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## Socio-economic status of fishermen at Habiganj Sadar Upazila in Bangladesh

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### Abstract

The present study was conducted to assess & providing baseline information about the socio economic & livelihood status of fishermen in the Habiganj Sadar Upazila, Bangladesh during the period from August to November, 2018. The livelihood status of fishermen community of Habiganj Sadar Upazila was presented in terms of educational status, marital status, religious status, family size & type, housing facilities, electricity facilities, sanitary facilities, drinking water facilities, banking facilities, technical training, annual income. The survey revealed that majority of the fishermen belonged to the age groups of 31-40 years (28.75%), represented by 97% Muslim. 85% of them were married & 15% were unmarried. The family size of fishermen community usually consisted of more than 7 members. It was found that 61% of them lived in nuclear families and 39% live in joint families. About 72.5 % of fishermen were illiterate. Among them 7.25% can't sign but 65% were able to sign. 76% of fishermen had tin shed house, 19% and 5% of the fishermen had katcha & pucca house respectively. The highest number (54%) of the fisher's annual income ranged between 65,000 BDT-80,000 BDT. 61% of the fishermen received health service from District Sadar Hospital, 35% from village doctors and remaining 4% got health service from MBBS doctors. About 65% of fishermen used semi pucca toilet while 29% of fishermen had katcha toilet but only 6% fishermen used pucca toilet for hygiene facilities. Present study had been found that, 57% fishermen used own tube well while 40% used neigh bor's tube well as a source of water. Only 3% used pond water. Most of them (72%) had electricity facilities in their house. Fishermen struggled for their livelihood. For the development of the socio economic status of fishermen expansion of education, technical training, off farm employment opportunity, loan facilities from government agencies and improved management of the local resources should be ensured.

**Keywords:** Fishermen, socio-economic, livelihood, Habiganj

### 1. Introduction

Bangladesh is a country of South Asia. It shares land borders with India and Myanmar (Burma). Fisheries sector is one of the most dynamic and productive sector in Bangladesh. The fisheries sector contributes 3.61% to GDP and 24.41% to agricultural GDP [1]. More than 11 percent of the total population of Bangladesh is engaged with this sector in full time and part time basis for their livelihoods [1]. Fish supplements to about 60% of our daily animal protein intake [4]. In Bangladesh fish and fisheries is the part of cultural heritage [2]. Fish and fishermen are associated with each other. Fishermen are one of the most important group in Bangladesh. The number of fishermen who are fully reliant on fisheries sector for their livelihood about 1280000. Among them 770000 are engaged in inland fisheries sector and 510000 in marine sector [3]. There are about 64 districts in Bangladesh. Habiganj is one of them which is situated in the north-eastern part of Bangladesh. It is located in between 23°58' and 24°42' north latitudes and in between 91°09' and 91°40' east longitudes. Its area is 2,636.58 km<sup>2</sup> and covered by Sunamganj District to the north, Tripura of India and Maulvibazar District to the east, Balaganj Upazila of Sylhet to the north-east, Brahmanbaria and Kishoreganj districts to the west [4]. Habiganj district is rich with fisheries resource. Kushiara, Kalni, Sutang, Khowai, Korangi, Barak river are notable in Habiganj district. Habiganj Sadar Upazila situated on the bank Khowai River. The district comprises nine Upazilas as Ajmiriganj, Baniachang, Bahubal, Chunarughat, Habiganj Sadar, Lakhai, Madhabpur, Nabiganj, Sayestaganj. The total area of Habiganj Sadar Upazila is 256 km<sup>2</sup>. In our country fishermen's socio economic status is not hearty. They have to struggle for endure. Generation after generation they remain illiterate and are not able to contribute for the betterment of their community. This study was carried out for the first time to know the socio economic condition of fishermen community of the Habiganj Sadar Upazila.

**Correspondence**

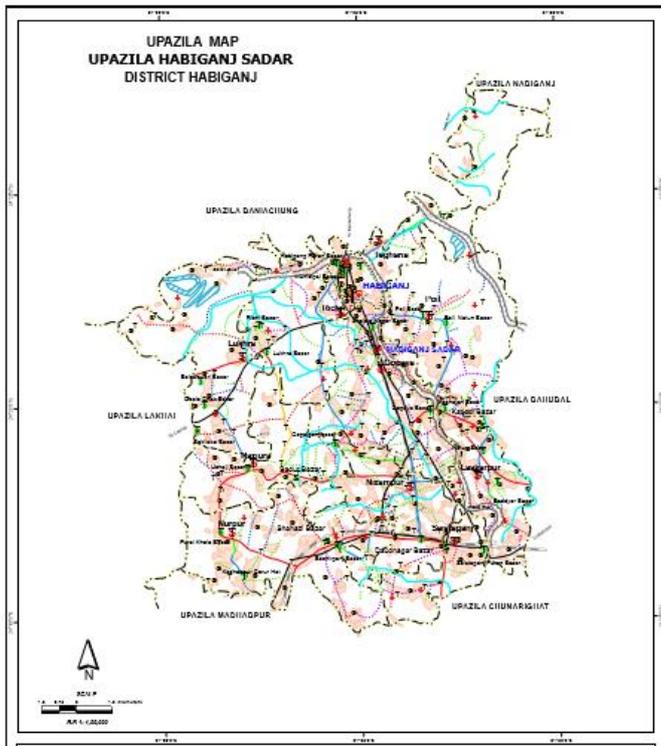
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**2. Materials and Methods**

**2.1 Study area and period**

The investigation was conducted in some selected area of Habiganj Sadar Upazila (Figure 1) during August to November, 2018 by using survey and interview method. Eighty fishermen of the selected area were interviewed during the survey. The study was carried out in the eight villages named Umednagar, Poil, Noagaon, Shikarpur, Tongir Ghat, Panch Paira, Moshajan, Shihaldaria.



**Fig 1:** Map of Habiganj Sadar Upazila.

**2.2 Data collection**

**2.2.1 Primary sources**

For collection of data regarding socioeconomic issues, interview made with eighty fishermen of eight different villages Habiganj Sadar Upazila. Ten representative fishermen from every village were asked with a semi structured questionnaire. Different social aspects were asked in the questionnaire.

**2.2.2 Secondary sources**

The secondary sources of data were Upazila Fisheries of Habiganj Sadar Upazila, District fisheries of Habiganj and also different websites and journals.

**2.3 Data analysis**

After collection of data from the fishermen, they were verified by asking other localities to eliminate error and inconsistencies. Then Data were imputed transformed into digital format carefully. The data were arranged according to various aspects. The data were categorized and analyzed with Microsoft Excel 2016.

**3. Results**

**3.1 Age distribution of fishermen**

In the study area majority of respondents (28.75%) were 31-40 years old. On the other hand, 23.75% fishermen were found 41-50 years old, 18.75% fishermen were found 21-30

years old, 10 % fishermen were found 51-60 years and also between 10 to 20 years old. Rest 8.75% were above 60 years old. The case study shows that young people are more involved with fishing activities (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Age of the fishermen in Sadar Upazila, Habiganj

Age group (years)	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)
10-20	8	10
21-30	15	18.75
31-40	23	28.75
41-50	19	23.75
51-60	8	10
Above 60	7	8.75
Total	80	100

**3.2 Educational Status of Fishermen**

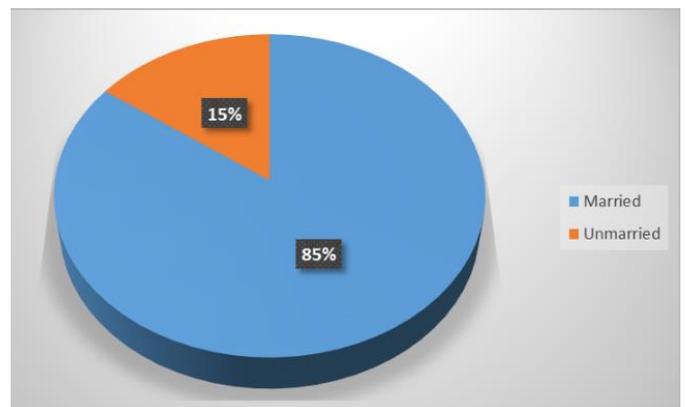
In our country most of the fishermen hadn't received education. They engaged fishing activity from childhood. In study area about 72.5 % of fishermen were illiterate out of 80 fishermen. Among them 7.25% can't sign but 65% were able to sign. On the other hand, 25% had education up to primary level and only 2.5% passed S.S.C. The case study shows that even they haven't enough education but most of them have learnt to sign. They were unable to study more because they were inherited fishing activities by paternal way. But they understand the importance of education and want their children to study (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Educational Status of fishermen in Sadar Upazila, Habiganj

Educational Status	No. of Respondents	Respondents (%)
Cannot sign	6	7.25
Can only sign	52	65
Primary	20	25
SSC	2	2.5
Total	80	100

**3.3 Marital Status of Fishermen**

Majority (85%) of respondents were married and rest 15% were unmarried. The case studies showed that most of the fishermen were married and their families were also associated with fishing activities. Early marriage and dowry system found in fishermen community (Fig 2).



**Fig 2:** Marital Status of Fishermen

**3.4 Religion**

There were about 97% of fishermen who had religion status as Muslim. Only 3% were found Hindu (Figure). The study shows that there was present communal harmony among them (Fig 3).

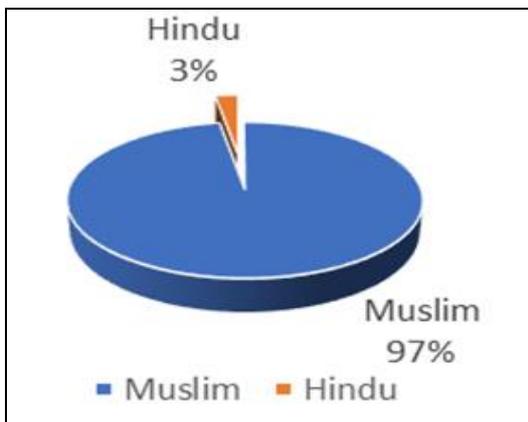


Fig 3: Religion Status of fishermen

**3.5. Number of family member**

It was found that, Majority (60%) of family consists of more than 7 family members, 25% Family had 5-6 members and rest 15% consists of 2-4 family members. The study shows that those who have more family members suffered from different types of problems (Fig 4).

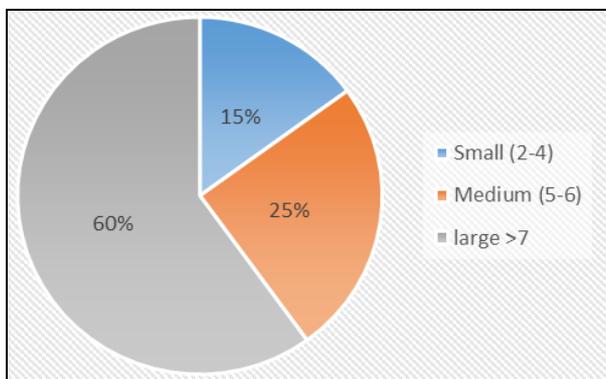


Fig 4: Number of family member of fishermen

**3.6 Types of Family**

Both nuclear and joint family were observed in study area. Number of nuclear family was higher in study area. It was found that 61% people lived in nuclear families and 39% live in joint families. Most of the fishermen live separately from their paternal family (Fig 5).

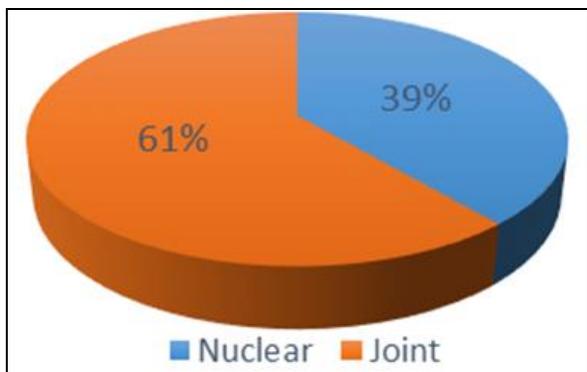


Fig 5: Types of family of Fishermen

**3.7 Housing condition**

There were three types of house found in study area such as katcha, tinshed and pucca. Majority (76%) of houses were tinshed and 19% were katcha which were made from combination of soil, tree leaves and bamboo. Only 5% were

pucca made of brick. Due to the bad financial condition of fishermen most of them live in tinshed house (Fig 6).

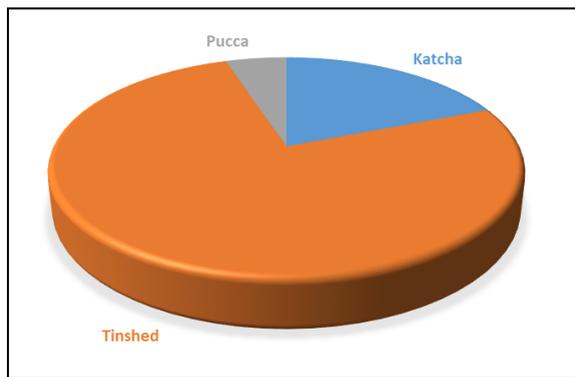


Fig 6: Housing condition of Fishermen

**3.8 Electricity facility**

It was found that about 72% fishermen have electricity facilities in their house only 28% have no electricity facilities in their house. Electricity has reached the houses of fishermen as the most of the villages are electrified (Fig 7).

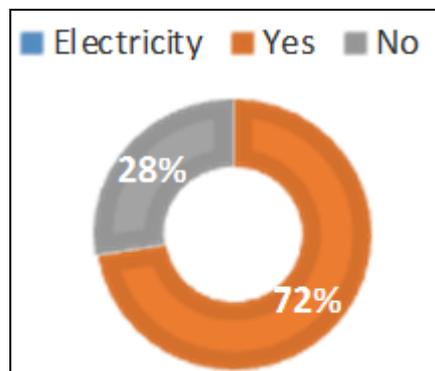


Fig 7: Electricity facility of Fishermen

**3.9 Mobile, Television and Refrigerator user**

It was found that 57 respondent use mobile phone and 23 had no mobile phone out of 80 people. Most of them used mobile phone for commination, only small portion favored for recreational purposes. Many fishermen are using mobile phones as the network has reached in villages. But a few number of fishermen can't afford mobile phone. 20 fishermen had television in their house but others 60 couldn't afford television. Most of television users watching TV at night. In study area only few fishermen had refrigerator in their house. Only 7 people out of 80 had refrigerator in their house. As a result, most can't preserve their perishable food items (Table 3).

Table 3: Mobile, Television and Refrigerator user among Fishermen

Device	Yes	No
Mobile	57	23
Television	20	60
Refrigerator	7	73

**3.10 Drinking Water Facilities**

Water is important for our life. This case study shows that about 57% fishermen had their own tubewell in house. 40% used neighbor's tubewell as a source of water. Only 3% used pond water. No deep tubewell were observed in study area (Fig 8).

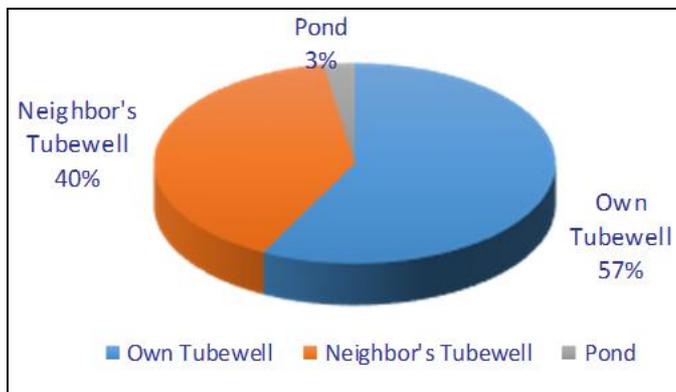


Fig 8: Drinking Water Facilities of Fishermen

**3.11 Sanitary Facility**

Sanitation is vital for maintain good health and promote life span. Diarrhoea, cholera etc. disease caused due to inadequate sanitation facilities. In the study area 65% of fishermen had semi pucca (ring) toilet, 29% of fishermen had katcha toilet made by bamboo, Polythene, leaves, soil etc. Only a small portion 6% fishermen used pucca toilet for hygiene facilities (Fig 9).

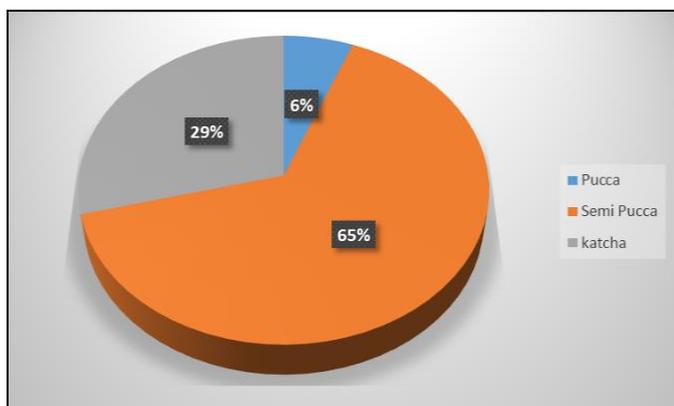


Fig 9: Sanitary Facility of Fishermen

**3.12 Diseases and Medical facilities**

There is a proverb that says health is wealth. Majority of respondents no knowledge about nutritional value of food and lived in unhygienic environment. So disease outbreak was a common phenomenon among them. They often suffered from diarrhoea, cholera, typhoid, fever, gastric, malnutrition etc. It was found that 61% of people received their treatment from Habiganj Sadar hospital. On the other hand, 35% visited village doctor. Only 4% took medical facility from MBBS doctors. Medical facilities was found quite satisfactory in study area (Fig 10).

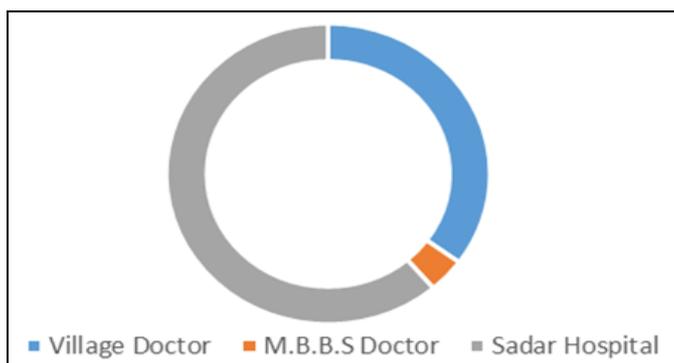


Fig 10: Medical Facility of Fishermen

**3.13 Bank account holder**

There are some government and non-government bank present in Habiganj sadar such as Sonali bank, Janata bank, Agrani bank, Rupali bank, Dutch Bangla bank, AB bank, Prime bank etc. But only a few number of respondent have bank account. It was observed in the study area that about 22% has bank account but 78% has no bank account. Mobile banking is also popular among fishermen. They use bKash, Rocket, Ucash other money transaction system (Fig 11).

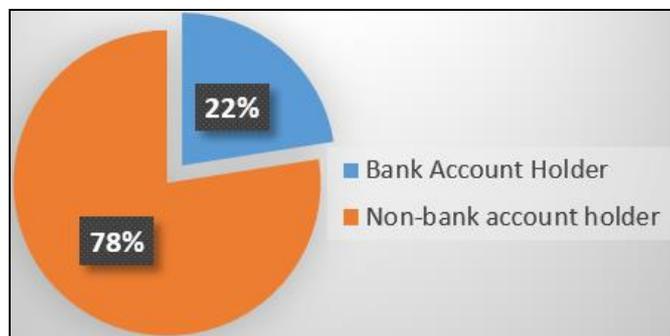


Fig 11: Bank account holder Fishermen

**3.14 Technical training**

Training is necessary to improve knowledge, skills, performance. Training increase the provide various information about fish marketing system, storage, transportation, sustainable use of fisheries resources, harmful effect of destructive fishing gear. Only 11% of total fisher got technical training from governments project and Non-government organizations but majority (89%) had no technical training (Fig 12).

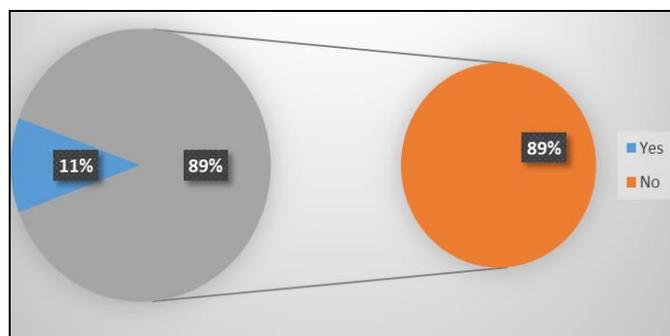


Fig 12: Technical training of Fishermen

**3.15 Occupational Status and Annual Income**

There were mainly three types of fishermen (professional, occasional and subsistence) found in Habiganj Sadar upazila. But in study area most of them were professional. Majority of them involved in fishing activity by legacy. However, a small number of population were involved in agriculture, day labor, Small trader, Rickshaw puller, Tom Tom driver (Electric auto rickshaw), Goat and cow rearing, Poultry business etc. It is troublesome to found appropriate information on annual income through observation. So, this information was collected very cautiously. The annual income of fishermen came from mainly fishing activities as well as secondary sources. Depending upon their daily and monthly income, the annual income was estimated. Among 80 fishermen, almost 15% had their annual income 50000-65000 BDT, 54% of fishermen had annual income in ranges of 65000-80000 BDT, 20% had 80000-95000 BDT. Only 11% fishermen had higher income above 95000 BDT (Table 4).

**Table 4:** Income status

Income Level (BDT)	Number of fisherman (n=80)	Percentage of fisherman
50000-65000	12	15
65000-80000	43	54
80000-95000	16	20
Above 95000	9	11

#### 4. Discussion

In the study area majority of respondents (28.75%) were 31-40 years old. On the other hand, 23.75% fishermen were found 41-50 years old, 18.75% fishermen were found 21-30 years old, 10 % fishermen were found 51-60 and 10 to 20 years old. Rest 8.75% were above 60 years old. Ali *et al.*, have found that (2014) <sup>[5]</sup> the age of the fishermen ranged from 10-60 years. 10% of fishermen were in the young group, 60% were in the middle age group, where 25% was represented by group of seniors and 5% being very old person. Which is more or less similar with our study.

In study area it was observed that about 72.5 % of fishermen were illiterate out of 80 fishermen. Among them 7.25% can't sign but 65% were able to sign. On the other hand, 25% had education up to primary level and only 2.5% passed S.S.C. Mia *et al.* found (2015) <sup>[3]</sup> that 25-40% illiterate (no education), 45-50% capable of sign only, 12.5- 17.5 % primary level, 2.5-7.5% SSC level of education. Kabir *et al.* reported that (2012) <sup>[6]</sup> most of the fishermen were illiterate (88%). Only small portion of them can sign only (2%). Some were primary level of educated (10%). Minar *et al.* found (2012) <sup>[18]</sup> that majority of the fishermen were illiterate (80%) and only minor part of them can sign only (12%). Some were primary level of educated (8%). The present study is more or less relevant with previous work.

The case study showed that most majority (85%) of respondents were married and rest 15% were unmarried. Bappa *et al.* stated that (2014) <sup>[7]</sup> majority (94%) was married while the unmarried responded was only 6%. Which has similarity with the present study.

Hassan and Mahmud (2002) <sup>[8]</sup> stated that the coastal fishing community in Kuakata the majority of fishermen were Muslim (93.94%). Billah *et al.* reported that (2018) <sup>[9]</sup> there were about 96% of fishermen who had religion status as Muslim; rest of fisher had Hindu (6%) and Buddhist (2%). In our present study there were about 97% of fishermen who had religion status as Muslim. Only 3% were found Hindu.

It was found that, Majority (60%) of family consists of more than 7 family members, 25% Family had 5-6 members and rest 15% consists of 2-4 family members. Bappa *et al.* showed that (2014) <sup>[7]</sup> the highest percentages (47.76%) found for 7-8 members in a family, the lowest percentage (1.27%) was obtained for 1-2 Members.

It was found that 61% people lived in nuclear families and 39% live in joint families. Billah *et al.* reported that (2018) <sup>[9]</sup> there were about 82% family which belongs to nuclear type status and rest 18% had joint family. Adhikary *et al.* reported (2018) <sup>[10]</sup> that 77% of fish farmer family was jointed and 23% percentage fish farmer family was nuclear.

There were three types of house found in study area such as katcha, tinshed and pucca. Majority (76%) were tinshed. 19% were katcha and rest of 5% were pucca. Ali *et al.*, was found that (2014) <sup>[5]</sup> 60% households were tinshed with wooden wall. 20% households were containing of Brick, wood and tin and only 5% having the Brick and Cemented House. Hossain *et al.* (2009) <sup>[11]</sup> reported that 40.3% of farmers had house of

earthen condition, 46.7% had semi-concrete and 10% had concrete house.

It was found that about 72% fishermen had electricity facilities in their house only 28% had no electricity facilities in their house. Islam *et al.* found that (2017) <sup>[12]</sup> about (93.33%) fish farmers had electricity facilities in their house. Only few (6.67%) had no electricity in their house. Bappa *et al.* observed that (2014) <sup>[7]</sup> majority households (82%) had no electricity connection.

It was found that 57 respondent use mobile phone and 23 had no mobile phone out of 80 people. 20 fishermen had television in their house but 60 had no television out of 80 fishermen. In study area only few fishermen had refrigerator in their house. Only 7 people out of 80 had refrigerator in their house. Sharif *et al.* reported that (2015) <sup>[13]</sup> 99% fish farmers use mobile phone and only 1% has no mobile phone. Billah *et al.* reported that (2018) <sup>[9]</sup> 54% respondent had a television set in to their house, 48% fishermen had own mobile phone. There was no data available about refrigerator use in Bangladesh.

Bappa *et al.* showed that (2014) <sup>[7]</sup> 82% fishermen used deep tube well water while remaining 18% collected water from other sources. Ali *et al.* found that (2014) <sup>[5]</sup> 10% fishermen used their own tube-well, 30% fishermen used shared or neighbor tube-well and remaining majority part as 60% used Government tube-well in Schools area. This case study showed that about 57% fishermen had their own tubewell in house. 40% used neighbor's tubewell as a source of water. Only 3% used pond water. No deep tubewell were observed in study area.

In the study area 65% of semi pucca toilet were found. 29% of fishermen had katcha toilet but only 6% fishermen used pucca toilet for hygiene facilities. Kabir *et al.* reported that (2012) <sup>[6]</sup> 65% of toilets were Katcha while 5% were semi-pucca and 30% of the fishermen had no sanitary facilities. Mia *et al.* found (2015) <sup>[3]</sup> that 47.5-50% of toilets were katcha, while 42.5% were semi-pucca, only 7.5-10% were pucca.

It was found that 61% of people received their treatment from Habiganj sadar hospital. On the other hand, 35% visited village doctor. Only 4% took medical facility from MBBS doctors. Billah *et al.* reported that (2018) <sup>[9]</sup> 67% fishermen took medical facility from village quack doctors, and rest of 33% got from MBBS doctors. Islam *et al.* found (2014) <sup>[14]</sup> 80% of the fish farmer in the study area was dependent on village doctors. Shahriar *et al.* (2010) <sup>[17]</sup> found that 64% of the fishermen households were dependent on village doctors, 24% of the fishermen got health service from upazila health complex and remaining 12% got health service from MBBS doctors.

Sharif *et al.* reported that (2015) <sup>[13]</sup> 45% traders had own bank account but only 55% traders had no bank account. It was observed in the study area that about 22% had bank account but 78% had no bank account.

In the study area only 11% of fishermen received technical training but majority (89%) had no technical training. Mia *et al.* found (2015) <sup>[3]</sup> that about 50-55% fishermen were trained from the various types of organization and rest of them had no training. Hossain *et al.* found (2015) <sup>[16]</sup> that only 20% fishermen had training and 80% had no any training. The present study is relevant with previous work.

Billah *et al.* reported that (2018) <sup>[9]</sup> annual income of respondents were varied from 30,000 to 70,000 and BDT above. The highest percentage (26%) earned 30,000 to 40,000 TK per year and the lowest percentage were, (12%) earned

70,000 TK and above. In the study area almost majority had annual income 65000-80000 BDT. Lower income as 50,000-65,000 BDT had only 15% of fishermen.

## 5. Conclusion

The present socio economic status of the fishermen of Habiganj Sadar Upazila was not satisfactory. Most of them were dependent on only fishing for their livelihood. They were not well educated, they had no technical training and capital for proper gear and boat. They lack of off season employment opportunity. Some of them wanted to change their profession. Effective initiatives from government & non-government agencies may lead to a rapid development of the livelihood status of the fishermen in the study area.

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