

Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.



RIPPLES OF RESILIENCE

Stories of Health and Hope in Badin's Water Crisis

ONLY YOU CAN TELL YOUR STORY

— Story of a Seven-years old Fisherboy of Badin —

Sikandar woke up early in the morning, dressed, and prepared his school bag. He went to the kitchen, but there was nothing to eat. The water can also was empty. His mother was still asleep, and he didn't want to wake her up. With the water can in one hand and the school bag in the other, he left for school without breakfast. On his return from school, he would collect drinking water from the local filtration plant.

Walking to school, he felt hungry and weak but didn't want to tell anyone about it. Instead of school, Sikandar turned toward the filtration plant. A typical filtration plant in Badin has two or three water ponds where water is collected from the nearby irrigation canal and stored. On a lucky day, one could catch a fish in the pond. Sikandar thought that he could try his luck to bring home some fish for his family's dinner.

He did not have any fishing rod, string, or hook. He decided to dove into the pond to catch the fish. Although he knew that big fish could be found in deep waters, he had yet to learn how to swim in those depths. That day, he had to be content with the small fish in shallow water. He filled the water can, put fish in his school bag, and walked home.



Sikandar gestured towards the spot where he had managed to catch fish during his last visit.

As he fished, his heart was heavy, and he wondered why life had to be so difficult. He wanted to study and become a doctor to help people like his father, who fell ill due to contaminated water. But he knew that his dream was far-fetched given their current financial condition.

Sikandar reached home and showed the fish to his mother. She smiled weakly and thanked him for bringing dinner. She prepared the fish and some roti for the family's dinner.

Sikandar's stomach was still empty, but he was happy that he had done something for his family. He went to bed that night with a smile on his face, thinking about how he would catch more fish in the pond tomorrow. Before falling asleep, Sikandar's mother told him he didn't have to worry about the future and focus on his studies. She believed their circumstances would improve one day, and Sikandar could achieve his dreams.

But deep down, Sikandar knew he shouldn't have to skip school and go fishing to feed his family. He wished that his family could have enough food and that he could focus on his studies instead of worrying about where their next meal would come from.

"I don't skip school every day. Only when there's no food at home, and I have to fish to feed my family. Education is important to me, but so is making sure my family doesn't go hungry."

Sikandar: The little fisherboy of Badin

Roshan: The First Day of Struggle

— Story of filtration plant workers not paid for eight months —

Roshan and two dozen of his colleagues stand united in protest, fighting for their right to be paid for the arduous work they had done for the past eight long months.

The filtration plants are crucial for providing clean water to the people of Badin, and Roshan and his colleagues worked tirelessly to maintain and operate them. Employed by the contractor responsible for the upkeep of these plants, they had put their heart and soul into their jobs. However, their dedication had not been reciprocated, as they hadn't received their salaries for months.

Their plight was further worsened by the contractor's claims that the Public Health Department has not cleared their bills for the past eight months. Frustrated and desperate, Roshan believes this is nothing but a ruse. He is convinced that a conniving collusion exists between the contractor and the Public Health Department, leaving the workers in the lurch.



Roshan leading a protest in front of Public Health Engineering Office-15 March 2023

The protestors gather in front of the Public Health Department building for justice and their rightful dues. Chants of unity echo through the streets, carrying their message of hardship and injustice. Despite facing numerous challenges, Roshan's spirit remains unwavering.

As the holy month of Ramadan approaches in a few days, Roshan's worries intensify. How would he feed his children during this sacred time when their struggle had left them penniless? The joy of Eid, a time of celebration and new clothes, seemed like a distant dream for Roshan's family and the families of his fellow workers.

Despite the darkness that clouded their hopes, Roshan refused to give up. The flicker of hope that had ignited on the first day of the strike still burned within him. He knows he must be strong for his family and colleagues, finding solace in their shared determination.

"Our families depend on us, and we will not waver," Roshan declared, receiving nods of agreement from his colleagues.

Roshan: The First Day of Struggle



A notice pasted on a water tank reads "plant is closed due to non-payment of salaries."

Whispers of Water: The Chronicle of Badin's Thirst



A display of Equality: A site in Badine where Humans and Animals consume water from the same source.

In the heart of Sindh, amidst the undulating plains cradled by the mighty River Indus, lies Badin. A district known for its vibrant culture and resilient people, yet beneath this facade of normalcy, there's a crisis that runs through the veins of the city, a plight hidden within the ripples of its water. Badin, a tapestry rich with history, is now marred by a present that reeks of neglect. Its water supply and drainage systems have become a labyrinth of decay, a testament to years of disregard and insufficient infrastructure. As the sun ascends each morning, it sheds light on the grim reality of the city's most precious commodity: water. The pipelines, like ancient serpents, meander through the city's underbelly, cracked and weary, having intermingled over time until the lines that once separated the potable from the polluted are indistinguishable. The dawn does not just bring light; it brings anticipation. For the fortunate residents in parts of the city, there is water, albeit trickling and uncertain. But this daily gift is a gamble. What runs through the faucets is a murky memory of what water should be, tainted by the very pipes that carry it, delivering not life but a harbinger of illness. Mothers, the silent sentinels of health, dread every drop their children consume, for cholera has found a breeding ground within these aqueous graves, claiming the city's youth with its virulent touch.

The hospitals, both governmental and private, have become battlegrounds. Here, an endless tide of patients, young and old, wage war against diseases born from the very substance that should have nurtured them. The corridors echo with the cries of anguished parents and the coughs of stricken children, painting a heart-wrenching portrait of a city betrayed by its lifeline. Yet, amidst this landscape of despair, stand the water filtration plants, the would-be sentinels of purity. These structures, once the beacons of hope, are now monuments of neglect. With filters choked by years of accumulated debris and machinery groaning under the strain of time, they are but a faded dream of a thirst quenched, a promise unkept.

"Every morning, we're not just hoping for water; we're praying for a future. It's not merely about quenching thirst; it's about nourishing dreams."

Nida: A local school teacher in Badin

Whispers of Water: The Chronicle of Badin's Thirst



Badin: A city where potable and drainage lines run sid-by-side often intermingling.

However, in this portrait of despair, there's a stroke of resilience. The people of Badin, battered but unbowed, have started to weave tales of change. Activists, both young and old, with fire in their hearts, have taken to the streets, their voices rising in unison to demand what is a fundamental human right. Non-governmental organizations have stepped into the light, offering solutions, education, and relief, one drop at a time. They've initiated drives for clean water, mobilized resources to provide medical aid, and have begun the herculean task of untangling the snarled web of Badin's water supply and drainage systems.

This isn't just a story of a city's struggle; it's a narrative of its fight for redemption. The road ahead is parched, and the journey will be long. But the whispers of water are growing louder, carrying with them the hope that Badin, with its tapestry now woven with courage, unity, and resolve, will one day see its waters run clear again. Through the strength of its people, the city will reclaim its right to a life where water is not a source of dread but a wellspring of health and prosperity.

For every drop of water that falls upon the parched lips of this land, a prayer rises - a prayer for a future where thirst is merely a memory, and the waters of Badin are a testament to the resilience of the human spirit.



"The water here carries more than illness, it carries stories – of our struggles, our fears, and our resolve. One day, these stories will flow pure and inspire generations to come, telling them of the time when we turned the tide."

Bilal: A third generation shopkeeper

A Tale of Two Taps



If you get drinking water direct to your home, don't take it for granted.

In the bustling city of Islamabad, Ayesha's morning routine was as predictable as the sunrise. She would wake up, stretch, and lazily stroll to her kitchen sink. With a simple twist of her wrist, fresh water would gush out, filling her glass with the clarity and purity that she had always taken for granted. For her, water was a given, as easy as flipping a switch or pushing a button.

Several hundred kilometers away, in the district of Badin, Sameena's mornings couldn't have been more different. Before the first light could break, she would join the queue outside her home, clutching her empty pots, her heart echoing with hope. The awaited visitor was the water tank, a rare sight in her community, and a source of life for so many.

Sameena's memories were dotted with countless hours spent under the blazing sun, waiting for the water tank. It wasn't just water she was waiting for; it was hope, survival, a chance at another day. And while the wait was arduous, the real fear lay in the uncertainty – for the visits of the water tank were few and far between.

One day, while Ayesha was scrolling through her phone, she stumbled upon a documentary about the water crisis in Badin. She watched with growing horror as the film showcased children like Sameena, their lips parched and eyes sunken, dreams dwindling like the water in their pots. Tales of diseases like cholera, typhoid, and dysentery, all stemming from the absence of clean drinking water, sent shivers down her spine.

The stark contrast of their worlds hit Ayesha like a tidal wave. She felt a pang of guilt every time she turned on her tap, realizing the privilege she had never acknowledged. The water crisis in Badin wasn't just a statistic or a news story; it was a reality, a daily battle for many.

Inspired to make a difference, Ayesha started an initiative. With the help of her community, she set out to raise funds to send clean water trucks to Badin regularly. While this was just a drop in the vast ocean of needs, it was a start.

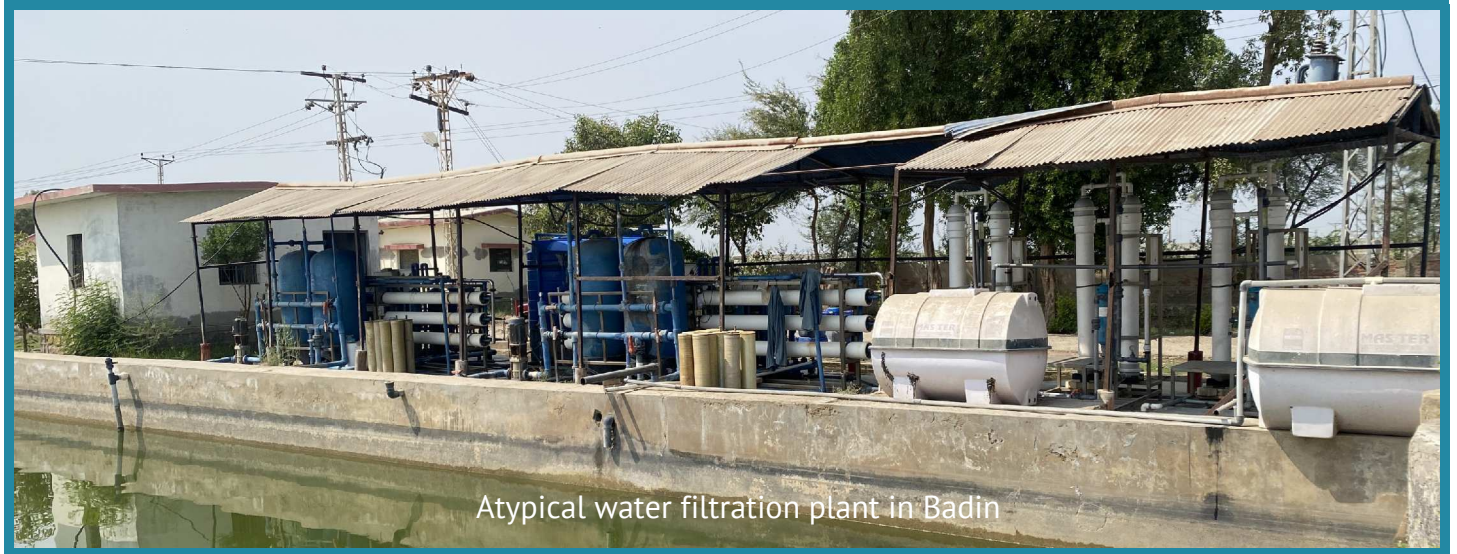
Months later, as Sameena stood in line, the familiar rumbling of the water tank reached her ears. But this time, there was a change. The tanks were more frequent, the water cleaner. There was a spark of hope, a hint of change. And as the two worlds of Ayesha and Sameena collided, a simple truth emerged – water wasn't just a necessity; it was a right, one that everyone deserved.

The story of two taps, miles apart yet intrinsically linked, serves as a poignant reminder: If you have drinking water direct to your tap, never take it for granted. For in another corner of the world, a child waits, dreams, and hopes, all for that elusive drop of life.

"Turning on my tap, I never realized I was unlocking a privilege until I saw eyes that held an ocean of thirst. Now, every glass I fill, I'm reminded of our shared humanity and the streams we must cross to quench a collective longing"

Ayesha, an activist from Islamabad

Filters Forgotten: A Tale of Neglect and Necessity in Badin



Atypical water filtration plant in Badin

In the heart of Badin, among the labyrinth of bustling streets and weary homes, stands a structure meant to be the guardian of health: the public water filtration plant. Yet, it stands, not in glory, but in the shadows of its intended purpose. Its walls, stained with the passage of time, shelter not the relentless hum of machinery but a silence that speaks volumes. This is no ordinary silence; it's the echo of a promise unfulfilled, a duty neglected, a community left vulnerable. The plant, a responsibility of the Public Health Engineering Department, was a beacon of hope when it first opened. People from all corners of Badin flocked, containers in hand, ready to collect what they believed would be clean, safe water. It was more than a facility; it was a symbol of progress, a testament to the belief that every individual, regardless of status, had the right to untainted water.

However, as the moons changed, so did the state of the plant. It didn't operate with the pulse of the city; it throbbed for just a few hours each day, its erratic heartbeats dictating the rhythm of life for the residents. "The filters," one worker disclosed with a sigh, "haven't been replaced for years." His voice was a blend of frustration and resignation.

These filters, once the plant's defensive barrier against contamination, now stood defeated by time and apathy. The water that trickled from the taps carried with it more than a metallic taste; it bore pathogens, harbingers of diseases that soon wove their way into the tapestry of daily life in Badin. Children, the most vulnerable, became the face of this water crisis, their bodies the battlegrounds for waterborne diseases they were never meant to fight.

Hospitals began brimming with preventable despair. Cases of cholera, dysentery, and typhoid transformed from numbers in a report to names, faces, and families. Each statistic was a story of a mother's sleepless night, a father's helpless despair, a child's lost laughter.

But within this narrative of neglect, there emerged a story of undeniable human spirit. People of Badin, bound by adversity, started joining hands to pen a different story. They formed lines at the plant not just to fetch water but to demand accountability, their chants demanding action resonating through the corridors of power. Volunteers, local and international NGOs, began converging on Badin, bringing with them not just aid, but attention to a crisis too long ignored.

"Filters Forgotten" is not just a story of a failing plant; it's a chronicle of resilience, a plea for the fundamental human right to health, and a testament to the unbreakable spirit of Badin's inhabitants. In the plant's stagnation, a movement flows, reminding us all that the pursuit of health and dignity are inseparable, and sometimes, the human condition is the most potent force for change.

"Turning on my tap, I never realized I was unlocking a privilege until I saw eyes that held an ocean of thirst. Now, every glass I fill, I'm reminded of our shared humanity and the streams we must cross to quench a collective longing"

Ayesha, an activist from Islamabad

The Water Porter of Badin: A Story of Struggle

Bashir Ahmad is a water porter in the rural town of Badin, Pakistan. He works long hours every day to deliver gallons of water to households from the local filtration plant. Bashir charges between Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 per gallon, barely enough to make ends meet.

Despite his hard work, Bashir struggles to provide for his family. After deducting fuel charges and motorcycle maintenance costs, he earns only Rs. 200 per day. His family's diet consists mainly of bread with tomato or green chilies, as they cannot afford more nutritious food.

"I have been doing this work for over a decade now," says Bashir. "It is a difficult job, but I have no other option. I have a family to support and no other means of income."

Bashir's daily routine starts early in the morning. He fills his motorbike-turned-trolley with gallons of water from the filtration plant and sets off to deliver them to households. The scorching sun and bumpy roads make the journey more challenging. Despite the obstacles, Bashir remains committed to his work and ensures that his customers receive clean and safe water.

"I feel proud that I am able to provide this service to my community," says Bashir. "Water is essential for life, and I am happy that I can help people access it."

Bashir's story is a reflection of the struggles faced by many in rural communities. Despite the hardships he endures, Bashir remains committed to his work and continues to provide a vital service to his community. His story serves as a reminder of the importance of access to clean and safe water for all.



Bashir is getting ready for the first delivery of the day.