

## ***Necessity of Participatory Water management plan for Tentultala Village***

*Tentultala* Village is situated approximately 10 kilometers from Khulna City under Jalma union parishad of *Batiaghata* upazila in Khulna district. *Jalma* union is big compared to many other unions in Bangladesh and it consists of 33 villages like *Tentultala*. This village is located far from the city as well from the centre of Union Parishad and due to these locational constraints none of the services from city council or Union Parishad reach the inhabitants of this village. There is no public transportation system and it has poor infrastructure for communication and commuting. Major occupation here is fishing and farming. According to the 2011 Census report of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), there are 668 households in the *Village*. In the last few years the village has witnessed high climate induced migration from coastal upzillas.

Historically the major sources of water for both fishing and irrigation were river *Rupsha* and river *Moyur* flowing towards southeast and northwest direction of the village. Although there are floods during rainy season these are normal and manageable.

Participant *Sultan Molla* mentioned that people started living in *Tentultala* Village since 1947. In those days only 18 to 20 families were living in the village and after 1952 migration started from other areas. Based on the conversation with villagers, in *Tentultala* village *Mayur* River is separated from *Rupsha* River by “*Alutola* Sluice Gate” which is also known as 10 Gate. Dam was constructed on *Rupsha* River in 1975 mainly to protect the city from flood water. After that *Alutola* Sluice gate was established in 1979 for systematic control of river water flow and to protect Khulna City.

Water Development Board was responsible for management and operation of *Alutola* Sluice Gate from 1980 to 2012. Then Khulna City Corporation (KCC) took the responsibility for management and operation of *Alutola* Sluice Gate in 2013. KCC has a committee including members from Khulna City Corporation (KCC), Khulna Development Authority (KDA), Water Development Board, community representatives and some other government agencies. They decide the gate opening and closing time on preference basis. One gate operator is appointed by the city corporation.

Around 80 percent of villagers in *Tentultala* are engaged in cultivating different types of crops like rice, vegetables. One of the participant *Umar Ali* reveals that multi season cultivation started in *Tentultala* village after the establishment of Dam and Sluice Gate. Before establishing the sluice gate people used to cultivate only one crop in a year (*Aman* Season). Now three crops are cultivated in a year. Rice is cultivated twice (*Robi* Season and *Aman* Season) and in *Robi* season vegetables are also grown. Due to improper management of *Alutola* sluice gate, agricultural and fish production of *Alutala* area is being hampered. Due to scarcity of water, farmers are unable to cultivate crops in *Robi* season.

The gate management committee is not active. Villager *Umar Ali* said that, shallow boring for irrigation purposes is not effective because of heavy iron contamination in water. They recommend that at least one gate should be opened always in during *Robi* season to meet the irrigation water demand.

The upstream people complain of gate operation, which is done keeping in mind the benefits for the downstream users, and this has given rise to conflict. The problem is *Tentultala* Village is 6 feet higher than the downstream areas. Downstream areas would be flooded if *Tentultala* villagers get sufficient water for their cultivation purposes. For these reasons Gate operation is mainly done considering the privileges of downstream communities. In addition downstream communities can easily preserve water required for cultivation purpose through an individual gate, which is located in *Rayer Mahal* Bazar. As a result *Tentultala* villagers are always deprived from sufficient water. Villagers mentioned that establishment of a gate at *Chachibunia* area would be a solution for this problem. The fishermen group is also affected due to improper management of *Alutola* Sluice Gate.

One potential solution to this problem is participatory water management plan involving upstream and downstream users, water development board, City Corporation, union parishad and upazilla parishad.

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