of resources is a shared responsibility that both the government and CSOs can actively contribute to, demonstrating a convergence of interests in driving sustainable energy policies.

Table 10 provides a chronological overview of different government plans and their associated target timelines spanning several years. This temporal perspective aids in tracking the progression of initiatives, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the trajectory of the proposed policies.

Table 8 Implementation

Issues	Authorities	Tasks
Capacity Charge and Tariffs on Solar Panels and Inverters	Power Division, Ministry of Power Energy and Mineral Resources (MoPEMR) and BERC	Phase-out of capacity payments, local currency payments, renewable energy policy, demand forecasting and planning, competitive bidding, lifting or reducing tariffs, and incentives for large-scale integration.
Policy Integration Regarding Renewables	SREDA	Creation of a single integrated energy policy, political commitments, FITs, public awareness campaigns, and national training programmes for engineers.
Legislation and Acts	MoPEMR	Abolish certain power plant indemnity acts, legislative reforms.
Reducing Import Dependency and Ceiling on Import-based Energy	MoPEMR and BERC	Utilisation of government lands, cap on import-based energy, incentives, exploring new gas fields, and discontinuation of spot market buying.
Energy Infrastructure, Power Buying Model, and Rural Energy Development	MoPEMR, BERC, BPDB, and Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board	Modern transmission facilities, environmental safety standards, audits, net metering, multi-buyer model

(Table 8 contd.)

(Table 8 contd.)

Issues	Authorities	Tasks
		implementation, auction market, and rural energy development projects.
Renewable Infrastructure, Attracting FDI for Renewables, and Energy Research	MoPEMR, BERC, SREDA, and Energy and Power Research Council	Building renewable energy infrastructure, attracting FDI, and promoting collaborative investment.

Source: Author's illustration.

Table 9 **Financing**

Strategies	Financial Sources
Government Budget	Ministry of Finance
International Climate Funds	G7 RSF, World Bank, Green Bond Financing
Public-Private Collaborations	Private Investors

Source: Author's illustration.

Table 10 **Government Plans and Target Timelines**

Year	Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCPP)	Power-System-Master-Plan-2016 (PSMP 2016)	Nationally Determined Contribution	Climate Vulnerability Forum Plan
2023	Conduct feasibility study on hydrogen as a renewable energy source and a potential export product.	Renewable energy target of 4,100 MW.	Reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions by 27.56 Metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent $MtCO_2e$ (6.73 percent) below Business as Usual (BAU) by 2030.	Continue to call for delivery of strengthened contributions to the Paris Agreement.
2024	Establish 'Mujib Locally Led Adaptation Hubs' in the most vulnerable communities.	Solar power will account for 50 per cent of the energy, at 2,277 MW.	Reduce GHG emissions by 61.9 Mt CO_2e (15.12 per cent) below BAU by 2030 in the conditional scenario.	
2025	Implement 'Mujib Climate and Disaster Risk Management and Financing Strategy' to close the financial protection gap and enable adaptive social protection.	Hydropower 1,000 MW.		
2026	Launch 'Mujib Bongoposagor Independence Giga Array', a hybrid renewable energy and adaptation project that will revitalise the mangrove green belt and protect the coastlines.	Wind 597 MW.		

(Table 10 contd.)

(Table 10 contd.)

Year	Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCPP)	Power-System-Master-Plan-2016 (PSMP 2016)	Nationally Determined Contribution	Climate Vulnerability Forum Plan
2027	Develop 'Mujib Resilient Well-being Programmes' to promote mental health and well-being, especially for the most marginalised groups, and to foster sustainable and traditional lifestyles.			
2028	Create 'Strategic Mujib Energy Hubs' to convert coal, oil, and diesel power plants into green hydrogen and waste-to-energy facilities, and to interconnect with the natural gas network.			
2029	Achieve 30 per cent renewable energy share in the power sector and reduce energy imports, price volatility, and inflation risk by leveraging domestic resources and green commerce.			
2030	Eradicate extreme poverty and exceed key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets by enhancing resilience, gender responsiveness, and social inclusion through locally led adaptation and green job creation			

Source: Government documents.

7. Conclusion

The power and energy sector newspaper analysis highlights critical concerns. Fossil fuel dependence, environmental impacts, and financial challenges dominate, emphasising the need for sustainable energy practices. Renewable energy, especially solar power, gains significant prominence, indicating a shift towards greener alternatives. Institutional discussions underscore the importance of robust policies, transparency, and regulatory frameworks. The subsequent CSO pledges present a comprehensive roadmap for a sustainable energy future, focusing on capacity charge phase-outs, reduced import dependency, and strategic policy reforms. This analysis serves as a valuable guide for informed decision-making and policy formulation, shaping Bangladesh's energy landscape towards resilience and sustainability.

The KIIs revealed CSOs' core concerns and aspirations for Bangladesh's power and energy sector, emphasising sustainable development and reduced reliance on fossil fuels. Across five clusters, CSOs focus on policy shifts, legislative reforms, and a move towards renewable energy. They stressed transparency, competitiveness, and efficiency in power generation. CSOs advocate for abolishing outdated acts, reducing import dependency, and incentivising renewables. A consistent theme is the promotion of renewable solutions in rural development, infrastructure, and attracting foreign investment. In essence, CSOs envision a future marked by sustainability, inclusivity, and forward-looking energy policies.

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive insight into the expectations and recommendations of CSOs concerning Bangladesh's power and energy sector. The analysis of newspaper reports and KIIs has revealed a collective vision that underscores the urgency of sustainable and equitable development. The CSOs' emphasis on moving away from fossil fuel dependency, particularly through robust policy reforms, legislative changes, and a steadfast commitment to renewable energy, charts a transformative path for the nation.

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This study aims to provide insights into what civil society organisation members and subject matter experts on Bangladesh's power and energy sector expect from the election manifestos of the political parties of Bangladesh regarding the power and energy sector policies. The study employed appropriate qualitative methods to identify recurring themes, patterns, and nuances within the collected data. The study revealed that civil society members envision a future marked by sustainability, inclusivity, and forward-looking energy policies. The report provides a comprehensive insight into the expectations and recommendations of CSOs concerning Bangladesh's power and energy sector, emphasising sustainable development and reduced reliance on fossil fuels. The report serves as a valuable guide for informed decision-making and policy formulation, shaping Bangladesh's energy landscape towards resilience and sustainability.

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