

# “Political Conflict in Chittagong Hill Tracts: A Synthesis”

*Thesis Submitted to the University of Dhaka for the award  
of the Degree of Master of Philosophy*

**Supervisor:**  
Professor Mahbubur Rahman

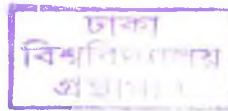
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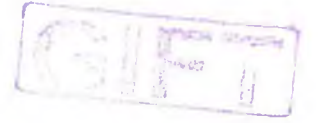
Department of Public Administration  
University of Dhaka, Dhaka 1000  
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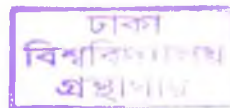
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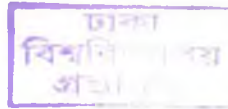
## CERTIFICATE

It is a pleasure to me to certify that the thesis entitled "Political Conflict in Chittagong Hill Tracts: A Synthesis" submitted by A.H.M. Humayun Kabir, for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, is his original research work. It is done by the candidate under my direct supervision.

I have gone through the work and found it satisfactory for submission to the Department of Public Administration, University of Dhaka, for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Public Administration.

Dated: Dhaka  
29.07.2010

449627



Mahbubur Rahman  
Supervisor  
29.7.2010

## DECLARATION

I, A.H.M. Humayun Kabir, hereby declared that this thesis work "Political Conflict in Chittagong Hill Tracts: A Synthesis" has been originally carried out by me and under the guidance and supervision of Prof. Mahbubur Rahman, Professor, Department of Public Administration, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. This work has not been submitted either in whole or in part for any degree at any university.



A.H.M. Humayun Kabir

Registration No. : 335  
Session: 2002-2003

Dated: Dhaka  
29.07.2010

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- A.H.M. Humayun Kabir

## **Abstract**

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Conflict was the political conflict and armed struggle between the Government of Bangladesh by the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (United People's Party of the Chittagong Hill Tracts) and its armed wing, the Shanti Bahini over the issue of autonomy and the rights of the indigenous peoples and tribes of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The Shanti Bahini launched an insurgency against government forces in 1977, and the conflict continued for twenty years until the government and the PCJSS signed the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord in 1997.

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- a. To gain knowledge about the geographic cultural, anthropological and productive methods.
- b. To understand the dynamics of the geo-political and strategic situation of CHT and the altitudinal patterns of India, China, Myanmar, U.S. and other external forces live the EU.
- c. To analysis the result of tribal rebellion it's nature, all the necessary incentives taken by the govt. the executed peace efforts and it's aftereffects.
- d. To evaluate the most recent situations of the conditions of CHT.

The conflict in the Chittagong Hill Tracts dates back to when Bangladesh was the eastern wing of Pakistan. Widespread resentment occurred over the displacement of as many as 100,000 of the native peoples due to the construction of the Kaptai Dam in 1962.

The displaced did not receive compensation from the government and many thousands fled to India. After the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, representatives of the Chittagong Hill Tracts such as the Chakma politician Manabendra Narayan Larma sought autonomy and recognition of the rights of the peoples of the region. Larma and other Hill Tracts representatives protested the draft of the Constitution of Bangladesh, which did not recognise the ethnic identity and culture of the non-Bengali peoples of Bangladesh. The government policy of recognised only the Bengali culture and the Bengali language and designating all citizens of Bangladesh as Bengalis. In talks with Hill Tracts delegation led by Manabendra Narayan Larma, the country's founding leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman insisted that the ethnic groups of the Hill Tracts adopt the Bengali identity. Sheikh Mujib is also reported to have threatened to forcibly settle Bengalis in the Hill Tracts to reduce the native peoples into a minority.

Consequently, Larma and others founded the Parbatya Chhatagram Jana Shanghatti Samiti (PCJSS) as a united political organisation of all native peoples and tribes in 1973. The armed wing of the PCJSS, the Shanti Bahini was organised to resist government policies. The crisis aggravated during the emergency rule of Sheikh Mujib, who had banned all political parties other than his BAKSAL and the successive military regimes that followed after his assassination in 1975. The Shanti Bahini insurgents hid in the neighbouring Indian state of Tripura, where they trained and equipped themselves. In 1977, they launched their first attack on a Bangladesh Army convoy.

Since the 1980s, the PCJSS gave a new identity to the hill people. It was Jumma nationalism. It claimed that the thirteen different ethnic communities in the CHT together constitute the Jumma nation. The nomenclature was adopted to unify the hill people under one banner in order to counter the hegemony of the majority. More importantly, it was an assertion of their equality and an attempt to come out of the negativism associated with tribalism. The PCJSS also demanded that a constitutional guarantee be given to their cultural distinctiveness.



The Shanti Bahini divided its area of operations into zones and raised forces from the native people, who were formally trained. The Shanti Bahini attacked Bengali police and soldiers, government offices and personnel and the Bengali settlers in the region. The group also attacked any native believed to be opposing it and supporting the government. The Military of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Police, Bengali settlers, the Shanti Bahini and its supporters have been suspected of committing human rights abuses and ethnic cleansing.

At the outbreak of the insurgency, the Government of Bangladesh deployed the army to begin counter-insurgency operations. The then-President of Bangladesh Ziaur Rahman created a Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board under an army general in order to address the socio-economic needs of the region, but the entity proved unpopular and became a source of antagonism and mistrust amongst the native people against the government.

The government failed to address the long-standing issue of the displacement of people, numbering an estimated 100,000 caused by the construction of the Kaptai Dam in 1962. Displaced peoples did not receive compensation and more than 40,000 Chakma tribals had fled to India.[13] In the 1980s, the government began settling Bengalis in the region, causing the eviction of many natives and a significant alteration of demographics. Having constituted only 11.6% of the regional population in 1974, the number of Bengalis grew by 1991 to constitute 48.5% of the regional population.

In 1989, the government of then-president Hossain Mohammad Ershad passed the District Council Act created three tiers of local government councils to devolve powers and responsibilities to the representatives of the native peoples, but the councils were rejected and opposed by the PCJSS.



Peace negotiations were initiated after the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh in 1991, but little progress was made with the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, the widow of Ziaur Rahman and her Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Fresh rounds of talks began in 1996 with the newly-elected Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed of the Awami League, the daughter of Sheikh Mujib. The peace accord was finalised and formally signed on December 2, 1997.

The agreement recognized the special status of the hill people.[4] Under the Accord a Regional Council (RC) has been formed representing the three hill districts local government councils. The following is the composition of the RC: chairman 1, members (tribal) male 12, members (tribal) female 2, members (non-tribal) male 6, member (non-tribal) female 1. Among the total male tribal members, five will be elected from the Chakma, three from the Marma, two from the Tripura and one each from the Murang and the Tanchangya. In case of female tribal members one from the Chakma and one from another tribe will be elected.

As for non-tribal members two would be elected from each district. The members of the RC will be elected by the elected members of the three hill district councils.[4] Chairmen of the three hill district councils will be the ex-officio members of the Council and they will have the right to vote. The elected members of the RC will elect its chairman. The Council will be elected for five years. It will coordinate and supervise the general administration, law and order, and development activities of the three hill districts. Tribal laws and the dispensation of social justice will also come under its purview. It will coordinate disaster management and relief activities with NGOs and issue license for heavy industries. The government will enact laws relating to the CHT in consultation with the Council.

The Accord also provides for the setting up of a Ministry of Tribal Affairs to be headed by a tribal to look into the affairs of the CHT. It is evident that the RC is a symbolic institution. Its powers and functions are of a coordinating and supervisory nature. The powers and functions of the district councils have remained the same, though in certain cases amendments have been made in the Act to make them more functional. The accord stipulates that land would be returned to the owners once their ownership rights were ascertained, and a land survey would be undertaken in the CHT to ascertain ownership rights.

There is no denying the fact that the 1997 peace accord has ensured a pause on long-standing self-determination armed conflict. However, unless the question of autonomy of CHT, which was the root cause of conflict, is resolved by implementing the peace accord and addressing the issues and challenges concerned with such implementation, it would be unrealistic to expect sustainable peace in CHT. The sooner the provisions of the accord are implemented, the quicker will be the mitigation of many of the existing problems and the elimination of the causes of potential conflict. Although there was no time frame in the accord for its implementation, it is time to develop a time-bound action plan so that stagnation in implementation of the various provisions of the peace accord does not create any doubt about a lasting peace.

In addition, measure should be taken to ensure constitutional recognition of CHT so that the peace accord can be immune from constitutional litigation. Care should also be taken to reach a political consensus in support of the accord at national as well as regional level before the fragility of the ongoing peace is exposed. In particular, harmony between indigenous and non-indigenous people, who are almost equal in number and almost likewise victims of government policy, is a prime condition for the congenial atmosphere that might accelerate the pace of implementation of the accord.

# Contents

Chapters	Title	Page
<b>Chapter-1</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>1</b>
	1.1 Introduction	2
	1.2 Significance of the Proposed Study	4
	1.3 Aims & Objectives	5
	1.4 Area of the Study	5
	1.5 Methodology of the study	6
	1.6 Analysis of Data	6
	1.7 Selection of Sample	6
	1.8 Limitation of the Study	7
	1.9 Chapterization of the Thesis	7
<b>Chapter-2</b>	<b>Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT): Recognition &amp; Environment</b>	<b>8</b>
	2.1 Geographic Identification	9
	2.2 Geo-Location	9
	2.3 Area	9
	2.4 Boundary	9
	2.5 Physiography	10
	2.6 Climate	11
	2.7 Mountains	12
	2.8 Flora & Fauna	12
	2.9 Rivers	12

2.10 Lake	13
2.11 Agro-Resources	13
2.12 Forest Resources	13
2.13 Hydroelectricity	14
2.14 Mineral Resources	14
2.15 Tourism	14
<b>Chapter-3 Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Different Ages</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 Introduction	16
3.2 The Tripura Dynasty	16
3.3 The Monarchy of Arakan	16
3.4 The Sultani Regime	16
3.5 The Regime of Sher Shah	17
3.6 The East India Company	17
3.7 The British Rule	18
3.8 Establishment of the CHT Police	19
3.9 Reforms of 1900 Act.	19
3.10 Administration of 1947	20
<b>Chapter-4 The Geo-political Importance of Chittagong Hill Tracts on the Backdrop of National &amp; International politics</b>	<b>21</b>
4.1 Introduction	22
4.2 Geo-political Importance	23
4.3 Political Interests of Some countries	23

4.4 Socio-anthropological importance of India	24
4.5 Geo-strategic Interests & Advantages of India	25
4.6 Economical and Political interests of India	27
4.7 China's Political Interest and Role	31
4.8 Political Interests of Myanmar	32
4.9 Interest of the U.S.A.	33
4.10 European Union and Others	34
<b>Chapter-5 National Solidarity and the Problems of CHT</b>	<b>36</b>
5.1 Cultural Distinctiveness as Elementary Elements	37
5.2 Cultural Solidarity in the Formation of Nation	37
5.3 Economic Progress and National Solidarity	38
5.4 The Kaptai Barrage/Dam Project	39
5.5 Industrialization	40
5.6 Outsider Settlement	40
5.7 Problems of Possession of Land	42
5.8 Problems of Nationality	43
5.9 Weakness of CHT Development Board	44
5.10 Tribal Refugee Problem	45
<b>Chapter-6 Administrative and Political Evolution in the CHT</b>	<b>47</b>
6.1 Introduction	48
6.2 Pre-British Period	48
6.3 British Rule	49
6.4 The Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900	50

6.5 The Efficacy of the CHT Regulation Act.1900	50
6.6 Tribal Movement in British Reign	51
6.7 The Pakistan Regime	52
6.8 Political Organizations of the Tribes During Pakistan Period	54
<b>Chapter-7 Political Evolution of the Tribal Peoples of CHT</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>in Independent Bangladesh, Backgrounds of</b>	
<b>Rebellion and Policies and Steps Guided to</b>	
<b>Mitigate these Rebellions</b>	
7.1 The Liberation War and the Tribes	57
7.2 Demands of the Tribes	57
7.3 Four-Point Demand	58
7.4 M. N Larma in the Parliament	58
7.5 Declaring the tribes as Bengali	59
7.6 Formation of Janasanghati Samiti	59
7.7 Foundation of the Shanti Bahini	59
7.8 Meeting with Indira Gandhi	61
7.9 Bakshal Formation and Joining of M.N.Larma	61
7.10 Main Political Issues	61
7.11 Regime of President Zia	62
7.12 President Sattar's Regime	65
7.13 General Ershad's Tenure (1982-1990)	65
7.14 The Regime of Caretaker Govt.	71
7.15 Khaleda Zia's Tenure (1991-96)	71
7.16 The Sheikh Hasina's Regime (1996-01)	73
7.17 The Historical Peace Treaty	74



<b>Chapter-8 The Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Treaty</b>	<b>77</b>
a. General Chittagong Hill District Local	78
b. Chittagong Hill Districal Local Government Council/Hill District Council	79
c. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council	86
<b>Chapter-9 Conclusion</b>	<b>95</b>
9.1 General	96
9.2 Bibliography	101

# **Chapter-1**

## **Methodology**

### 1.1. Introduction:

An emerging economy with an area of 1, 47,570 square kilometer Bangladesh is an independent sovereign nation. In the south east corner, the Chittagong Hill Tracts is surrounded with a belt of 5,188 square miles. This zone, having an important geopolitical significance is strategically important and consists of Bandarban, Rangamati and Khagrachari. It's also a cradle of natural scenic beauty.<sup>1</sup>

South Asia, wading through down ancient history, civilization, heritage culture, the rules of Turkey-Afghan, Mogul and British colonization shares almost a homogenous experience in terms of referential existence. Besides this, there survived a racial intolerance, sectarian antagonism, heterogeneity in foreign diplomacy and policy, hostilities for economic interest instead of stability and consistency. In 1947 where this part will be adjoined to India or Pakistan or to an indifferent Burma. This was one of the reasons of instability here. And for this, the external forces become operational and took interests in CHT. Among the tribal leaders about where to include either to India or Pakistan, where dissensions Kamini Mohan Dewan & Sneha Kumar Chakma worked and pitched in the race of being Indian, but Muslim League argued for their part because of the Muslim name & titles of the Chakma.<sup>2</sup>

On August 9, 1947, Sir Serial Radcliff, chairman of Bengal Boundary Award commission proposed that CHT should be included in Pakistan and Lord Mountbatten approved that many of the then tribe leaders couldn't take it easily. On August 14, 1947 Ghanashyam Dewan, Sneha Kumar Chakma poised the Indian flag in public and that remained unflinching in front of the District commission office till August 20. Then a regiment of Pakistan army dethroned the Indian flag and replaced with a Pakistani.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the Marmas from the Bomang circle wanted to join Burma.

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<sup>1</sup> Gain, P. ed., (2000) *The Chittagong Hill Tracts: Life and Nature at Risk*. Dhaka: SEHD.

<sup>2</sup> Chakma, Siddhartha (1985), *Proshongo Parbattay Chottogram*. Calcutta: Nath Brothers.

<sup>3</sup> Mohsin, A. (1999), *The Politics of Nationalism: The Case of the Chittagong Hill Tracts*, Bangladesh (Dhaka, Bangladesh: University Press).

As a sign of political demonstration against the inclusion into Pakistan and empathize with Burma in Bandarban. Again here, the Pakistan Army dragged it off. And later Pakistan govt. declared the rebellious Marmas as miscreants and fugitives and led a warrant against them that led to the excommunication of some of the locals and fled to Burma. Many of the Chakmas migrated to Tripura and nearby provinces as refugees. In 47's partition, all these unwanted detachments turned CHT as a problematic political periphery and a foreign invasion was likely there.

The so called controversial Kaptai Barrage project raised furor among the tribes. The Pakistan Govt. with the help of an American MNC protected the dam in 1952-53; From the tributary a 35 mile upward, a hydroelectric project was provisioned in Kaptai. More than 1 lakh people faced a massive overall damage due to this. Most of them are from Chakma. No robust rehabilitation was planned and because of that some 40,000 Chakma left for India and never come back.<sup>4</sup> The India Govt. then as part of a strategic over settled them down in Arunachal and the rest in Mizoram.

Intriguingly, CHT is of paramount and deep rooted interests and interrelationships with neighboring China, India and Myanmar for geopolitical and economic benefits. The geo-strategic importances of CHT become tangible clear after the war of 1962. Both China and India strived to create an influence ring over this region. After the war of 1962, India for her geo-political & strategic logistics, rehabilitated the Chakmas of CHT in Arunachal & Mizoram. Interestingly enough, the Buddhist of this region are also favored by the Japanese and other Buddhist Nation. America and other rich oil-enriched nation also do interest in a large way in this zone for their privileged economic & geo-political benefits.

And they try to pitch in for a human rights project. Apart from these, more specifically some of the tribal leaders schemed to form a sovereign land with the tribal areas of Bangladesh, India, Thailand, Myanmar and other Chinese homogeneous geographies. All this efforts eventually turned out to be a separatist unrest and movement as the

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<sup>4</sup> Mohsin, A. (2003) *The Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh: On the Difficult Road to Peace* (London: Lynne Rienner).

internal and external ingredients. The govt. has undertaken numerable important development projects and besides them some other welfare undertakings helped mitigate all the insurgent actions of the separatist. Apart from these, the patriotic security forces always were up & doing and worked hard to extinguish all the disintegrations. As a result, embraced peace pact with the government of Bangladesh in December 3, 1997. But, unfortunately the basics of the peace pact were much foiled because of the smoggy management of land tenure system, paradoxical roles of the army, much aggression of the Bengali peoples. And at this moment, all the rebellions of the tribes are being turned into a greatest movement. On the other hand, non-tribal peoples are now waking against the pact. With all this vulnerabilities, the CHT is encumbering a much heavier situation than ever before. For a geo-strategic reason, many neighboring countries are keeping an eagle eye on the armed rebellion. At present for an oil exploration, the U.S. dose interest in this region. After the massive cold war, the European Union and have a common humanitarian inclination. So, this zone is of sheer significance and for the overall security & sovereignty, we need to be vigilant on this area.

The Tamil Insurgency, the armed promptitude in the North-Eastern zones in India and the ethnic problems in Sindhi Mohai in Paki are of tantamount unilinearity. But what we believe is we can resolve any political problem with an eagerness, political pledge, humanistic attitudes, communal harmony among sect-creed-caste religion, equity & equality among individuals and above all love in a peaceful way. Enhancement of legal equality, social progress and a harmonious co-existence can guarantee the regional peace and for this it requires a sustainable research.

### **1.2. Significance of the Proposed Study:**

Significance of the proposed study must be clear if we seriously observe the activities of Bangladesh govt., different tribal political organization, non tribal (Bengali) groups and the donors and other functioning beneficiations. The peace pact never came into effect completely. Some of the conditions of the pact, some colliding acts with the constitutions should be represented as an acceptably viable way from an ethnic

research perspective. Resolution of some of the fundamental problems, equal opportunities, socioeconomic equity and agro-based technology could only achieve a massive and sustainable development, national progress. To examine all these policies or methods is the objective of this study.

### **1.3. Aims & Objectives:**

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- a. To gain knowledge about the geographic cultural, anthropological and productive methods.
- b. To understand the dynamics of the geo-political and strategic situation of CHT and the altitudinal patterns of India, China, Myanmar, U.S. and other external forces live the EU.
- c. To analysis the result of tribal rebellion it's nature, all the necessary incentives taken by the govt. the executed peace efforts and it's aftereffects.
- d. To evaluate the most recent situations of the conditions of CHT.

### **1.4. Area of the Study:**

Khagrachari, Bandarban and Rangamati are out of the study area. Some detached provinces from India mostly in the North-East zones comprise 217 tribal groups. These groups, for a long time have been fighting for their own rights and in some cases armed movements. It seems, at a little will, Bangladesh may get involved in spreading anarchy in these areas. The overall interest, the disturbing elements and CHT's interest stake of India will be discussed here. And it will shed lights on the diverse issues. The Hill Tracts rebels came to an agreement with the govt. of BD. But the complete and full materialization of the pact is kind of, complex and will consume some time.

Various aspects of the peace pact analyses of the post-pact situations will minutely be reviewed in this study.



### 1.5. Methodology of the Study:

**Primary Source:** Information & reports run on the national & international journals and interviews of the concerned individuals are used as primary sources for this study. Besides this, information were also collected from different govt. manual and gazette. Various socio-political handouts, leaflets of some politically & culturally aware in CHT representing their rights, wants and demands also served for reliable sources.

**Secondary Source:** Numerous books, journals, articles, research papers, international journals paved the ways of a sound secondary source.

**Data Collection:** Data have been collected by sample survey from the field.

**Interview Based:** Exclusive interviews have been executed between Hill Tracts & Bengalese leaders, civil and non-civil servants, and people from other professions were selected for the interviews.

**Seminar/Meeting:** Several academic seminars, meeting, symposiums have been conducted on the burning issues of CHT and statements of the intelligentsia have also been recorded.

### 1.6. Analysis of Data:

Following the relevant and useful statistical models, data have been analyzed in the proposed study. Views & opinions of the concerned people are taken with paramount importance.

### 1.7. Selection of Samples:

Almost all the related categories, viz.-govt., semi-govt., non-govt. service holders and officials concerned with CHT, the civil societies, the mass tribes and Bengali people (who on the outsiders) are considered to be potential samples.

### **1.8. Limitation of the Study:**

Though CHT is focused by some of the external force as area of much strategic interest, but India has more than any. The foremost reason comes as some of the north-eastern India states are geographically connected to CHT. In the eastern zone- Mizoram, Tripura, in north and Myanmar surrounds in the south. The study could've been much better and realistic if we would go to the neighboring countries and collect data. But owing to logistic support, we couldn't go there.

### **1.9. Chapterization of the Thesis:**

The proposed thesis has been classified into 12 chapters viz.-

Chapter-1: Introduction and Research Methodology

Chapter-2: Recognition & Environment of CHT.

Chapter-3: CHT in Different Ages

Chapter-4: Geopolitical Importance of CHT and  
the Backdrop of National & International Politics

Chapter-5: National Solidarity & The Problems of CHT

Chapter-6: Administrative and Political evolution in the CHT

Chapter-7: Political Evolution of the Tribal People of CHT in Independent  
Bangladesh Backgrounds of Rebellion and Policies and Steps  
Guided to Mitigate these Rebellion

Chapter-8: The CHT Peace Treaty

Chapter-9: Conclusion

## **Chapter-2**

### **Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT): Recognition & Environment**

## 2.1 Geographic Identification:

Chittagong Hill Tracts is situated in the south east corner of Bangladesh surrounding rivers-mountains, artificial lakes, small springs, lush greenery, sprawling hilly soils and of astounding natural beauty comprising of three districts viz. Bandarban, Rangamati, Khagrachari. Before 1960, it was a part of the Chittagong district.<sup>5</sup>

## 2.2 Geo-Location:

Chittagong Hill Tracts the only extensive hill area in Bangladesh lies in southeastern part of the country (21°25'N to 23°45'N latitude and 91°54'E to 92°50'E longitude) bordering Myanmar on the southeast, the Indian state of Tripura on the north, Mizoram on the east and Chittagong district on the west. The area of the Chittagong Hill Tracts is about 13,184 sq km, which is approximately one-tenth of the total area of Bangladesh.

## 2.3. Area:

Collaboration with three administrative districts, CHT has a total area of 5093 square miles or 13,184 square kilometers which is one-tenth of the entire Bangladesh. At present, CHT has an area of 5093 square miles but in 1860, when it was segregated from Chittagong, had an area of 6796 Sq. miles. In 1901, its area decreased to 5138 Sq, miles. At last, in 1947 with an area of 5093 Sq, miles CHT joined the East Pakistan. That means, in 87 years, almost 1703 sq. miles area were snatched away from CHT. And I 1971, CHT became the part of Bangladesh with 5093 Sq. miles.<sup>6</sup>

## 2.4. Boundary:

Geographically, CHT is surrounded by Indian soil; Tripura is in the north and north-west, Mizoram is in the north & north-east corners and Myanmar, China and Arakan province are in the east-south corner of CHT; Cox's Bazaar and Chittagong districts are in the

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<sup>5</sup> Chakma, S. (1993) Parbatya Chhattagramer Upajati O Sanskriti , Rangamati, Tribal Officers Colony.p-15

<sup>6</sup> Abedin, J. (1997) Parbatya Chhattagram: Swaroop Sandhan Dhaka, Chowkas Printers, p-17 & 23

west. With Indian Tripura, CHT has 236.80 km and with Myanmar and Arakan province, it has a 288 km international border.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.5. Physiography:

According to the physiography of Bangladesh the CHT falls under the Northern and Eastern Hill unit and the High Hill or Mountain Ranges sub-unit. This sub-unit covers most of CHT, some small parts of southern Habigonj and the south and eastern borders of Moulavi Bazar. At present, all the mountain ranges of the Chittagong Hill Tracts are almost hogback ridges. They rise steeply, thus looking far more impressive than their height would imply. Most of the ranges have scarps in the west, with cliffs and waterfalls.

The region is characterized by a huge network of trellis and diverse drainage consisting of some major rivers draining into the Bay of Bengal. The major rivers are Karnafuli, Sangu, Matamuhuri and Feni. Within the hill tracts, the Karnafuli has several important tributaries, of which Chengi, Kasalong and Rainkhiang are the principal ones. Generally the hill ranges and the river valleys are longitudinally aligned. Four ranges, with an average elevation of over three hundred meters, strike in a north-south direction in the northern part of the hill tract districts. These are Phoromain range (Phoromain, 463m), Dolajeri range (Langtrai, 429m), Bhuachari (Changpai, 611m) and Barkal range (Thangnang, 735m). South of the Karnafuli River within the Chittagong Hill Tracts, there are seven main mountain ranges within Bangladesh. These are: Muranja range (Basitaung, 664m), Wayla range (most of this range is in Myanmar), Chimbook range (Tindu, 898m), Batimain range (Batitaung, 526m), Politai range (Keokradang, 884m; Ramiu Taung 921m, Saichal-Mowdok range (Bilaisari, 669m) and Saichal range. Saichal range contains the highest peaks of Bangladesh. These are Waibung (808m),

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<sup>7</sup> Azad Humayun (1997) *Parbatya Chattagram, Sabuj Paharer Vetor Diye Probahita Hingsar Jharnadhara*, Dhaka, Agami Prokashani.p-19-21

Rang Tlang (958m), Mowdok Tlang (905m), and Mowdok Mual (1,003m) which is on the border with Myanmar.<sup>8</sup>

Some of these hill ranges also contain important geological structures to form excellent structural traps for natural gas accumulation. The structures are: Semutang anticline (average elevation is 80m except in some areas where it reaches over 160m), Sitapahar anticline (245 to 330m in the south to middle of the structure and 330 to 410m in the northern part), Matamuhuri anticline (average elevation ranges from 245 to 330m in the northern part, but in the southern part it increases from 410 to 570m and the maximum elevation is 710m in the south) and Bandarban anticline (maximum elevation varies between 650 and 800m, with three peaks of around 935m, 960m and 965m located from north to south). There are two natural lakes (Rainkhiangkine Lake and Bagakine Lake) and one artificial lake (Kaptai Lake). The Kaptai Lake covers an area of about 767 sq km in dry season and about 1,036 sq km in the monsoon.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.6. Climate:

The weather of this region is characterized by tropical monsoon climate with mean annual rainfall nearly 2540 mm in the north and east and 2540 mm to 3810 mm in the south and west. The dry and cool season is from November to March; pre-monsoon season is April-May which is very hot and sunny and the monsoon season is from June to October, which is warm, cloudy and wet. Summer temperature varies around 30-35 degree Celsius and in winter an average temperature is 25 degree Celsius. But in extreme conditions, in summer it heightens to 40.45 degree and in winter it might plummet to 3/4 degree.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Shelly, M. Rahman, (1992) The Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh Dhaka, Center For Development Research. P-64

<sup>9</sup> The CHT Commission (1997) Life is Not Ours: Land and Human Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, The Report of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission, update 3, February.

<sup>10</sup> The CHT Commission (1994) Life is Not Ours: Land and Human Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, The Report of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission, update 2, April.



## 2.7. Mountains:

The mountains in CHT can be cascaded down into ten arrays. They are 1. Subalong; 2. Mayani; 3. Casalog; 4. Sajek; 5. Hurring; 6. Barkal; 7. Raikhyang; 8 Chimbu; 9. Mirinja; and 10. Vijay.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.8. Flora & Fauna:

Almost, more than half of the land of CHT are covered largely by forest, hills and evergreen trees. Thick, dense bushes are also surrounded everywhere. Segun, Karoi etc are some of the invaluable trees and there also are a multitudes of bamboo and canes. The total area of forest is 7,046 square kilometer. These forest is fraught with elephant, monkeys, wild kine and so many other rare species of birds.<sup>12</sup>

## 2.9. Rivers:

Rivers: The CHT has mainly seven rivers. They are--

1. Karnaphuli
2. Kasalong
3. Chengi
4. Matamuhuri
5. Feni
6. Mayani
7. Rynakhyian
8. Sangu

All these rivers, flowing amidst the local mountains, taking a turn over the dales and then through the Bay of Bengal. The principle characteristics of these rivers are they extremely torrential and much capable of producing hydro-electricity.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ali, A.M.S., (1995), Population pressure, environmental constraints and agricultural changes in Bangladesh: examples from three agroecosystems. *Agriculture Ecosystems Environment* 55, 95–109.

<sup>12</sup> Lewin, T.H., (1869), *The Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers Therein, with Comparative Vocabularies of the Hill Dialects*. Bengal Printing Company, Calcutta.

<sup>13</sup> Uddin, M.S., Kamal, M.S., Mollah, M.H.,(2000), *Hill Farming System and Resource Utilization in Chittagong Hill Tracts*. Hill Agricultural Research Station, Khagrachari pp. 1–64.

### 2.10. Lakes:

Both natural and artificial lakes are seen here. The natural lakes are:

- a. Rainkhiyan
- b. Kayin
- c. Bogakayan

On the other hand, because of the Kaptai Hydroelectric project, an artificial Kaptai lake was manufactured which has an area of 265 square miles.<sup>14</sup>

### 2.11. Agro-Resources:

Only 5% of all CHT land is included to agriculture. There is a tangible food deficit in the there hilly districts. In 1990, in 60,000 areas of land was brought under Jhoming.<sup>15</sup>

Couple of bans from the government interests of the NGOs and modernization in agriculture worked together for the decline of Jhoming. The staple crops of the river shores and canal beds are paddy now. In the high areas, now in a limited scale rubber, coffee, tea and cotton farming have been started. Rubber gardens are being increased. Establishment of the non-tribal groups in the fallows & infertile lands also led to the production of different fruits, grains & vegetables.

### 2.12. Forest Resources:

CHT is the second largest forest resources in Bangladesh. A large portion of the forest of Bangladesh belongs to this region. Half of the hilly region covered by thick & semi thick forest. In a large sanctuary of 1400 sq. miles and in the reserved forests –so many valuable trees like shal, segun, garjan, lohakath, chapalish, sheelkorai are grown. Moreover letusar nageshwer, tik, jarul, gamar, bet, bamboo, are some of the trees of economic importance.

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<sup>14</sup> Singh, R. (1996) The Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, in: C. Nicholas & R. Singh (Eds) *Indigenous Peoples of Asia: Many Peoples, One Struggle* (Bangkok: Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact).

<sup>15</sup> Roy, R. C. K. (2000) *Land Rights of the Indigenous Peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts* (Copenhagen: IWGIA).

### **2.13. Hydroelectricity:**

In the Kaptai hydroelectric project only 160 mw is being produced nom even having a capacity of 250 mw. There is also a splendid possibility of hydroelectricity in the rivers like Matamahuari, Sangu, Mayeni.<sup>16</sup>

### **2.14. Mineral Resources:**

No significant mineral has not yet been mined from CHT but its geographic location, levels of land, forms, geological environments have gradually escalated the possibilities of natural resources in this region. The experts envisage there is a huge stock of gas, coal and other petroleum products, limestone, hard rock there. In Somtung Khagrachari, the mine experts have discovered a stock of 0.16 trillion cebic feet gas. Hard rocks with high quality methane has been found in Kaptai & Alikodom and in Ramu –natural gas, petroleum in Alikodom coal in lama.

### **2.15. Tourism:**

Every inch land of CHT has an economic importance & significance. We can embellish every village, mouza, town port as world class tourism spots and they can contribute to the economic amelioration of the country.

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<sup>16</sup> Abedin, Z. (1997) CHT: That Sheds Blood (Dhaka, Bangladesh: Sunzida Anzuman).

## **Chapter-3**

### **Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Different Ages**

### **3.1. Introduction:**

There is hardly any anecdote of ancient civilization in the evergreen deep forest and in the hilly CHT entrenched with valleys, rivers and springs. As the history of human establishment is not so long, so, nationalism and the cores of the problems are not so old. The political evolution has been recurrent through the tenures of the kings of Tripura, Arakans, the Sultani Regime, Shershah & the Mughals, British rules, Pakistani regime and the sovereign Bangladesh.

### **3.2. The Tripura Dynasty:**

Reviewing the history, we see in 590 AD. The founder of Tripura Juja Rupa defeated the king of Arakan and occupied the adjacent land. He established Rangamati as his capital and ruled more 350 years.

### **3.3. The Monarchy of Arakan:**

In 953, the king of Arakan, Sula Sandra occupied CHT. They ruled CHT about 275 years. In 1240, the king of Tripura resumed it again.

### **3.4. The Sultani Regime:**

In the Sultani regimes, Sultan Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah (1338-49) captured some parts of Chittagong & Chittagong Hill Tracts. Then Mowan Tshi, the Chakma king was repelled from Burma and took refuge to a Muslim royal servant named Ali Kodom. Mohalchari, the Chakmas were allowed to establish their homes in Ramu & Teknaf. In 1406, Bosu Suyamonghi subdued Arakan king Mogh Somwan and enthroned. The banished king, with the hilly of Mongkhari, the successor of Mogh Somwan being in the power, drove away the Chakmas from Ramu & Teknaf and earned partial success in regaining the lost lands in sultani regime. In tenure of next emperor Alauddin Hussen Shah (1493-1519), with the leadership of Arakan king Nusrat Khan, there was a temporary termination of Sultani rule.

Dhanya Manikya, the king of Tripura in 1515, proved his authority in the CHT and some parts of Arakan. And thus, with the ups & downs- topsy-turvy of rulings & power, ultimately Mogh Falaun alias Sikander Shah triumphed and claimed victory in Chittagong, Noakhali and many parts of Tripura.<sup>17</sup>

### **3.5. The Regime of Sher Shah:**

During the rule of Sher Shah in the famous "Land of God" the Portuguese colonizers established their supremacy. These sailors, mostly pirates, started plundering and spread the fire of rancor and tensions. Taking grudging advantage from the envy, jealousy and malevolence between the Portuguese colonizers and the Arakan kings, then Subedar of Bengal Shayesta khan took possessions of all the Chittagong, CHT and following the supervision of pious Awrangajeb renamed this region as Islamabaad. Later, peace survived here without any noteworthy bloodshed till 1760 under the Mughal rule.<sup>18</sup>

### **3.6. The East India Company:**

The fate of CHT, like other parts of Bengal was determined by the East India Company on October 15, 1760. It is true that, the tribes did not welcome the Mughal or British rule without any resistance. And as a result, this region was declared as a controlled zone and the company in fact initiated kind of dual administration. The administrative authority was with the tribal headmen. The English were only to earn the revenues from this part. At the last decades of 18<sup>th</sup> century, every headman was given prerogative to have commercial relations in exchange of giving texts to the collector of Chittagong. The Arakan king on 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1787 cited on a written document that the Mog, Murong, Pankho and Bonjogi groups who fled from Arakan to CHT, were actually engaged in reek less misappropriation and looting. The Arakan king pleaded the Chittagong authority.

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<sup>17</sup> The CHT Commission (1991) Life is Not Ours: Land and Human Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, The Report of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission, May.

<sup>18</sup> Barua, B. P. (2001) Ethnicity and National Integration in Bangladesh: A Study of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (New Delhi, India: Har-Anand).



In 1859, commissioner of Chittagong suggested of taking these hilly regions under a super indent instead of controlling. This recommendation was accepted in act-22 and that took into effect on August 1, 1860. They discharged CHT from a controlled district and appointed an officer as the district administrator conferring him the super indent of Hill Tracts. The primary goal was to objectify control over the independent hilly sects and again to provide security for the dependent groups. Then the total region under this super indent was denominated as Chittagong Hill Tracts. From then, CHT had become a district in the province of Bengal.<sup>19</sup>

There Mohokumas of CHT were entitled as three individual districts. Their present names are Rangamati Hill Districts or Rangamati Hilly District, Bandarban Hill District and Khagrachari Hill District.

### 3.7. The British Rule:

Just immediately after the beginning of the process in 1866, a man named Captain D.H. Loden was appointed the commissioner of CHT. From then, the tribal society was built as some historians think. In 1874, King Harish Chandra took over the kingdom and was conferred "Roy" by the British govt. The Chakma circle was divided into 9 estates in 1892. Gradually, almost 327 mouzas were created by 1930. The British Govt. every now & then sought after the suggestions about how to get along. The kings were dignified too for their suggestions. The kings had their own police forces and jails. Any sorts of mischievous act like any felony, killing, rape and banditry, the kings were the paramount judge to justify. For a grave offense, the kings suggested the charges and sent to the district superintendent. The District Super must have respected the kings. From two hundreds years back, in the hilly region, especially among the Chakma inhabited zones, the village chief was entitled as "karbari". After the British rule, converging more than one village, they created mouzas of different sizes. The mouzas were in effect built on the basis of land administration land revenue administration and social administer.

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<sup>19</sup> Anti-Slavery Society (1984) *The Chittagong Hill Tracts: Militarization, Oppression and the Hill Tribes, Indigenous Peoples and Development Series*, Report No. 2.

And the chief of the mouza was mentioned as “headman”. Literally the “headman” refers to a predominant male, but it didn’t mean there would be no woman or female as “headman”. Like its past legacy, recently there are also some women as headman. With the recommendation from the “headman”, the king elected karbari and with the suggestions of kings, from the government, the district commissioner was not liable to obey king. Any king (as for instance, the present king of chakma circle Barrister Debashis Roy) could be the headman of one or more mouza, karbari & headman respectively, used to resolve the problems & social collisions in the village & mouza.

The trial was held as per the tribal ritual and the judgment was executed following the tribal laws. The tradition of kingship is somewhat hereditary, but karbari & headman ship are not hereditary. But, if there was a capable male child then it got privilege. In 1867, the designation super indent was promoted to Deputy Commissioner and he was handed over the legislative authority to collect revenues and judicial legitimacy. Then, the whole CHT was divided into three Mohokumas and some loyal officials of deputy commissioner were in charge of them.

### **3.8. Establishment of the CHT Police:**

To stabilize peace, harmony and secure control on the entire region, in 1881 the government passed the police Regulation Act and formed the police force with the local tribes and sent them to different thanas. Until 1948 these forces were used to secure peace and to help the local administration.

### **3.9. Reforms of 1900:**

After taking so many cautionary steps & measures, peace was not promised in CHT and control was something at stake, the British Govt. was left with much tension. In 1900, the rules brought about a massive administrative and economic reform. They indoctrinated a new act naming “Regulation One” and the entire district was divided into three “Tribal Circles” and the tribal chiefs become their cardinals too. Alongside, the British Mohakumas were also in operation.

The duties and responsibilities of the circle chief were to collect revenues help preserve harmony. The responsibilities of the administrators of the Mohakumas were to keep pace of the govt. administration in a regulatory way. And these dual administrations later worked as an unwritten constitution in the Pakistan & Bangladesh tenure. This "Regulation one of 1900" or "Hill Tracts Regulation" is much familiar as the heart of Chittagong Hill Tracts Manual.

### **3.10 Administration of 1947:**

CHT was exchanged to East Pakistan for District Sadar of Ferozpur of Punjab & Zia Mohakuma. But no significant administrative move took place. Bangladesh earned her independence in 1971 and CHT was included to Bangladesh. And in 1983, dividing CHT, three separate districts went in action.

## **Chapter–4**

# **The Geopolitical Importance of CHT on the Backdrop of National & International politics**

#### 4.1. Introduction:

Geographic location and geopolitical environment is considered to be one of the national strengths of a country. A nation really can tighten and solidify its nation security if she could lead forth her geopolitical environment in a strategically shrewd way. But for the lack of skilled manipulation, the national security might be at bay and unprotected, something a target of opponent conflicting external forces<sup>1</sup>. Total area of CHT is 13,141 sq.km. this region, is somewhat incongruous, large and long physiographically. In comparison to the terminal, its area is much. Apart from this, CHT is a projected surface from the greater geography of Bangladesh. All these geo-structural traits characterize it as a geo-politically sensitive area.

The maximum length from north-south of CHT is 280 km and breadth is 50 km. in the north-east corner its maximum width is 70 km and from Ramgahar to Barkal and north edge constitute a narrow 40 km.(from Chandraghona to west corner of Mizoram).

From the eastern corner of CHT to the coastal belts, it has spread out leaving a special geopolitical importance. The total area of entire CHT is almost 13, 148 Sq. km. CHT is greater in terms of area, than almost half of the countries of the world; some 25-26 very important and economically robust nations are weaker than CHT in comparison to the locations of land resources and area. Mizoram, Nagaland, Assam is in the direct north-east of CHT and surpassing them, almost 650 km away, borders of Junam, China locate another geographical patches. 110 km border of CHT is adjacent to Tripura. Rangamati's 240 km border directs the dissection line of Mizoram & Tripura and Bandarban Hill District's 155 km border line dissociates Myanmar.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Mey, W. E. (1981) Political system in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh: a case of study, in: C. von Fure-Haimendorf (Ed.) Asian Highland Societies in Anthropological Perspective, pp. 214-222 (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers).



#### 4.2. Geopolitical Importance:

a. The Indian Ocean is easily accessible through the Bay of Bangle Bangladesh. Because of this unique geographic location, Bangladesh has a much demanding bargaining abilities in the comity of adjacent nations.

b. This area is really a meandering passage for oceanic commerce. The neighboring nations do really realize this.

c. This is an enriched reservoir of natural resources. Tea, oil, rubber, spices are some of the goods of economic importance.

Three organizations are seen to be functioning for their rights.

a. Three MPs who were elected under the auspices of Awami League are representing the CHT.

b. The "Chittagong Hill Tracts Janasanghati Samiti" who have the supports of the mass peoples of hill tracts and operating an armed movement , recently executed a peace pact. The leaders of the Janasanghati Samiti have occupied all the important niches of regional council.

c. United people of Democratic Front who were against the peace treaty, rather demand for autonomy and constitutional status. They are raising much furor and an organizational operation has been taken by them.<sup>21</sup>

#### 4.3. Political Interests of Some Countries :

Because of the geopolitical importance China & India do interest a lot in this region. And for oil & gas, multinational American oil companies have already flocked there. After the historical peace pact, the western donors are now having an extra attention & focus on this region, especially the European Union has already developed a huge interest here.

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<sup>21</sup> C. D. Brauns and L. G. Loffer (eds.), *Mru: Hill People on the Border of Bangladesh* (Boston: Birkhauser, 1990), cited in Eshani Chakraborty, "Understanding Women's Mobilization in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Struggle: The Case of Mahila Samiti," paper presented to the 15th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Canberra, June 29 to July 2, 2004.



Some NGOs, financially sustained by the western & South-East Asian countries are preaching actually Christianity in the guise of education & development.

Some tribal groups viz.-Pangkho, Boam, Nusai, Charu, Murong, Khiyang are almost converted to Christianity. Being the shrines for the armed rebels near the borders, CHT has become strategically & geopolitically important.

With the emergence of nationalism & patriotic consciousness, recently, however across the globe. Japan places interests here in this region to witness a resurrection of Buddhism and finances the separatists for its regional supremacy in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia Raising a humanitarian issue and balancing the power politics in this region, Australia involved here. The neighboring India, China & Myanmar has direct relationship with Bangladesh.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4.4. Socio-anthropological Importance of India:

- a. The eastern borders of India are linked with CHT. For a long span, an intriguingly malignant separatist movement was run by the rebels. Endeavored a lot, but India has ended up being foiled in maintaining peace in these regions. Bangladesh might play a crucial role in flaring up turmoils & tumults in those Indian borders.
- b. During the last days of British rule, all these provinces were included to India. But the very process of Indianization didn't see much success
- c. The inhabitants are principally mongoloid. Thus a distinct division between the peoples of mainland India exists. So if they even try to intrude India, they will be treated as foreigners.

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<sup>22</sup> Eleanor Diction-Bang-oo, In Search for Peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh (2004), <[http://www.tebtebba.org/about\\_us/publications/special/beyond/BeyondText.pdf](http://www.tebtebba.org/about_us/publications/special/beyond/BeyondText.pdf)>, accessed July 10, 2008.

- d. Hindus are majority in this region. Christianity is an emerging religion and already its gained noticeable momentum in Meghalaya & Mizoram where its become predominant. As a result of this there is a very close relation of politics & Christianity in these provinces.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4.5. Geo-strategic Interests & Advantages of India:

After the cold war, India has transpired as a very significant power in Asia, as their progresses elevate, they are one of the superpowers in near future. In the Indian Ocean, of course with the Bay of Bengal, India has established as a potent player. But now a days, in some of the provinces, separatism or independence is a smarting issue and the spearheads are working heavily on it. In the North-East corner, India has seven provinces Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura & Mizoram. All these whole regions are surrounded by land and they are called Seven Sister of India.

All these seven provinces are being devoured by separations & nationalist movement and they are eating away the harmony of Indian peace. Shiliguri corridor is only shallow way out for all these North-Eastern seven sisters which link them (almost 18 mile of length). This corridor spreads to a huge tract of Nepal, Bangladesh and china. It is much known as a risky and militarily strategic for all these nations. Considering all these situations, for an easier oceanic communication with her North-East, India is trying seriously to have Chittagong port as transit. The main objectives of India are to keep moving the flows of ammunition and commodities.

India and China in the independent war of Bangladesh in 1971 took inimical roles against each other. China was in favor of Pakistan and India supported Bangladesh. In the Chakma insurgency, India was silent, but China flared it up. Bangladesh has been tackling the reasons in CHT after her independence.

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<sup>23</sup> Raajen Singh, "The Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh," in C. Nicholas and R. Singh (eds.), *Indigenous Peoples of Asia: Many Peoples, One Struggle* (Bangkok: Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, 1996), p. 129.

It comes forward with 4 points demands predominantly the regional autonomy.<sup>24</sup> After 1975, when the political panorama metamorphosed, China reined in and stopped fuelling in the CHT but India started rolling in for her strategic supremacy. And thus, there was always an external power play in CHT.

This civil war and tumultuous upheaval, beginning more than two cascades back raised unrest, claimed death tolls and is being survived till today.

The Govt. with continence and composure managed to handle with some of its effective principle and plans and tried to alleviate rebellion in a peaceful way. Some the government incentives and correction and mass-welfare never let make room for the separatists to earn the local people's assistance. To materialize this geo-political strategy, India from the very beginning has been fueling this conflicting armed rebellious of the tribes and they also nurtured the so called "Shanti Bahini" with finance and ammunition. Almost fifty thousand refugees have been given berths in the Indian soil and it's one of their foreign policies.

In the 1962 war India had to embrace a miserable discomfiture and they realized the loopholes of strategic and geo-political napping of India. Within 2/3 days, China conquered most of the regions of Assam (North). And in future, if Nepal and Bangladesh goes against India and a war starts, India will be bogged down with her sensitive regions.

If China attacks from Tibetan Chumbi Valley, Shiliguri Corridor will easily be trounced. Then Bangladesh will only be the route to manipulate Indian army, armory and military equipment. And this is one of the reasons, the Chittagong port has been figured out as a crucial hub of economic and military interest for India. To curtail and mitigate Chinese influence, India has set up and brought up in action the most fledged air base in Baghdngra, Nakshalbari which is one of the flamboyant bases in North-East. Almost 25-30 military air vessels operate here routinely. Seven divisions armed battalions are on

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<sup>24</sup> Asian Center for Human Rights (ACHR), "The Ravaged Hills of Bangladesh," ACHR Review, Index: Review/35/2004, at <<http://www.achrweb.org/Review/2004/35-04.html>>, accessed July 5, 2008.

the vigil. Only with a view to bracing her geo-strategic interest, India has incepted all these.

#### **4.6. Economic and Political Interest of India:**

India has very sharp interest in CHT especially for economic and political significance. Bangladesh is an independent neighbor whose, almost hundred percent people one from a homogenous ethnicity, who speak in almost one standard language. And if such an important and strategically feasible neighbor is not in amicable relation & terms, if she's not in the ring of Indian Power Sphere, her future aura of influence might be impaired. A market of almost is cores, Bangladesh has a unique competency to be a Catalyst in the power plays in this region and Indian Ocean belt.

If Bangladesh belongs to the Indian belt, she will never grudge antagonism against India and won't act so in the regional and international diplomacy. Bangladesh will never join the Anti-India league. And this will lead towards not only a regional supremacy but a vital agency for India in world politics. Besides, if a new state comes into being or aureole of influence gets sharper here, separation moments in these lands that lack ocean links will be automatically ceased.

Mizoram Nagaland and other eastern states are to maintain a commercial communication with Kolkata, plodding two thousand five hundred km<sup>2</sup> treacherous flock of mountains. If Chittagong port could be accessed, the product and commodities will be conveyed in on easier way; moreover, cost and time would be saved. Chittagong port is only 60km away from Mizoram and the furthest southeast border of Tripura is 10km away from Feni's coastal surrounded Bay of Bengal. The furthest southern perimeter of CHT-Naikkhongchari, is only 5km.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ushatan Talukder, "Chittagong Hill Tracts Issue and Post-Accord Situation," paper presented at the International Conference on Civil Society, Human Rights, and Minorities in Bangladesh, organized by the Campaign Against Atrocities on Minorities in Bangladesh (CAAMB), in association with the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council (BHBCUC, International Chapters), Kolkata, India, January 22–23, 2005.



India firmly believes and formulates that to curb boisterous miscreant activities and help progress economic enterprises and above all, however to foil any possible war chances with China, Chittagong or in other words, the South – East coast of Bangladesh needs to be under Indian reins and effective power sphere.

**The politico-economic interests of India with CHT are furnished below:**

1. India never expects a stable, prosperous and powerful Bangladesh. India, very pellucid with exact rationales knows, the tumultuous violence of “Shanti Bahini” will tell upon seriously economic progress and communal violence. If CHT is burdened with a civil war and a same by the separations, a large portion of the foreign donation will be ill-spent on it. And as a result of it gradually will face an economic drought and at one moment will try to get out of the saddle of CHT.

Because, Bangladesh is in no way, in a situation to continue this undesirable war for a long span. India, still shelters one faction of the ‘Shanti Bahini’ (Preeti Group) as will unleash when necessity demands.

2. If such an individual country could be established, then that nation and Bangladesh with their sovereign distinctiveness would not be able to last. They, then, might be a refugee country like Bhutan or might merge into India completely like Sikkim.

The surrounding vicinities of Indian subcontinent must be kept safe and sound from any inimical alien power.

3. To establish and maintain authority over the Indian Ocean and the concerned belts.

The characteristics of Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in North-East-India:

To help evaluate the insurgency and Counter-Insurgency of the four states in North-East-India, now the traits are sketched trend-

1. Nagaland is the birthplace for all sorts of insurgency and is the oldest. They started way back declaring freedom and still stiff at their resolutions. National Socialist Council

of Nagaland is fighting against Indian govt. and they are working strict. In the history of Tripura's insurgency, an issue of freedom once surfaced; Gorkhaland never thought of freedom.

2. Except Gorkhaland, in the rest three cases, with the relevance of state security or security of mass people, India engineered Counter-interagency attack and deployed army; they still re engaged in protecting the integration as vigilant guards.

3. Except Gorkhaland, in the remaining three states during the insurgency there emerged many leaders, many organizations; So many peace pacts were materialized and later an infringement also took place. At the same time there were many ceasefires but infringed submitted.

4. Most of the militant leaders at first appeared with a stature of extreme temperament and much prone to be free but gradually they turned out o be much pliable and were ready to write the accords following the acts of constitutions in one way or other; but they then faced opposition from their close accomplices. The only exception is Laldonga of Mizoram.

5. Except for Shuvas Ghissing in Gorkhaland and his GNLF, Landing's MNF in Mizoram in most of the cases, most of the insurgent groups broke down and remerged again.

6. In all the cases, leading intellectuals from the civil societies worked as the mediators between insurgents and the government; they pioneered for keeping peace, liaison and understand and furthered the total peace process. In Mizoram and Nagaland, the civil leaders played a very important role. In some incidents the insurgents killed some of the mass leaders or intellectuals.

7. The insurgent always in their own language, argued to repel the outsiders from their land. Only in Tripura, the Bengalis, who are outsiders in the insurgents' eyes, joined and assembled together and raised a united voice.



8. The most poignant driving forces for all the ardent movement were the demand for ascertaining the political, economic, cultural and social rights entitlement and franchise. Moreover, to maintain the distinctness, discreet individualism of the small groups, tribal and the local elusiveness of small ethnic communities.

9. The insurgent groups flocked and went operational theoretically they involve in treason. In spite of all these, the existing government governments tried peace efforts with the designated government official governor, central secretary or the prime minister of the nation took part in the peace talks an attempted in all possible ways to help ameliorate the deadlocks. And from the insurgents it was never possible to establish peace with the accords of the lynchpins of them.

10. With a view to alienating the insurgents from Mizoram and Nagaland, the tribal mass peoples were segregated in a protected area. This was a very cumbersome tribulation for the innocent peoples. And the Govt. had to spend a huge wherewithal for that. And for the insurgents that were really a grim encounter. And ultimately, an adverse experience was culled from the situations of Mizoram and Nagaland. To protect the tribal masses distinctively, a special area was demarcated.

11. Theoretically, from the above discussed for examples, however, lighting with pragmatism, the instance of Mizoram is most realistic. Next comes Darjeeling that is also much pragmatic. Nagaland takes everybody on a lethal syndrome and the situation is really grave. And all the interested groups are waiting with eagerness for an ultimate understanding and an effective pact.

12. The Indian observers and experts have always been accusing China, the then Pakistan and Bangladesh for insurgency. In the issues with Nagaland and Mizoram the same allegations also surfaced involving Myanmar. In a peace pact with Mizoram, its clear rooted that the central Govt. of India will take all the necessary steps to uplift the commercial plays in the borders using Chittagong port.

#### 4.7. China's Political Interest and Role:

China is the third largest atomic energy. And even being the only superpower in Asia, because of geographic locations, she has no notable authority. Politically speaking, China has, in fact, two ways to penetrate into the Indian Ocean.

- a. Along with the border frontiers of Bhutan adjoining south-east Tibet, starting from Kumbhe valley, following the phases of southern edges, 100 km over Shiliguri-Darjeeling then reaching Mongla seaport(500/600 km) or Chittagong port(700/800 km).
- b. Starting from adjoining Hunan province (of China) of north-east border frontier of Myanmar, plainly towards south-western direction, then through Myanmar from west and 700 km. over the north-eastern uneven Indian mountains,

entering CHT and lastly to Chittagong port. This the easiest way through the homogenous Mongolian races to the Indian ocean and this is why favored by China.

China already built three grand roads from South Hunan to North Myanmar through Myanmar to herald unambiguously it's authority in the Indian Ocean. And it's one of the reasons why CHT is of serious importance to China. This is why a host of analysts draw-China might have helped the formidable Shanti Bahinis." The actions of Janasanghati Samiti are much similar with the ideologies of Chinese and it's founder Mr. Manabendra Narayan Larma, once was a follower of Bhasani (NAP).

After the war in 1962, one of China's foreign policies was to limit India's supremacy in the India ocean and level it by implementing a Chinese control sways around. These are may be one of the reasons China supported Pakistan in 1965 and 1971.<sup>26</sup> The peoples of North Myanmar, Some China in the borders, Arakani, Mizo from India are of the same ethnic Mongolian group. The shanty Bahini of CHT has a close and deep link with the Naga, Nusai, Manipuri and some northern tribes of Assam.

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<sup>26</sup> Cited in Galdu Resource Center for the Rights of Indigenous People, "Bangladesh: Indigenous People Still Face Discrimination and Eviction from Their Land," 2008, <<http://www.galdu.org/web/index.php?odas=2881&giella1=eng>>, accessed on January 17, 2009.

All the insurgents and separatists are believed to have an interlink with the communist groups. Therefore, the distant China is trying in all possible ways, to unite all these communist separatists; China also, is, however, reviewing the facts endeavoring to restructure and establish all those conflicting fractions only for a regional supremacy<sup>5</sup>. The Chakma outlaws have direct collaborations with some of the ravaging Maoist and Communist groups. The entire zone is much larger than Bangladesh. All these tribes still cannot accept the division of their borders among India-Bangladesh-Myanmar following the Yundabo Treaty in 1826.<sup>27</sup>

#### **4.8. Political Interests of Myanmar:**

Bangladesh has a border land-frontier of almost 170km. Most of the tribes in CHT had recently (before some decades) came from Myanmar. With all these tribal peoples in CHT, there are lots of military, cultural and religious bonds and connections with the same groups in the northern and western regions of Myanmar. Rohingya, San, China, Karan and some other tribal groups are involved with the eviction process of the government of Myanmar.

Many rebellious groups from Myanmar like the Rohingya solidarity Organization (RSO), Arakan Solidarity Organization (ASO) and some affiliated assisting groups have hideouts. For their own national security, existence and experience Myanmar has delving beaming on CHT. They have already increased their national security budget, modernized army and amassed newer weapons. With the help of Israel and China, they have intensified their naval forces and reinforced the naval bases. Sittwe, along with the Bangladesh border and Coca, an island situating in the north of Andaman in Nicobar in the Indian ocean. In these islands, Myanmar set up new military outpost. In 1973, Shanti Bahini was trained by the Burmese Communist Party. Besides, the issues of Rohingya Refugees ignited the two neighboring nations and the situations worsened when it remained uninhabited.

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<sup>27</sup> Paul S. Chhakchuak, Chittagong Hill Tracts: Stating and Resolving the Issues within the Mountains (Dhaka, Bangladesh: American International School/Dhaka, Senior Project, 2004).

But, Myanmar at present thinking politically is not a major threat for its internal tortuous political turmoil's and dire poverty. But, the impassable hilly regions are becoming gradually the dens of the militants from both countries. More than ten insurgent groups from Myanmar, taking refuge in Bandar Baan, are fueling the making of "Bomang Rajya".<sup>28</sup> They do not tolerate the preeminence of the Chakma in CHT. So, with the evoking beckons from Myanmar, these groups are dreaming of a new nation in Bandar Baan. Considering all the recurrent situations, Myanmar, for her own interest, is focusing seriously on the entire region.

#### **4.9. Interest of the U.S.A:**

In today's unipolar world, the United States is the unrivalled power. In South Asia, the US considers China a greater menace than India and Russia. To manage Chinese aggression, they are in good terms with India. They countenance integrated India and one investing a lot in India. Only to espouse Indian interests, they accorded with Peace Accord and welcome it. Apart from this, the US has geo-economic interests. The oil and gas companies of the US are very much fascinated with the natural resources in the CHT.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, the US wants a stable and investment friendly environment.

There might, as the analysts presage, start Balkanization in the CHT. And with this process of an international conspiracy, East Timor was segregated from Indonesia only because of its majority in Christianity. A religious façade figured prominently. The U.S. & its allies are endeavoring to form an independent Christian confederacy by converting the tribes into Christianity within next two decades. The Christian Missionaries were much up & doing and invested money & sincerity in converting the tribes into Christian in the process of Timorization.

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<sup>28</sup> Chhakchhuak, P. S. (2004) Chittagong Hill Tracts: stating and resolving the issues within the mountains, American International School (Dhaka: Senior Project).

<sup>29</sup> Chowdhury, B. H. (2002) Building Lasting Peace: Issues of the Implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord, Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, August.



A peace accord was attempted in 1997 and United states United Maritime Ltd (UML) explored petroleum in block 22. Keyarn Energy, another American conglomerate explored in 15 & 16 block and discovered two feasible facilities. All these companies have huge political enfranchisement. They are working to pressurize the Govt. to export natural gas. Recently, as a matter of fact a U.S. company is on a mission to set up a private terminal in the Chittagong port. Therefore, it's clear the U.S. has a deep geopolitical interest in & around CHT.<sup>30</sup> Apart from these, to ensure her flows of influence in the South East Asia to keep going economic, political and military domination, the U.S. wants to domineer in the Indian Ocean and the outskirts. And Australia, to lessen Indian domination in the Indian Ocean, is butting in the issues of CHT and also keeping a eye. They raised the relevancy of human rights in CHT and put pressure on Bangladesh. Moreover it is crystallized that Australia wants a balance of power in these regions. Many vested interests groups and countries want a confederacy type Mongoloid United States here.

#### **4.10. The European Union & Others:**

Peace loving Japan, the EU and Australia are now frequently seen to sympathize the CHT issue. Having a Buddhist majority, Japan is helping the tribes in different ways. Some political analysts think for the resurrection of pan Mongolian or trying to reformulate and equate with these. The European Union has a sincere and wakeful eye on CHT. They are serious about the infringement of human rights. They truly support the peace accord and much empathetic for the tribes. The EU suggests that before taking any effective development agenda for CHT, Bangladesh must talk to the Janasanghati Samiti and others.<sup>31</sup> The EU is much rigid about all these.

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<sup>30</sup> Hussain, S. A. (1999) War and Peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts: Retrospect and Prospect (Dhaka: Agamee Prakashani).

<sup>31</sup> Larma, J. B. (2003) The CHT and its solution. Paper presented at the Regional Training Program to Enhance the Conflict Prevention and Peace-Building Capacities of Indigenous Peoples. Representatives of the Asia-Pacific, organized by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) at Chiang Mai, Thailand on 7-12 April.

They are bent on dislocating the non-tribal peoples and are generous to offer financial supports to execute this. Again, they also are pressing the govt. for reformulating behavioral patterns of the NGOs and of the Land commission. Besides this, alarmingly, we are on an alert that - there is an effort of an influential group to build a Muslims of CHT, some parts of Chittagong and north eastern parts of Myanmar- mostly inhabited by Muslims. An intelligence group CIS is much cautious of this. Some Muslims nations in the Middle East have different equations here. Many external forces want a confederacy type general Mongolian united states.



## **Chapter-5**

### **National Solidarity and the Problems of CHT**

### 5.1. Cultural Distinctiveness as Elementary Element:

The emergence of anything and its continuity is never detached from history. From the ancient societies to today's scientific civilization –cultural idiosyncrasies were made from the sense of security and humanistic consciousness. The tribal peoples in CHT belong to their own cultural spheres historically which are varied from the majority peoples cultural dimensions. Many ethnic tribes or adivasis, from 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century entered this region through northern corners of Burma. Some Cookie tribal groups-i.e. Lusai, Pankhu, Maro and Khumis first came here and got settled down. Then many tribes from Tripura Group means Tripura, Murong, Tanchanga and Riangra entered here. At last, Arakanian Chakma and Mog came here and made habitats. In the next few centuries, Mughal, British, Arakani, Tripuri empires could never reach completely CHT.<sup>32</sup> Diverse in nature and varied in different sectarian groups, this region now has reached to its unique nation state which defines them as “**Jhum Nation**” and thus they have established themselves a politically and culturally distinct group.

### 5.2. Cultural Solidarity in the Formation of a Nation:

With three hilly districts, CHT is geographically detached from the plains of Bangladesh. Feni, Karnafuli, Chengi, Mayani, Kasalong, Sangu and Matamuhuri rivers and seven other valleys posit it in other tributaries along with ravines passages and mountains. These valleys have different geographic traits than the plains. Some thirteen ethnic minority tribes basically formed CHT, are of the Mongoloid heredity and some from Chinese origin and instead of the Bengalis in the mainland there similarities mostly are with the peoples of north east India, Burma, Thailand & Mongolia.

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<sup>32</sup> Rovillos, R. (1999) Process Documentation of Training Needs Assessment in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Baguio City, Philippines: Tebtebba Foundation).

In terms of native language, they mostly speak in Tibeti-Burmese. These all belong to the subdivision of cookie-china.

This subdivision includes the following groups-

Bonjogi, Chakma, Mog, Pankhu, Tanchanga, Cookie, Lusai, Khami and Khaiyan. On the other hand, the rest three tribes-Tripura, Mreyang and Baiyan. They speak in a language combining Bangla, Pali and Sanskrit. The dominant Chakmas, who calligraphy resembles the Burmese. The peoples from Tripura use the language which is much similar to Kachari, Marma's prone to Arakanian. All these bear a clear testimony to the fact that Bengali and hilly peoples are much diverse in their speaking and native vernaculars.

Even in religion, they practice different religious doctrines other than Islam. Chakma, Marma, Chak, Khyang, and the Tanchangas practice Buddhism Tripuri & Riangs Hindum, Lusai, Pankhu and Bonjogis practice Christinaity and the rest are the followers of nature.<sup>33</sup> These peoples have unique mode of production and lifestyles. Jhuming is locally known to be a traditional agronomy and also sustainable which dates back some centuries. In spite of all the adversities, diversities and differences among them they preserved unity and co-existence fostering only one goal. And this gradually led him towards being a unique sectarian group or ethnic community. More impotently, to materialize their dreams, they demanded a sanctioned land, a different geography, and similar socio-cultural festivities.

### **5.3. Economic Progress & National Solidarity:**

Economy, politics and building of a nation influence each other and progresses through mutual interactions. So, development programs must be directed and implemented in such a way that the national solidarity and economic progress is ensured in national

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<sup>33</sup> Singh, R. (1996) The Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, in: C. Nicholas & R. Singh (Eds) *Indigenous Peoples of Asia: Many Peoples, One Struggle* (Bangkok: Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact).

politics. The socioeconomic backwardness of the tribal of CHT loom large in the making of an undisputed nationalism in Bangladesh. Especially building of the Kaptai Dam, land rights problems, Bengali settlers and other burning issues figured prominently in the metabolism of the concoction of some socio-economic problems and thus the government could not build a fine monument of faith in the minds of the tribes.

#### **5.4 The Kaptai Barrage/ Dam Project:**

The then British Govt. conducted a feasibility study in 1906-07 for building a dam in the river of CHT. Wading through various adversities like problems of buildings, discrepancies of water levels, procrastination of the project works, technical errors all were seriously mulled over and upon the lowest ravine, the project of building a dam was fixed in Shilchari. But lastly, it was build near the mouth of Kaptai canal and it saw its end in 1962.

The dam created an artificial lake and that resulted in submerging almost 400 sq. miles in 125 mouzas. Almost 40% of the cultivable land i.e. 54 thousand acres were immersed. And that resulted in damaging the economic sustenance of almost one lakh people from 8 thousand jhuming and 10 thousand peasant families. Later, the ousted peoples were endowed with 20 thousand acres of land, but they were denied another 34 thousand acres of arable lands.

The affected families were not offered compensation. Among 18 thousand affected families, only 11,461 were rehabilitated but 6239 were denied. That resulted in a huge emigration into India and almost 50 thousand people left from Longathu, Barkal & Baghaichari rehabilitation centers. Among them, 20,000 people were settled down in Arunachal by the then India. And the rest were established in Tripura. Breaching the former pledge, the compensation had been lessened. And the reparation that was rewarded was fraught with grafts so, the really damaged ones were bereaved. Every affected family was offered a low lying 3 acres of land which is half of their lake possessions.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Uddin, M.K. (2006) Rights of indigenous people and minority issues in Bangladesh. Available at [http:// ipra2006.com/papers/IPRC/RightsOfIndigenousPeopleandMinorityIssues-Bangladesh.doc](http://ipra2006.com/papers/IPRC/RightsOfIndigenousPeopleandMinorityIssues-Bangladesh.doc).

Because of the Kaptai dam, there fell a shortage of arable lands, jhuming got obstructed and the social, cultural and economic lives were devastated. As a result, they tried for a different living and went for gardening, fishing, and workers at the factories.

### **5.5. Industrialization:**

Most of the industries in CHT are based on forest resources. Karnaphuli paper mill & Karnaphuli Rayon mill are two heavy industries. Apart from that, five medium industries, one cigarette factory, one match factory are there and among workers there's a little portion from the tribes. But before establishing all these manufacturing industries, a huge tribal pool of workforce was promised. The hill tracts peoples deprived from rehabilitation. In 1953 Asia's largest paper mill was set up based on bamboos, soft wood and some other forest resources from the CHT in 1953.<sup>35</sup> For this paper mill the Marmas were dislocated.

### **5.6. Outsider Settlement:**

According to the regulation of 1900, no non-tribe was allowed to purchase any land in CHT. Violating the regulation of 1900, a new settling process was initiated in 1951-52 and as an Govt. initiative, the refugees from India were rehabilitated at Nariar char in Rangamati, Nakkhangchari & Lama of Bandarban. In 1966, the Ayub Khan regime rehabilitated the Mohajer & non-Bengalis. And the faults started from then. Lines of the tribal peoples were devastated. And the problem was brewed thus. Among them, one part was some Muslim families who came from India during the partition and the rest were some landless farmers from East Pakistan. Some families, who were chasing good luck, took the chances and got settled there.

The Bengalis were very dominant in land distribution and somehow or other influenced the socioeconomic landscapes there. In many cases, the non-tribal settlers encroached and possessed more than the governmental sanctions, misappropriated the khas land

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<sup>35</sup> Manan Ganguli, (1995) 'The Chittagong Hill Tracts: before and after Bangladesh', Fourth World News (Cambridge), pp 5-8.



by fake grafts and took away lands from the tribes at a nominal price. A feud thus fomented and the hill peoples gradually grudgingly harbor against the Bengali settlers and were denied from work.

The new settlers almost with their coercive hands repressed the hill peoples, they impetuously cropped their paddies, damaged crops, looted their cattle's. But the helpless & hapless peoples in the CHT never received any justice. Gradually these peoples got to believe in their course that all these Bengali people are cheat, deceiver, licentious and even their wives, daughters are not safe to them. The Bengalis with their wily wits embezzled their land & property, cheated in trade & commerce and bereaved of their own rights.

These issues of land are an old problem and they hardly have sufficient land related documents or institutionally legitimate system. Taking the advantages of the naivety of the tribal peoples, the shrewd settlers with a cunning head proceeded further to materialize their missions. And they scarcely followed up governmental laws. In maximum cases, they went on to continue without any settlement and enjoyed the fruits out of them. Even they took on the khas lands. Moreover, the Bangladesh govt. approved the settlement of non-tribal i.e. Bengali peoples. But, being rehabilitated the Bengali people violated all the settlement laws, governmental injunctions and land distribution tenets.

They even forcibly occupied that. The cultural settings & lifestyles of the Bengalis and the Paharis or the tribes are different. As a result clash, racial tensions and envy surfaced and brewed gradually. And thus, the solidarity between these two conflicting groups was on the verge of ruination. In 1979, President Ziaur Rahman again went controversial by establishing fortified Bengali settlements in the disturbed regions.

During 1979-83, a large-scale random rehabilitation process raged the tribal peoples. And the Bengali settlers then set fire to pillage, plundering, mass killings, collision,



conflagrations. Then, in effect, the CHT became a detached land under the authority of the army.<sup>36</sup>

### 5.7. Problems of Possession of land:

Land possession related problems are very complex in nature and it has existed for a considerable period of time. The problems have not been solved due to the destitute of modern land law. However among the tribal communities land related problems have never been a burning issue.

Chittagong Hill Tracts consists of one tenths of the land of Bangladesh. In the Mughal period here the possession of land was conventional. After that the British govt. for their economic and political interest ruled this arena without interfering with the convention. If we look through the regulation act of 1900A.D, we see that, though there were some rights to the tribal in terms of land ownership, land administration was fully controlled by the British. In fact the tribal rulers were merely the king of men not of land. According to the 38<sup>th</sup> principle of existing manual, in case of allocation of land to the tribes, deputy commissioner has to consult with the concerned Raja of that circle. But it is ignored due to the political interest.

Though deputy commissioner is the sole authority to allocate the land, he has to do it with the help of the report of local headman. But the rule is violated though it is a must. Moreover, a large amount of land that was hereditary consumed and cultivated by the tribal, have been handed over to the outsider Bengali settlers. Because of political violence and unrest, many tribal people have left their cultivable land, fruit garden and forests.

As a result these lands have gone under the control of the Bengali settlers. The tribes were never interested to take allocation of land. The only deed of their proprietorship, which was in the office of Khagrachari district office, was lost in fire. So there is no

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<sup>36</sup> Cited in Suzanne Goldenberg, 'Rivalry and corruption cripple the self-help economy', Guardian, 17 February 1996.

evidence of proprietorship in favor of tribal now. This complexity always keeps them in uncertainty.

According to the CHT Regulation Act of 1900, though deputy commissioner is all in all for the allocation of land, the local administration has a share in power to the allocation of land. So there exists a diarchy. Experts opine that in a uni-centered ruling country like Bangladesh, the right to land should be recognized constitutionally.

Great Britain has a unilinear ruling system, but it has various laws for England, Scotland and North Ireland. Political dialogue maybe, however, is the best way to the solution to the tribal's land problems. It is worth mentioning that if the 4<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> principle of chapter D and 26<sup>th</sup> principle of chapter B of peace contract are in operation, the problems will be solved.

#### **5.8. Problems of Nationality:**

The question of nationality reached its peak immediately after the liberation of Bangladesh. In 1972, the then prime minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman rejected the four point demand of the tribal's. He advised the tribal's to become Bengali. It was an evidence of cry down the tribal. In 1973, in Rangamati prime minister declared that "from now onwards we all are Bengali. You are now promoted to a nation from a tribe".

In 1972 in a speech on draft constitution in parliament Manobendro Narayan Lama stood against Mujibur Rahman's greater Bengali nationalism. He said "this constitution has nothing to do with the Chittagong Hill Tracts' tribes. We are being exploited and deprived from British regime to now through Pakistan period. It's my painful duty to say that our nationality is being ignored. But we want to live with Bangladeshi altogether. India and USSR have recognized different nationality. I convene for the constitutional recognition of tribes". But in the final constitution which set off from the 16<sup>th</sup> of December stated all the citizens of Bangladesh as Bangali.

In the national parliament in 23th of January in 1974 it was passed by the majority vote that "Bangladesh is a state of one language one culture". M.N Larma protested this. He said " I am a Chakma. A Chakma can never be a Bengali .....I am a Chakma , and I am not a Bengali. I am a citizen of Bangladesh. You are also in Bangladesh, but your national identity is Bengali. They (tribes) can never be a Bengali."

He also stated that "our main worry is that our culture is threatened with extinction..... but we want to live with our separate identity".<sup>37</sup>

Bangladesh govt. has failed to make a well established nation and mainstreaming tribes. Bangladesh has at least 33 tribal groups. Among them twenties have got into the national level. The rest 13 groups of Chittagong Hill Tracts are bent upon to keep their distinction on.<sup>38</sup> In effect, for the rejection of tribes demand and the fear of their extinction, the tribes got furious and rebelled against the state.

#### **5.9. Weakness of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board:**

President Ziaur Rahman looked upon the problems of Chittagong Hill Tracts as economic problems. So he in 20<sup>th</sup> October of 1976, by an ordinance of the 77 constituted Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board.

By this ordinance, the divisional commissioner of Chittagong and deputy commissioner of Chittagong Hill Tracts district respectively will be appointed as chairman and vice chairman. But in later for political interest the Chittagong Hill Tracts development board was reshuffled and the GOC of the 24<sup>th</sup> infantry division in Chittagong was appointed as the chairman and an additional commissioner of Chittagong was appointed vice

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<sup>37</sup> M. Q. Zaman, "Tribal Issues and National Integration: The Chittagong Hill Tracts Case," in *Tribal Cultures in Bangladesh*, M. S. Quraishi, ed. (Rajshahi: Rajshahi University Press, 1984), p. 314-15.

<sup>38</sup> Syed Nazmul Islam, "The Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh: Integrational Crisis between Center and Periphery," *Asian Survey*, 21:12 (December 1981), p. 1217.

chairman. Military authority comes out in civil administration.<sup>39</sup> A consultative committee including the head of three circles and some local leaders was formed, but they failed to contribute. The chairman was the almighty and he with the help of civil and military officials conducted all the works of board according to the will of government.

In Chittagong Hill Tracts, though roads constructions, house building and other development programs were initiated, the tribes were not included in this programs. They became angry and as a result the purpose of making the board was not served.

#### **5.10. Tribal Refugee Problem:**

After the birth of Bangladesh, political unrest and lack of confidence and armed violence caused many tribal peoples to move away from their native lands to India and Burma. Followings are the principal causes for their regression:

1. The conflict on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 1981 between peace commando and Security agencies and this resulted in the repulsion of 20128 tribal people to Tripura.
2. In June, 1948 the communal riots in Bhushanchari & Harina compelled almost 12000 refugees to take shelter in Indian Mizoram.
3. From May to December of 1986, grim uprisings and chaotic revolts in Panchari, Rangamati, Chongrachari fed into making asylum of almost 30/40 thousand peoples. India's statistics was a staggering 49 thousand and Bangladesh's 29,992.
4. Because of the uproarious fracas massacre in Herachal, Sarbotali, Khagrachari, Longudu, in 1988-99, at least 20/30 thousand peoples left for Indian Tripura.

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<sup>39</sup> Syed Nazmul Islam, "The Karnafuli Project: Its Impact on the Tribal Population," Public Administration 3:2 (Summer 1978), p. 31.

5. on April 10, 1992 a massive holo caust was manufactured at Logang village in Khagrachari's Panchari; the same drama was staged on April 17 at Naniyar Char of Rangamati and that repelled thousands of tribes to Indian soils and because of security forces, refugee management even was handicapped.

After a fruitful and mutual understanding and meeting between the governments of India and Bangladesh, both the high officials came to an agreement on February 15, 1994 to retract the refugees.

And on February 27, 1998-te last refugee caravan returned to their own soil led by the leader Upendra Lal Chakma. The tribes, are, however, much ill-fated. The refugee problems were created by the majority groups. The Peace Accord guaranteed their return in the country.<sup>40</sup>

CHT, from all the three sides, is always surrounded by the burning infernos of contretemps, altercations and clashes. The land of CHT is attractive and profitable. Because of Geo-Political advantages, CHT is a feasible and practicable way to communicate among Tibet, North-East India and North-West Myanmar. It is natural for this region to become a land of tension, refutation and unrest.

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<sup>40</sup> Siddarth Chakma, Pransanga: Parbattya Chattagram [Issues: The Chittagong Hill Tracts] (Calcutta: Nath Brothers, 1986), pp. 3-15.



## **Chapter-6**

### **Administrative and Political Evolution in the CHT**

### 6.1. Introduction:

Once the present tribal communities of CHT lived in the mainland of Bangladesh. But they had cut off from the mainland and started to live in the hilly areas of Chittagong. A Picture Descripcio Dento Bangal Painted by a Portuguese in 1550 named Joan de Barros shoves that there was a state named 'Chaco' as lied over the eastern shore of karakul between two rivers. Besides, Reno de Tripura is remarkable also. The Chacomias state covered the area of southern east part of Srihatto and Tripura and the north of Arakan that means former greater Chittagong. It is proved that the indigenous people come here hundreds of years ago. Evidence shows that many ethnic conflicts till 1200 A.D caused them to leave their own land and become settler in CHT.<sup>41</sup>

From the very beginning, there were cultural differences among these tribes. They were divided onto Hindu, Buddhist and Christians. Though they lived is thin Bangladesh, They were distinct from Bangladeshi. For this reason, the political dynamism of tribes and their contribution raises a question about that nationality of Bangladeshi.

### 6.2. Pre-British Period:

There is a long history that fared diversely behind the creation of CHT. In the earlier period, CHT were divided into many small landed states or zones. In 590 A.D Chakma prince Bijoygiri and his general Radhman Khisha set up the chakma state. The capital was settled in. Suprikul. In 1400 A.D, the Arakan king defeated the Chakma king and he then left Moisong Mongjamru and started living by the riverside of Toichhari. In 1775, prince Fateh Khan first established peace with the Nawabs.<sup>42</sup> He, with a royal permission from Farrukh Shah & Mohammad Shah, made a provision of trade and commerce between the Jhum cultivators and merchants from low lying lands.

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<sup>41</sup> Selim Samad, "What Is Happening in the Chittagong Hill Tracts?" (in Bengali), Robbar(Sunday), June 22, 1980.

<sup>42</sup> Hayat Hussein, "Problem of National Integration in Bangladesh," in Bangladesh: History and Culture, vol. 1, S. R. Chakravarty and Virendra Narain, eds. (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1986), p. 197.

### 6.3. British Rule:

Under the Mughal rule from 1715-1760 and in British rule, from 1760-1886 revenues were collected through cotton; this is why, this region was recognized as "Karpas Mahal" By the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, the kings of CHT became free and they had full control over these regions. Jhuming was a community practice and they had self-sufficient economy. Different periods of 18<sup>th</sup> century were weaved by the collisions between Bengalis and the Chakmas for border trades in the history CHT.

On the condition and promise of no interference in the internal administration, the Chakma king Janbox Khan capitulated the East Indian Rule in 1860, this district was recognized as an individual one; in 1861, the Indian Council Bill was passed in the parliament. This Bill espoused all the orders or directions formulated by the Governor General.

By the Government of India Act, 1870 Bangalore, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and CHT assumed administrations by special ordinance; according to Notification N0-3302 of 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1860, the British Govt. accredited CHT as a distinct district on 1<sup>st</sup> August. The British rulers never poached here and never suppressed to enforce their laws upholding the heritage and cultural uniqueness of the Paharis and to preserve the existence of minority nation state. Besides the British rulers were much aware of the cotton mills in England and didn't want to impair that process; this is why, the English never interfered.

Until 1860, CHT was a part of the Chittagong district. Then it was separated from the Chittagong district and brought under a Hill Superintendent. In 1900, this zone was again transformed to a district and the old caretaker designation was considered as officer. In 1870, the then ruler Captain Luwin divided the northern part of the Chakma kingdom, different Mong Circle and different Bomang Circles in the southern part. To change the administrative layouts, the British Govt. created the headman and royeja positions along with the Mouza division. And the inhabitants of the mouza were appointed there.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Sudhin Kumar Chakma, "Social Change in Chakma Society in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Poona, 1986, p. 429.

On 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1881 the govt. of Bengal divided CHT into the circles. In 1890, the Chakma circle was furthered into nine landed estates. Then it was abrogated and separated into 124 mouzas. Every mouza was stretched.

#### **6.4. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900:**

After the Sipahi Mutiny, the British rule in India took a direct phase; so, by correcting 1860's regulation, the British govt. ruled the "Notification-123 P.D. Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, 1900 Acton 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1900. This manual was corrected in 1920 and 1925 and it regulated new formula for the emergence and blossoming of the nation states of CHT. In that situation, CHT was prioritized as "Excluded Area". Thus by dual administrations, revenues and social justice were entrusted in the hands of kings and subordinate headmen. According to this manual, CHT was splited into Chakma, Bomang and Mong circles.<sup>44</sup> The headman was the administrative head in the mouza. And a "karbari" was there in every locality/quarter. This manual ensured the existence, security, land rights of the nation-state of CHT and lastly was considered as safeguard for the tribes.

#### **6.5. The Efficacy of the CHT Regulation Act, 1900:**

According to this act diarchy was set in CHT. AS a result CHT was different from the rest districts. To this act, the deputy commissioner himself was the district Magistrate police super executive engineer, forest officer, civil surgeon and tax officer. After the independence of Pakistan, the deputy commissioners' authorities over these were ceased off excerpt magistracy. Tribal leaders and neighboring society did not take it for goodness and objected to it. CHT regulation Act, 1900 and its working principles rules altogether are generally called Hill tracts manual.

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<sup>44</sup> M. Q. Zaman, "Crisis in Chittagong Hill Tracts: Ethnicity and Integration," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 17:3 (January 16, 1982), p. 79.

The 34<sup>th</sup> Section of this manual, Prohibited allocation of land estates to the CHT people.<sup>45</sup> An advisory council was formed including the three headman of Chakma circle Moug circle and Bomang circle to help deputy commissioner, according to the 38<sup>th</sup> section of the manual this advisory council within their respective area worked for the spread of education, maintain peace and order, collecting revenue and socio economic development Norga headman had some magistracy power.

According to 51<sup>st</sup> rule, the deputy commission can remove any person who is outsider their and seemed to be threatened. As in CHT exists the administrative Act of 1900, there have not developed any democratic structure like village, Union, Thana instruction only after the "India Rule Act of 1935" and the vindication of 1937, few democratic structures were developed.<sup>46</sup>

#### 6.6. Tribal Movement in British Reign:

CHT Regulation Act 1900 directly related to the interest of tribes. As a result, there was no major upheaval in British period by the tribes. However the followings are worth mentioning:

1. In 1935 Raja Rammohon Dewan formed the first tribal organization Chakma Youth forum; but this forum did not have any political agenda. At first it worked for the education, society building, culture and religion and gradually appeared as the pioneer in advancing the tribal society towards brighter light.
2. In 1918 the Chakma Jubak Sangha was founded and though it was short-lived but it helped ignite the political consciousness among the hill youths.
3. In 1920, Kamini Mothon Dewan formed CHT public forum which worked for nineteen years in cultural arena; in 1939, when Jamini Ranjon Dewan and Sneha Kumar Dewan took its leadership they included political agenda in it.

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<sup>45</sup> Sangbad (Dhaka, Bengali daily), January 9, 1998. See also, Independent, March 9, 1998.

<sup>46</sup> Amir Khasru, "Peace Outlook in the CHT Still Dreary," Holiday (political weekly) (December 12, 1997).



History says "CHT Jana Samiti" was the milestone of political history in CHT. That made people aware of British ruler and their collaborators, feudal lords and bourgeois exploitation.

4. With the sustenance and patronization of the royal family, CHT Hill Student Samiti was formed headed by Sarat Chandra Talukdar & Suniti Jiban Chakma; it was basically worked to preach moral, religious and other racially conscious doctrines under the auspices of the royal family.

### **6.7. Pakistan Regime:**

After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, Pakistan gave special reference to CHT. The constitution of 1956 & 1962 looked upon this area as excluded area. But the amendment of 1963, called off the special reference of CHT. This creates fear and makes people skeptic. The high Court of East Pakistan stated that the 51<sup>st</sup> section of CHT Regulation Act, 1900 is ultra-virus with the constitution of Pakistan, and abolished it. After that deputy commissioner could not expel anyone from CHT. It is mentionable that, neither CHT was not the only hilly area close to Pakistan border, not the indigenizes of CHT was the only tribe of Pakistan. Pakistan government took initiative for all frontier hilly areas and tribal communities.

India and Pakistan as two independent and sovereign nations, were freed from the grip of British rule, mainly based on the Two-Nation Theory consecutively on 15<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> August of 1947. According to the sketch map of Bengal Boundary Commission, 1947, there was a possibility of including Ferozpur district of Punjab to Pakistan and CHT to India. But later, in accordance with Major Billy Short's suggestion, Radcliff & Lord Mountbatten, on 9<sup>th</sup> August decided finally to include CHT instead of Jira & Ferozpur Mohakuma.

Against this irresponsible, inconsiderate decision, the whole CHT whose 97% peoples are non-Muslim flew into a rage and went berserk. Storms of unrest hit the map of CHT. Chittagong Hill Tracts People's Association publicly opposed and lodged written application to the government. They even hoisted Indian flag from 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> August in the District Commissioner's Office of Rangamati.

On the other hand, the king of Bomang circle hoisted Burma's flag. On 21<sup>st</sup> August, 1947 Beluch Regiment of Pakistan hoisted Pak's flag bringing down India's. Three tribal chiefs pledged to the British Authority, Congress and Muslim League for CHT's accreditation as a "Native State". When spurned, they then proposed of forming a Confederation combining Tripura, Kuchbihar and Meghalaya. But all their endeavors and toils ended in sheer smoke and lastly became a part of Pakistan. After that, the Pakistan govt. termed the tribes indiscriminately as pro-Indian. That created specter and fear among the tribes and many of them fled to Myanmar and India.

After the establishment of Pakistan in 1947 the "Chittagong Hill Tracts Manual" was kept almost intact and in the constitutions of 1956 & 1962 this region was regarded as the "separated area". But with a correction of 1963 the special status was abrogated. That congealed the fear and suspicion of the tribes. The High Court of East Pakistan termed section no-51 of the Regulation of 1900 as ultra-vices and unnerved it. In an order it expressed that the deputy commission CHT wouldn't be allowed to oust anyone from the region. Noteworthy is—CHT was not the only hill district, but the inhabitants of CHT are not the only tribes of Pakistan. The Pakistani govt. followed the same and similar policies for all the tribal groups which seemed congruous and accordant for all. The Autocrat Aiub created inconsonant inconsistency among the tribes and to the tribal lives.

In 1964, 50 thousand tribal people left for India and another 30 thousand went away to Myanmar. In 1948, Pakistan abolished "CHT Frontier Police Regulation 1881"; consequently, the high-lender lost trust on Pakistan. The amendment of CHT Regulation Act, 1900 made the hill-people think that Pakistanis were intruding here to satisfy their gross political revenge.<sup>47</sup>

The following two programs exhausted the trust of high-people:

1. Construction of Kaptai Barrage in 1960.
2. Intentional and slanned Bengali resettlement in 1966.

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<sup>47</sup> M. Rashiduzzaman, "The CHT Peace Accord in Bangladesh," NFB, January 21, 1998, and also Holiday, February 8, 1998.

### 6.8. Political organizations of the Tribes during Pakistan Period:

The following were the political organizations developed in Pakistan regime.

1. Hill student Association led by Annante Bhiani Khisha and Mrinal Kanti Chakma in 1956.
2. Formation of Tribal Students Association in leadership with M.N. Larma in 1965 which worked against the making of Kaptai Barrage.
3. Formation of CHT Tribal Welfare Association in leadership with Ananta Bihari Khisha and J.B. Larma for making up a progressive national movement. This association constituted "Election Monitoring Committee" in 1970. This association also put forward the demand of Zonal autonomy and their own legislative body- raised a 16 point demand. In 1973's election, M.N. Larma was voted to Pakistan National Assembly defeating Awami League Candidate.
4. In 16<sup>th</sup> of May, 1970, Rangamati Communist party was formed with a view solving existing problems. The Party members were M.N. Larma, J.B. Larma, Vabotosh Dewan, Jatindra Lal Tripura, Kali Madhsals Chakma and others.
5. Immediately after the independence of BD, many org were created there. In 1972, Hill Students Association were created in leadership with chaleai Mog and Dipankar Chakma. This org. stood against disparity and call for solution to the problems.

During Pakistani period, Tribal society was still in primitive and backward stage. Their main livelihood was Zoom cultivation and hunting animals. Economy was main self-subsistence. Bengali outsiders controlled business. In 1960-61, committee headed by Division commissioners of CHT was formed to assess the demand of education in CHT. This committee recommended establishing 169 primary school. By 1969, this figure raised to 391 (CHT District Gazettes, 1971).<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Atul Kohli, "Can Democracy Accommodate Ethnic Nationalism?" *Journal of Asian Studies* 56:2 (May 1997), p. 344.

In Pakistan period, few large industries and projects were established in CHT. These industries contributed significantly to complement and livelihood.

In 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1971 Pakistan govt. brought some amendment in section 34 in CHT Regulation Act, 1900. The most significant amendments were:

1. Both the hill-peoples and non-hill will enjoy equal opportunities
2. Paharis or the high-landers and others, with the permission of Revenue Board of East Pakistan can cultivate and set up industry and make house buildings here.<sup>49</sup>

The above strides were taken by the got for the development of CHT. But the tribes took it as a conspiracy to settle Bangladeshi in CHT. In fact both views proved to be correct.

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<sup>49</sup> Bertocci, Peter J. (1996) "Resource Development and ethnic Conflict in Bangladesh: The Case of the Chittagong Hill Tracts", in Peter J Bertocci, *Politics of Community and Culture in Bangladesh: Selected Essay*. Dhaka: Center for Social Studies, pp. 122–160.

## **Chapter-7**

### **Political Evolution of the Tribal Peoples of CHT in Independent Bangladesh, Backgrounds of Rebellion and Policies and Steps Guided to Mitigate these Rebellions**



### 7.1. The Liberation War and the Tribes:

During the time of liberation war for the weakness of law and order and for the want of perfect leadership it was not possible to organize the tribes on behalf of liberation war. They were confused to determine the appropriate way of keeping distinction of tribes within the few of Bengli nationalism. As the tribes were good at operating weapons the Pakistani government used them against the liberation war. Raza Tridip Roy went away Pakistan via China and prayed for Political shelter as he could not assure himself dignity and security. As a delegate of Pakistan he opposed the liberation war in UN. Later he did not come back in country.<sup>50</sup>

In addition then Pakistani government with the help of Headmen and the Karbari consisted Rajakar, Muzahid Bahini, civil armed force with the young's of tribe. On the other hand one part of the hill tracts people went to India to take part in the liberation war. Ashik Mitra Chakma, Naba Bikram Tripura, Ukhajay Marma, Dipamkar Talukdar are main.

Besides this late Prosine Anarabi accepted the batch of colonel and took part the liberation war in the Akhaura war field. But the Bengali Freedom fighters burn the village of tribe and killed 16 tribes in Pansari as extinction of aborigines. The torture were continued in the area of Dighinala and Barkol. After that the forces of "Rakshi Bahini" in the name of arms deliverance tormented the tribes.<sup>51</sup>

### 7.2. Demands of the Tribes:

After the independence of BD the state started to direct be conducted in direction with the constitution of BD. There were no special principle in CHT in newly formed constitution. In 29<sup>th</sup> Jan 1972, tribal leaders headed by Charu Bikash Chakma met the than prime minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and demander for a different constitutional rule for their betterment. After a few days, in 15<sup>th</sup> Feb, a deligate team consists of seven members leaded by Raja Maung Pru Sine Chowdhury, went to meet the Prime minister.

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<sup>50</sup> Asian Development Bank (1979) Appraisal of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Project in Bangladesh, Report no: Ban Ap-24. Manila: ADB.

<sup>51</sup> PCJSS (1987) Patchdofa Dabinama. Rangamati: Information and Publicity Department of PCJSS

But they could not meet Prime minister. However they kept their four point demand in Prime minister's office.<sup>52</sup>

### 7.3. Four- Point Demands:

In 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1972, Manabendra Narayan Larma, on behalf of high Landers, put forward their four point demands to the committee who draft constitution of Bangladesh. The demands were:

1. CHT will be an autonomous area and it will have its own legislative council.
2. A Principal like CHT Regulation Act will have to include in the constitution.
3. The office of tribal king will have to preserve.
4. There will be an act in constitution which in CHT related principle.<sup>53</sup>

But Sheikh Mujibur Rahman repudiated their demands stating them as separations. He advised them to get into Bengali nationalism. This advice was an evidence of cry down of high lenders. This results in fear and mistrust about Bengali among high-landers.

### 7.4. M.N. Larma in the Parliament:

While discussion was going on about the draft constitution. M.N. Larma on his speech in parliament, stated, with a very distracted and emotional voice--

"I am a Chakma.....A Marma could never become a Chakma; A Chakma can't be a Murong, a Murong can't never be a Bengali. ....I'm a Chakma but not a Bengali. I am a citizen of Bangladesh -a Bangladeshi. You are also Bangladeshis, but your identity is Bengali. And tribes could never be Bengalis." But the final constitution was accepted on 16<sup>th</sup> Dec of 1972, termed all the citizens of Bangladesh as Bengali. For this reason, M.N. Larma, did not sign in final constitution though he was a parliament member.

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<sup>52</sup> Organizing Committee, Chittagong Hill Tracts Campaign (1986) "The Charge of Genocide: Human Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh", in Organizing Committee, The Conference on the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Amsterdam: Organizing Committee, Chittagong Hill Tracts Campaign.

<sup>53</sup> Srijagadish (1993) "Jumma Jatiyatabad", in PCJSS, ed., The Jumma Sambad Bulletin. Rangamati: Information and Publicity Department of PCJSS, pp. 16-22.

### **7.5. Declaring the Tribes as Bengali:**

In an election speech, Sk. Mujibur Rahman, in Rangamati in 16<sup>th</sup> Feb of 1973, stated "We all are now Bengalis. From this day onward the tribes are Bengalis". Educated tribes protested this decision..... This tribes became insurgent.<sup>54</sup>

### **7.6. Formation of Janasanghati Samiti:**

In post Independence period M.N. Larma tried to gather tribal youths and educated class against torment, mistrust, and persecution of tribes. CHT Public Solidarity Association comes out in Rangamati in 24<sup>th</sup> June of 1972 and one of its handmaid associations are High-lander student Association. This Association was called "Maoist political party and from of Rangamati Communist Party. M. N. Lama, encouraged the members saying". Our district ethnicity is on a stake, we want to live with our own identity. This slogan was spread out everywhere.

### **7.7. Formation of the Santi Bahini:**

In 7<sup>th</sup> Jan of 1973, the "Peace Committee" was set up in a forest of Khagrachhori. Younger brother of M. N. Larma, Jyotirindro Bodhipriyo Larma's nick name Shantu. For hill-peoples public solidarity Association was the Symphen of Ireland, and peace committee was the I.R.A. M.N. Larma and J.B. Larma were the leader of P. S. A and peace force. Peace force was a armed force. Most probably the success of Chica Revolution had encouraged M.N. Larma. Peace force was formed for the purpose of liberating the tribes. It took its inspiration from Mao se Tung and his pronged war strategy. During 1973-1974, the peace committed recruited many educated tribes and set up a military academy in deep forest.<sup>55</sup>

The first trainer of P.C. was Nalini Rangan Chakma, known as Major Afuronto, Major Afuronto trained only the officers of P.C. These trained officers trained the soldiers later.

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<sup>54</sup> Tripura, P. and A. Harun (2003) Parbotto Chattagrame Jumchash. Dhaka: SEHD.

<sup>55</sup> ibid

The first training came was at Dadkupiya in Monolachori. Shanti Larma supervised the training camp.

Zone leaders course was started in 1973. The trainee of this course were appointed as zone political secretary. Then came Junior Training Course (J.T.C) The appointment of sector, zone and sub zone commander was commeted in Nov, 1975. An evaluation of 1984 shows that, there were about 3500 person had been trained by the peace committee. During 1986-1988, operating vi8rent terrorism. Peace committee recruited about 8000 members.

They used the geographical advantage to operate guerilla war. The main programs of peace committee wear

1. Abrupt assaults on security force on land and water.
2. To attack and set fire on Bengali majority villages and security camps.
3. Non Killing tribal and anti-peace committee members.
4. Kidnapping of govt. officers and other important non-tribal peoples for ransom.
5. Destruction of electric station. bridge, culvert, roads, and forests.
6. Set fire to any vehicle on road and water.
7. Encouraging communal riots.

The tribes thought that Bengali Nationalism will extinct the existence of tribal distinction. As a result "Zoom Nationalism" arose by the leadership of M.N. Larma. As M.N. Larma delivered speech against outsider Bengali and enthused the hill-peoples to gather and unite under the banner of public solidarity Association as Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman agitated and united Bangladeshis by delivering speech against Pakistani rulers.

Similarly, M.N Larma thus, united the hill-peoples by harboring grudges against the Bengalis.



In 1970 election, in both two seats, Awami League candidates won and made it to parliament. But in 1973, election Jhum Nationalism defeated Bengali Nationalism. The election of 73 politically organized the high-landers.<sup>56</sup>

#### **7.8. Meeting with Indira Gandhi:**

In 1974, CHT public solidarity Association, met with the prime minister of India Indira Gandhi, to force BD got as the BD got did not consider their demands But Indira Gandhi disheartened them saying it was their internal affairs. India warned Mujib govt. about the insidiousness of Shanti Bahini.

#### **7.9. BAKSHAL Formation and Joining of M.N. Larma:**

In 24<sup>th</sup> Jan, 1975, through a constitutional amendment the then prime minister declared Bangladesh as a mono political dominated country. M.N. Larma joined BAKSL and was appointed a governor of CHT. But after the assassination of Mujibur Rahman on 15<sup>th</sup> Aug of 1975, Larma expressed his hope to solve the problems of CHT. The leaders of public solidarity Ass took the advantage of Military coup and encounter coup. They organized the association and M. N. Larma led this organization in guise.

#### **7.10. Main Political Issues:**

Though, during the tenure of Sheikh Mujib, there were hardly any problems, but they organized themselves for insurgency incognito; and only waiting for a better time. They were looking for an avenue of movement. However, Mujib-prescribed Bengali Nationalism was not the only cause for insurgency. There was another reason behind.

1. Outsider/ immigrant Bengali exploited the high-landers, but the govt. took no steps. This deprivation brings forth resentment and mistrust.
2. Some irresponsible decisions made hill-peoples insurgent. They are Construction of Kaptail Barrage and political persecution of Chakma.

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<sup>56</sup> Van Schendel, Willem (1995) "The Invention of 'Jummas': State Formation and Ethnicity in Southeastern Bangladesh", in R. H. Barnes, A. Gray, and B. Kingsbury, eds., *Indigenous People of Asia*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: The Association for Asian Studies, pp. 121– 44, and 459– 466.



Setting up of Karnafuli paper mill and leading Marmas to refugees.

Paying no compensation to the refugees and no rehabilitation of hill-peoples; on the other hand, strengthening refutation, tension, tumults and providing sustenance and patronization to the Bengali settlers.

3. After the liberation war, the mass tolerance did not go fully functional in CHT.
4. Misunderstanding between Bengalis and the hill-peoples .
5. Insufficient budget for CHT.
6. Mental pressures as in CHT, the govt. established three cantonments with Indian soldier.
7. Ignore of legal rights of hill-peoples.
8. The voraciousness of vehement Bengali nationalism led astray of uproarious nationalist country.

After the independence of BD, the problem of CHT was ignored by the govt. This results in insolent insurgency.<sup>57</sup>

#### **7.11. Regime of President Zia:**

It is apparent that during president Zia's regime, some steps were taken to solve the problem in CHT. Those are followings:

1. To assess the political desire of CHT, then limit it and try to materialize it.
2. Gradually mainstreaming them in national politics.
3. As the non-Bengali peoples in the hills were much inimical towards the security forces, army and other officials, so to help out the army in their operation some landless peoples from the country were settled down there.
4. To manage and handle the diplomatically who countenanced insurgency or fueled the Shanti Bahini.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> R. C. K. Roy, *Land Rights of the Indigenous Peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts* (Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs [IWGIA], 2000).

<sup>58</sup> Levene, M. (1999) *The Chittagong Hill Tracts: a case study in the political economy of 'creeping' genocide*, *Third World Quarterly*, 20(2), pp. 339–369.

President Ziaur Rahman worked upon CHT problems as a economic problem instead of political problem. From the beginning military officer have dominated the board and there were no tribal representative in the board. On 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1976 the Zia govt. ruled ordinance no-99 and formally developed the "CHT Development Board"; since its birth, it was maintained, directed and managed by the army and always there was supremacy of army; so, the tribal people called this board "Army development Board". CHT Development Board took some economic initiatives. A consultation committee was formed including the heads of these circle's and some local leaders to conduct the programs for the board. Tribal leaders, however unfortunately could not contribute to the board. Lastly it was failed to gain trust from the hill-peoples

Thus when small scale endeavors turned out to be foiled, the govt. mulled seriously to from a political platform with the leading hill-peoples which will mediate between the govt. and the insurgents. The Zia govt. established an associated organization named 'Tribal Convention' to earn the support and assistance of the tribal middle class on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 1977.

A committee was formed, was chaired by the Chakma king Debashish Roy and Co-Chaired by Bomang king. Charu Bikash was given the responsibilities of general secretary. The objectives of the Tribal Convention were to ignite their endeavors for open healthy politics than hidden earnestness for suicidal activities. But unfortunately, this Tribal Convention fell prey of incredulity from both sides.

The Shanti Bahini started perceiving they are the brokers of negotiators of the govt. the govt. on the other hand thought they're still in favor of the Shanti Bahini under cover. The political strategies by the Zia regime raised furor. To curb the intensities of the fracas and unrest, the govt. deployed a host of military, Para-military and ansar squad. And against these coercive drives, the Shanti Bahini was much reactive. In the first quarter of 1976, the Santi Bahini started military action against the govt.

Earlier, Shanti Bahini uprooted bridge, pool and damaged govt. land and attacked on army. In a guerrilla attack at least 10 army personnel and one officer killed.

That led the deterioration of the overall situation and it plummeted. After this incident on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1980, the army managed to occur one of the diabolical massacres at Kamapati Union in Rangamati's Kaukhali. They army pretended to rebuild the Noyapara Buddhist Temple and when the Buddhist devotees lathered, Caption Kamal commanded to set fire to the innocent civilians. And that counted an instant death toll of more than 300 religious Buddhists. That reminded us of the Jalianwala Bagh massacre by Gen. Dayar.

No sooner had the taints of blood of Kamapati withered than the army provoked again another accident. Induced by, military backing, the Bengali settlers brewed a bloodcurdling carnage. At Raikhyabili on 15<sup>th</sup> September, at Baurapara of Betbunia on 28<sup>th</sup> September, at Upalehhari on 19<sup>th</sup> November, at Lagthu on 23<sup>th</sup> November, Noyapara on 11<sup>th</sup> December, there was huge blood shedding. The Tribal Convention was a complete failure to tackle and monitor the brewed situation. The three huge cantonment when set up Deeghinala, Ruma and Alikadom.

In 1980, the Zia govt. proposed the controversial "Disturb Area Bill" which was adverse to fundamental rights but was compelled to retract on the vehement objection of the oppositions in the parliament. Sub-inspector of the police force or non-commissioned officer could detain or shoot any suspicious person and it was in the bill. Besides, investigations without warrant, setting the dwelling houses on charge of housing armory or even encroaching were included in the bill.

The Zia govt.'s steps to curb to control the insurgency, the military strategies. One the one hand, were the different names of coercion, sectarian repression regional suppression and discrepancies. Imitating the Pakistani rulers, the Zia govt. passed the outsider way for infiltration in the Hill-districts.<sup>59</sup> The outsiders i.e. the Bengali settlers were used as the armaments for racial repression & oppression and the pariahs were at bay.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Guhathakurta, M. (1997) Overcoming otherness and building trust: the Kalpana Chakma case, in: S. Bhaumik, M. Guhathakurtha & S. B. R. Chaudhury (Eds) *Living on the Edge: Essays on the Chittagong Hill Tracts*, pp. 109-126 (Kolkata: Calcutta Research Group).

<sup>60</sup> Choudhury, Z. (2010) Broken promises, *Forum: A Monthly Publication of The Daily Star*, 3(4).

Ziaur Rahman is merited with the second father of the reemergence of the implosions & insurrection in the CHT. In his regime, controlling rebellion did not see any peaceful solution. Racial discrimination and its solution is a political issue. Financial auspices, reliefs or any other profession rights or any legal structure did not serve well. But it is true that the killing of Ziaur Raman elongated the clouds of the problems in the CHT .

#### **7.12. President Sattar's Regime:**

No New direction or fruitful effort was seen in the one year regime of president Sattar. Some problems got much tortuous, on the other hand. During Zia's stint, in some sectors viz. education services there were provisions of quota but Sattar turned them down in 1982, a delegate headed by Subimal Dewan, assistant adviser for the CHT, and met and explained the exact situations to Sattar. But they in return got only some words of hope and nothing tangible.

#### **7.13. General Ershad's Tenure(1982-90):**

General Ershad was a little different than his predecessors and invested huge money to really reap a good harvest from the problems laden CHT. In 1985, he declared CHT as Special Economic Zone some of its primary objectives were to create working places for the huge untapped human resources in the CHT. And for flourishing trade commerce to industrialize in a massive way and to ensure economic sustenance for the downtrodden masses in the described areas. To spread higher education among the tribes they were quotas in the University But alternately all these efforts did so well see little light. Two significant decisions were as follows:

- 1) Mass tolerance at the members of Shanti Bahini and assurance of rehabilitation.
- 2) Meetings with the Janasanghati Samiti and giving them importance.

For the above mentioned two important decisions the following five successes were achieved:



- a) Class among the Shanti Bahinis
- b) Surrender of the Preeti Group
- c) Formal meetings with the Janasanghti Samiti
- d) Approval of the Hill District Regional Govt. Bill
- e) Election of the local Govt.

### 7.13 (a) Breakdown in Shanti Bahini:

The second congress of the Jana Sanghati Samiti was held from 23<sup>rd</sup> September to 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1982. 8 Day congress could not dissolve the untrustworthy attitudes, resolve the fumed cavities. And in the question of taken the political and military strategy, there raised a gigantic dissidence and fuss, ultimately it led to the division of the party.

#### 1) The Marxist Group:

This group was led by M. N. Larma he was supported by J. B. Larma, Kalimadhab Chakma Ushatan Dewan, Rupayan Dewan and Sudhasindhu Khisa. As this Marxists talked about independent even by a prolonged battle they were thus known as the Lamba group or Larma Group the a clatter seemed clear with RAW (Research and Analysis Wing India). They did no bear Larma with the leader of Shanti Bahini and directed them to change leadership in the party. In 1982 the Preeti Kumar Chakma group lodged the following allegations against M.N. Larma:

1.1) M. N. Larma & Sante larma believe in Marxism, but the Govt. of India doesn't espouse Marxism so, a change was required here.

1.2 Manabendra Narayan Larma doesn't trust anybody other than his brother Santu Larma

1.3 The responsibility of field commander has been awarded to Santu Larma.

1.4 The Preeti Group "thinks they will free the hilly regions with the help of India.



1.5 India is not helping completely for the unskilled leadership of Larma.

1.6 The massive settlement of Bengali people was made possible again because of erroneous leadership of Larma.<sup>61</sup>

## (2) The Nationalist Groups:

Mr. Bhabotosh Dewan, Preeti Kumar Chakma, Devjyoti Chakma and Jatindralal Tripura one leading the nationalist Group. The settlers, the Bengalis involved hugely in agriculture, industry, service sectors, fishing, wood business, day labor and so many other professions; they were able to show their craftsmanship and proved their potency everywhere than the tribal peoples. Therefore, the settlers or Bengalis controlled maximum shares of the trade and commerce and other economic mobilities. These nationalist groups one mostly known as 'Bete Group' or Reeti Group because they promised of realizing their rights. If need be they were ready to form a confederation with India. The disintegration started under the supervision and auspices of an Indian intelligence agent Gopal Krishna Chakma.

Preeti Group then emerged with a new leadership and planned to form a new independent nation reposing in their own nationalism; also they outlined their next military actions, constitutions, party flag, national flag and national anthem. But a grime grip at fate chased them and Mr. Manabendra Narayan Larma seized that dossier. Because of the breakdown of Janasanghati Samiti, their armed cadres split into Shantibahini. Sector no-3,5and 6 supported Larma Group and Preeti Group was fortified by 1, 2 and 4. And that resulted in a bloodletting collision on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1983 at 11:15am in the special sector head quarter between two fighting quarters. They then waged guerilla and suicide squad attacks on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1983, in a suicide squad attack headed by Captain Allin, the father Jhum nationalism, chairman of Janasanghati Samiti

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<sup>61</sup> Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman and A. H. Monjurul Kabir, Role of Parliament in Conflict Resolution: A Critical Review of the Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) Peace Accord in Bangladesh, p. 8; Working Paper, no. 2, "The Role of Parliament in Conflict and Post Conflict Asia," United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Regional Center in Bangkok, Thailand, (2005).

and Commander-in-chief Mr. Manabendra Narayan Larma was killed with eight of his aides in Kalyanpur's Baghmara Cantonment.

### **7.13 (b): Surrender of Preeti Group:**

In 1984, the Indian Intelligence agency took of their backing of Preeti Group. And that necessitated a submission of the Preeti Group with an armed group to the Ershad govt. Preeti Kumar and Bhabotosh Dewan literally fled CHT to India being disarmed. Larma group comprised so many political leaders and they headed in war strategy and politics. In 1985, the Larma Group was rearranged and reconstructed. They formed a dialogue committee after hairy a conversation with the govt.

### **7.13(c): Convention with the Janasanghati Samiti:**

As an undertaking to resolve the political clinging and clashes, in 1982 the Ershad Regime contrived a liaison committee to place peace talks and Upendra Lal Chakma. Next political endeavor was attempted on August 30, 1983 making Shantimoy Dewan the convener to resurrect tribunal convention. Ershad, president of the then government visited Rangamati on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1983 for organizing public opinion. He declared a package program in the Rangamati Stadium while delivering his speech as an instance of earnestness of his government which included cessation of Bengali settlements mass tolerance to Shantibahini and direct dialogues with the leaders of Janasanghati Samiti: In order to resume and reestablish place in CHT.

General Ershad declared mass tolerance for all the armed militants on 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1984. The first meeting with the Janasanghati Samiti was held on 21<sup>st</sup> October, At Pujgang, Khagrachhari on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1987 while touring Chittagong , General Ershad had a meeting with the concerned dignitaries and he managed t form high authority national committee to politically resolve all the problems in the CHT and that committee was headed by planning minister.

A.K. Khandokar. With the Janasanghati Samiti, this newly formed national committee continued to have six meetings. In the second meeting, the Janasanghati Samiti raised a dossier of five-point.<sup>62</sup>

But those five-point were much subversive to the constitution and ultimately dismissed. The causes were in an America-centric or unlinear administrative system, provincial autonomy was simply impossible. And the standstill of the discussion started thus. Yet four other meetings were held.

### **7.13 (d). Approval of the local government Bill in the CHT:**

When formal discussion was foiled, the government went for an alternative when influential tribal leaders were in discussion with govt. proposed for nine-point demand. govt. raised a four-point bill in the parliament on 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1989 based on that nine point. the aforementioned four bills as regional and Khagrachari Rangamati, Bandarban hilly districts Local Govt. Parishad bill, 1989 and were formalized as laws by the parliament on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1989.

The special characteristics of the regional government bill were supervisory power to exact influence over all the ongoing functions of the board. The regional government council was entrusted to operate twenty two division of suction no 22 the chairman was assigned for executive authority in section no 24.<sup>63</sup>

By order of section no 64, except for lands under govt. control settlement and consignment of all lands in the hill tracts Besides, the responsibilities

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<sup>62</sup> Asian Center for Human Rights (ACHR), "The Ravaged Hills of Bangladesh," ACHR Review, Index: Review/35/2004, at <<http://www.achrweb.org/Review/2004/35-04.html>>, accessed July 5, 2008.

<sup>63</sup> Bangladesh Watchdog, "Fresh Violence in CHT: Indigenous Villages Attacked," April 25, 2008, <<http://bangladeshwatchdog.blogspot.com/2008/04/fresh-violence-in-cht-indigenous.html>>, accessed on January 17, 2009.

of primary education, expansion of agriculture, fisheries, cattle grazing, sports, handicrafts, social cooperation committee, advisory social lows trade commerce, haat-bazaar and other cultural divisions were authorized to the council.

### **7.13 (e). Election of Local Government Council**

Chittagong Hill Tracts Janasanghati Samiti, Pahari Chhatra Aoikya Parishad, Parhari Gano Parishad and some other functioning organizations opposed the "Regional Government Council Bill" as contriving contravening to mass interests. Ignoring all these opposition and not paying a little Read to the five- point demand of the Janasanghati Samiti, an election, under the auspices of military non- military administration was held of three hill council though the hill people didn't take part in this election, yet Janasanghati Samiti or Shanti Bahini could not frustrate the election. The council got going on July13, 1989.

#### **Bipolar Tribal leadership:**

Leaders, except from the Chittagong some other Hill Tracts Janasanghati Samiti also worked for peace and deciding on the problems, they got politically sustained during the Erased regime. Then fore, the Janasanghati Samiti had to handle the security force and Bengali Settlers on the hand the opponent tribal leaders on the other. they even had to devise various war schemes and Political strategies against these factions and thus, tribal leadership was dividable into two Cliques.

Though the elections of Chittagong District councils, a representative political institution got thrived and led to a Seconds power structure. Formation of the council and accelerating economic development programs through them, necessarily directed to a strong new dimension



in tribal leadership and for the Shanti Bahini. that was nothing but Political debacle.<sup>64</sup> And that fuelled them to resume the power axis and they started militancy.

#### **7.14 The Regime of Caretaker Government:**

The dismissed of the Ershad regime on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 1990 forged the legitimating of chief Justice Sahabuddin Ahmend's being temporary President. They visited Rangamati on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1990 and on various demands he announces local government council wouldn't be abolished. No further decision was accepted in his short stint.<sup>65</sup>

#### **7.15 Kheleda Zia's Tenure (1991-1996):**

Begum Khaleda Zia took over the prime ministerial designation in March 1991. To reboot the process, and above all to resolve the existing problem of the CHT, the elected democratic govt. declared forgiveness for all militant groups. The mass tolerance declaration of 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1991 requested the insurgents to deposit give back all their arms, the govt. even offered them financial incentives.

On April, 1992 huge maser was stormed between the tribes and Bengali settlers on a more issue of a tiff among the boys of Pahari-Bengali at Logging village of Panchhtri thana in Khagrachri. some 300 Paharis were killed and 587 house were conflagrated. A one member investigation commission headed by justice Sultan Hossein Khan.

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<sup>64</sup> R. C. K. Roy, Land Rights of the Indigenous Peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs [IWGIA], 2000).

<sup>65</sup> ibid



This and that reported suspected Shanti Bahini for the carnage the Pahari (Hill) groups nullified all these as false and partial and retarded as a this doing of the vested interest. All these incidents led forth a huge cavity of disbelief and lack of trust.

Begum Zia went on tour to Khagrachari on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1992. she acquiesced that all problems in the CHT could be Solved with in the constitutional circumference. In frequent order to keep moving of the wheels of discussion with Shantibahini as a part of the process minimizing political elucidation in the CHT, the Khaleda Zia regime constructed a liaisons committee Chanukah as its conveyor It was member body which again furthered to communicate with the Shanti Bahini.

The Khaleda Zia administration wanted who literately to put all the problems end by dialogues. the them communication minister colonel Oli Ahmed who led a all-party parliamentary committee comprised of nine members, proposed peace the CHT. the govt. declined truce from 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1992 and step by step increased the time up to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1997. when the government with its communication committee created favorable environment to talk with Janasanghati Samiti,

Col. Ali's national committee managed to held their first meet on 5<sup>th</sup> November, 1992. the second meeting between the national committee and Shanti Bahini was held on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1992 3<sup>rd</sup> on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1993 and 7<sup>th</sup> ,4<sup>th</sup> on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1993, 5<sup>th</sup> on 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1993, 6<sup>th</sup> on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 1993 and 7<sup>th</sup> meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 1994. All of the meetings were held in the circuit house of Khagrachari the Janasanghati Samiti increased their arms-truce up to 31<sup>st</sup> march, 1993 None of the side could hardly show any true willingness cooperation beyond 'their own interest". And Prime Minister Khaleda was no exception though sneer meetings went in action, but no one saw any little ray of hope.

There a subcommittee chaired by Rashed Khan Menon also had four meetings. With this backdrop, for the returning of the refugees to who took shelter in Tripura to sign an agreement of understanding with India on 9<sup>th</sup> May, 1993.<sup>66</sup>

#### **7.16 The Sheikh Hasina's Regime (1996-2001):**

The sheik Hasina led government went in action on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 1996. In their manifesto, they had a promise of solving the problem in CHT. The Peoples in the hill turned hostile when Kalpana Chakma, a spearhead of the Hill Woman Federation was abducted from Baghaichari Rangamati.

The hill community was taken aback. Then Shantibahini Killed twenty eight woodcutters from 30<sup>th</sup> September to 30<sup>th</sup> October, the Janasanghati Samiti one sided declared the ornstruce. On this background, the Awani govt. did welcome that action. In the meeting of ministry council a national committee was formed placing Abdul Hasnat Abdullah as the convenor.

A lot of meetings took place then for the much connected peace process. Ultimately, both the sides signed the historical peace accord. On 2<sup>nd</sup> December,1997.In Dhaka international conference centre at 15:25 PM both side signed the much awaited peace treaty. For the government of Bangladesh, chief whip Mr. Abdul Hasnat Abdullah and for Janasanghati Samiti Mr Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma signed. Prime minister Sheik Hasina and other high officials were present in the room.

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<sup>66</sup> Retrieved from <<http://intercontinentalcry.org/settlers-attack-jumma-in-the-chittagonghill-tracts/>>, April 16, 2008.

## **7.17 The Historical Peace Treaty:**

### **a. Favorable Situation for Peace Treaty:**

The sun of peace didn't rise overnight. A sincere endeavor for almost two decades, communication, rapport building, a series of meetings all contributed to the Ultimate accord.

The Total process is as follows – Major general Md. Abdul Monjur took an initiative as a representative of President Ziaur Rahman for sowing a seed of process, that didn't bloom to be a plant. But the seed did not extinct. During the regime of Gen. Ershad in 1983-84 with earnest efforts of Major Abdul Kader there sprouted a tiny plant. And that bore a premature fruit but it was not ripe. The tree started growing and with proper nursing it bore another fruit in 1988-89. This time again the fruit was not mature. But the roots were embedded in deep down inside the soil. The tree again got better nurtured in 1992-95, but a stormy weather compelled its felling. In 1996-97, because of intensive nurturance, the tree was reshaped with a robust fruit.

Some India states viz.- Arunachal, Tripura which border CHT grudgingly harbor for the political asylums or refuges. The Chakma refugees were large in number and that led to an adverse repel Chakma resulting in a compromising decision for the Shantibahini.

Awami League's victory to form a government in Bangladesh, a liberal united alliance in Indian govt. and a close collaboration between these two governments necessary paved the way for signing up the peace accord. The Devegoura government in India was much interested in developing relations between two countries the Indian govt. promised not to help the Shanti Bahini.

Besides then Indian govt. became much focused on the rebellion larder seven sister in the north eastern regions. Being the premier Sheikh Hasina affirmed that she wouldn't let anybody use Bangladesh against India and she also took some initiatives to fulfill the premise. India though Pakistani 1<sup>st</sup> was operational in Bangladesh and aiding the insurgents. the Indian authority assuaged that India wouldn't help the Shanti Bahini.

After Devegoura India Kumar Gujral took firm steps to materialize all the promises Shanti Bahini's operations based in Tripura was ousted. their food supply training, moderations, finance all were seized and interrupted A overall condition into a different road and lastly the Shanti Bahini was almost forced to retract for the peace accord

Apart from that a fatigue was contaminated among the workers militants in Shanti Bahini. they didn't achieve any success conflict and strife. Not a single piece of land was growled with their own demarcation. The people were never kept in vest peace because of the rumbustious war situations after a truce of 4.5 years a collective psyche for battling again even also lost among the Shanti Bahini. They these stopped recruiting new combating disciples. Almost twenty thousand general people were killed in the military fracas and situational skirmish.

A verdant and mood of vengeance was found always. The mass people wanted peace and aspired to live without unrest and dust-ups. without the cooperation of the masses, the Shanti Bahini couldn't go further and they couldn't ignore a trial for giving peace a chance so they monde toward a peace accord and were getting ready for normal life.<sup>67</sup> This treaty was kind of historical landmark for terminating the uproar and tumults of long time.

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<sup>67</sup> UNPO, "Chittagong Hill Tracts: Spotlight on Human Rights," <<http://www.unpo.org/content/view/7731/236/>>, accessed February 22, 2008.

**(b) Surrendering Arms:**

As a part of the realizations of the peace accord a massive submission of the arms and other firearms from the Shanti Bahini was held with huge enthusiasm incentive on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1998. the commander-in-chief Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma Sheikh Hasina and started the surrounding fiesta. 739 cadres in first batch, 543 in 2<sup>nd</sup> batch, 433 in 3<sup>rd</sup> and next surrendered in 4<sup>th</sup> batch. All concerned national and international organization and nations observed with their insights and hailed Bangladesh for inking a newer dimension in the peace process. Thus a novel history was penned.



**Chapter-8:**  
**The Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Treaty**

## The Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Treaty of 1997

Under the framework of the Constitution of Bangladesh and keeping full and firm confidence in the sovereignty and integrity of Bangladesh, to uphold the political, social, cultural, educational and economic rights of all the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts region and to expedite socio-economic development process and to preserve and respect the rights of all the citizens of Bangladesh and their development, the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts, on behalf of the government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity, on behalf of the inhabitants of Chittagong Hill Tracts, have reached the following agreement in four parts (A, B, C, D):

### A) (Ka) GENERAL:

1. Both the sides have recognised the need for protecting the characteristics and attaining overall development of the region considering Chittagong Hill Tracts as a tribal inhabited region.
2. Both the parties have decided to formulate, change, amend and incorporate concerned acts, rules and regulations as soon as possible according to the consensus and responsibility expressed in different sections of the agreement.
3. An Implementation Committee shall be formed to monitor the implementation process of the agreement with the following members:
  - a) A member nominated by the Prime Minister: Convenor
  - b) Chairman of the Task Force formed under the purview of the agreement: Member
  - c) President of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti: Member
4. The agreement shall come into effect from the date of the signing and execution by both the sides. This agreement shall remain valid from the date of its effect until all the steps are executed as per the agreement.

**B) (Kha) CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL/ HILL DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Both sides have reached agreement with regard to changing, amending, incorporating and omitting the Hill District Local Government Council Acts 1989 (Rangamati Hill District Local Government Council Act 1989, Bandarban Hill District Local Government Council Act 1989, Khagrachhari Hill District Local Government Council Act 1989) and its different sections which were in existence before this agreement came into being, as below:

1. The word "tribal" used in different sections of the Council Acts shall stay.
2. The name "Hill District Local Government Council" shall be amended and the name of council shall be "Hill District Council."
3. "Non-tribal permanent residents" shall mean a person who is not a tribal but has legal land in the hill district and generally lives in the hill district at a specific address.
4. a) There shall be 3 (three) seats for women in each of the Hill District Councils. One third (1/3) of these seats shall be for non-tribals.  
b) Sub-sections 1,2,3 and 4 of section 4 shall remain in force as per the original act.  
c) The words "deputy commissioner" and "deputy commissioner's" in the second line of sub-section (5) of section 5 shall be replaced by "circle chief" and "circle chiefs".  
d) Following sub-section shall be added in section 4:

Whether a person is a non-tribal shall be determined, along with the identity of non-tribal community to which he belongs, by the concerned Circle Chief on the provision of submission of certificate from concerned Headman/Pourasabha chairman/Union Parishad chairman and no

person can be a candidate for the office of the non-tribal member without a certificate from the concerned Circle Chief in this regard.

5. It is narrated in section 7 that a person elected chairman or member shall make an oath or announcement before the Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong. By amendment of it there shall be incorporated that the members shall make oath or announcement before " a Justice of High Court Division" instead of "Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong".

6. The words "to Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong" will be replaced by "as per election rules" in the fourth line of section 8.

7. The words "three years" shall be replaced by "five years" in the second line of section 10.

8. There shall be a provision in section 14 that if the office of the Chairman falls vacant or in absence of the Chairman, a tribal member elected by other members of the Council shall preside and perform other responsibilities.

9. The existing section 17 shall be replaced with the sentences as mentioned below:

A person shall, under the law, be eligible to be enrolled in the electoral roll, if

- (1) he is a citizen of Bangladesh;
- (2) he age is not less than 18 years;
- (3) he is not declared mentally unsound by any competent court;
- (4) he is a permanent resident of Hill District.

10. The words "determination of electoral constituency" shall be added in the sub-section (2) of section 20.

11. There shall be a provision in sub-section (2) of section 25 stating that the chairman and in his absence a tribal member elected by other members shall preside over all the meetings of the council.

12. As the entire region of Khagrachhari district is not included in the Maung circle, the words "Khagrachhari Maung Chief" in section number 26 of Khagrachhari Hill District Council Act shall be replaced by the words "Maung Circle Chief and Chakma Circle Chief." Similarly, there shall be scope for the presence of Bomang Chief in the meeting of Rangamati Hill District Council. In the same way, there shall be provision that the Bomang Circle Chief can attend the meetings of Bandarban Hill District Council meetings if he wishes or is invited to join.

13. In sub-section (1) and sub-section (2) of section 31 there shall be a provision that a chief executive officer equivalent to the status of a deputy secretary shall be the secretary in the Council and there shall be provision that the tribal officials would be given priority for this post.

14. a) There shall be a provision in sub-section (1) of section 32 that for the proper conduct of its affairs the Council may, with the approval of the government, create posts of various categories of officers and employees.

b) Sub-section (2) of section 32 shall, by amendment, be made as follows:

The Council can, in accordance with regulations, appoint class three and class four employees, and can transfer, suspend, dismiss, remove or can impose any other punitive action on them. But provided that the priority of the tribal inhabitants must be maintained in case of the said appointments.

c) There shall be provision in the sub-section (3) of section 32 stating that:

The government can, in consultation with the Council, appoint other officers as per regulation and can transfer, suspend, dismiss, remove or can impose any other punitive action on them.

15. In sub-section (3) of section 33 "as per regulation" shall be mentioned.

16. The words "or any other way determined by the government" placed in the third line sub-section (1) of section 36 shall be omitted.

17. a) The original law shall be in force in the fourth paragraph of sub-section (1) of section 37.



b) "As per rules" will be included in Sub-section (2), sub-sub-section (d), of section 37.

18. Sub-section (3) of section 38 shall be repealed and by amendment, the sub-section (4) shall be framed as follows:

At any time before the expiry of the financial year, if deemed necessary, budget may be formulated and sanctioned.

19. In section 42 the following sub-section shall be added:

The Council with the fund received from the government shall formulate, initiate and implement development projects on the subjects transferred and all the development works initiated at the national level shall be implemented by the concerned ministry/department through the Council.

20. The word "government" placed in the second line of sub-section (2) of section 45 shall be replaced with the word "Council"

21. By repealing the sections 50, 51 and 52, the following section shall be made:

The government, if deemed necessary, may advise or order the Council, in order to ensure conformity with the purpose of this Act. If the government is satisfied with definite proof that anything done or intended to be done by the Council, or on behalf of the Council, is not in conformity with law, or contrary to public interest, the government may seek information and clarification and give advice or instruction to the Council on the concerned matters in writing.

22. In sub-section (3) of section 53, the words "if the period of super session is completed" shall be repealed and "within ninety days of super session" shall be incorporated before the words "this Act".

23. The words "of the government" in the third and fourth lines of section 61 shall be replaced with the words "of the ministry"

24. a) By amendment, sub-section (1) of section 62 shall be made as follows:

Notwithstanding anything contained in any Act for the time being in force, all members of the rank of Sub-Inspector and below of Hill District Police shall be appointed by the Council in

manner laid down by regulations, and the Council may transfer and take disciplinary action against them as per procedure laid down by regulations; provided that in the manner of such appointment tribals shall be given priority.

b) The words "subject to the provision of all other laws for the time being in force" placed in the second line of sub-section (3) of section 62 shall be repealed and substituted by the words "as per rules and regulation".

25. The words "providing assistance" will remain in third line in section 63.

26. Section 64 shall be amended as follows:

a) Notwithstanding anything contained in any law for the time being in force, no land, including those land suitable for giving settlement, within the boundaries of Hill District shall be given in settlement including giving lease, purchased, sold and transferred without prior approval of the Council; provided that this provision shall not be applicable in case of areas within the reserved forests, Kaptai Hydroelectricity Project, Bethunia Earth Satellite Station, State-owned industries and factories and lands recorded in the name of government.

b) Notwithstanding anything contained in any law for the being in force, no lands, hills and forests within the control and jurisdiction of the Hill District Council shall be acquired or transferred by the government without consultation and consent of the Hill District Council.

c) The council can supervise and control functions of Headman, Chainman, Amin, Surveyor, Kanungo and Assistant Commissioner (land).

d) Fringe land in Kaptai Lake shall be given settlement on priority basis to original owners.

27. Section 65 shall be amended as follows:

Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law of for the time being in force, responsibility of collecting land development tax shall be entrusted in the Council and the said tax collected in the District shall remain in the account of the Council.

28. By amendment of section 67 it shall be made as follows:

If deemed necessary for coordination of activities between the Council and government authorities, government or the Council shall put specific proposal on certain matter(s) and functions may be coordinated by mutual correspondence between the Council and the government.

29. By amendment of sub-section (1) it shall be made as follows:

The government in consultation with the Council can, by notification in the official gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act and even after the rules had been made, the Council shall have special right to file petition for reconsideration of the rules.

30. a) In the first and second paragraphs of sub-section (1) of Section 69, the words "prior approval of the government" shall be omitted and the following part shall be added after the words "can do" in the third Para:

"Provided that if the government differs with any part of the regulation made by the Hill District Council then the government can give advice or instruction for amendment of the said regulation".

b) The words "transfer of power of Chairman to any officer" mentioned in the (h) of sub-section (2) of section 69 shall be omitted.

31. Section 70 shall be omitted.

32. Section 79 shall be amended as follows:

If in the opinion of the Council any law applicable to Hill District, passed by the national parliament or any other authority, is found to be hurtful to the district or objectionable to the tribal people, the Council may file petition in writing, for the purpose of amendment or relaxation of its application, to the government stating the reasons for which the law is being hurtful or objectionable and the government shall in the light of the petition, adopt necessary remedial measures.

33. a) The word “supervision” shall be added after the word “order” in the No. 1 of the functions of the Council in the First Schedule.

b) The following subjects shall be added in the No. 3 of the functions of the Council:

Vocational training;

Primary education in mother tongue;

Secondary education.

c) The words “or reserved” placed in sub-section 6(b) of the function of the Council in the First Schedule shall be omitted.

34. The following subjects shall be added in the functions and responsibilities of the Hill District Council:

- a) Land and land management
- b) Police (local)
- c) Tribal law and social justice
- d) Youth Welfare
- e) Environment preservation and development
- f) Local tourism
- g) Improvement trust and other local government institutions except Pourasabha and Union Councils
- h) Licensing for local trade and business
- i) Proper utilization of water resources of rivulets, canals, ponds and irrigation except Kaptai lake
- j) Preservation of death and birth and other statistics
- k) Money lending and trade
- l) Jhum Cultivation.

35. The following sectors and sources shall be included in the taxes, rates, tolls and fees to be imposed by the Council as stated in the second schedule:

- a) Registration fee from non-mechanical transports
- b) Tax on sale and purchase of goods
- c) Holding tax from land and buildings
- d) Tax on sale of domestic animals

- e) Fees from cases of social justice
- f) Holding tax on government and non-government industries
- g) Part of royalty from forest resources
- h) Supplementary tax from cinema, theatre and circus, etc.
- i) Part of royalty from license or lease given by the government for exploration and extraction of mineral resources
- j) Tax from business
- k) Tax from lottery
- l) Tax from fishing

**C) (Ga) THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS REGIONAL COUNCIL:**

1. A Regional Council shall be formed in coordination with the 3 Hill District Local Government Councils provided that various sections of the Hill District Local Government Council Act 1989 (Act No. 19,20 and 21 of 1989) shall be amended with an aim to make the three Hill District Local Government Councils more powerful and effective.
2. Chairman of this Council shall be elected indirectly by the elected members of the Hill District Councils, his status shall be equivalent to that of a State Minister and he must be a tribal.
3. The Council shall be formed with 22(twenty-two) members including the Chairman. Two-thirds of the members shall be elected from among the tribals. The Council shall determine its procedure of functioning.

Composition of the Council shall be as follows:

Chairman	1
Members Tribal	12
Members Tribal (women)	2
Members non-tribal	6
Members non-tribal(women)	1



Among the tribal members 5 persons shall be elected from the Chakma tribe, 3 persons from the Marma tribe, 2 persons from the Tripura tribe, 1 person from the Murung and Tanchangya tribes and 1 person from the Lusai, Bawm, Pankho, Khumi, Chak and Khyang tribes

Among the non-tribal members 2 persons shall be elected from each district. Among the tribal women members 1 woman shall be elected from the Chakma tribe and 1 woman from other tribes.

4. Three seats shall be reserved for women in the Council, one-third of which will be non-tribal.

5. The members of the Council shall be elected indirectly by the elected members of the Hill District Councils. Chairman of three Hill District Councils shall be ex-officio members of the Council and they shall have voting rights.

Eligibility and non-eligibility of the members of the Council shall be similar to that of the Hill District Councils.

6. The tenure of the council shall be five years. Budget preparation and its approval, dissolution of council, formulation of council's regulation, appointment of and control over officers and employees and matters related to concerned subjects and procedures shall be similar to the subjects and procedures given in favour of and applicable for the Hill District Council.

7. A chief executive officer equivalent to the rank of a Joint Secretary of the government shall be appointed in the council and tribal candidates would be given priority in the appointment for the post.

8. a) If the office of the Chairman of the Councils falls vacant then a member from among the tribal members would be indirectly elected as Chairman by the members of Hill District Councils for an interim period.

b) If any office of a member of the Council falls vacant for any reason then that shall be filled through by-election.

9. a) The Council, including coordination of all development activities conducted under the three Hill District Councils, shall supervise and coordinate the subjects vested upon the Hill District Councils. Besides these, if any lack of coordination and inconsistency is found among the Hill District Councils in discharging their responsibilities the decision of the Regional Council shall be taken as final.

b) The Council shall supervise and coordinate local councils including the municipalities.

c) Regional Council can coordinate and supervise in the matters of general administration, law and order and development of the three Hill Districts.

d) The Council can conduct programmes related to disaster management and relief, and also coordinate the activities of the NGOs.

e) Tribal laws and social justice shall be under the jurisdiction of the Council.

f) The Council can issue license for heavy industry.

10. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board shall discharge its responsibilities under general and overall supervision of the Council. In case of appointment of Chairman of the Development Board, the government shall give priority to competent tribal candidates.

11. If the Regional Council finds any rule of the 1900 CHT Regulations and other related laws, rules and ordinances as contradictory to the 1989 Hill District Council Acts, then the government shall remove that inconsistency in law according to recommendation of and in consultation with the Regional Council.

12. Until Regional Council is constituted through direct and indirect election the government may, by constituting an interim Regional Council, entrust the responsibilities of the Council on it.

13. If the government wants to formulate any law regarding CHT, it shall do so in consultation with and according to the recommendation of the Regional Council. If there arises the necessity

to amend any law that may be harmful for development of the three Hill Districts or for the welfare of the tribals, or to make any new law, the Councils may file a petition or put recommendation before the government.

14. The fund of the Council shall be created from the following sources:

- a) Fund received from the Hill District Councils' fund;
- b) Money or profits from all properties vested in and managed by the Regional Council;
- c) Grant and loan from the government or any other authority;
- d) Grant from any institution or individual;
- e) Profit accruing from investment by Regional Council;
- f) Any other moneys received by the Regional Council;
- g) Money received from such sources of incomes as the government may direct to be placed at the disposal of the Regional Council.

#### **D) (Gha) REHABILITATION, GENERAL AMNESTY AND OTHER MATTERS**

Both sides have reached the following position and agreement to take programmes for restoring normal situation in Chittagong Hill Tracts area and to this end on the matters of rehabilitation, general amnesty and others related issues and activities:

1. An agreement has been signed between the government and the refugee leaders on March 9, 1997 with an aim to take back the tribal refugees from India's Tripura State based on the 20-point Facilities Package. In accordance with the said agreement repatriation of the refugees started since March 28, 1997. This process shall continue and with this in view, the Jana Sanghati Samiti shall provide all kinds of possible cooperation. The Task Force shall, after determination, rehabilitate the internally displaced tribal people of three districts.

2. After signing and implementation of the agreement between the government and the Jana Sanghati Samiti, and after rehabilitation of the tribal refugees and internally displaced tribal people, the government, in consultation with the Regional Council to be formed as per this agreement, shall start cadastral survey in CHT as soon as possible and after finalization of land ownership of tribal people by settlement of land dispute through proper verification, shall record their land and ensure their land rights.

3. The government, to ensure the land rights of the tribal families which are landless or possess less than 2 acres of land, shall provide two acres of land to each such family, provided that lands are available in the locality. If requisite lands are not available then grove land shall be provided.

4. A commission (Land Commission) headed by a retired justice shall be formed for settling land disputes. This commission, in addition to settling disputes of lands of the rehabilitated tribal refugees, shall have full power for cancellation of ownership of those lands and hills which have been so far illegally settled and occupied. No appeal can be made against the judgement of this commission and decision of this commission shall be final. This shall also be applicable in case of fringe land.

5. This commission shall be set up with the following members:

Retired justice;

Circle chief (concerned);

Chairman of Regional Council/representative;

Divisional Commissioner/Additional Commissioner

Hill District Council Chairman (concerned)

6. a) The term of the commission shall be three years. But its term can be extended in consultation with the Regional Council.

b) The Commission shall settle disputes according to the existing rules, customs and practices of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

7. The tribal refugees who received loans from the government but could not utilize them properly due to conflicting situation shall be exempted from repayment of loans and interests.

8. Allotment of lands for rubber plantation and other purposes: Settlement of land, of those non-tribals and non-locals who were given settlement of lands for rubber plantation and other purposes but had not undertake project within the past 10 years or had not utilized their lands properly, shall be cancelled.

9. The government shall allot additional funds on priority basis for implementation of increased number of projects in CHT. New projects formulated with an aim to make necessary infrastructures for facilitating development in the area shall be implemented on priority basis and the government shall provide funds for these purposes. The government shall, considering the state of environment in the region, encourage developing tourism for tourists from within the country and abroad.

10. Quota reservation and scholarships: Until development equals that of other regions of the country the government shall continue reservation of quota system in government services and educational institutions for the tribals. For this purpose, the government shall grant more scholarships for the tribal students in the educational institutions. The government shall provide necessary scholarships for research works and higher education abroad.

11. The government and the elected representatives shall be active to preserve the distinctiveness of the tribal culture and heritage. The government in order to develop the tribal cultural activities at the national level shall provide necessary patronization and assistance.

12. The Jana Samhati Samiti shall submit to the government the lists of all its members including the armed ones and the arms and ammunition under its possession and control within 45 days of signing this agreement.

13. The government and the Jana Samhati Samiti shall jointly determine the date and place for depositing arms within the 45 days of signing this agreement. After determination of date and place for depositing arms by the members included in the list of the Jana Samhati Samiti the government shall ensure security for return of JSS members and their family members to normal life.

14. The government shall declare amnesty for the members who shall deposit their arms and ammunition on the scheduled date. The government shall withdraw the cases against whom cases have been lodged.

15. If anyone fails to deposit arms on the scheduled date the government shall take lawful measures against him.



16. After the return of all JSS members to normal life general amnesty shall be given to them and to the permanent residents who were involved in the activities of the Jana Sanghati Samiti.

a) In order to provide rehabilitation to all returnee JSS members a lump sum of Taka 50,000/- shall be given to each family.

b) All cases, warrants of arrest, held against any armed member or general member of the Jana Sanghati Samiti shall be withdrawn and punishment given after trial in absentia shall be exempted after surrender of arms and coming back to normal life as soon as possible. Any member of the Jana Sanghati Samiti in jail shall be released.

c) Similarly, after surrendering arms and coming back to normal life, no case can be filed or no punishment can be given to any person for merely being a member of the Jana Sanghati Samiti.

d) The loans obtained by the members of the Jana Sanghati Samity from different government banks or other agencies but could not be utilised owing to conflicting situation would be exempted with interest.

e) Those members of the PCJSS who were employed in various government jobs shall be absorbed in their respective posts and the eligible members of their family shall be given jobs as per their qualifications. In such cases, the government principles regarding relaxation of age would be followed.

f) Bank loans of soft terms shall be given to the members of the PCJSS for cottage industry and horticulture and other such self-employment generating activities.

g) Educational facilities shall be provided for the children of the Jana Sanghati Samity members and the certificates obtained from foreign board and educational institutions shall be considered as valid.

17. a) After signing of the agreement between the government and the Jana Sanghati Samiti and immediately after the return of the JSS members to normal life, all the temporary camps of military, Ansar and Village Defence Party shall be taken back to permanent installations except

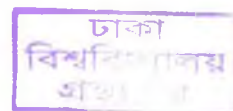
the border security force (BDR) and permanent cantonments (three at the three District Headquarters and Alikadam, Ruma and Dighinala) by phases and with this in view, the time limit shall be determined. In case of deterioration of the law and order situation, natural calamity and such other works the army can be deployed under the civil administration like all other parts of the country as per relevant laws and rules. In this case, the Regional Council may, according to the necessity or time, request the proper authority for the purpose of getting assistance.

b) The lands of camps and cantonments to be abandoned by military or para-military forces shall be either returned to the original owners or to the Hill District Councils.

18. The permanent residents of Chittagong Hill Tracts with priority to the tribals shall be given appointment to all categories of officers and employees of all government, semi-government, councils and autonomous bodies of Chittagong Hill Tracts. In case of non-availability of eligible persons from among the permanent residents of Chittagong Hill Tracts for a particular post, the government may give appointment on lien or for a definite period to such posts.

19. A ministry on Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs shall be established by appointing a Minister from among the tribals. An Advisory Council shall be formed to assist this ministry with the persons stated below:

- a) Minister on CHT Affairs **449627**
- b) Chairman/representative, Regional Council;
- c) Chairman/representative, Rangamati Hill District Council;
- d) Chairman/representative, Bandarban Hill District Council;
- e) Chairman/representative, Khagrachari Hill District Council;
- f) Member of Parliament, Rangamati;
- g) Member of Parliament, Bandarban;
- h) Member of Parliament, Khagrachari;
- i) Chakma Raja;
- j) Bohmang Raja;
- k) Mong Raja;
- l) Three members from non-tribal permanent residents of hilly areas nominated by the government from three Hill Districts.



This agreement is framed as above in Bengali language and is done and signed in Dhaka on the date of 02 December, 1997 A.D., 18 Agrahayan 1404 Bengali year.

On behalf of the inhabitants of  
Chittagong Hill Tracts

SD/-  
(Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma)  
President  
Parbattya Chattagram Jana  
Sanghati Samiti

On behalf of the government of the  
Peoples Republic of Bangladesh

SD/-  
(Abul Hasanat Abdullah)  
Convenor  
National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs,  
Government of Bangladesh

## **Chapter-9**

### **Conclusion**

## **9.1 General:**

The preceding discussion leads us to ask why indigenous communities in the CHT are being brutalised by the Bengali settlers and security agencies despite being the majority of the population in the region. One part of the answer could be that the government has lacked willingness to ensure their full rights and autonomy, and that this has seriously affected full implementation of the peace accord, in both word and spirit.

Another important factor is the power struggle between several groups within the indigenous communities. The smaller indigenous groups feel unrepresented and thus dislike the fact that Shanti Bahini (the political wing of the indigenous guerrilla movement) is in charge of implementing the peace agreement. Violent conflict between two Jumma political parties, the PCJSS and the UPDF, have not helped the situation either, resulting in the killing, maiming and kidnapping of hundreds of Jumma. These crimes have been perpetrated by both parties.

The refusal of the PCJSS – its aim is to claim itself sole representative of the Jummas – to engage in dialogue with the UPDF has excluded any possibility for peace. This is despite the fact that both UPDF activists and JSS cadres have been victims of atrocities by the Bangladeshi security forces. Ordinary Jummas are thus left to fend for themselves.

The current intra-indigenous violence is perhaps alleviating pressure on the indigenous–settler conflict over political rights and natural resources, and is weakening the indigenous people in a number of ways. Since the intraindigenous conflict is largely concentrated in Chakma-inhabited areas, it is mostly the Chakma who are the direct victims of violence, but other ethnic groups are also affected due to restrictions on travel, pressure on businesspeople and ordinary people to pay ‘contributions’, and so forth. Indigenous CHT society is therefore becoming increasingly divided, its economy is dwindling and its social and human development through healthcare, education and training are stagnating.



At its inception, the CHT Peace Accord truly reflected an elitist and top-down implementation process, in contrast to a bottom-up approach. The former is argued to be more suitable in cases where a policy is meant to eventuate only a few changes, where there is wide consensus on goals and the means for achieving them. In such cases, the policy is objectively driven and there is a clear division of responsibilities between various stakeholders. The top-down approach is more administratively regulated through well coordinated units and follows standardised operating procedures. It is appropriate when decisions are routine and there are well-documented policy success stories.

Meanwhile, the scenario reverses when changes to be brought about by a policy are large and fundamental, and when there is little consensus as to the means for achieving them. The CHT Peace Accord may be said to belong to this category of policy decision and implementation. It is a novel venture – a pioneering effort. Its unique nature and the controversy surrounding it would have been better served by a bottom-up perspective where national consensus among the country's political leadership and citizens would have been required.

Since the accord is unique and without precedent, it needed a well organized and wider discourse, debate and deliberation in appropriate forums such as the parliament, in its committees or in diverse civil society forums that could foster nationwide support. Instead, the accord was shrouded in secrecy during the year-long negotiations with the Shanti Bahini and thus devoid of public scrutiny. The process preceding the signing of the treaty reflected more of an elite-oligarchic affair and no scope remained to judge different opinions and arguments surrounding the issues.

As a result, the power and strength of appropriate and better arguments were not tested against one another. It was driven from Dhaka with the party in power at its helm. Hence the accord and its clauses were never tested against opposing claims and counterarguments.

For two and half decades, that is, since 1975, the indigenous Jumma people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh have been subjected to serious human rights abuses and massive harassment. The 'planned population transfer' of over half a million Bengali plains settlers has worsened the situation and created a permanent focus for violence between the indigenous Jummas and those they deem to be illegal settlers; 70,000 Jummas – about 10 percent of the total Jumma population – have been forced to seek shelter in the Tripura State of India (in 1986, 1989 and 1993).

Over 10,000 Jumma refugees were forcibly repatriated by the government of India to the CHT in February and July of 1994 and in March through April of 1997. The rest returned after the signing of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord.

The indigenous people and minorities of Bangladesh struggle for survival.

Despite having an ancient history, the indigenous people do not have a 'present' and 'future'. Their daily lives pass in insecurity, uncertainty and distress.

Although it was expected that the 1997 peace accord would protect them from exploitation and suffering, it has failed to do so and instead is caught in a political crossfire between the Awami League, which has used it as a means of partisan capital, and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which has denounced it. The indigenous communities still face exploitation of various types, including killing, rape and arson.

From a certain political perspective, one can, of course, consider any political treaty as a failure if it does not achieve any of the objectives set for it. And indeed, many indigenous people of the CHT do regard the 1997 accord as a failure insofar as it has not brought stability and peace to the region, or protected their culture and identity. Then again, some feel the accord received a serious blow when the Awami League lost political power to the BNP.

Regardless of which factor may be more critical to accounting for the failure, there seems to be a lack of sincere political will to implement the accord. According to the JSS, it is not the content of the accord but its non implementation that is responsible for the current political stalemate.

The present political situation in Bangladesh involves a so-called caretaker government backed by the military. It has embarked upon redressing some of the wrongdoing of leaders, especially massive corruption and abuse of state power for personal gain by the previous two political regimes – the Awami League and the BNP. The implementation of the accord does not seem to be the top priority of the present government, for it insists that its major task now is to hold general elections at the end of 2008 and to hand over power to the popularly elected government.

This means the accord's proper implementation remains with the future government, likely to take the helm in early 2009. Whatever may be the concerns of the future government of Bangladesh, it would do well to consider the following issues in order to reduce the extent of violence in the CHT and to establish peace in the region:

(1) Political ambition and sincere will on the part of the government is needed to implement the peace accord to ensure more political and social rights to the indigenous people. At the same time, it should be anchored in the mainstream politics so that the accord gets due recognition and respect from all successive governments. Moreover, the government should think about withdrawal of military camps which would ensure that the indigenous people do not face further exploitation and unnecessary harassment. The government should also consider an end to moving Bengali Muslims into the CHT, which would also reduce the level of conflict between the two groups.

(2) The indigenous people as citizens of the country deserve rights to self determination, an end to their identity crisis and return of their property. In order to ensure these rights, constitutional amendment is necessary which would give recognition to the indigenous people. Along with constitutional amendment, the government should consider initiating a rehabilitation programme for repatriated Jumna refugees and the internally displaced indigenous people.

(3) International human rights and criminal justice standards should be observed while maintaining law and order. This means that no one should be arrested arbitrarily on account of peaceful political activity or peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression as set out in the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights.

(4) More inclusion and integration of the indigenous people into the mainstream Bangladesh society should be sought, while at the same time recognition and respecting their cultural, linguistic and social diversities and heritage.

(5) The Norwegian model of Sametinget (Sami Parliament) may provide a role model for how the CHT Peace Accord could be implemented in practice. The prelude to establishing the Sametinget was the construction of a dam on the Alta-Kautekeino River in the late 1970s, yet the decision to build the dam was made as early as the 1960s and led to massive protests from the indigenous Sami people. This is very similar to the building of the Kaptai Dam in the CHT region in the 1960s, which precipitated the Jumma–settler conflict.

The Sametinget – its first elections were in 1989, i.e. representatives are elected directly by the indigenous Sa`mi people in Norway – is a political organ which enhances the political position of the Sa`mi in an equitable and just manner. It has the power to adjudicate upon land use and investment in agricultural projects, the establishment of new businesses and industrial concerns, environment protection and development. It enables the Sa`mi to protect and develop their language, culture, heritage and social life. The Sametinget has entitled the indigenous people of northern Norway to determine their own destiny, reality and future, and to preserve pride and honour through political and cultural autonomy.



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