

WASH facilities at Rural areas tackling Climate Change effect

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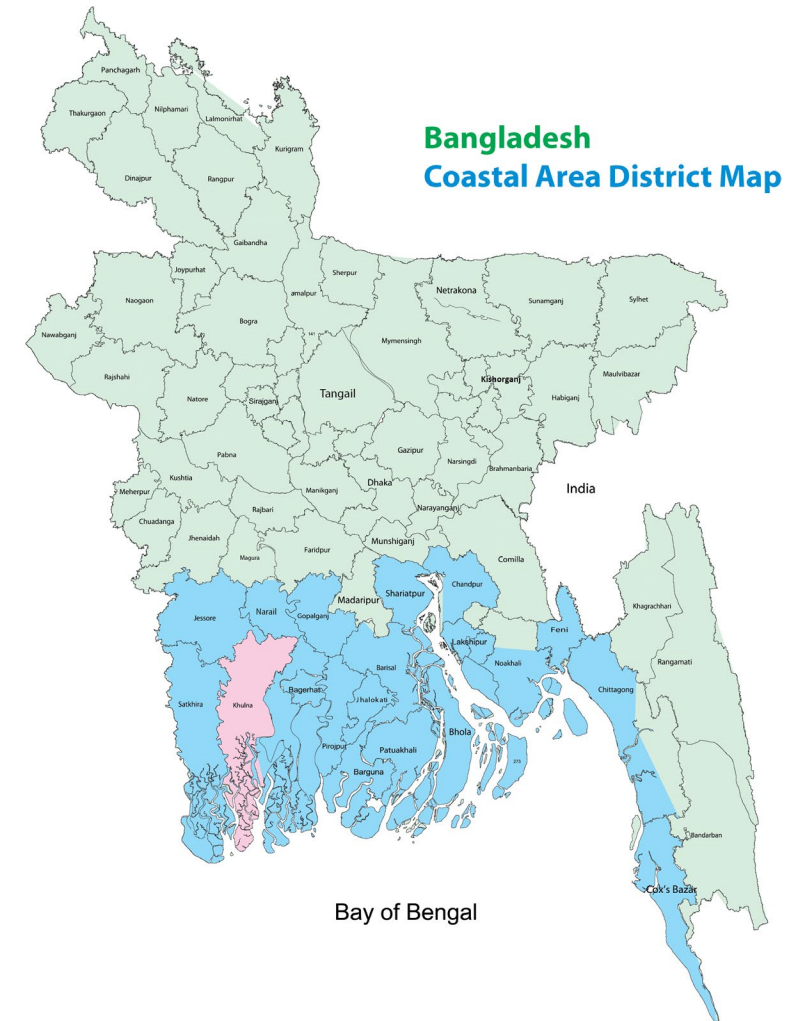
#WaWF23

Background :Climate-resilient WASH in practice

- Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change which is ranking seventh on the 2021 World Climate Risk Index.
- Approximately 20 million people living in 19 Districts along the coastline of Bangladesh depend heavily on various natural sources to obtain water for drinking and domestic purposes
- South-west coastal regions started facing increased occurrence and intensity of sudden shocks such as floods, cyclones, storm surges
- Onset stresses such as prolonged dry season and increased water salinity.
- Climate Resilient WASH technologies are prioritized in National Adaptation Plan (NAP) as key entry points of Adaptation.
- Water Act 2018 is fully supporting Water Security Plan

Methodology

- This study aimed at understanding the impacts of climate change on water security in two coastal Sub-Districts of Khulna and identified community perceived adaptive strategies to reduce the vulnerability.
- The study applied an array of PRA tools and conducted participatory workshops with different groups of the community to collect data.
- Key informant interviews with relevant government and non-government stakeholders were also conducted to reach a consensus on the community perceived strategies.



Findings

- Over the years, coastal communities have adopted a range of adaptive strategies using local knowledge to cope with climate change induced water scarcity.
- Lack of updated knowledge and skills together with ad hoc support from government and NGOs are often not adequate. For example Climate Financing and WASH technologies



Findings (cont....)

- Years of experience and peer learning have enabled communities to propose solutions which they feel may help to reduce risks if applied on appropriate way and time.
- Bottom-up approach established in service delivery mechanism where community engagement has increased.



Recommendation



- Ensure peoples participation in decision making process of Climate Resilient WASH services
- Increase Knowledge and Practice in Adaptive situation
- Increase Climate and WASH Budget Allocation and Utilization
- Implementation of Water Act 2018 and National Adaptation Plan (NAP) of Bangladesh

Salinity affects life and livelihoods in coastal areas

MOHAMMAD AL AMIN

The salinity of the water has affected life and livelihoods in coastal areas of the country, causing diseases, creating drinking water shortages, and making lands uncultivable.

In recent visits to Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat districts, this correspondent observed that the people coastal areas are suffering from serious salinity in their water. Agriculture land, ponds, canals and rivers in these districts are contaminated with salt water.

"I drink rainwater for around three months, then I collect tubewell water from around half a kilometre away from my home, which is also saline water," Peara Begum, 55, of Pashchim Baharbania in Morrelganj upazila of Bagerhat, told the Daily Sun.

As her husband Yunus Hawlader has been ill for a long time, she has to walk through muddy roads to collect drinking water during the rainy season.

Due to the lack of fresh water in the

area, many people in the village use pond water for cooking, including Jharna Begum, 23, the wife of Ruhul Amin.

Several residents of the Baharbania union told Daily Sun that they are not only experiencing an acute water crisis, but they are also suffering from river erosion since a large portion of the village has already been marooned in the Kewra river.

"As a result of water salinity, we cannot grow crops. We cultivate paddy during the monsoon. However, this year's rainfall was insufficient, preventing the paddy plants from growing," said Rakib Hossain from Pashchim Baharbania village.

The roads in Baharbania union Parishad can't be repaired due to a lack of adequate fund allocation, according to Asken Khan, an elected member of ward no. 3.

"The government should set up a large rainwater harvesting system in the area to resolve the drinking water crisis. At the same time, adequate funding should be allocated to repair roads regularly and build embankments," he said.

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Monirul Islam, the Sub-Assistant engineer at the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) in Morrelganj upazila, said rainwater and pond water are the only sources of drinking, cooking, and bathing water in the area.

"The area has been experiencing an increase in salinity in its water. Groundwater is saline up to 1200 feet below the surface. Tube well water does not provide fresh drinking water here. The government encourages the use of pond water here and to conserve rainwater," he said.

Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Barguna, Barishal, Bhola, Jhalakati and Pirojpur districts are highly affected by climate change, according to research reports.

Environmental experts say climate change plays a role in increasing salinity in coastal waters because of the intrusion of water from the sea into the mainland and natural disasters like cyclones, and river erosion.

"The salinity of the water has caused a drinking water crisis, affected agricultural land, and adversely affected

public health. Climate change plays a major role in this situation. We need a fair water management system in the country to face the crisis," Prof Dr A.K.M. Saiful Islam, director of the Institute of Water and Flood Management (IWF) at BUET, told the Daily Sun.

Jayanta Mallick, Executive Engineer of the DPHE in Bagerhat, said Morrelganj, Mongia, Sharankhola and Kochua upazila areas of the district are highly affected by salty water.

"The water salinity has increased in the district. The government has taken steps to resolve the freshwater crisis as alternative technology like rainwater harvesting is being used. Besides providing water purifier tablets, ponds have also been dug to alleviate the water crisis," he added.

The permissible salinity level in drinking water is 1,000mg per litre in coastal areas, but some areas of the Bagerhat district have water with a salinity of over 2,000mg per litre.

The government and some non-government organizations have been implementing different projects to improve the life and livelihoods of

coastal people.

Mohammad Zobair Hasan, Deputy Executive Director (DED) of Development Organisation of the Rural Poor (DORP), said a key objective of the Pani Jibon project is for the community to become more resilient to climate change and capable of raising their voices for climate justice.

By the end of 2023, the Pani Jibon Project will reach about 210,000 women and men.

Climate change activist Ashish Barua, also the programme manager of Helvetas Swiss Incorporation, attributed the increasing salinity to rising sea levels and seawater intrusion.

As a result of the increasing salinity of water, floods in coastal areas, river erosion, and cyclones, people's lives and livelihoods have been affected, causing huge loss and destruction, he noted.

A World Bank report said climate change will cause significant changes in river salinity in the southwest coastal region from October to May by 2050. Another study projects a median increase of 26 per cent in salinity by 2050, with increases of over 55 per cent in the most affected areas.



Media Coverage



“ Despite our responsibilities and resources constraints, we have adopted exemplary initiatives to tackle climate change. However, developed countries should fulfil their commitments of providing 100 billion dollars annually with a 50:50 balance between adaptation and mitigation.”

Sheikh Hasina

Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh

at COP26 in 2021, Glasgow



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