

HOPE AMIDST HAVOC

"I suffered heavily from waterlogging in my residential area during monsoon periods. It seemed very unusual to me at first. But it was not long until I began to notice other problems, including excessive untimely rainfall and drought due to climate change, in my hometown, Barisal."

"Constantly finding myself in terrible catastrophic events along with my peers, I came to realize what my aim in life looked like within a brief period," said Shakib.

Climate activist Ashikur Rahman Shakib initiated his activism journey six years ago in Barisal. Subsequently, he became a part of the "Youth Net" platform, focusing on climate change and natural disasters. Through this platform, he engages in work within coastal areas. His primary objective revolves around educating and raising awareness among the local population about these disasters, enabling them to manage the consequences more effectively.

Barisal Division, situated in the southern region of Bangladesh, is a disaster-prone coastal area. Annually, several cyclones cause substantial damage. According to Ashikur, rural areas

face greater peril than urban ones. People find themselves in a precarious situation as another cyclone hinders complete recovery. The situation has deteriorated over the last 10 to 15 years.

Ashikur is of the opinion that young individuals can effectuate meaningful change by actively voicing their concerns and persuading policymakers to support their initiatives. However, their impact is hampered by a lack of adequate knowledge and information on climate change, diminishing their influence in advocating for policies.

Ashikur Rahman asserts, "The budget for climate change should be appropriately utilized, and all local volunteers and coastal residents should receive thorough training and adequate equipment."

Acknowledging the inevitability of natural disasters, proactive measures should be implemented to reduce loss and damage. Simultaneously, Ashikur emphasizes that the climate protection movement must persist to bring about substantial change over time.

Written by Faizar MD Saolin

