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MSUK introduces Sono Filter in southwest region

ECONOMIC REPORTER

Manob Sakti Unnayan Kendro (MSUK), a Kushtia based NGO, has undertaken a project to mitigate arsenic contamination in the country. Through introducing a special filter named "Sono Filter" by using indigenous technology, the organisation have already attracted the attention of the concerned stakeholders.

The filter has already been introduced in 11 districts of the country.

The filter is innovated by a group of scientists-innovator led by Dr. Munir, a physician and General Secretary of MSUK, and Bangladeshi born USA citizen, Prof. Abul Hussam of department of Chemistry and Bio-Chemistry, George Mason University, USA. The team worked hard to innovate the filter and after a seven-year research the Sono Filter was innovated.

The filter is locally innovated, using cost effective available materials, based on Composite Iron Matrix (CIM) and low cost Arsenic removal filter to extract arsenic free safe water. It is approved by the govt. after passing through strict environmental testing and verification programme for arsenic mitigation (ETV-AM).

No chemical is used in this filter. So there is no risk of any pollution and Sono Filter does not produce toxic waste. It is completely environmental friendly.

With the financial support from DLB and BMZ, Germany for the last three years MSUK distributed 12,500 Arsenic removal Sono Filter across the country free of cost.

Of them 7,000 filter were installed in Kushtia while the rest were installed in cooperation with like minded NGOs; ADAMS at Mollahat upozilla in Bagerhat, Dip Shetu at Shahjadpur and Sirajgonj Sadar and Shishu Sasthyo Foundation (SSF,B) at Sadar Upazilla of Satkhira district. Another 2100 Sono Filters will be installed at those areas free of cost.

Besides, SONO FILTERS were installed at 825 schools in Kushtia Sadar, Bheramara, and Kumarkhali Upazill at free of cost. It is estimated that about 35 million children are at risk of arsenicosis. The Bangladesh arsenic scenario may be termed as "Slow Tsunami."

Drinking arsenic free safe water can only arrest the [health](#) hazard caused by drinking arsenic laced water.

Apart from free distribution of Sono Filter, MSUK has also given training on the use of Sono Filter at house hold level, free [health](#) care service for Arsenicosis patient, free installation of slab ring latrine and performing social awareness programme through its Mothers' club an innovative programme.

Other NGO's of the country are also working in this field and installed Sono filter are; SIM Bangladesh, Agape Bangladesh, MCC Bangladesh, Baundra Advancement Integrated Committee (BAIC), Bangladesh Arsenic Control Society (BACS) etc.

To fulfill the demand of arsenic free water for the poor MSUK works out a massive plan but it could not go forward at its desired goal for financial constrains.

Bangladesh is a country where natural calamities and disaster are very common phenomena. Arsenic contamination drinking water has already been identified as one of the worst natural disaster in the country.

A recent study shows that more than 60 per cent of the shallow and deep tube-wells contains arsenic above the WHO guideline value of 10 µg/L in many parts of the Ganges and Bhrahmmaputra basins of the country.

It is estimated that 77 to 95 million out of 140 million people of country are drinking groundwater that contains more than 50 µg/L arsenic. The arsenic contaminated water is generally hand pumped from a depth of 30-200 feet deep aquifers. There are about 2.5 million tube-wells according to WHO estimate, although the unofficial estimate is about 10 million.

The prolonged drinking of arsenic contaminated water has caused serious [health](#) hazard in the form of hyper-keratosis on the palms and feet and people experiencing fatigue symptoms of arsenicosis. Long term exposure to low concentrations of arsenic has been reported to cause cancer of bladder, skin, and other internal organs.

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