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ANALYZING LIVELIHOOD SUSTAINABILITY OF FISHERY BASED LIVELIHOOD OF NORTH EASTERN BANGLADESH

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Fish and fishery resources play an important role in improving socio-economic status of the fishing communities. Sylhet, the *haor* (bowl or saucer shape shallow depression) dominated administrative divisions (encompassing RAMSAR site and Ecological Critical Wetland Area) of Bangladesh is very promising for freshwater capture fisheries. But very few studies focused on the overall status on livelihood sustainability of fishing communities in this region. This study identifies the demography, livelihood strategy, constraints of fishing and their coping strategies, strength, weakness and opportunity of fishing communities using household questionnaires, oral history interviews, and focus group discussions in Sylhet division (north eastern region of Bangladesh). The study identified physical strength and intention to work all the year round as the key strengths and acute poverty, poor economy, lack of alternative income generating opportunity and reduced fish availability as common weakness of fishers. Major threats facing by the fishers are natural calamities, overexploitation, dependency on natural resources and improper policy implication. Scope of alternative income generating opportunities, training and motivational program among the resource users and community based fisheries management can improve the situation. Findings of this study will provide important guideline for wetland management, planning and development of livelihood sustainability of the fishing communities.