



# **Symbiosis and Crisis: Study on Elephant-Fisher folks Ecology in Deepor Beel Ramsar Site, Assam**

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**Abstract:** The present study was carried out in the eco-sensitive zone of Deepor Beel wildlife reserve, the only Ramsar site of Assam, where Asian elephants and fisher folks have co-existed for centuries. The elephants have established a symbiotic relationship with the fisher folks by providing a series of ecological services that help in the wetland resource management of the beel. Therefore the present study deals with the role and significance of elephants on the livelihood system of the fisher folks. The study resulted in identifying two crucial means of ecological services that elephants provide through their wide ranging feeding ecology and diet composition, first as a means to control the invasive aquatic species and second as a means to enhance the productivity of the benthos fish species. The study also focuses on the change in their symbiotic relationship that has taken the form of livelihood crisis for the fisher folks due to the adverse impact of deforestation and urbanization within the beel ecosystem.

**Keywords:** Asian elephant, Aquaculture management, Urbanization, Environmental degradation, Livelihood crisis, Wildlife protection

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