

Arsenic Pollution Mitigation

In November 1971, an issue arose concerning health hazards among local residents due to the production of arsenic trioxide at the former Toroku Mine. The results of the examination revealed that there was environmental contamination in the Toroku area that affected the health of the residents as a result of the operation of the former Toroku Mine, and that there are health victims who appear to have chronic arsenic toxicity.

In response to the outbreak of this disease, the University of Miyazaki (UoM) has for many years been involved in the certification review board for patients with chronic arsenic poisoning, health checkups for residents, and patient support. After 1995, when arsenic contamination and symptoms of suspected chronic arsenic poisoning were reported from various parts of Asia, UoM started surveys and research activities in the following year in Bangladesh, the country most affected by arsenic contamination, with intent to implement countermeasures. In addition to Bangladesh, the Department of Dermatology of the Faculty of Medicine has also confirmed symptoms of chronic arsenic poisoning in residents of Inner Mongolia, China, and Nepal.

Leveraging the expertise gained from more than a decade of research in Bangladesh and working with NGOs, UoM subsequently conducted two arsenic contamination mitigation projects in Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh, India. The first was the two-year JICA Partnership Program, "Integrated Approach for Arsenic Pollution Mitigation in Uttar Pradesh state, India", which began in 2008. The second was the two-year JICA Partnership Program that started in 2011, "Execution of Arsenic Mitigation Project for Establishment of Government Initiative System in UP state of India".

UoM implemented "The Project for Promoting Environmental Health in Arsenic Contaminated Area in Myanmar" in Thabaung Township, Ayeyarwady Region, Myanmar, in 2015 after completing the countermeasure activities in India, aiming to improve the implementation system of sanitation and health in arsenic-contaminated areas through basic health information development and drinking water measures.

We aim to introduce the drinking water contamination countermeasures and sanitation and health implementation system modeled in this project as a government measure and to disseminate the countermeasures and the system to other areas where drinking water is contaminated. A new project titled "Implementing the safe drinking water supply model for health risk reduction in highly arsenic contamination area in Myanmar" is scheduled to be launched in the near future.