

Role of Community-based Forestry to Improve Livelihoods of Local People: A case of Sal-forest area in Bangladesh

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Abstract—Community-based forest management (CBFM) or community-based forestry is any government-approved form of forest management in which local communities participate, with an objective of providing communities with social and economic benefits while promoting the sustainable management forest resources. CBFM has been implementing in the degraded Sal forest areas since 1989 with an aim to eliminate the main causes of forest depletion as well as alleviate poverty through participation of local people who depend on forest for their livelihoods in Bangladesh. The objective of the study was to explore the role of CBFM initiative on the livelihoods of local people based on empirical data collected from the CBFM project sites. The study was conducted in two forest ranges of Sakhipur Sal forest area under Tangail district of Bangladesh. The findings indicate that though CBFM initiatives improved the financial capital of respondents to an extent, other livelihood capitals faced constraints and difficulties. Biasness of the CBFM project personnel and social discrimination, inequality issues and social capital differences were emerged between ethnic and non ethnic respondents in the study areas. Lack of concrete commitment by the CBFM project personnel in particular and forest department in general, CBFM could not fulfill the demands of local people and limited success had been created to improve the overall livelihoods situation. It was reported during field

observation that CBFM project alone was not sufficient to manage and conserve the Sal forests or ensure local people's basic needs and demands. Therefore, to address the diversified needs of forest dependent local people and to manage and conserve Sal forest in a more sustainable way, the forest department of Bangladesh might initiate a long-term-integrated approach with skilled local forest staff.

Keywords: *Community-based forestry, Livelihood, Local people, Sal-forest, Bangladesh.*