

# **RIVER ECOSYSTEM SERVICE IN SETTLEMENT DEVELOPMENT AND HISTORY OF COASTAL BANGLADESH: A CASE STUDY ON KACHUA UPAZILLA**

## **Abstract**

In Bangladesh every single settlement, whether it is urban or rural is situated alongside a form of inland water network. Livelihood, culture and civilization of these settlements maintain an intrinsic relationship with the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna River Basin System. Inland water eco-system service plays a significant role in the establishment of a settlement and its socio-economic activities. The traditional role of the water network has however, deteriorated over the years due to the lack of ecological knowledge, dearth of proper strategies and policy guidelines and various anthropogenic activities in the face of accelerated climate change scenarios. This study attempts to find out the ecosystem services of Bhiarab River in the context of the national river management strategies and policies in cooperation with river-dependent community and challenges thereof. The paper explains the background of this River's channel-based navigation, along with the discussion of issues and challenges faced by the settlements. The findings reveal various strategic policies that have been implemented over the years on piecemeal basis to manage water resources which did not end up well due to the absence of a holistic approach. It is suggested in this paper that future management plans for this River should involve local communities to avail their willingness to conserve the River, while making them resilient against anthropogenic and natural impacts through enhancement of socio-economic outputs from it. The community willingness and its dependence, as unearthed in this research, provides compelling ground for the authors to state that integrated planning with proper respect for local ecology is a mandatory strategic element for successful implementation of the policies in this regard.