

Climate Change and Bangladesh

Report of workshops

Bangladesh is one of the most victimized countries of the world due to the Climate Change. Northern part of Bangladesh is gradually going to be desert with continued drought. At the same time southern part of Bangladesh destroyed by cyclone and high tidal wave sinks in the saline water of the sea permanently. Six seasons of Bangladesh now turns three seasons- Summer, Rainy and Winter. But those three does not continue to function with as usual rules - during summer it is so hot, during winter it is unbearable cold. Cold is regularly breaking old record and making new records. There is possibility that people of Bangladesh will see snowing soon. There trend of long duration of the cold in winter and too warm in summer season. But rain is coming in undue time and most of the time it lasts for short time. All peoples know that last year rain came one and half month later. As a results; peasants start Amon paddy plant so late.

America, Australia, Europe, China-Japan with other industrialist countries are emitting greenhouse gases but victimizing developing countries like Bangladesh. In this regard Bangladesh Krishok Federation and Bangladesh Kishani Sabha organized 31 workshops in different parts of Bangladesh from 17th December 2009 to 27th January 2010. Those workshops were organized to asses the impact of climate change, and it's future consequences as well as the social responsibility in this regard. Teacher of the RMIT University, Australia, Cathryn Kriewaldt was facilitator.

Venues of the Climate workshops

31 Climate Change workshops took place in 22 Sub-Districts under the 11 Districts. More than one workshop took place in some sub-districts. The Venues and one picture of the each sub-district are below:-

01. Kurigram District

(a) Kurigram District Hedquarter, (b) Rajarhat, (c) Nageshwary, (d) Bhurungamari, (e) Fulbari



Workshop took place in Rajarhat sub-district under the Kurigram District



Workshop took place in Kurigram Sadar



Workshop took place in Bhurungamari sub-district under the Kurigram District



Workshop took place in Nageshwary sub-district under the Kurigram District



Workshop took place in Fulbari sub-district under the Kurigram District

02. Dinajpur District

(a) Dinajpur District Hedquarter, (b) Birol, (c) Hakimpur



Workshop took place in Dinajpur city



Workshop took place in Birol sub-district under the Dinajpur district



Workshop in Hakimpur sub-district under the Dinajpur district. Indigenous people attended the workshop

03. Rongpur District

(a) Rongpur District Hedquarter



Workshop in Rongpur Sadar. Indigenous people attended in the workshop

04. Bogura District

(a) Bogura District Hedquarter



Workshop took place in Bogura city

05. Narayongonj District

(a) Rupgonj



06. Sariotpur District

(a) Palong



Workshop took place in Palong sub-district under the Sariotpur district

07. Sathkhira District

(a) Sathkhira District Hedquarter, (b) Kaligonj, (c) Shamnagor



Workshop took place in Kaligonj sub-district under the Sathkhira District



Workshop took place in Shamnagor sub-district under the Sathkhira District



Workshop took place in Sathkhira City

08. Khulna District

(a) Dumuria, (b) Batiaghata



Workshop took place in Batiaghata sub-district under the Khulna District



Workshop took place in Dumuria sub-district under the Khulna District

09. Barguna District

(a) Barguna District Hedquarter, (b) Pathorghata



Workshop took place in Pathorghata sub-district under the Barguna District



Workshop took place in Barguna City

10. Patuakhali District

(a) Patuakhali District Hedquarter



Workshop took place in Patuakhali Sador sub-district

11. Barisal District

(a) Barisal District Hedquarter, (b) Bakergonj



Workshop took place in Barisal Sador sub-district under the Barisal District



Workshop took place in Barisal District City



Workshop took place in Bakergonj sub-district under the Barisal District

We have priorities to select the area for organizing workshop in northern droughtfull area and in southern cyclone prone and high tidal wave affected area.

Participants in the Climate workshops

Most of the participants of the workshops were grassroots leaders of BKF and BKS. Expert peasants, women peasants and workers were most appreciated to attend the workshops. We also ensured the participation from different classes and professional peoples of respective areas. The participation of women was 60% to 80%. Total participation was limited to 30 to 80 delegates in one workshop.

Method of the workshops

At first, delegates of workshops were split into some groups and each group consisted of 5 to 10 people. Each group got some climate change related photos. Before distribution of photos facilitator described the idea of the workshop to respective groups. The idea was: each group has two works after getting photos. (1) Look the photos and tries to understand the changes of climate in their respective area. All understandable changes will be discussed in each group. Each group could swap photos to other groups and could discuss in the own group. (2) Participants discussed in the groups what type of changes of weather they have seen in their lives out of the photos.

At the end of discussion on two topics participants will start to expresses their opinions and results of group discussions. Each group expresses their understanding on changes of weather in the picture first and then they discussed their experiences of the life and other changes of the weather which they realize in their long time of the life. Facilitator was careful to the fact that opinions, experiences and advices of the participants can be discussed duely.

Then, there started the second part of the workshop. In this part facilitator express her own idea about climate change. But she respectively narrated the opinions of each groups in her speech and also compared the expert opinions and groups opinions. For that reason all participants feel moved that their opinion and knowledge will be enriched with scientific idea.

Opinion from participants

Participants selected all far reaching changes of climate from their experiences, complains, advices and discussed about their problems. They never missed to follow any kind of changes of weather. There were countable differences of the climate change from the southern Bangladesh and northern Bangladesh. That was-

Northern Bangladesh

- (i) Hot is increasing. The duration of summer. Previously there was 2/3 months summer time but now summer duration is 5/6 months. For this reasons fertile land is going to become drought land and plants are burning.
- (ii) Gradually all rivers are going to dry. For this reason total north of Bangladesh could be desert gradually. Underground water is the only resource for the irrigation in summer. Irrigation is expensive resulting in the cost of production of all crops.
- (iii) Water level is going down day by day. Previously one pipe (20') for a tube-well was enough to pick up underground water but now is not enough. Besides, there are increasing arsenic and iron in water.
- (iv) Cold is increasing. Cold are destroying so many vegetables and other seasonal crops.
- (v) Fog is rising. Dense fogs are destroying Mango, Litchi and other seasonal crops.
- (vi) Huge amount of water comes from India causing flood sometime. Previously there was flood and people knew time and nature but now flood is coming completely undue time and destroying standing crops.

Southern part of Bangladesh

- (i) The number of cyclone is on the increase. Simultaneously the strength of cyclone is also increasing. Previous 2/3 years we faces some devastating cyclone like Sidr and Aila. People are facing seasonal north-western cyclone every year, but now cyclone are coming now and then.
- (ii) Increasing high tide wave. Spate and speed of flood are more than previous ones. Thousands of people died, cattle died, crops destroyed by the saline water of the high tide sea wave on the Sidr and Aila time.
- (iii) Increasing salinity and duration of saline. Now duration of the saline water in the rivers is 5/6 months but it was 2/3 months previously. Saline water is most harmful for all crops.
- (iv) Increasing water level on the high tide. Many places are sinking now in the high tide but previously it was not flooded. There have possibilities to over-flood the southern part of Bangladesh if the Government dose not increase their embankment level on the river side.
- (v) Increasing heat. With increasing summer duration also. Gradually other seasons are disappearing and mixing with the summer.
- (vi) Increasing cold and density of fog. Cold and fog are destroying crops every year.

Speech of the facilitators

Facilitator of the climate change workshops, teacher of the RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia Cathryn Kriewaldt said- Bangladesh is not responsible for the climate change. Expensive life style of the peoples of America, Australia, and Europe are the responsible for the climate change. They are driving car all the time, using lots of electricity, lots of luxurious goods, making big industries. All the industries are using coal and oil as a fuel. Those industries are the source of greenhouse gas emission. Cathryn explained cause of climate change that industrialist countries are emitting carbon, methane gas and all other kinds of green house gases so that climate is changing all over the world. Green house gases are making another kind of layer like blanket on the atmosphere.

The sunlight can enter easily through this blanket of green house gases, but when sunlight comes in this atmosphere and makes heat after variation, heat is can't go out from this polluted greenhouse gas layer. We can see easily the black smoke of industries but we can't see the green house gases, because

it has no color. She also said, a plastic sheet is the best example of greenhouse gas blanket. If we make a house of plastic sheets you will see that sunlight is coming normally in the house and making heat on the house but heats have no scope to come out from the plastic sheets house. In this way heat is increasing in our atmosphere everyday and changing climate of the globe. Due to heat increasing-changing wind speeds, raising warm, increasing cold, reducing rain, changing season circle, even heats changing current of sea. Heat is a power. This power is creating depression and making cyclone in the sea now and then. So that, cyclone is increasing similarly like heat rising. Heat is also increasing speed of cyclone. So every cyclone is getting more speed than previous one.

Extra heat of atmosphere is also melting glaciers of North and South Pole and increasing the sea level. As the results of sea level rising, low laying area of the earth is sinking by the saline sea water. People of the low laying area are in risk of mass migration. Southern part of Bangladesh is in high risk to be climate refugee.

Cathryn also explained about cause of navigability decrease of Bangladeshi rivers The Himalayan is the only water resource of almost all rivers of Bangladesh. Affect of increase in glaciers of Himalayan it is melting faster than to gather ice. So reducing ice from Himalaya's day by day and not feeding water enough to the rivers. If this heat rising continue, Himalayan's will be out of ice soon and rivers of Bangladesh will be barren desert only.

Recommendation of the climate workshops

- (i) Stop emission of the greenhouse gases caused by industrialist countries. Suffering countries should be united to put pressure on rich countries.
- (ii) Climate change suffering people should build strong movement against climate change.
- (iii) We have to plant so many trees and have to take steps for saving trees from cut. Because trees are not only receiving carbon, but they are also saving lives during flood and cyclone.
- (iv) Government should take initiative to inform people of the country about devastating affect of climate change. In order that the people can take preparation to save their life and livelihood from the crazy behaviors of weather.
- (v) Compel the industrialist countries to give compensation to the effected countries for their deliberate climate change.
- (vi) There have arrangement to buildup sufficient cyclone shelter in the risky area and make sufficient storages of food, drinking water, medicine and other emergency goods to serve immediately for the suffering people.
- (vii) Increasing the water level of high tide and we have to raise height and strength of the natural calamity, have to inform the people immediately, so that people will be careful and have preparation to face.
- (ix) There have to buildup sufficient arrangement to rescue of possible suffering peoples from natural calamity. Government has to have initiative and buildup capacity to save life and people's properties before cyclone hit and high sea wave.
- (x) Government has to plan to rehabilitate people immediately to their own place after natural calamity. Government has to ensure compensation to suffering people to recover their damages.
- (xi) Government has to take initiative to reduce the use of chemical fertilizer, pesticides and sterile seeds in the name of hybrid seeds and ensure balance of diversity.

Workshop organized, conducted and reported by

 Bangladesh Krishok Federation (BKF)

 Bangladesh Kishani Sabha (BKS)

www.krishok.org