

Life and Livelihood of Indigenous Peoples in the Chittagong Hill Tracts: What We Know ?

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1. Introduction

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) with its diversity in geography, multi-ethnic population composition (including 11 Indigenous communities and Bangalees), displacement issues, deprivation in terms of socio-economic parameters, armed conflict, signing of CHT Accord and post-conflict development, etc. still remains as a critical political economic discourse. CHT is one of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable regions in the country. And our 'true' knowledge about life and livelihood of the indigenous peoples of CHT is still much incomplete, and that by individual indigenous community is at embryonic stage.

The CHT region appears as a crucial political and development discourse among academicians, researchers, and politicians for its diversity and gravity in geography, population, displacement, and Bangalee settlement among others. The issues like ethnicity, displacement, migration, environment, socio-economic backwardness, insurgency, military operations, and consequently the unstable situation in the CHT makes it a unique case for research. In December 1997, the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord (often known as *Shanti Chukti*) was signed between the Government and *Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity* which stopped two and a half decades of insurgency and military operations that claimed thousands of lives. After the implementation of the treaty, focus is on the improvement in livelihood of these marginalized and deprived people, especially the indigenous peoples (IPs) got a new dimension with development initiatives taken by the Government and development partners. In the official documents of the Government, population of CHT has been categorized as Tribal and Non-tribal (Bangalee). However, in this paper the term 'Indigenous People/Population' (IP) has been used to denote tribal population ignoring the discourse of definition of indigenous people. This paper focuses on a total of eleven different types of IPs

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recognized in the Bangladesh Population Census living in CHT. In the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (Article 28(4), indigenous peoples are recognized as "backward section" of population and provision of positive discrimination regarding any types of development efforts is enshrined.

There are eleven ethnic multi-lingual minorities in the CHT. They are: Bawn/Bawm, Chak, Chakma, Khyang, Khumi, Lushei/Lushai, Marma (Maghs), Mrus/Mro (Moorangs), Pangkhua/Pankhua, Tangchangya, and Tipperas (Tipras). Anthropologists divide all these ethnic peoples into three groups based on their languages, customs, religious beliefs and patterns of social organization. The Bawm, Pangkhua, Lushai, Khumi, Mro and Khyang belong to the *Kuki-Chin or Kuki* group. The Tripura and Riang belong to the *Tripura* group and the Chakma, Marma, Tangchangya and Chak belong to the *Arakanese* group. Arakanese group is numerically the most prominent group among the three. Tripura and Kuki are the second and third groups respectively in terms of numerical strength. Most indigenous peoples are Sino-Tibetan descent and have distinctive mongoloid features.

2. Objective

This paper attempts to provide an empirical account of the people living in CHT on major life and livelihood issues. The empirical evidences presented in this paper are drawn from a most recent comprehensive study on rural CHT conducted by the author and his team in 2008¹. The key purpose is to understand the socio-economic scenario of CHT representing all the individual indigenous community and Bangalee. The indicators used include broad areas like socio-economic infrastructure in *para*, demography, migration or displacement, land ownership and dispossession, employment, crop production, income, savings, credit, household assets, food consumption, education, health, water-sanitation, access to information and local government institutions, women empowerment and violence, promoting peace and confidence building, knowledge on peace accord and community empowerment. Understanding of the socio-economic reality of indigenous peoples of CHT is absolutely necessary to design development plan for people living in CHT.

1. For details, see Abul Barkat, S Halim, A Poddar, B Zaman, A Osman, S Khan, M Rahman, M Majid, G Mahiyuddin, S Chakma, and S Bashir (September 2008). *Socio-economic Baseline Survey of Chittagonj Hill Tracts*, conducted by Human Development Research Centre (HDRC), conducted for UNDP Dhaka. The most part of this article is drawn from the above study. Therefore, it is my ethical responsibility to acknowledge all the authors of the study report.

3. Para Profile

The concept of *para* in CHT is synonymous to the concept of *village* in the plain land of Bangladesh. In CHT, the average population/*para* is 241 and average number of household (HH) per *para* is 46. Majority *paras* in CHT (57%) falls under the category “*para* with only one indigenous group (mono-indigenous)” followed by *paras* where only indigenous people of different groups live (20%). In 16% *paras* of CHT only Bangalee live. In 7% *para* indigenous people and Bangalee live together.

The condition of roads in CHT is deplorable with only 16% villages have access to metallic roads. Average distance between *para* and metallic road is 4.5 km. and it requires on average 1 hour time to visit metallic road from a *para*. Union Parishad and Upazila HQs are respectively 2.2 km. and 5.7 km. away from the *paras*. Economic hubs such as hat/bazaar (market place/ trading centre) are about 7 km away from *paras* requiring around 1.5 hours of travel to reach a hat/bazaar.

Government primary schools and NGO schools have been found in one-third and half of the *paras* respectively while secondary schools can be found rarely in a *para* in CHT. The average distance between an NGO school and a *para* in CHT is bit closer (0.8 km.) than a govt. primary school (1.4). UH&FWC is around 5.5 km. away from the *paras* whereas one-fifth of the *paras* have satellite clinic.

Common property resources like reserve forest of *mouza*, grazing land and accessible lake or water bodies are found in one-third of the *paras*. Accessible forest and rivers are around 2 km. away from the *paras* on average.

4. Household Background Information

The average household size in CHT is 5.2 which is higher than the national average (4.8). The household size of the Bangalee (5.4.) is slightly higher as compared to that of the indigenous peoples (5.1).

CHT population is comparatively young age-structured. About 58% of the population belongs to below 24 years, and 5% belong to 60 years and above. The mean age of CHT population is 23 years with not much variation between indigenous and Bangalee communities.

The sex ratio of the indigenous and the Bangalee are estimated to be both at 104.4 which is 2 percentage points lower than the national sex-ratio. A 72% of CHT population (age 15+years) is married followed by 23% unmarried, 5% widowed, 0.7 % separated, and 0.4% divorced. The dependency ratio in CHT is 82.1 which

is little bit lower than the national dependency ratio. Dependency ratio of indigenous and Bangalee are 76 and 91 respectively.

Only 7.8 % of CHT people completed primary education and 2.4% completed secondary education. The average year of schooling is 4.9.

Farming/cultivation (plough) is the primary occupation of 10 % while it is the secondary occupation for 7% of population. *Jum* cultivation is the source of occupation among 23% indigenous population. Business and salaried job has been found in 7% and 3% of CHT population respectively. About 4% of CHT population work as day laborer in agricultural and nonagricultural sectors.

In rural CHT, about 9% households are female-headed. Female-headed household has been found higher (12%) in Bangalee than among indigenous peoples (7%).

5. Migration Scenario

About 62% of the Bangalee populations are living in rural CHT for less than 30 years. It implies that close to two-thirds of the current Bangalee population in CHT are transmigrated people.

Around 31% of households living in rural CHT had to change their usual place of residences at least once in their life-time and, on an average, a household had to change the permanent address 1.7 times. About 38% of all indigenous population living in CHT had to shift from their places of usual residences. An average indigenous household had to change the permanent address for almost 2 times and 20% was displaced more than once. Chakmas are the worst affected: 72% Chakma households were displaced from the places of their usual residences in last 30 years.

About 22% Bangalee households had to change their permanent addresses during last three decades. During 1997-2007, an average Bangalee household had to move from their first permanent residence in CHT about 1.4 times. In most instances, the settler households have preferred to move to locations adjacent to security forces' camps due mainly to security perceptions.

At least one household member in 13% CHT rural households had to out-migrate from his/her *para* before the signing of the CHT Accord in 1997. While 5% Bangalee households have reported that any of their household member(s) had out-migrated before the signing of the accord.

Enquiry into the causes of out-migration reveals that in 10% of CHT rural households, their member(s) migrated due to reasons related with security

concern, and communal or political conflict. Households member returned back in about 10% households after the signing of the CHT Accord.

6. Land Ownership, Possession and Dispossession

There is a wide diversity in type of land, ownership of land, unit of measurement, and land management in CHT as compared to that in plain lands of Bangladesh. Irrespective of ethnicity, about 95% households own some land (including common property). An average rural household owns about 235 decimals of land (all types of land including common property). An indigenous household owns about 318 decimals and a Bangalee household owns 132 decimals. Agricultural land (plough and *jum*) is owned by about 27% households.

Ownership of *jum* land is significantly (46%) pronounced among indigenous communities than that among Bangalees (5%). Out of about 364,000 acres of cultivatable land about 73,000 acres are under plough cultivation and about 99,000 acres are available for *jum* and about 66,000 acres of land is used as homestead. Among the indigenous communities, most land falls under the category of traditional- customary property (55%). Over half (52%) of land property has been categorized as 'Registered Ownership' for Bangalee which is remarkably higher than that of indigenous people (21%).

About 22% indigenous households reported incidence of land dispossession. Chakma people are mostly affected by land dispossession (41%) followed by Tanchangya (22%). Majority of dispossession incidents have taken place during the life time of father of the current owners (11%) and about 6% lost their lands during his/her own ownership period. On an average, a CHT household has lost about 90 decimals of land during ownership of three generation (the current owner, father and grand father of the owner). An average indigenous household has lost about 115 decimals and Bangalee household has lost about 58 decimals.

7. Household Assets

In rural CHT, almost all households possess own house. The status of possession of tube well is significantly higher among the Bangalees than that among the indigenous groups. In terms of possession of furniture, Bangalees are in a significantly better-off position than the indigenous people. Rural CHT households are much deprived in terms of possession of modern communication devices such as telephone/mobile, radio, television. A few HH possess own transport (e.g., bicycle, motorcycle, boat). In most cases, indigenous HH possess more agricultural appliances than the Bangalees. A number of indigenous groups possess more livestock, poultry and trees as compared to the Banglaees.

On average, a Bangalee HH owns assets worth Taka 61,730, which is 30% higher than that among average indigenous HH in rural CHT. The valuation of HH assets of Khyang community is the highest among the eleven indigenous communities. Pangkhua community records the lowest valuation of HH assets. Bangalee ranks the third highest in the valuation of HH assets. The variation among the different communities not only reflects difference in socio-cultural status, but also shows unequal distribution in the local economy.

8. Housing Status

The majority (63%) of the houses of indigenous communities are *kutcha* followed by *machaan*. Among the Bangalee community almost all (96%) the houses are *kutcha*. Straw/jute stick/leaves/*chaan* has been used as the main roof construction material for the main house among the indigenous group (55%) more frequently than that among the Bangalees (37%). For the Bangalee community, sheet/wood is the most frequently (58%) used roof construction material of their main house. Bamboo is the most frequently used wall construction material for both among the indigenous (75%) and Bangalee (53%).

In rural CHT, on average, the indigenous and Bangalee people possess almost similar number (2+) of dwelling rooms. Among the eleven indigenous communities, Bawm household possesses the highest number of dwelling rooms (2.6), and Khumi HH possesses the least (1.6).

An average Bangalee household has 333 sq.ft. living space, which is 18% higher than that of an average indigenous HH (282 sft). Among indigenous peoples, Bawm HH has the highest amount of living space on average (408 sq.ft.) and Chak HH possesses the least (209 sft).

More than 91% of indigenous households and 73% of Bangalee households do not have access to household electricity.

9. Employment Scenario

On average, 2.75 person in a household (HH size is 5.2), that is 52% of the total household members is either employed or employable. The pattern of employed and employable persons as percentage of household member is similar (around 50%+) irrespective of different indigenous groups or Bangalee.

The majority of the employed and employable people fall in the age group of 25-29; around 16% of the employed and employable persons are in this age bracket

irrespective of ethnicity. Among the employed and employable persons, more than 90% are full-time employed. Irrespective of indigenous and Bangalee, two-thirds of the employed persons are self employed.

Out of all employed persons, 84% earn money and remaining 16% do not earn money from their work. A 94% of the employed rural indigenous people are income earner, which is 22 percentage-points lower than among the Bangalees (72%). Among the indigenous income earner people, 53% are male and 47% female. But, among the Bangalee income earners, 70% are male and only 30% are female. An income earner in CHT, on average, earn for 9.36 months per year without significant variation among ethnicities.

10. Agriculture and Crop Production

The cultivation technologies practiced in CHT for crop culture are plough and *jum* depending upon the suitability of the land. Nearly two-thirds of rural households are farming households who cultivate various types of crops in their farms. One-third households are involved in field cropping only, about one-fifth are involved in *jum* only, and a small portion (9%) does both field and *jum* agriculture. Plough and *jum* cultivation has been found in more than 50% of all indigenous households, while most Bangalee households depend on plough agriculture.

The average amount of land under cultivation during the last year (2007) cropping season was 138 decimals under field cropping and 161 decimals under *jum* cropping among indigenous households. But land under plough cultivation for Bangalee households was 151 decimals which is significantly higher than that of indigenous households. On the other hand, *Jum* cropping area is considerably higher among indigenous households (163 decimal) than among Bangalees. Estimates show that during the cropping year 2007, at least 252,000 acres of land had been brought under field cropping and 296,000 acres under *jum* cultivation. More than 35 types of different crops were cultivated with major crops limited to 7 types including paddy, turmeric, ginger, arum, *binny* paddy, and banana.

In CHT, the productivity of paddy (34 maunds per acre) under field cropping is substantially higher than the average national scenario (27 maunds per acre). Productivity of field cropping is higher than that in *Jum* culture (15 maunds per acre).

11. Household Income

There are 35 different types of income sources applicable for rural households in CHT. Almost all the CHT households have atleast one agriculture related income

source, and some of them earn from multiple sources related with agriculture. On the whole, the indigenous households are more related with agriculture than the Bangalees.

The average annual net income of a rural household in the region irrespective of ethnicities is about Tk. 65,852, while the same in rural Bangladesh (at the current price of January 2008) is about 1.28 times higher. Community wise analysis reveals that household annual net income of the Bangalees in CHT though less than that of the rural Bangladesh is comparatively higher than that of average indigenous community households (Tk. 71,031 vs. Tk. 61,641).

Over 50% of the annual net income of all CHT households comes from sources related with agriculture; non-farm wages constitute about 15% closely followed by business related sources (13%). The share of agriculture related source in generating net annual income of all indigenous households is higher as compared to the Bangalees (63% vs. 49%).

On the whole, about 7% of the household annual net income (Tk. 4,471) has been contributed by the working and/or income earning women members of the household. For Bangalee households, the contribution of women in generating household income is only 4% while the same among the indigenous communities is 11%.

12. Household Expenditure

The average household annual expenditure in CHT is relatively low. The household annual expenditure in rural CHT is lower than that of rural Bangladesh (Tk. 62,000 vs. 73,000). The share of food expenditure is extremely high across the communities comprising about 90% of total household expenditure. The annual household expenditure on health and education for an average household is extremely low with Tk.605 and Tk. 398 respectively.

The share of annual household spending for maintenance of the female members is disproportionately low (around 30%) i.e., an average female member in CHT household is two-fold discriminated than her male counterpart. This is also indicative of the high extent of intra-household discrimination against women.

13. Household Savings and Credit

In CHT, about 87% households have some savings with average household savings of Tk. 3,542. The amount of savings for Bangalee population (Tk. 4,643) is relatively higher than that of indigenous household (Tk. 2,647). In terms of per capita savings, an average household member has Tk. 702, while an average IP

household member possesses Tk.467 and Bangalee household member, Tk. 890. NGOs have been appearing as a place of depositing savings for both Bangalees (46%) and indigenous peoples (30%).

About 54% of all CHT households reported their partial access to credit. The Bangalees have higher access to credit as compared to the indigenous communities. The average amount of credit received by a household during the last three years (2004-2007) is Tk.4,597, while an average indigenous household and Bangalee household had received Tk. 5,283 and Tk. 12,674 respectively. The Commercial Banks (including Krishi Bank), BRDB, Micro-credit NGOs, and traditional money lenders/local elites are the major sources for credit. The largest portion of households, who have taken loans, had spent the loaned money for maintaining household expenditure (37%). However, about 28% households invested the loaned amount directly for income generating activities (IGA).

14. Food Consumption, Food Security and Poverty

Food habit reflected in food items consumed by the CHT people is almost similar to the plain land people except few items like *nappi* (a special type of dry fish), bamboo shoots, and dry vegetables. Except some special dishes in indigenous households (e.g, *nappi*, dry vegetables and bamboo shoots), the food consumption basket is similar among the indigenous groups and the Bangalees.

The physical quantity of daily food intake per person in CHT is about 781 gm. The average daily per capita food intake of Bangalee household is higher (800 gm), which is 769 gm among the indigenous communities. Over 50% of food intake comes from rice followed by vegetables (30%). Gender disaggregated data on daily food intake reveal that an average female member of household gets 17% lesser amount of food as compared to her male counterpart.

In terms of energy intake of food, people living in rural CHT use to have 1,798 k.cal per day which is less than the level of the hardcore poor (below 1,805 Kcal). The average per capita daily energy intake status of the Bangalees (1,842 K.cal) is slightly better than the indigenous communities (1,762 K.cal) but still under the level of the absolute poor (below 2,122 K.cal). The daily average energy intake is the least among Bawm (1,440 K.cal) followed by Lushai, Chak and Khyang (1,600 K.cal each).

'Food Poverty' is widespread in CHT. Most indigenous peoples in CHT are *not* secured in relation to availability of food during most time in a year; *Ashar* (June-July) and *Sravan* (July-Aug) being the worse months. However, for the Bangalees

the food security status is little better as compared to the indigenous peoples. Since CHT is a food deficit region of the country, the whole issue of improving food security status deserves special attention.

According to Direct Calorie Intake (DCI) method, 62% households in the region irrespective of ethnicities are living below absolute poverty line (below 2,122 kcal), while about 36% are hardcore poor (below 1,805 k.cal). Poverty is relatively less pronounced among the Banglaees with about 59% of Bangalee households are absolutely poor and about 31% are hardcore poor.

According to CBN method poverty incidences has been found more deplorable, it has been found that about three-fourth of the households (74%) live below the lower poverty line (<Tk.866/ person/month) and 86 % households live below upper poverty line (<Tk.1,025/ person/month). Households living below lower and upper poverty lines are 78% and 89% respectively among indigenous people and 69% and 83% respectively among Bangalee. Community wise data indicate that the households below lower poverty line range between 100% of Lushai and 71% of Chakma and households below upper poverty line range between 100% of Lushai and 84% of Chakma.

Poverty status of women should be a grave concern where almost all women in CHT (94%) are living below the absolute poverty line and about 85% below the hardcore poverty line.

15. Education

About one-fourth of the respondents have reported that there is no school in the *para* or in close proximity to the community. About 82% children of 5-16 years are enrolled in primary or secondary school. The enrollment among the Bangalees is marginally higher than that among the indigenous peoples.

Three-fifths reported that their children go to nearby or far away government primary school. The average travel time for going to a nearby school is around 26 minutes. The corresponding average travel time for going to a far away school is around 75 minutes. The dropout scenario among the students is deplorable with 65% households reporting about discontinuation of children's education before completion of primary and 19% after primary.

Financial problem is the main reason for dropout. The other reasons reported include *distance, children are not welcome at school, medium of instruction is not understandable, helping parents, insecurity, and of lack interest of child.* The

mother tongue of relevant indigenous peoples has not been used as language of book and as medium of instruction in school.

16. Primary Health Care

In CHT, the peoples' knowledge status about health problems, and about the facilities and providers to go for care if these health problems occur is simply deplorable. Their awareness is very low on how to prepare ORS, ANC checkup, PNC checkup, and delivery by medically trained provider, place to go for child vaccination, ARI treatment of child, and place to go for treatment of TB/leprosy.

The contraceptive prevalence rate is 54%, and the unmet need for family planning is 12%. Therefore, as against 73% demand for family planning nationally, the rate is 66% in CHT.

Service provider's visit to home level is low and varied by communities. It is higher in Bangalee and Khumi communities, and lower in Pangkhua, Khyangs and Mros. Visit by NGO health visitors is low in Chak, Pangkhua, Khumi and Tanchangyas. Use of both Satellite clinic and NGO clinic is less pronounced among Khyangs, Khumi, Mros and Pangkhua. Use of district hospital is very low in prevalence among Lushai and Marma. The awareness of the people of rural CHT about the MCWC, School Health Clinic and Community Clinic is unacceptably low.

Availing ANC and PNC checkup facilities is low among Khyangs, Khumis and Mro. The knowledge about danger signs of pregnancy is also unacceptably low among above communities along with Chaks, Lushais and Tanchangyas. The actual status of TT immunization among pregnant women is also deplorable, especially that among the Khumis.

Regarding reasons for not availing medical treatment services from public health and/or NGO facilities, the most commonly mentioned reasons are '*don't know where to go*', and '*facility/provider too far*'.

17. Water, Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene

The major source(s) of drinking and cooking water in CHT are not safe. They travel long distance to fetch drinking water, which in turn takes a substantial amount of time off from their daily livelihood. In the dry season, regardless of the communities, almost all experience inadequate supply of water. Moreover, there is widespread gender discrimination in collection of water: it is the female members of household who suffer most due to water scarcity and inadequate hygiene situation.

Possession of sanitary latrine among the CHT residents is not associated with sound practices. Additionally, practice of healthy personal hygiene including hand washing in critical times and disposal of household waste are crucial for pleasant environmental health. What more to observe in the study that both of these are quite far off the perfect and need a strong social mobilization and habit changing efforts to this regard. Given the fact, a typical geo-hydrological situation, cultural isolation, difficult communication as well as limited livelihood options render CHT population somehow detached from mainstream and lack of access to resources, services and infrastructure to their needs. In order to overcome these challenges, appropriate mechanisms have to be developed so as to address their special needs culturally appropriate for the indigenous peoples.

18. Access to Information

Overall 43% households with 50% of the indigenous and 34% of the Bangalee listen to radio, and 60% households with 54% of the indigenous and 68% of the Bangalee watch TV. Among all the indigenous communities, the exposure to radio is highest among Pangkhua with 94% and lowest among Tanchangya with 33%. The exposure to TV is highest among Khyang with 79% and lowest among Pangkhuas 16%.

The highest proportion of those not owning radio goes to neighbor's house with 16%, followed by those going to Hat/Bazar 6%, relatives' home 5%, friends' home 2%, and club /samity 0.1%. About 29% of those not owning TV visit neighbour's home, 15% Hat/bazaar, 10% to relative's home, 3% to friend's home, and 0.1% to club/Samity.

19. Access to Local Government and Nation Building Institutions and Community Empowerment

During three preceding months of the survey 51% of the respondents visited Karbari followed by 48% visited UP members, 40% UP Chairman, 32% Headman, 30% health worker (FWA/HA), 24% NGO, 20% Union Health and Family Welfare Centre (FWV/HW), and 10% Army/ BDR/APB Camp.

While the access to the public health system is not encouraging, relatively more discouraging is the access to various government offices with 1% each reported visiting BADC, DoL, and DoF, and 2% each visiting BRDB and Co-operatives. Households reported visiting sub-assistant agriculture offices constitute only 3% indicating very low access to the agriculture office.

During the last 3 years, a 3% of the households have visited the Circle Chiefs, 4% visited Hill District Council, and 1% visited both the CHT Development Board and CHT Regional Council.

Overall one-fifth of the households have membership (by any of the household members) in the CBO(s). Holding membership in the CBOs are 5 percentage points higher among the Bangalees than that among the indigenous people. One-tenth of all the CHT households with 13% of the Bangalees and 9% of indigenous peoples received skill development training in last one year.

Only 3% percent of the households of both indigenous peoples and Bangalees reported involvement in multi-community organizations. Involvement in multi-community organization is highest among the Bawms with 11% and lowest with 2% among both the Pangkhuas and Tripuras.

20. Women Empowerment and Development

Women and development issue has been assessed and the indigenous people has been found better positioned than the Bangalees. In this regard, the indigenous peoples are 12 percentage-points higher than the Bangalees². It is indeed a bleak scenario as still 56 and 68 percentage points need to be achieved respectively by the indigenous and Bangalee community in CHT.

The overall practice of independent decision making³ of women in CHT, irrespective of indigenous and Bangalee, is somewhat insignificant.

Violence against women (VAW) and the rights of women are the two critical areas of concern retarding the process of advancement of women. Irrespective of indigenous or Bangalee, the prevalence of verbal abuse, followed by battering is highly pronounced in CHT. Dowry related violence is almost absent among the

² A total of 16 indicators were used to measure women and development status. The indicators are : Dowry is not practiced; Girls are encouraged to go to school; Women are consulted with on matrimonial issue; Women are not discriminated at *shalish*/local arbitration; Women can freely choose occupation; Women can go outside *para* for work; Women can inherit property; Women can participate in local development work; Women can participate in traditional institutions actively; Women can participate *shalish*; Women can possess house; Women can possess land; Women can take decision to seek health service for her own; Women can take decision to spend her own income; Women get same wage as men; and Women know the legal age at marriage (18 years for women).

³ To assess the independent decision making practice it has been asked whether the women HH member *can take decision by herself only, or take decision jointly, or only husband take decision*. And only the first option, i.e., *can take decision by herself only* as the proxy of the independent decision making practice of women. Even the joint decision making practice of the women is not considered as independent decision making practice of women as it does not reflect solely independent practice and in most cases these joint decisions are dominated significantly by male members in HH.

indigenous peoples, however the same among the Bangalees has been reported by one-fourth of the respondents.

In the community level, the sexual abuse and intimidation at workplace has been reported to be frequent by both the indigenous peoples and Bangalees. Knowing about incidence of rape has been reported by 6% of the respondents which is less among the indigenous peoples (1%). In general, domestic violence has been reported more than the violence in community.

21. Knowledge on Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord

Assessment of the knowledge status of the CHT people about the CHT Accord⁴ shows that, in general, majority of the population possess extremely inadequate knowledge about the content of the Accord. They rather merely know that there has been an Accord which is known as the 'Peace Treaty'. The overall knowledge score of a CHT household (respondent) against some purposively selected indicators is about 15 point (out of 100), with 16.72 for indigenous peoples and 12.58 for Bangalees.

The plausible reasons responsible for low knowledge-base include absence of intensive discussion on the issues among CHT population, veiled several negotiation meetings before signature of the accord, absence of consensus among various communities of CHT and between Bangalee and IPs, low level of consciousness or awareness due to lack of education, and memory recall problem (because the accord was signed 10 years back in 1997).

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A total of eighteen indicators were used to assess the respondents' knowledge status on CHT Accord 1997. The indicators are whether or not the respondent: Heard about CHT Accord; Knew the year of signing the accord; Knows about the two parties/signatories to the accord; Remembers the number and location of HDC (Hill District Council); Knows that no land within the boundaries of CHT districts can be given in to settlement, purchase, sale, transfer, or lease without prior approval of the HDC; Knows about to the CHT Regional Council (CHTRC); Knows that the Chairperson of the CHTRC would be elected from the IPs; Knows that two thirds of the members of the CHTRC would be elected from IPs; Knows that three members of the CHTRC would be elected from amongst women; Knows that two-thirds of female members of the CHTRC would be elected from IPs; Knows that tenure of the CHTRC would be five years; Knows the Government's provision for giving two acres of land to each landless indigenous family; Knows the provision for forming a Land Commission to settle land disputes; Knows the provision for exemption of loans with interest for indigenous refugees who could not use them due to the social conflicts; Knows that the Government should continue reservation of the Quota System in governmental jobs and educational institutions for IPs; Knows that in case any law is found to be detrimental for the IPs, the HRC/HDC may file petition to the Government for amending its application and that the Government shall, in such cases, adopt necessary measures; Knows that the Minister for the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs has to be appointed from amongst the IPs of CHT, and an advisory board would help the ministry; and Knows that a non-indigenous resident of the CHT cannot contest for membership of the HDC without a certification by the respective Circle Chief.

22. Conflict and Violence Scenario

Before the CHT treaty, about 20% of the CHT households have faced armed violence with 25% of indigenous and a slightly over 10% of Bangalee. While 5% households have reported of being wounded or killed among all CHT households, those reporting among indigenous and Bangalee are 7% and 2% respectively.

Overall 0.4% of CHT households with 0.6% of indigenous and 0.4% of Bangalee have faced abduction during last ten years. About 17% households with slight less than 25% of indigenous and 8% of Bangalees have faced extortion during last three years (2005-2007).

Overall 42% of CHT households with 46% indigenous and 38% Bangalee do not feel confident to move anywhere outside their own community.

Although the majority of the Bangalee reports that the relationship between Bangalee and the indigenous are "*friendly*" and "*almost friendly*" the majority of the indigenous people report that it is "*not friendly*" and "*hostile*".

A total of eleven factors act as constraints to peace in the CHT. About 81% have reported *communal threat*, followed by 80 percent reporting *extortion*, 78% both reporting *abduction* and *armed conflict*, 77% *ransom*, 75% *restricted movement*, 74% *lack of trust among communities*, 73% both reporting *insecurity of women* and *fear of eviction from own land*, and 67% reporting *fear of insecurity of children*.

23. Peace and Confidence Building Status

Assessment of peace and confidence building has been done using a total of twenty relevant indicators which were devised in a participatory manner. 'Confidence Building Index (CBI)'⁵ has been estimated to obtain a robust, precise and comparable measurement of peace and confidence-building status in CHT. The value of CBI varies from 0 (zero) to 4 (four), where 0 means 'no confidence', 1 implies 'poor

⁵ Confidence Building Index (CBI) has been measured using 20 indicators, which are - Perception about responsiveness of national government; Perception about responsiveness of Hill District Council; Perception about responsiveness of local government (UP); Perception about security forces; Perception about freedom of movement (due to armed group); Perception about local law and order situation (safety-security feelings); Perception about responsiveness of local traditional institutions (Karbari, Headman etc.); Perception about enjoying cultural freedom; Perception about enjoying customary rights; Perception about enjoying religious freedom; Perception about participation in IP'S social functions; Perception about possibility of peace; Fear feeling in "other" indigenous group areas when traveling; Perception about satisfaction about inter community interaction; Ability to engage with government without fear or anxiety; Govt. service delivery to CHT people; People attend other groups' festivals; Festivals celebrated jointly; Negative events "instigated" by outside elements; and Can vote freely.

confidence', 2 indicates 'moderate confidence', 3 indicates 'quite confidence', and finally 4 means 'high confidence'. This study reveals a moderate confidence level (value of CBI=2.1) prevailing among the people in CHT irrespective of ethnicity. The Bangalees (value of CBI=2.3) has been found to be relatively more confident than the indigenous communities (value of CBI=2.0). At the indicator level, this scenario does not deviate significantly from the average level.

24. Some Conclusions

1. The key conclusions having development and policy-planning implications are as follows:
2. The *para* in CHT, synonymous to the *village* in the plain land, on average consists of about 46 households and a population of around 240 persons.
3. The average household size of CHT is 5.2 (national average being 4.8).

Only 7.8 % of all CHT people completed primary education and 2.4% completed secondary education. Farming/cultivation (through ploughing) is the occupation of 17% of the total population (primary and secondary taken together) in CHT. *Jum* cultivation is the occupation of 23% indigenous population. About 9% of the households are female-headed with 7% among indigenous peoples and 12% among the Bangalees.

4. A 62% of the Bangalee population are living in rural CHT for less than 30 years. Around two-thirds of the current Bangalee population in CHT are transmigrated people. Around 31% of households had to ever change their usual place of residence in their life-time, and the average frequency of such displacements is 1.7.
5. At least one household member in 13% of CHT rural households had to out-migrate-due to reasons related to security, communal and political conflict-from its *para* before 1997, i.e., before the signing of the CHT Accord. In about 10% of CHT households, out-migrated member(s) returned after the signing of the CHT Accord.
6. There are three major types of land ownership: (i) individual registered ownership, (ii) traditional ownership (recorded and/or not recorded with headman) under usufruct rights, and (iii) usufruct rights to ownership of common property (different from that in plain land). About 95% households, irrespective of ethnicity, own some land. This ownership also include common property.

7. Out of estimated 364,000 acres of available cultivatable land, about 73,000 acres are under plough cultivation and about 99,000 are available for *jum* and about 66,000 acres of land used for homesteads. Among the indigenous communities, most lands fall under the category of traditional- customary property (55%). 'Registered Ownership' constitute 52% of land properties of the Bangalees; the same for the indigenous peoples is 21%.
8. About 22% indigenous households have lost their lands. The Chakmas are mostly affected by land dispossession (41%), followed by Tanchangya (22%). Majority of dispossession incidents took place during the life time of fathers of the current owners and 6% lost their lands during his/her own ownership period. An average indigenous peoples' household has reportedly lost 115 decimals.
9. The majority (63%) of the houses of IPs are *kutchha* followed by *machan*. Almost all the houses of Bangalees (96%) are *kutchha*.
10. On average, 52% of the total household members in CHT are either employed or employable. Across the communities, two-thirds of the employed persons are self-employed.
11. Nearly two-thirds of rural households are farming households: One-third (34%) households are involved in field cropping only, about one-fifth (19%) are involved in *jum* only, and a small proportion (9%) does both field and *jum* agriculture. Plough and *jum* cultivation have been found in more than half of all indigenous peoples' households while most of the Bangalee households depend on plough agriculture.
12. An average rural CHT household has brought about 138 decimals of land under field cropping and 161 decimals under *jum* in the 2007 cropping year. The field cropping area for Bangalee households, on average, is bigger (151 decimals) as compared to that for the indigenous households (132 decimals). Out of 35 types of crop cultivated the major crops are limited to 7 types including paddy, turmeric, ginger, arum, *binny* paddy, and banana. In CHT, the productivity of paddy (34 maunds per acre) under field cropping is substantially higher than the average national scenario (27 maunds per acre). Productivity of field cropping is also higher than that under *jum* culture (15 maunds per acre).
13. The annual household net income of an average rural household is around Tk. 66,000 (Bangladesh rural being Tk. 84,000). The household annual net income of the Bangalees is around Tk. 71,000 and the same for indigenous

peoples is about Tk. 62,000. Agriculture-related activities are the prime sources of household income across the communities (ranging between 49% and 72% of the net income).

14. The reported contribution of female members in generating household annual net income is low. This indicates that, across the communities, the income-earning work performed by the female members remains substantially under-recognized or less valued.
15. The household annual expenditure in rural CHT is lower than that of rural Bangladesh (Tk. 62,000 vs. 73,000). The same for an average Bangalee household in CHT is Tk. 68,728, and that for an indigenous people's household is Tk. 57,035. The share of food expenditure is extremely high across the communities (around 90%). The annual household expenditure on health and education for an average household are extremely low with Tk. 605 and Tk. 398 respectively.
16. The share of annual household spending for the maintenance of female members is disproportionately low (around 30%). This is indicative of high extent of intra-household discrimination against women and female child.
17. About 87% households reportedly have some savings (any amount from Tk. 1 or more). An average CHT household has savings (as on January 2008) amounting Tk. 3,542 (indigenous people's household Tk. 2,647 and a Bangalee household Tk. 4,643).
18. About 54% of all CHT households have some access to credit. The average amount of credit received by a household during 2004-2007 is Tk. 4,597. An average indigenous household has received Tk. 5,283 as credit, while an average Bangalee household has received Tk. 12,674. The largest proportion of households had spent the borrowed money for maintaining household expenditure (37%), and about 28% households invested directly for income-generating activities.
19. Food habit of the CHT people is almost similar to that of the plain land people except that they consume a very few items like *nappi* (a special type of fish paste), *bamboo shoots*, and dry vegetables.
20. 'Food Poverty' is widespread in CHT. Most indigenous peoples in CHT are *not* secured in relation to availability of food during most time in a year; *Ashar* (June-July) and *Sravan* (July-Aug) being the worse months. However, for the Bangalees the food security status is little better as

compared to the indigenous peoples. Since CHT is a food deficit region of the country, the whole issue of improving food security status deserves special attention.

21. About 62% households in the region irrespective of ethnicities, according to direct calorie intake (DCI) method, are living below the absolute poverty line (below 2,122 k.cal), while 36% are hardcore poor (below 1805 k.cal). A 59% of the Bangalee households are absolutely poor, and about 31% are hardcore poor. The prevalence of absolute poor and hardcore poor among indigenous peoples are 65% and 44% respectively.
22. About 82% of children of 5-16 years are enrolled in primary or secondary schools with the enrollment among the Bangalees being marginally higher than that among the indigenous peoples. The dropout scenario among the students is highly unacceptable, 65% children discontinue their education before completion of primary schooling and 19% after completion of the same. *Financial problem* is the main reason for school dropouts. The other reasons include *distance of the school from the residence, children are not welcomed at schools, medium of instruction is not understandable, unhelping parents, insecurity, and lack of interest* of the child. In almost all schools both at primary and secondary level, the medium of instruction is Bangla.
23. Peoples' knowledge about health problems, health facilities and health service providers were found to be deplorable in terms of the following issues: how to prepare ORS, ANC checkup, PNC checkup, and delivery by medically trained provider, place to go for child vaccination, ARI treatment of child and place to go for treatment of TB/leprosy. Regarding reasons for not availing treatment services from public health system and/or NGO facilities, the most commonly mentioned reasons are '*don't know where to go*', and '*facility/ provider too far off*'.
24. The major source(s) of drinking and cooking water in CHT are not safe. Most tubewells have not been tested for arsenic contamination. People have to travel long distances to fetch drinking water and spend substantial amount of time for the same. The distance and traveling time varies by season (dry and wet).
25. Overall 43% households (50% indigenous and 34% Bangalee) listen to radio, and 60% households with 54% indigenous and 68% Bangalee watch TV.

26. The common people's day-to-day life in CHT is closely associated with the traditional power structure and lower tier of the local government, and to some extent with the security forces.
27. In terms of composite score on *women and development* issues, the indigenous peoples and the Bangalees still need to achieve 56 and 68 percentage-points respectively to attain the ideal situation (100%).
28. Majority of the population in CHT have extremely inadequate knowledge about the content of the CHT Accord 1997.
29. Before the CHT Accord, about 20% of the households had faced armed violence; 25% faced extortion during the last three years. Overall 42% of the CHT households with 46% indigenous and 38% Bangalees do not feel secured in moving outside of their own community. According to the majority Bangalees, the relations between the Bangalees and the indigenous peoples are "*friendly*" and/or "*almost friendly*"; and the same according to the majority indigenous peoples is "*not friendly*" and/or "*hostile*".
30. The confidence building index (CBI) comprising 20 pertinent indicators and estimated using a 5-point Likert Scale (0 being 'no confidence' and 4 being 'highly confident') shows a moderate confidence level across the communities (CBI = 2.1). Among the indigenous communities the value of CBI is 2.0, and among the Bangalees the same is 2.3. Therefore, it is still a long way to go to build confidence among the CHT people, and accordingly all-out efforts must be devoted toward that to expedite the whole process of accelerated human development in CHT.