

# World Water Day 2011

## Seminar On

### Present Status of Water Supply in Khulna City and Way Forward

## REPORT



Organized by:

Bhairab River Area Water Partnership &

Initiative for Right View (IRV)



Supported by:



Bangladesh Water Partnership

**“Water for Cities”**  
**World Water Day 2011**  
**Seminar On**  
**Present Status of Water Supply in Khulna City and Way Forward**



**Introduction:**

The world civilization started from the bank of Rivers. Water is the most vital element among the natural resources, and is crucial for the survival of all living organisms. To sustain a civilization water is the basic need. That is why it has been synonym as “life”. Among the 100% water that our planet contains 97.5% water is ocean water which is salty. Among the remaining 1.725% is in glaciers, snow and permafrost. 0.075% is ground water, and 0.025% is in the lakes, swamps and rivers. It is alleged that the next world conflict would be for water. Water is a strategic resource in the globe and an important element in many political conflicts.

Safe drinking water is fundamental to healthy life and prosperous communities. Nearly a billion of people world wide do not have to access to drinking water form a improved source and more than 2.5 billion people do not have access to improved sanitation facilities. In south Asian region over 75 percent of the people live in rural areas, those have little access to safe potable water systems. Until, recently, people depended more on surface water which was exposed to microbial contamination resulting in water related disease like gastroenteritis, typhoid, dysentery, cholera, infectious hepatitis, infant diarrhoeas, and skin diseases and so on.

Bangladesh has a population of app. 160 million people, and it is foreseen that half of the growing population will be living in cities within the coming 20 years. More that 36 percent of the population is still living below the poverty line. Achieving food security for this huge population puts tremendous challenge to Bangladesh’s water resources. Flooding every year during monsoon and drought during dry season due to unsustainable abstraction of water in upstream has been causing socio-economical and environmental disaster for Bangladesh (Gupta et al. 2005). The rapid industrialization and urbanization increases the need for clean water for industries and domestic households. To achieve United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, sustainable management of water resources is obligatory for a country like Bangladesh.

Like Dhaka and chittagang Khulna WASA inaugurated on March 5 in 2008, Khulna WASA started functioning independently on September 16, 2008. The office of former Water Works Department of Khulna City Corporation was handed over for use as WASA office while 130 permanent officials and employees as well as 138 master roll workers of Water Works Department were absorbed with WASA. There are 35 big and 21 small pumps, 3748 deep tube-wells and 5532 shallow ones under Khulna WASA in the city. There is 224-kilometre long pipeline for supplying water to the city residents.

Khulna WASA can supply only 90 million liters against daily need of 240 million liters. Water crisis in Khulna city has turned acute as Khulna Wasa can supply only 37% water that is required for 15 lakh city dwellers.

But water supply situation in the city has not improved at all since Khulna WASA took up the frequent load shedding and drastic fall in underground water level are two main causes behind failure to ensure steady supply of water as most of the pumps remain inactive. More time will be needed to solve the problem.

**Report of the Seminar**

The United Nations has designated March 22nd World Water Day to focus on the attention on the importance of the safe drinking water and to advocate for the sustainable management of water resource. This years theme is Water for Cities; Responding to the Urban Challenge.

In Khulna World Water Day was also observed elaborately. As a part of on going activities World Water day was observed by Bhairab River Area Water Partnership and Initiative for Right view (IRV) with the support of Bangladesh Water Partnership (BWP). A seminar was organized on “Present Status of Water Supply in Khulna City and Way Forward” on 23 March 23, 2011 at Khulna Press club.



Talukder Abdul Khaleque, Mayor, Khulna City Corporation, was present as chief guest and Among the special guests, Dr. Tarun Kanti Sikdar, Director, Environment Department, Engineer Dr. Tauhidul Anawar Khan, Secretary General, Bangladesh Water partnership(BWP), Amena Halim Beby, Councilor, Khulna City corporation, Sk. Ali Akbar Tipu, Councilor, Khulna City corporation were present. The seminar was chaired by Ad. Firoz Ahmed, Convenor, Bhairab River Area Water Partnership and the inaugural speech was delivered by Kazi Zaved Khalid Pasha, Coordinator (CEO) of Initiative for Right View (IRV).

Water crisis in Khulna city has turned acute as Khulna WASA can supply only 90 million liters (30 millions through pipeline, 60 million liter through 10000 deep tube wells) but the demand is 240 million liters. WASA supply only 37%. The Chief Guest Talukder Abdul Khaleque, Mayor, Khulna City Corporation expressed that they are trying their best to solve the problem. In this respect he shared that they have took initiative on 1996 to bring water through pipeline form Phultal Upazilla for the Khulna city dwellers. When the initiative is at the end and when 90% of budget has been utilized then for the sake of environment conservation the community went against this initiative. But the fact is that all the people took the compensation as their lands are acquired for the project. But now they are protesting and against the process. The chief guest emphasized the necessity of solving the water crisis of the Khulna city including the crises of the southwest coastal region especially the Aila affected Dakop, Koera(Khulna) and Mongla Upazillas(Bagerhat) upazillas. He shared that we have Rupsha River but we cannot use this water. The entire water reservoir like pond, canal and wetlands are gradually filled up for various purposes. Not only has the Khulna city the whole southwest coastal region been suffering form scarcity of drinking water. It is necessary to take coordinated and integrated initiative to solve the problem. There is no flow of upstream water flow. Now we are giving priority to use the surface water. He requested to the experts to give him the way of solution so the lot of people will get rid form this crisis. He shared that he is trying his best to solve the water crisis of the Khulna City. Khulna City Corporation looks after the water supply system before the establishment of the Khulna Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (WASA) Khulna. He said that it is necessary to ensure the navigability of Gari River which is the main sweet water supply for the coastal region. The WASA is trying to use the water of the near by rivers but the salinity of the water is so high that it will be costly to treat it.

In the inaugural speech Kazi Zaved Khalid Pasha, Coordinator (CEO) of Initiative for Right View (IRV) gave thanks to Bangladesh water Partnership (BWP) for their support and initiatives. With the support of BWP we have been working with women and youth forming Bhairab Basin Area Water Partnership and have been organizing capacity building training, awareness creation activities, workshop, seminar day observation etc. He also shared The United Nations General Assembly on 28 July 2010 adopted a resolution that recognized the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights. This is a historic and long-needed decision. While the importance of food has been recognized by its being made a human right, the access to clean water had not officially been recognized as a human right. In Bangladesh government has given due priority to the water and sanitation issue. Though Bangladesh is a riverine country now it has been suffering from water crisis. Especially in cities the water supply situation is not satisfactory. In Khulna KWASA has been working for supplying the drinking water for the dwellers. Bangladesh is making progress to achieve the target of MDG on water supply and sanitation. Government’s vision 2021 also gives priority on this issue. As we are living in Khulna our demand that the concerned authority should take initiative to supply water to the city dewless during the dry and summer season properly.



As the key note speaker Engineer Md. Abdullah presented the paper on *Present Status of Water Supply in Khulna City and Way Forward*. In his presentation he shared on the

water supply scenario in Bangladesh, access to water in urban and rural areas, source of drinking water, sanitation feature in Khulna city, Background of water supply in Khulna, present water supply system, management and operation of Khulna WASA, salinity levels in the rivers, water resources development plan, future development plan for Khulna WASA, JICA and ADB project for Khulna WASA.

A video documentary on the status of water supply in Khulna city and its prospect was presented by Mr. Kausik Ahmed, secretary, Southwest Youth Water Forum and another presentation on Pollution of Bhairab River was presented by Nausin Ahmed, deputy Secretary, also presented by Southwest Youth Water Forum.



As special guest Engineer Dr. Tauhidul Anwar Khan, Secretary General of Bangladesh Water Partnership (BWP) shared that among the 100% water that our planet contains 97.5% water is ocean water which is salty. Among the remaining 1.725% is in glaciers, snow and permafrost. 0.075% is ground water, and 0.025% is in the lakes, swamps and rivers. So it is clear that the total population of whole world is depended on only 1% sweet water. 10 thousand children have been dying in the world due to water born diseases. Since 1900 to till now 50% has reduced. It is said that Bangladesh is floating on water. Now a day the water supply from Farakka has reduced drastically. After the Farakka the water salinity has been increasing. Population is increasing day by day. The demand of water is also increasing. Upstream flow in all the river systems of Bangladesh reduces in dry months. It is necessary to increase the sweet water flow from upstream to solve the problem. Reduction of flow from the upstream during the dry season causes tremendous socio-economic and environmental losses for Bangladesh. Hence, any intervention on the upstream of the rivers affects Bangladesh significantly. For addressing all the key water related challenges of the country, water available in the Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Meghna river systems is the single most crucial factor. It is necessary to increase basin Based water supply.

Dr. Tarun Kanti Sikdar, Director, Environment department, recollected that it is not a long time that we had used pond water. People started to use ground water with the introduction of Tube well. We are wasting water in various ways. It is a matter that the KWASA cannot supply as per the demand of the city dwellers. It is necessary to take integrated approach to solve the problem. Main problem is in management. Besides this awareness is very essential which can also help.



Amena Halim Bebi, Councilor, Khulna city corporation Khulna expressed that she was very much enriched by taking part in the seminar. She learned a lot from the environment and water experts. She is very much interested to be the part of this initiative.



Sk. Ali Akbar Tipu, Councilor, Khulna city corporation Khulna, shared that KCC and WASA have negative image to the people. But now all can understand that they are trying their best sincerely solving the problem but due to some unavoidable reason they cannot go forward. Most of our rivers are dried up or occupied. We have to save our rivers for the sake of drinking water supply. The state should play the vital role for solving the problem. We failed to accomplish our respective job. Due to some interest group we have been facing this problem. Once upon a time the water of Madhumati River was sweet. But now it has become saline. We will be more conscious about the use of water.



#### **Participant's opinions:**

Professor Saidur Rahma shared that in the modern age everything is near us. We have been extracting ground water unplanned way. We have made many mistakes. We will be more conscious and aware about the utilization of water resources. We have been extracting ground water without consideration of future by using tube wells. We are using this water for irrigation and fish farming.

Professor Dr. A. K M Nurul Islam, Vice Principle (retrd), M.M.City College, Khulnl a shared that we all over the country have been using the ground water through using tube well. Now we are not getting sufficient water form the tube well. To face the problem we have to develop water resources. He requested to the MD of WASA to share how many tube wells are running by WASA and publicly. He suggested for the use of rainwater.

Gautam Kundu, Lecturer Phultala Women's College said that recently a policy has adopted about the use of ground water use. The initiative for supplying water for the Khulna City from the Phulta is a wrong initiative.

Jahangir Alam Lecturer Phultala Women's College said that Hybrid Rice production need intensive irrigation. Ground water has been using to solve the problem. As the result of over utilization of ground water many areas tube wells are not working. In this situation it is necessary to increase the utilization of surface water resources. The water crisis of the khulna city corporation is increasing day by day. Awareness is very much important for water management. We can use the rain water. We have to organize movement for the conservation of Mayur River

Ad. Aloka nanda Das, Divisional Coordinator, National Women's lawyers Association, Khulna shared that the people of Khulna has been conducting movement for water and conservation of rivers such as Mayur River and Phultal water conservation movement. Till now we did not get any positive result.

Sk Abu Hasan Bakul, Executive Director, Muktir Alo said that Trans boundary issue is very important for our country. Most of the upstream come form India. Positive initiative form India is very important to solve the water problem. We can include rainwater preservation system in building new house. It is necessary to conserve the existing ponds in our city.

Sahina, Uttaran shared that we should be aware and conscious about utilization of water resources.

Md. Babul Hawlader, Advocate, BELA expressed that political commitment is very much essential for the water management issues. The level of ground water is in dangerous situation. We should include rain water harvesting system in constructing houses and apartment in cities. He also requested that KCC can take the initiative for conserving the existing ponds and ware shades for reserving water. He also demanded that the government owned water shad should not be filled up.

S.M.Mahabubur Rahman Khokon, Member secretary, Brihartoro KhulnaBasi, expressed that we have to find out the way of solution. Some international issues are related with water management. This problem can be solved with coordination of India. People should be conscious and will be organized demanding their rights. We can use surface water in hygienic way. Population control is necessary for the long term development of the country.



#### Recommendations:

- River Gori should be re- excavated for ensuring flow of sweet water.
- Initiative should be taken for purifying the surface water.
- Constructing reservoir for water supply

- Increasing water supply through pipeline
- Basin based water management should be given priority.
- We should save the Ganges and Brahmaputra.
- Water management should be given priority
- Awareness creation is necessary for water management.
- More research and study is necessary to understand the total scenario.
- It is necessary to establish water treatment plant in southwest coastal region.
- It is necessary to preserve the rain water.
- Strengthen the save Mayur river movement.
- Save the Bhairab river form illegal grabbing and pollution.

At last the Ad. Firoz Ahmend concluded the seminar by giving thanks to all.