Ancient tradition of irrigating cropland with a pressure is disappearing day by day

Mirza Abdur Rob Bulbul,- Chalanbeel is formed by rivers, canals and beels. The historical Chalanbeel of Bangladesh is well-known to the people of the whole country as a storehouse of grain and fish. Since ancient times, in the early 90s, Iri-boro rice cultivation started in full swing in the Chalanbeel area.

As a result, a large number of shallow machines were imported from Japan and India in this area. Due to modern farming, traditional farming methods started to decline. As the pattern of farming in cropland has changed in digital Bangladesh due to the touch of modernity, irrigating cropland with a hoe is disappearing day by day from this area.

The 9 Upazilas of Chalanbeel are Tarash, Ullapara, Shahjadpur, Faridpur, Bhangura, Chatmohar, Gurudaspur, Singra and Atrai. Since ancient times, the people of this area have been adopting various techniques for irrigation in agriculture. At one time, the wheelbarrow was one of the main means of irrigating cropland in the entire Chalanbeel area, with the help of which water was irrigated. Although this device can be seen in some areas of Chalanbeel, it is only used by farmers for land irrigation on a small scale, elders of the area told this reporter. With the evolution of time, today, the traditional scene of irrigating water with a wheelbarrow is no longer seen in the Chalanbeel area as before.

The new generation of boys and girls and people living in the city really do not know what a wheelbarrow is and what it is

used for. It seems to be only in the pages of newspapers and fairy tales. During the field investigation, we spoke to Md. Abdur Razzak of Sorishabari village in Singra upazila. He said that in the past, tin or bamboo sluices and wooden sluices were used to irrigate cropland. Water was irrigated from rivers, canals, or water bodies with sluices made of tin or bamboo mats. And the sluice was unparalleled in irrigating high and low lands.

The invention of this wooden sluice was the result of the original thinking of the farmers of rural Bengal. In this area, the wood of the middle part of mango or jackfruit trees was cut, carved in the middle, and a drain was made to provide water for irrigation. In some places, this sluice was also made of coconut, palm, jiga, betel and pine trees. However, nowadays this sluice is also made of wooden planks. There is no other cost other than labor costs for irrigating water. Farmers in the Chalanbeel area said that two strong bamboo poles are buried in the ground in the shape of a cross and another long bamboo is tied to it.

The head of the hoe is placed in one part and the other part is filled with soil (weight) to achieve quick irrigation. In the modern era, with the use of shallow machines, deep and shallow tube wells to irrigate the land, the use of the ancient hoe is almost non-existent. In the Chalanbeel area, where surface water is easily available, the use of hoe is occasionally seen during the dry season.

Most of the rivers, canals and gullies in this area have become crop fields. However, when there is water, hoe is used to irrigate the land of Iri-boro crops on a small scale, he said.

When I spoke directly to Tarash Upazila Agriculture Officer Md. Abdullah Al Mamun in this regard, he said with great sincerity that currently, as all the cropland in the country is under 100% irrigation, there is no need to irrigate the

cropland with the help of the traditional “pressure”. Therefore, farmers no longer use pressure. However, in some areas, this ancient tradition of “pressure” is seen. He told this reporter that when the flood water dries up, the “pressure” becomes useless.