

Third Party Evaluator's Opinion on Energy Saving and Improvement of Ghorasal Fertilizer Factory

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Relevance

Improvement of agricultural productivity through chemical fertilizers, among others, is essential for Bangladesh. Ghorasal Fertilizer Factory (GFF) was established in 1972 and over the period of time—equipments and technology became obsolete having adverse effect on production and environment.

Though present and forecasted demand vis a vis supply scenario of urea fertilizer in Bangladesh offer a mixed picture but by simplification, it can be stressed that 1)the present level of production need to be sustained and 2)more efficient way of production need to be adopted. Exactly those were the reasons, why “Energy saving, Environmental Protection and Improvement of on-steam factor of the Ghorasal Urea fertilizer Factory Project (ii)” was conceived and implemented.

As the project resulted into 1) improved energy efficiency 2) improved production capacity and 3) improved environment—all these evidenced from data and information from different sources—the project is relevant for the economy of Bangladesh.

Sustainability

Sustainability can be considered three pronged issue: 1)Financial 2)Management and 3)Institutional.

For variety of socio-political reasons—financial sustainability of the factory is a far-cry. But, financial sustainability will have to be there and to start with, people within the organisation need to be made aware about it. It is *their* factory and *their* country. In final analysis—it is *their* job to make the factory financially viable either by increasing return or by decreasing costs.

It seems that neither BCIC nor GFF has been able to institutionalise a proper management system. It is not very difficult for me to understand as to why 32 years after inception (GFF) or 28 years of inception (BCIC)—failed to institutionalise a management system. Lack of commitment and ad-hocism are two reasons—to name a few.

Institutional sustainability, in this case, is more a matter of stakeholders. As agriculture is the largest industry in Bangladesh and as fertilizer is one of the very important inputs—factories producing fertilizers are essential. Therefore, sustenance of these factories is not only the job of the factory-people but larger community also. Whether larger community take and retain sufficient interest or there are mechanism to arouse and channelise interest of the community—appear very vital. These are cultural issues warrant cultural interventions. It is my opinion that these factories are yet to be a part of the larger community as a result most of the people of larger community think it as ‘one of theirs’ as opposed to ‘one of ours’. Therefore, stakeholders of different categories need to be identified, apprised and encouraged. There is a special need for those who used to be known as “donors” and lately known as “development partners”. If one is to be a partner one must know the hopes, expectations, history, culture, capacity, world-view i.e.idiosyncracies of another partner. These things are very important for effective partnership.