

Study on Socio-economic Status of the Fishermen and Dry Fishers Communities at Ashuganj Upazila in Brahmanbaria, Bangladesh

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Abstract

This research examines the socio-economic and occupational conditions of fishermen and dry fishers in Ashuganj Upazila, Bangladesh. Through a comprehensive survey involving 37 fishermen and 20 dry fishers, the study uncovers substantial economic difficulties faced by fishermen, with 64% being landless and 72% earning between BDT 168,000 and 217,999 annually—an amount that barely covers their basic needs. Family expenditures, averaging between BDT 280,000 and 300,000 per year, far exceed their income, leading to minimal opportunities for savings or investments. Educational attainment is low among fishermen, with 45% having completed only primary school, restricting their economic mobility. Dry fishers, though slightly better off, also face economic challenges; 75% spend between BDT 600,000 and 1,099,999 on fish purchases and live in modest housing, with 70% residing in tinshed homes. However, they enjoy greater stability, with 75% owning land, which aids in financial security and diversification. The study recommends educational improvements, better healthcare access, and financial support for sustainable livelihoods to alleviate economic strain and build resilience against environmental and economic challenges.

Introduction

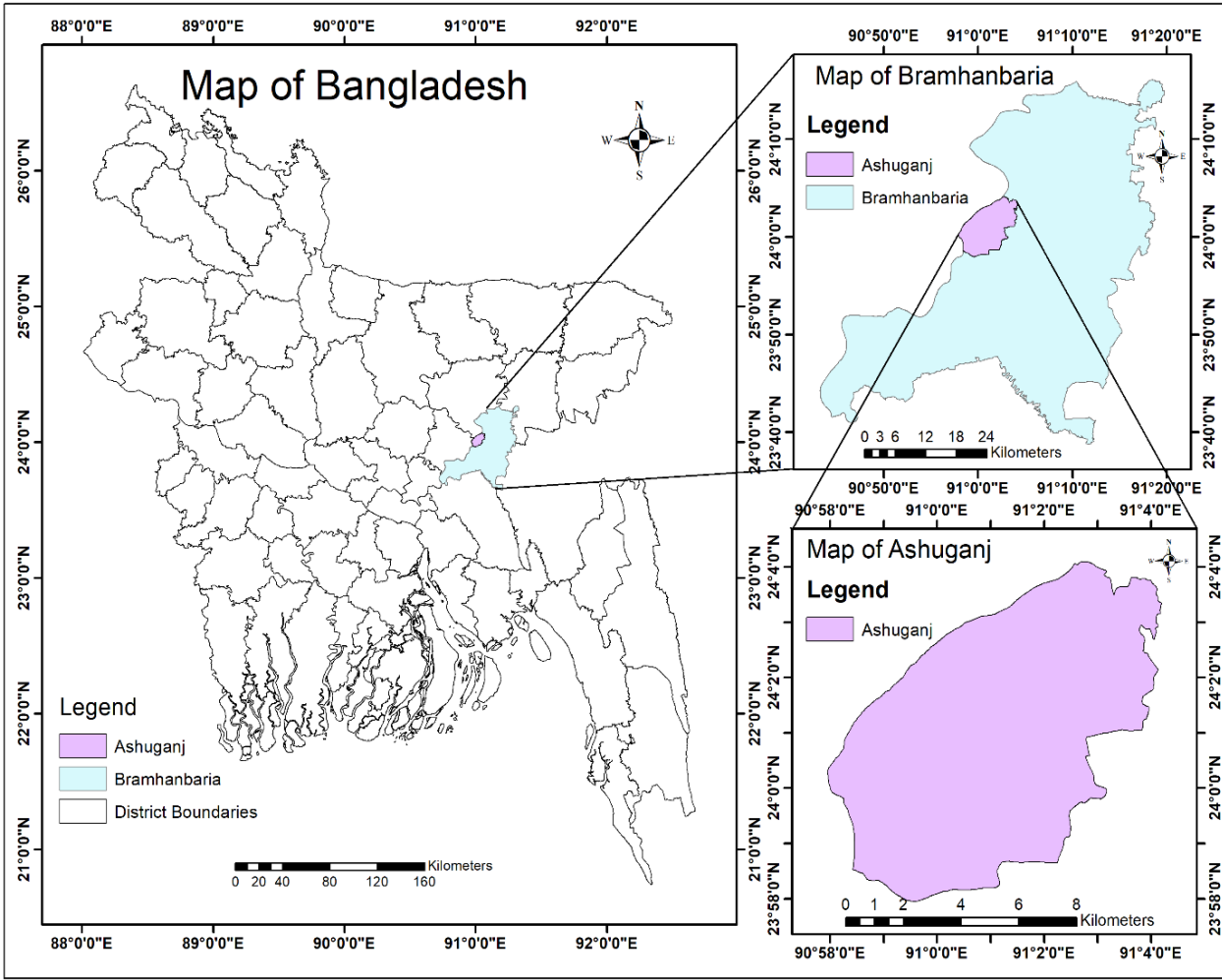
Fishing is a vital sector in Bangladesh, significantly contributing to food security, employment, and foreign exchange earnings. This study focuses on the socio-economic realities of fishermen and dry fishers in Ashuganj Upazila, an area where fishing is central to local livelihoods. Despite their economic contributions, these communities face considerable challenges, including income instability, limited access to education, healthcare, and resources necessary for their trade. The study aims to provide a detailed understanding of these challenges and the socio-economic dynamics within fishing communities in this region.

Objectives

- To assess the income levels, educational attainment, and occupational patterns of fishermen and dry fishers in Ashugonj Upazila.
- To analyze the impact of environmental and market dynamics on their economic activities.
- To identify the socio-cultural and institutional factors affecting their livelihoods.
- To suggest policy recommendations for improving the socio-economic status of these communities.

Materials and Methods

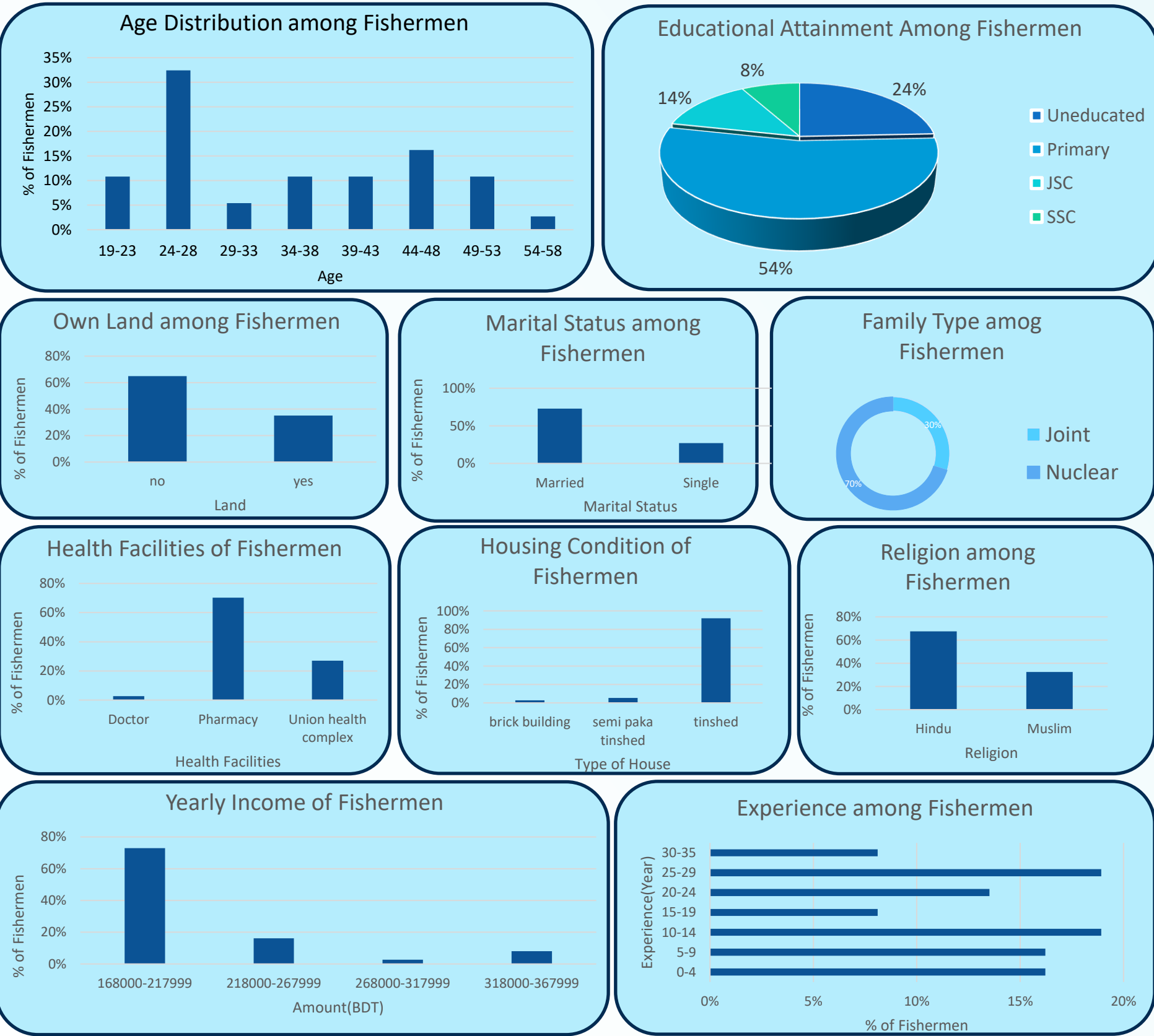
- ❑ **Study Area:** The research was conducted in Ashuganj Upazila, located along the Meghna River in the Brahmanbaria district, a region where fishing is both culturally and economically significant.
- ❑ **Population and Sampling:** A sample of 37 fishermen and 20 dry fishers was selected using a multi-stage sampling method to ensure a representative cross-section of the community.
- ❑ **Data Collection:** Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered using structured surveys that included questions on demographics, income, health, education, and occupational activities.
- ❑ **Data Analysis:** The data were analyzed using statistical and qualitative methods to assess socio-economic indicators, comparing outcomes between fishermen and dry fishers.



Results

Fishermen:

In Ashuganj Upazila, 64% of fishermen are landless, with 72% earning between BDT 168,000–217,999 annually—insufficient to meet living costs. Annual household expenses of BDT 280,000–300,000 leave little for savings. Education levels are low (45% only completed primary school), limiting economic mobility, while access to health and sanitation is also inadequate.



Dry Fishers:

Dry fishers are somewhat more stable; 75% own land and 25% have secondary education, allowing for more financial security and income diversification. Although they spend significantly on fish (BDT 600,000–1,099,999 annually), 70% live in modest tinshed housing, indicating some economic resilience over fishermen.



Conclusion

The socio-economic challenges of fishermen and dry fishers in Ashuganj Upazila call for targeted interventions. Improving access to education, healthcare, and financial support for alternative livelihoods can alleviate economic hardships. Supporting sustainable fishing practices and promoting income diversification, such as small-scale agriculture or fish processing, will strengthen community resilience against economic and environmental pressures. This research underscores the need for policies focused on sustainable development and poverty alleviation in fishing communities.

Reference

