

## Field Trip 2

**Location visited:** Kaliakoir, Gazipur

**Places visited:** Mokosh Beel, Ujan Beel

**Date of visitation:** 25th, November, 2018

**Participants:** Chandrika Mondal, Graduate Research Assistant; Jobaida Behtarin, Graduate Research Assistant; Mohammad Riad Uddin, Research Associate

On Nov 25, 2018, our journey started to kaliakoir at 8.15 am from East West University. We wanted to look into the Mokosh Beel, acres of open water one hour journey from Gazipur metropolitan city lies in the Turag river Basin surrounded by sal (*Shorea robusta*) forests, numerous canals (khals), and Juran Beel. We reached our destination at 11 am. Basically, it took around 3 hours but it will take less time in future because the construction of a flyover road is in progress at Konabari, Gazipur.



*Figure 1: Mukosh Beel; Captured on Nov 25, 2018*



*Figure 2: A Recreational Hub at Mukosh Beel; Captured on Nov 25, 2018*



*Figure 3: A canal through the Beel with polluted water Captured on Nov 25, 2018*

When we have first seen the Mokosh Beel, it was a place like anyone will love to come and spend some time from their leisure bank but the water quality there was dismal, polluted and the color of the water is dark Black. It spreads bad odor in the whole area. The place has three recreational hubs to entertain visitors, and we visited all those three places to get more insight about the problems they suffer due to degradation in water quality. We talked both to the workers and owners of these places and they said that their business is seasonal (June- September) because in the rainy season the Beel pours with full of water and attracts daily 500-600 visitors. In the rainy season, boats are available in the Mokosh Beel and for their recreation they do boat riding. Even in the off season (October- May), we have seen some visitors still come but the number is sharply declining due to foul-smelling environment. When those visitors were asked why they come to Mukosh Bill, their responses have one thing in common- “where should we go elsewhere in the surrounding”, this reflects the necessity of having a pollution free environment for visitor and for inhabitants, of course.

To identify the sources of the water pollution, we talked to the local people and asked why they have not yet come out to protect such a beautiful place they have. The answer, from all of the male respondents (11), was- “we have tried our level best but things don’t change as there are big fishes involved in outpouring the place with chemical extractions.” Some even were depressed about the on-going condition of the place. Besides male residents, we also talked to some female from the villages – Sholati and Korol Surichala.

The pollution in water causes many problems like less fish production, significantly less paddy production, and many health hazards. Water-borne diseases like diarrhea, cholera, children malnutrition etc. are some of common diseases they suffer, albeit the local people can hardly know direct impact of water pollution is such a devastating.

We also came to know that some NGOs like “BELA (Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association)”, “Caritas” worked on different issues of this area but they have failed to improve the condition. One of the owners of local recreational hub claimed that they have once formed a committee to seek assistance from government to protect this Beel from being polluted; the committee was headed by the District Commissioner (DC) of Gazipur, UNO being the secretary along with executive members including Chairmen of different unions, Members and some locals. The respondent was one of the claimed local members and said, even the DC cannot do anything for development of the conditions.



Figure 4: Soil of Mukosh Beel; Captured on Nov 25, 2018

We also observed that soil condition of this area is miserable and color of the land is also black. If we test the water we can easily prove that water of this Mokosh Beel is heavily polluted and for this pollution land is losing its fertility. According to the local people, their crop production has been declining for the last 10 years. They also informed us that before the industrial development, the crop and fish produced in this Beel could feed the whole population for two and a half days. The locals also mentioned that there is an outburst of mosquitos just after the rainy season. “The mosquitos can even kill a person within an hour”- they asserted. Water pollution there also leads to bad air quality means air pollution. We also observed that longevity of metals like tin is greatly decreased, maybe, due to bad air.

**Reported by:** Chandrika Mondal, Graduate Research Assistant