ETHNIC CLEANSING IN CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS

Saradindu Shekhar Chakma

কল্পতরু বই পিডিএফ প্রকল্প

কল্পতরু মূলত একটি বৌদ্ধধর্মীয় প্রকাশনা প্রতিষ্ঠান। ২০১৩ সালে "হৃদয়ের দরজা খুলে দিন" বইটি প্রকাশের মধ্য দিয়ে এর যাত্রা শুরু। কল্পতরু ইতিমধ্যে অনেক মূল্যবান ধর্মীয় বই প্রকাশ করেছে। ভবিষ্যতেও এ ধারা অব্যাহত থাকবে। কল্পতরু প্রতিষ্ঠার বছর খানেক পর "kalpataruboi.org" নামে একটি অবাণিজ্যিক ডাউনলোডিং ওয়েবসাইট চালু করে। এতে মূল ত্রিপিটকসহ অনেক মূল্যবান বৌদ্ধধর্মীয় বই pdf আকারে দেওয়া হয়েছে। সামনের দিনগুলোতে ক্রমান্বয়ে আরো অনেক ধর্মীয় বই pdf আকারে উক্ত ওয়েবসাইটে দেওয়া হবে। যেকেউ এখান থেকে একদম বিনামূল্যে অনেক মূল্যবান ধর্মীয় বই সহজেই ডাউনলোড করতে পারেন। আমাদের একমাত্র উদ্দেশ্য হচ্ছে, বর্তমান আধুনিক প্রযুক্তির যুগে লাখো মানুষের হাতের কাছে নানা ধরনের ধর্মীয় বই পৌঁছে দেওয়া এবং ধর্মজ্ঞান অর্জনে যতটা সম্ভব সহায়তা করা। এতে যদি বইপ্রেমী মানুষের কিছুটা হলেও সহায় ও উপকার হয় তবেই আমাদের সমস্ত শ্রম ও অর্থব্যয় সার্থক হবে।

আসুন ধর্মীয় বই পড়ুন, ধর্মজ্ঞান অর্জন করুন!
জ্ঞানের আলোয় জীবনকে আলোকিত করুন!

This book is scanned by Suvananda Bhante

Mr. Saradindu Shekhar Chakma was born in January, 1937 in a farmer's family at Burighat Mouza submerged in the Karnaphulli lake in early 1960s. He is the 2nd M.A. from the tribals of Chittagong Hill Tracts. He passed M.A. in history in1959 after doing his B.A. Hons. in the same subject from Dhaka University in 1958. After doing his M.A. he appeared both at the then Central Superior Service Examination of Pakistan and East Pakistan Civil Service Examination in 1960 and was successful in both the examinations. But he was not given a job in the Central Civil Service and hence he joined the Provincial Civil Service. By dint of his hard and sincere work he rose and became an Additional Secretary to the Government, the first among the minorities in the country to achieve this distinction.

(Continued to next flap)

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Ankur Prakashani

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First published : August 2006

Cover design
Mawdudur Rahman

Published by
Ankur Prakashani
38/4 Banglabazar, Dhaka 1100
Phone : 7111069, 9564799

Printed at
Impression Printing House
22 Alamganj Lane, Dhaka 1204
Phone : 7410936

ISBN : 984 464 164 0

Price : Taka 160.00

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Mukti Juddhe Parbattya Chattagram

Dedicated in Memory of those
who made supreme sacrifices so that we,
who are alive and our future generations
can live peacefully with dignity, honour
and without fear

CONTENTS

Prologue	11
Geography And the People	18
The Company Period	25
British Period	29
Pakistan Period	49
Liberation War	59
Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board	70
Ethnic Cleansing	79
The Undeclared War	84
Deforestation And Other Projects	86
Cluster Villages	91
Islamisation and Religious Persecution in CHT	93
Ethnocide	100
Refugees	119
Hill District Local Government Councils	124
Khaleda Zia Government	129
Government of Sheikh Hasina	136
Administration under 4 Party Alliance	140
Epilogue	146
Glossary	151
Abbreviations	153
Bibliography	154
Annexure	158

PROLOGUE

In Sir Ashutosh College, Kanungopara, Chittagong where I studied Intermediate Arts, I was Literary Secretary of the college magazine. But I did not write any article for the magazine because I was not a writer and did not publish anything earlier.

In 1947 at the time of Partition of India the minorities in then East Pakistan were 30 percent of the total population of the province and now they are 10.5 percent of the total population. I do not need to describe why the minority population has decreased. In 1947, the tribal population in Chittagong Hill Tracts was 97.50% and the Muslim population was only 1.50%. Now the tribals are minority in their ancient home land.

Now, there are 7 Municipalities in the three districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts. In all the 7 Municipalities, the Bengalees are holding the position of chairmanship. In Rangamati, the main town of Chittagong Hill Tracts, houses have been built for the Bengalee settlers on the cremation ground of the Tribals. Violation of human rights in Chittagong Hill Tracts is now almost everyday affair. Mass killings and gang rapes of women of the Tribals have become common incidents. It has never been heard that any culprit was punished for such heinous crimes except once. No Bengali writer has written any book giving the real picture of the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

In March 2006, I took one Chakma journalist, Jagaran Chakma of the Daily Independent to Khagrachari with the consent of the Editor at my expenses. He visited several places of the district and saw in his own eyes how the Bengalee settlers are occupying the lands of the Tribals. On his return to Dhaka he wrote a big article describing the real situation but his News

paper, the Daily Independent did not publish the article. In disgust Jagaran Chakma resigned from his job.

Now in Bangladesh there are about one dozen Human Rights Organisations. None of them published nor produced any book or paper giving the actual picture of human rights violations in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Rather I know a few writers, human rights activists and journalists went to Chittagong Hill Tracts in the army helicopters and on return published the distorted pictures of the actual situation.

On 12 June 1996 at midnight, a few days before the general election, some persons of the Law Enforcing Agencies in civil dress went to the house of Kalpana Chakma at New Lalyaghona village under Baghaichari police station under Rangamati Hill District of Chittagong Hill Tracts and kidnapped Kalpana Chakma who was then Organising Scretary of the Hill Women's Federation. Leaders of the Hill Womens Federation complained that Lt. Ferdous of 17 East Bengal Regiment of Kajoichari camp and Commander Nurul Huq of the village defense party and a few others were the persons who kidnapped Kalpana Chakma. Kalpana Chakma's brother Kalindi Kumar Chakma and Khudi Ram Chakma recognised the kidnappers as Army Camp and Village Defense Party Camp were not far away from Kalpana Chakma's house.

The leaders of the Hill Women's Federation and Hill Students' Federation not only protested, they held press conference in Dhaka, made demonstrations in different places of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Dhaka and Chittagong. As a result the kidnapping of Kalpana Chakma got wide press coverage in the country. In this situation, Bangladesh Human Rights Commission, a widely known human rights organisation of the country held a press conference on 8 August 1996 in Dhaka and said that the members of the commission went by river route from Rangamati to Baghaichari, then they went to Kalpana Chakma's house at New Lalyaghona village on foot, met Kalpana's mother and other members of the family. In the press conference the members of the Human Rights Commission further said that

Kalpana's mother told them that Kalpana was in the Chakma Refugee Camp in Tripura State of India. After a few days, on 18 August 1996 leaders of Hill Women's Federation held a press conference in Dhaka where Kalpana's mother was present. In the press conference Kalpana's mother said that the members of the Human Rights Commission went to Baghaichari Army zone headquarters by an army helicopter and from there they went to Kalpana's house accompanied by about 20 Bangladesh Rifle men. She further said in the press conference that she had narrated to the Human Rights Commission members what actually had happened in the night of 12 June and did not say that her daughter was in the refugee camp in India. It may be mentioned here that a well known Professor of Dhaka University was also in the Human Rights Commission which visited Kalpana's house. It is just an example.

On 9-11-2003 I met Advocate Sultana Kamal, Executive Director of Ain O Salish Kendra, a very wellknown Human Right Organization of Bangladesh to discuss the Mahalchari tragedy at her office. Salam Azad, a very wellknown human right activist and a celebrated writer was also with me. At a certain stage of our discussion I told Advocate Sultana Kamal that the Human Rights Organizations of the country are doing business in the name of protecting human rights, they are getting aid from Donor countries but they are doing nothing to protect the human rights of the minorities especially the human rights of the tribal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts. Advocate Sultana Kamal kept quiet. She did not make any protest. I said this because some human rights activists of Europe, North America and Australia formed an independent body in the name of 'Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission' to investigate allegations of human rights violations in Chittagong Hill Tracts and published five volumes of books in 1991, 1992, 1994, 1997 and 2000, stating the human rights violations in great details. But not a single Human Rights Organization of the country did make a detailed investigation and did not publish any detailed report or book. No Human Rights Organization also filed any public Interest litigation case in the

Honorable High Court of Bangladesh against the government for its failure to protect the lives and properties of the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts though many of them become very vocal when human rights of the people especially of the Muslims are violated in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Here I quote an extract from the article 'Care taker Government, Election Commission and Parliamentary Election' written by Justice Naimuddin Ahmed (now retired) of the High Court and a former Election Commissioner of Bangladesh. From the quote the readers will be able to know how elections were held in Chittagong Hill Tracts when General Zia and General Ershad were Presidents in the country.

'The Election Commission decided to undertake tours of some important districts and all the divisional headquarters in order to hold meetings with the Returning Officers, Presiding Officers, law enforcing agencies including the army commanders and Bangaldesh Rifles commanders in order to see to it that they held the ensuing election fearlessly and with all fairness and without any bias. We wanted of them to see so that they may present to the country an exemplary election.

We held the meeting of all the districts of Chittagong Division on 7 February, 1991, leaving Dhaka by train on the evening of 6 February, 1991. The episode which took place in Chittagong and the events that followed thereafter is exactly reproduced from my diary below :

6 February, 1991, Wednesday. Left for Chittagong by train 4-10 P.M. Arrived Chittagong 10P.M. Halt at B.J.M.C. Rest House.

7 February, 1991, Thursday, Meeting with R.Os, A R.Os, S.Ps, Sector Commanders, B.D.R., O.C.s of P.Ss, Lunch at Poura Corporation. Meeting at Bar Association and with local elites. --Left Chittagong for Dhaka by train 11-30 P.M. During our meeting at Chittagong one officer (U.N.O., Rangamati) abruptly told that in three Hill Districts there had never been any election in the true sense and in all the elections the 'Returns' were sent by the Army to the Election Commission. The Returning Officer simply put his signature on the 'Return' prepared by the Army.

8 February, 1991. Friday. Arrived Dhaka 6 A.M. I went to office at about 9 A.M. and asked Mr. Ayubur Rahman, Secretary, Election Commission, whether the version of the U.N.O. Rangamati, about the election of M.Ps. of the three Hill Districts was correct. He corroborated and said that it was so and added that nothing could be done about it. I disagreed and firmly told him that I could not be a party to it. I went to the C.E.C. and expressed my views. He assured me of taking up the matter after giving some thought to it.

13 February, 1991. Wednesday. I again met the C.E.C. and asked him whether he was going to take any measure for holding a fair election in the Hill Districts. He called Syed Misbahuddin Hossain, the other E.C., Mr, Ayubur Rahman, Secretary, Mr. Faizur Razzaque, and Mr. Zakariah, Joint Secretaries and asked for their views. Mr. Ayubur Rahman straightaway said that any attempt at changing what had always been done would mean direct confrontation with the Army and that would be dangerous. The others did not say anything. The C.E.C. then addressed me as follows : 'Brother, it is for the Army that the Hill Tracts are still a part of Bangladesh- otherwise they would have been India long ago! We need not bother our heads for it.' (Rendered into English from what he said in Bangla).

I understood he had been already suitably briefed and advised by Mr. Ayubur Rahman. I protested and said I would not be a party to such an election and requested him to take up the matter with the President. Ayub was visibly annoyed.

15 February, 1991, Friday. The Commission met the President. The meeting was arranged mainly on my insistence to make it clear that he should tell the Chief of the Army Staff that in the three hill districts which are virtually under the control of the Army, election must be free and the Army must remain completely aloof from taking any interests in election except maintenance of law and order. The C.E.C. Justice Rauf was at first hesitant- possibly preferred to take a clear middle path. I said if I was convinced that the Army was going to meddle in election in those districts, I would not go there- there must be a clear

assurance form the Army Chief in this matter. The President appreciated my point and supported me and also told us he would ensure that this time the Army would remain completely neutral.

17 February, 1991, Sunday. The President informed me over telephone that he had talked to General Nuruddin, the Chief of Army Staff who in turn had already sent a message to the Area Commander, Chittagong. He further assured me that the Army would remain completely aloof and neutral. I thanked the President.'

Thereafter, the Election Commission visited the three Hill Districts on 18 February, 1991. We held meetings with all the tribal leaders and others in Bandarban, Rangamati, and Khagrachari on the same day traveling in a helicopter and Major General Mahmudul Hasan, the Area Commander of Chittagong accompanied us in his own helicopter. In the last leg of our tour we reached Khagrachari at about 1-30 P.M. We were scheduled to hold our meeting with the people of Khagrachari after lunch. Lunch was being prepared and in the meantime, I was having some rest in my room. At that time Major General Mahumudul Hasan entered into my room and after exchange of some pleasantries he told me that I could be rest assured that the election in the Hill Tracts would be completely free and fair, He happened to be an old friend of mine since he was Sector Commander of the Bangladesh Rifles in Mymensingh and I was an Additional District Judge there. We spent many afternoons in the tennis court and in rivers for hunting birds. I embraced him and told him that I had no doubt in what he had said.'

On 26 May 1979 Brigadier Hannan Shah (later on Minister of Jute under Khaleda Zia (1991-1996) and Lt. Col. Abdus Salam (subsequently Major General and G.O.C. 24th Infantry Division, Chittagong) then serving in Chittagong Hill Tracts declared at a public meeting at Pànchari that 'we want the land and not the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts.'

In the Daily Prothom Alo on 19-5-06 it appeared that on 18-5-06 Santu Larma, chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council, inaugurated the third conclave of the Parbatya

Chattagram Janasanghati Samity of the Rangamati branch. In his inaugural address, he said that Tribal people are now under various pressures, either to embrace Islam or to leave the country.

As I have already said, I was never a writer but after my retirement from service, I have started writing. This is because there is no writer in the Tribal society of Chittagong Hill Tracts. So I have decided to write and describe the real happening so that the civil society of Bangladesh in particular, the people of the world in general could know little bits of the human rights violations in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

I am sure, unless compelled by the donor countries, Khaleda Zia Government will not implement the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord. And if the Peace Accord is not implemented the tribal people will be completely wiped out from their ancient home land in a few decades. The tribal people will either have to leave Chittagong Hill Tracts or embrace Islam, if the present policy of the BNP Government is not reversed.

The Governments of the U.K. and the U.S.A. have got special responsibility to protect the tribal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts. Because it is the British who awarded the Chittagong Hill Tracts, a non Moslem land to Moslem Pakistan, created as homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. And it is the U.S.A. that built the Karnafuli dam uprooting one-third population of the district and did not impose any condition on Pakistan government for proper rehabilitation of the uprooted people.

In the circumstances I appeal to the Civil Society of Bangladesh and Civil Society of the world and the Governments of various countries of the world believing in human rights to compel Khaleda Zia Government of Bangladesh to immediately stop violation of human rights of the tribal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts and implement all the provisions of Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord in letter and spirit.

Author
19-05-2006.

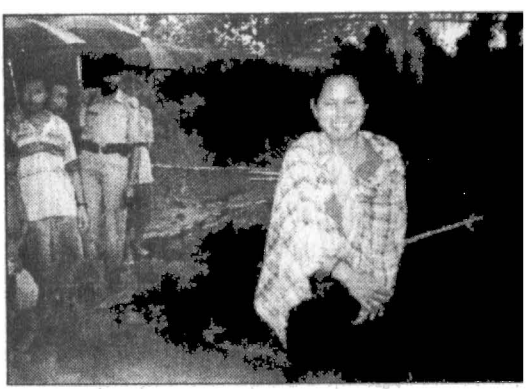
GEOGRAPHY AND THE PEOPLE

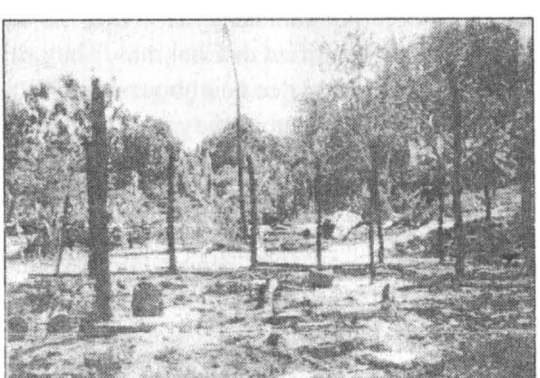
Geographically Chittagong Hill Tracts belongs to the hilly region that branches off from the great Himalayan ranges to the South through Assam and Tripura to Myanmar (formerly Burma). As a result, its historical development had been similar to the historical development of North-Eastern region of India and different from that of ancient and medieval Bengal. It lies between $21^0 25$ and $23^0 45$ north latitude and between $91^0 45$ and $92^0 50$ East longitude and its total area is 5093 square miles. Its political but not natural boundaries are states of Tripura in the north, Mizoram in the east, Myanmar in the south and the east and greater Chittagong district of Bangladesh in the west. The Tracts are made of several valleys formed by the rivers- the Feni, the Chengi, the Mayani, the Kassalong, the Sanghu, the Matamuhuri and the most importantly the Karnafuli. Its ridges reach heights of 3000 feet and were covered once in deep forest and run in a north-west and south-east direction. Geographically the Chittagong Hill Tracts contrasts greatly the alluvial, monsoon flooded plains of the rest of Bangladesh.

Geographical characters are important factors in shaping historical development of a national/ethnic groups. Being different in geographical and topographic attributes from other parts of Bangladesh, the historical development of Chittagong Hill Tracts had also been different. Rather the historical course of the tribes had been more similar to that of the North-Eastern region of India. Because of the geographical and topographical factors, Chittagong Hill Tracts has been a home of the 10 or 13 Mongoloid tribes for centuries. The tribes are as follows :

The burnt tribal houses of Katapahar near Bonorupa Bazar of Rangamati town. The Bengalees set fire to the houses in presence of law enforcing agencies on 20-5-1990

In Bhuachhari Mouza near Khagrachari district town settler Bengalees looted and burnt Chakma villege in presence of army persons on 19-4-2003





On 26-8-2003, Tuesday, the Bengalee settlers looted and set fire to Babupara village of Mohalchari in presence of army persons

1. Chakmas and Tanchangyas
2. Marmas
3. Tripuras and Ushais
4. Murungs/Mros
5. Bawms
6. Pankhos and Bonjugis
7. Khumis
8. Khyangs
9. Lushais
10. Chaks

So it is not surprising that in 1947 when India was partitioned, the tribal population Chittagong Hill Tracts was 97.5% and the tract was shown as part of India in the Independence Act.'[1]

The Chakmas and Tanchangyas

The Chakmas are the largest ethnic group and they are more than 50% of the total tribal population in the district. Though the Tanchangyas are identified as a separate tribe, but as a matter of fact they are a sub-tribe of the Chakmas. Both the tribes speak the same language, their customs and culture is same and they profess the same religion-Buddhism too. It is interesting to note that though the Tongchangyas of Chittagong Hill Tracts are identified as a separate tribe, the Tanchangyas living in the present Cox's Bazaar district are identified as Chakmas. They call themselves as Chakmas and their Bengalee neighbours also know them as Chakmas. Even in the census report, they are enumerated as Chakmas. Some Tanchangyas also live in some villages under Rangunia Police station in Chittagong district, where they are also known as Chakmas. Excepting Bangladesh, where the Chakma population is 2,52,986 as per 1991 census, almost equal number of Chakmas are now living in Indian states of Tripura, Assam, Arunachal, West Bengal and Mizoram. In Mizoram they have been given an Autonomous District Council. Most of the

Chakmas living in India especially in the states of Tripura, Arunachal and Assam went to India during the last 40/50 years after partition of India in 1947. The Tanchangya population in the country is 21,057.

It is rather very difficult to present chronologically the history of the Chakmas. Different historians gave different accounts of the Chakmas' origin, their history and their occupation of Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Region later named as Chittagong Hill Tracts, after it was separated from Chittagong district by an Act of 1860 AD. Whatever their history, there is no doubt that they belong to Tibeto Burman race. Though ethnically they are Mongoloid and quite different from the plains people of Bangladesh, their language belongs to Indo-Aryan branch. Dr. Sunity Chatterjee, the famous linguist of India described Chakma language as corrupt Bengali. But their alphabet is, different from Bengali and is close to Burmese alphabet. Some historians claimed them to be a branch of the great Sakya Clan of present Nepal. According to them the clan became Chakma from Sakya, Sakyama, Sakma. But it requires further research by the scholars and the researchers to know their origin and history. It may be mentioned here that lord Buddha was born in the Sakya clan.

According to Chakma chronicles, once the Chakmas used to live in a kingdom known as 'Champaknagar'. The king Udaygiri had two sons- Bijoygiri and Samargiri. During the lifetime of the king, the elder son Bijoygiri went out on an expedition in the South and conquered Chittagong and Arakan. After conquest of these two countries, when he was about to return to Champaknagar, he learnt that his father had already died and his younger brother also had ascended the throne. Greatly shocked and disheartened, he decided not to return to Champaknagar and decided to stay in the conquered lands but ultimately left Chittagong, moved further South and Settled at 'Saprekul' in Arakan. There, his soldiers married local women. Having established a new kingdom in Arakan, they lost contact with old Champaknagar. The present day Chakmas still believe that they are the descendants of Bijoygiri and his soldiers. The history of

Arakan supports the chronicle of the Chakmas, but it is very difficult to identify the location of Champaknagar. Different historians gave different accounts. Some claim, it was in present Tripura State of India, some think that it was at Kalabagha (now Sylhet), some others claim it was in present Shan state in Burma. But still some others think it was in Magadha (Present Bihar). King Bijoygiri had no issue and after his death, his minister Sirottama became the king. He was a powerful king, a wise ruler and a great patron of Buddhism.

The Arakanese call the Chakmas as Saks or Theks. Sir Arthur P. Phayre, Chief Commissioner of British Burma in his book 'History of Burma' while discussing the history of the Arakanese said that in 1546 AD, when the king of Arakan Meng Beng was engaged in a battle with the Burmese, suddently the Sak king appeared from the North and attacked Arakan, occupied and brought the areas up to Ramu (now in Cox's Bazzar district) under his control.'[2] Still now there is a place called 'Chakmarkul' on the bank of the river Bakkhali two miles south of Ramu. Near 'Chakmarkul' there is another place 'Fathekhakul' after the name of Chakma king Fatekhan. To the opposite of 'Chakmarkul' there is another place 'Rajarkul' after the name of the Chakma Rajas. Hence many believe that 'Saprekul' the capital established by Bijoygiri is the same with the present 'Chakmarkul'. As already said, the Arakanese call the Chakmas as Sak or Thek and in Arakanese language 'Prey' means country i.e. 'Saprekul' means the land of the Chakmas. Joa de Barrows, a Portugese historian drew a map of Bengal' in 1540 AD with the title of 'Descripcao do Reino de Bengalla'. In that map there was a place 'Chacomas' on the eastern bank of the river Karnaphulli. So many think that it was this place where the Chakmas used to live at that time. Arakan king Meng Rajagri Salim Shah (1593-1612) conquered this land and included it in his kingdom. He also conquered Bengal and Pegu Kingdom in southern Burma. The Arakan King in his letter to a Portuguese merchant Philip De Brito Nicote in 1607 addressed himself as the highest and most

powerful king of Arakan, of Chacomas and of Bengal.[3]

Being defeated by the Arakanese, the Chakmas entered the present Chittagong Hill Tracts and made Alekhyangdong (present Alikadam) as their capital. From Alekhyangdong they proceeded further north and settled in the present day Rangunia, Rauzan and Fatikchari upazilas of Chittagong District and also present Chittagong Hill Tracts.

In 1666 Shaista Khan, who was then governor of Bengal under the Mughals defeated the Arakanese taking advantage of the dispute between the Arakanese and the Portuguese, conquered Chittagong and renamed it Islamabad. However in the beginning the Mughal supremacy was confined to only the plain areas of Chittagong and the Chakmas remained practically unaffected. But after a few years the Mughals demanded tribute from the Chakmas for trading with Chittagong, when dispute developed between the Mughals and the Chakmas.

After liberation of Bangladesh, district gazetteers of all the districts of the country were published, when a district gazetteer for Chittagong Hill Tracts was also published. The district gazetteers were published from the Bangladesh government press and they were edited by Professor Mahammod Ishaque, a well known history professor and historian of the country. In the district gazetteer of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Professor Ishaque described the wars between the Chakmas and the Mughals in the following language,

"There were many engagements with the Mughals during the rule of Jubal Khan. His general, Kalu Khan Sardar fought many battles with the then Muslim Nawab. After Jubal khan's death, his brother Fateh Khan became king, as Jubal Khan died leaving no issue. Fateh Khan made peace with the Nawab in 1713 and obtained permission from the Mughal Emperor Farukh Shiyar (1713-19) to allow the 'Beparies' to trade with the Jumiyas on payment of a tribute of 11 maunds of cotton." (page 34-35).

A stable relationship development between the Chakmas and the Mughals and the latter never demanded complete subjugation from the former. The Mughals also rewarded the Chakma King

Sukdev, successor of Shermust Khan, now an ally with the title of Roy. Sukdev established a new capital in his own name at a place near Shilak now under Rangunia police station. The place is still known as Sukbilash and there are still ruins of the royal palace and other establishments there. Subsequently the capital was shifted to Rajanagar under the same Rangunia police station. It may be mentioned here that in the earlier times aristocrat Chakmas like the Arakanese used to take Islamic names.

INDEX

1. Sarder Patel's correspondence 1945-50 volume IV edited by Durga Das, page 166.
2. History of Burma, by Sir Arthur P. Phayre, page-79.
3. Parbatya Chattagramer Upajai O Sanskriti, by Sugata Chakma, Page-19,20.

THE COMPANY PERIOD

Three years after the battle of Palasy, Mir Kashem, the new Nawab of Murshidabad rewarded the British East India Company with Chittagong, Burdwan and Midnapur. On 5 January 1761 AD the Company representative Harry Verlest took over charges of Chittagong from Subedar Mohammad Reja Khan. But the Chakma King Sher Doulat khan who was almost independent though nominally paid tribute to the Mughals, did not accept the hegemony of the Company and their demand of taxes at enhanced rate. A protracted war started and it continued up to 1787 AD. The East India Company waged four offensives against the Chakmas in 1770, 1780, 1782 and 1785. In 1785 the Company started peace negotiations with the Chakma King Jan Box Khan, son of Sher Doulat Khan and in 1787 the king accepted the sovereignty of the Company and agreed to pay taxes, which was fixed at 500 maunds of cotton annually. The peace agreement was signed at Calcutta. Professor Ishaque in his book gazetteer of Chittagong Hill Tracts described the war between the Chakmas and the English in the following language.

"Shermust Khan, the eldest son of Fateh Khan became Raja in 1737 AD. During his time Mr. Harry Verlest, the chief of Chittagong proclaimed that the tract bounded by the Nizampur Road (Dhaka Road), Kuki territory, the Feni and the Sangoo rivers belonged to the Chakmas Raja. Sukdev, adopted son of Shermust Khan became Raja in 1757 AD. He took settlement of vast land, now called the Taraf Sukhdeva. He died Childless and after him Shedoulat Khan, grand son of Raja Fateh Khan (through his second son Rahmat Khan) became Raja in 1776 AD. There

was war between the English and the Chakmas during Sherdoulat Khan's rule. Two expeditions sent by the English under Mr. Lane and Mr. Turmmers against the Chakmas were unsuccessful (vide Mr. Cotton's Revenue History of Chittagong). Jan Box Khan was the son of Sher Doulat Khan, who became Raja in 1782 AD. There were wars between the English and Jan Box Khan in 1783, 1784 & 1785 AD. The Raja went to Calcutta in 1787 AD., asked pardon of the Governor General (Lord Cornwallis) and made peace with the British government on promise of payment of 500 maunds of cotton." (page 35).

Dr. Suniti Bhushan Kanungo Professor of history Chittagong University in his book 'Chakma Resistance to British Domination 1772-1798)' stated how and why the war with the Chakmas started.' He Wrote, 'The Cessionary treaty (1760) giving up Chittagong to the East India Company does not precisely define the boundary of the district of Chittagong. In fact, there was no line of demarcation between the British held territory and Chakma territory. Taking advantage of the absence of the separating line, the Bengalees residing in the border areas and encouraged by the Chittagong authorities took possession of Chakma territory step by step especially in the Halda basin area. This acquired land was officially designated as Noabad land.

In April 1772 Warren Hastings assumed office as President and Governor of Fort William. He gave up the policy of non interference and began to interfere either by force or by threat of use of force in the domestic affairs of the native states. His chief object was the extension of British territory to the unconquered neighbouring native states. The hill kingdom of the Chakmas became the target of the expansion policy of Chittagong authorities. Rangunia which was situated adjoining to the regulation district of Chittagong was made an object of British policy of expansion, (page 30)

The main provisions of the treaty between the Governor General and the Chakma King were as following :

(1) The East India Company recognized Jan Baksh Khan as the Raja of the Chakmas.

(2) It was agreed that the collection of revenue was the responsibility of the Raja.

(3) The British government would preserve the tirbal autonomy and migration from the plains would be restricted.

(4) Jan Baksh Khan was bound by the treaty to maintain peace in his territory.

(5) British troops would remain in the Chakma territory not to terrify the Chakmas but to protect the land from the inroads of the fierce tribes. (page 52 Chakma Resistance to British Domination 1772-1798).

In 1829, Halhed, then Commissioner of Chittagong reaffirmed that "the hill tribes were not British subjects but merely Tributaries and we recognized no right on our part to interfere with their internal arrangements. The near neighbourhood of a powerful and stable government naturally brought the Chief by degree under control and every leading chief paid to the Chittagong collector a certain tribute or yearly gifts. These sums were at first fluctuating in amount but gradually were brought to specific and fixed limit, eventually taking the shape, not as tribute but as revenue to the state".[1] In 1846 the annual revenue payable to the Company was re-fixed at Rs. 11,803.00. Jan Box Khan shifted his capital to a new place, named it as Rajanagar, near Rangunia, Chittagong. The ruins of the palace and 2 big tanks excavated by the king are still there. After his death in 1800 AD, his son Tabbar Khan became king, but he died shortly. After his death in 1802 AD, his younger brother Jabbar Khan became king. He ruled for ten years and after his death, his son Dharam Box Khan became king in 1812 AD. He ruled up to 1832 AD. After his death in 1832 without any male issue there was chaos and lawlessness and the government appointed Suklal Dewan as the Manager. In the meantime Rani Kalindi, widow of Dharam Box applied to the Government to allow her to run the affairs of the state. The Government accepted her prayer and in 1844 issued an order to that effect.[2] In his book 'An account of Chittagong Hill Tracts' R.H.S. Hutchinson, a former

Superintendent of Chittagong Hill Tracts, remarked about Rani Kalindi". "The Chieftainess rendered the Government a certain amount of aid in the dark days of the Indian mutiny. she secured and delivered up some of the sepoys of the native regiments that mutinied at Chittagong and had betaken themselves to the hills to avoid retribution, otherwise, for forty years she proved a thorn in the side of the Government. She was an exceedingly able woman having surrounded herself with Bengalee lawyers from Chittagong".[3] After the great Sepoy Munity in 1857, the British government assumed direct control of the administration of India from the East India company and took over the control of Chittagong Hill Tracts also, which was not yet formally separated from Chittagong but the territorial jurisdiction of the Chakma Raja was fixed by a proclamation dated 6th Sravan 1170 M.S. (1763 AD) by the company as "all the hills from the Feni river to the Sangoo and from Nizampur road in Chittagong to the hills of Kooki Raja".[4] In 1872 she also assisted in supplying cooli (porter) transport to the Lushai expedition and for this service her grand son Harish Chandra was vested with the title of Roy Bahadur. He became Chief in 1873 after the death of Rani Kalindi and was conferred the title of Raja in 1874.

INDEX

1. The Chakmas Life and struggle by S.P. Talukder-page 36.
2. Chakma Jatir Itibritta by Biraj Mohan Dewan-page 195
3. An Account of the Chittagong Hill Tracts by R.H.S. Hutchinson-page 94 and Chakma Jatir Itibritta page-197
4. The Chakmas Life and struggle by S.P. Talukder-page-35.

BRITISH PERIOD

After the war with the English the Chakmas became very weak militarily.

Since then the Kookies, who were independent tribes living further eastward used to make frequent murderous raids on the British subjects in Cachar, Noakhali, Comilla and other neighboring tracts including tracts under Rani Kalindi. They raided Chittagong Hill Tracts and the neighboring tracts in 1847, 1848, 1859 and 1860. As a consequence with a view to paying the necessary attention to the affairs of the front areas experiencing repeated raids and to protecting the people from the aggression of the independent tribes living farther east but primarily to occupy the Chakma land, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal recommended the removal of the hill tracts from the Regulation district and the appointment of Superintendent over the tribes. Both these recommendations were adopted by an act XXII 1860 AD which came into operation on 18 August of that year. Thus Hill Tracts were separated from Chittagong district and a superintendent was appointed for the said tracts and its headquarters was established at Chandraghona. The hills in his charge were henceforth known by the name of the Hill Tracts of Chittagong. For the next few years attention was directed to the preservation of peace of the frontier. In 1869 headquarters was shifted to Rangamati. Earlier the official designation of the post of Superintendent was changed to Deputy Commissioner and full control of all matters pertaining to both revenue and justice throughout the Hill Tracts was vested in his office. With the prevailing frontier situation the British government put pressure

on the Chakma Chief to shift his capital to Rangamati and ultimately in 1874 it was shifted to Rangamati from Rajanagar. At that time lot of cotton was grown in Chittagong Hill Tracts and this cotton was necessary for the British for their mills. Hence effective control of Chittagong Hill Tracts was most important for them in addition to the reasons already stated.

In 1881 the government decided to divide Chittagong Hill Tracts into three circles and the rulers were designated as chiefs.

1. Chakma circle
2. Bohmmong circle and
3. Mong circle.

Each circle was headed by a Chief, Chakma Circle by a Chakma, Bohmong Circle by a Bohmong and the Mong Circle by a Mong. The Chakma circle was centrally located and inhabited mainly by the Chakmas, the Bohmong circle was under the subjection of the Bohmong Chief of Arakanese extraction and also populated mostly by the people of Arakanese origin/extraction and the Mong circle was also inhabited by the Arakanese speaking clans with a springling of Tripura immigrants and headed by another potentate of Arakanese extraction. The reason of this division was that the British government was not in favour of the strong power of the Chakma chief who held sway over these hilly tribes. Further the government was feeling increasingly concerned about the political and administrative affairs of these tracts. Hence they aimed firstly to lay the foundation of administration in a restricted manner with the following basic objectives :

(i) to keep supervision on the rule of the Chakma Chief and also to curtail some of his powers.

(ii) To protect the British subjects from the Kookie menace and

(iii) To preserve peace in the frontier areas so that peace prevailed in Chittagong Hill Tracts and cotton could be grown and made available for their mills.

After the creation of a separate district and also three circles, the Kookie menace to Chittagong Hill Tracts and other adjoining

areas did not stop. Excepting the Kookies, the Shendus another ferocious tribe made occasional raids in the Hill Tracts. In 1865 and 1866 AD, the Shendus made two raids. On the first occasion they took six captives and on the 2nd, more than twenty persons were carried off. In the year 1866 AD, a more serious outrage was committed by the Haulong clan of the Lushais. The raid occurred on the 6th July, when they attacked and cut up three villages in the Sangu valley within the Bohmong circle to the South of Hill tracts. Another detachment of the Lushais penetrated into the British territory as far as Kaptai stream, a tributary of the Karnaphuli river and carried away eighty persons four of whom were killed. In January 1867 they again attacked the Bhomong's territory when they killed eleven persons and kidnapped another 35 people. No raid took place in 1868 AD but in January 1869, an attack was made on the police post of Chima on the Sangu river, the guards consisting of ten men were defeated and the post was destroyed. Seven men were killed and women and children of the whole guard carried off. In 1870, two raids were committed in July and the other in December. In 1871 also a series of raids of an unusually aggravated character was perpetrated in the neighboring district of Cachar by the Haulong tribe of the Lushais in which the lives of several Europeans were sacrificed and a young daughter of a tea planter together with several native British subjects were carried away as captives. The occurrence of these outrages determined the government to undertake effective reprisals and two columns of attack entered the Lushai country simultaneously-one from Cachar under General Boucher and the other from Chittagong Hill Tracts under the command of General Brownlaw in 1872. The operations which continued 5 months were entirely successful; the captives including young British girl Mary Winchester were recovered and the offending tribes tendered their submission and were compelled to pay a heavy fine for their cruel and unprovoked attacks. Peace reigned for quite sometime except once in 1875. But in January 1888 three raids were made at different points on the frontier, the most serious being the massacre of Lt: Steward and the survey party of which

he was in command. In the same month another party carried raids in the north, killed thirty one people and took eight women into captivity. In 1890 military expeditions were launched simultaneously into Chin Lushai hills from Chittagong and Burma as the British Government was convinced that any plan for dealing with these hill tribes should b implemented in collaboration with the governments of Bengal, Assam and Burma. Again in 1892 the British sent columns to complete the punitive measures and the whole of Kookie land was brought under the British control and the area was ultimately pacified.

After the annexation of the Lushai Hills, Chittagong Hill Tracts lost much of its importance and in 1891 was reduced to the status of a subdivision in charge of an Assistant Commissioner, a subordinate to the Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong. In the course of operations against the Lushais in 1892, considerable difficulties had been experienced as a result of the diverse administrative control over the Lushais among the three authorities viz. Assam, Bengal and Burma. So after prolonged discussions and correspondences, it was finally decided to transfer the Southern Lushai Hills (then a part of Chittagong Hill Tracts) to Assam. On 1 April 1900 AD, the South and the North Lushai Hills were amalgamated to form a district of Assam Province and placed in charge of an officer designated as the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills with headquarters at Aizawl. Now Lushai hills with a new name of Mizoram has become a state of the union of India.

Due to revision of the boundaries, the Chakma Chief had to forge some of his lands as also the subjects, who were inhabiting beyond the Thega river.

With the passage of time the government realised that the Act of 1860 AD would not work satisfactorily. hence the British Government enacted Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, 1900 (Act 1 of 1900) popularly known as Chittagong Hill Tracts Manual and adopted it in place of earlier rules. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation received the assent of the Governor

General on 6th January 1900 and was published in Calcutta Gazette on 17th January in the same year. The new regulation became effective from May 1900 AD and the old designation of Superintendent was restored and the earlier rules were annulled. In 1920 AD the superintendent was redesigned as Deputy Commissioner and the responsibility was put in charge of the Governor and his Executive Council after amending the regulation. The area was also declared as Excluded area. Earlier in 1881 AD Chittagong Hill tracts Frontier Police Regulation was adopted for effective administration of police force in Chittagong Hill Tracts and also to deal effectively with the marauders. This force performed the services of a quasi military character and hence the earlier rules and orders were not sufficient for maintenance of discipline among the members. This force was composed almost exclusively of the tribes people. This frontier Police Regulation also became a part of Chittagong Hill Tracts Manual. Since the adoption of the Manual, the administration of Chittagong Hill Tracts was carried on in accordance with the rules of the Manual.

The main features of Chittagong Hill Tracts Manual were as follows :

1. Chittagong Hill Tracts was made out of bounds for a non hill man unless he was in possession of a permit issued by the Deputy Commissioner at his discretion.

2. The Deputy Commissioner was given the right to expel any one who was not a native of the district (non-tribal) if he was found to be harmful/injurious to the peaceful administration of the district.

3. Legal practitioners were barred from appearing in any court in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

4. No one shall in future be permitted to hold more than 25 acres of land in all whether under one lease or more than one lease and lease may be granted only to hill men provided that non hill men of the cultivating classes actually residents in a village may be given lease in that village.

5. The Chittagong Hill Tracts was made a district for the purpose of criminal and civil jurisdiction for revenue and general purposes and the Deputy Commissioner was made the District magistrate and the general administration of the said tract in criminal civil, revenue and all other matters shall be vested in him.

6. The Chittagong Hill Tracts was made a Session Division and the Commissioner was made the Session Judge.

7. The Local government shall exercise the power of a High Court for the purpose of the submission of sentences of death for confirmation under the code of criminal Procedure 1898.

8. All officers in the Chittagong Hill Tracts were made subordinate to the Deputy Commissioner, who was authorized to revise any order made by such an officer and the Commissioner was authorized to revise any order made by the Deputy Commissioner.

9. The local government may make rules for carrying into effect the objects and purpose of this regulation.

10. Administration of the circles and Mouzas : The three Chiefs were charged with the administration of their respective circles and every person residing or cultivating within a circle was subject to the jurisdiction of its Chief with exception of government officers, their families, traders and shopkeepers in Bazars. The Headmen were in charge of the administration of Mouza and they were appointed by the Deputy Commissioner in consultation with sub-divisional officer, the Chief and inhabitants of the Mouza. The Headman is the lowliest revenue official of the district and without his recommendation no settlement or transfer cases of the land could be processed as the field official he know the latest position of the land. But now-a-days this provision and other provisions of Chittagong Hill Tracts Manual protecting the interests of the tribes are more disregarded than followed.

11. The District of Chittagong Hill Tracts was divided into two subdivisions, Rangamati and Ramgarh subdivisions and each subdivision was put in charge of one sub-Divisional Officer.

However, in the late British period one Sub-Deputy Collector

was deputed to Bandarban- the headquarters of the Bhomong Chief from Rangamati and after creation of Pakistan, Bandarban became a subdivision in 1952. In 1981 it became a District. In January 1970, the Headquarters of Ramgarh subdivision was shifted to Khagrachari from Ramgarh. In 1983 Khagrachari was declared as a district. Thus Chittagong Hill Tracts became three districts.

12. The Deputy Commissioner had to consult the Chiefs on important matters affecting the administration of the district. For this purpose a conference was to be held at least twice a year under the presidency of the Deputy Commissioner to which the Chiefs or their representatives were to be invited. As a result of the enforcement of the Manual, the old taluks (a certain administrative area), which were created by Rani Kalindi, were abolished and the circles were divided into Mouzas which were 369 in number and a Headman was put in charge of a Mouza. A Karbari (village headman) was put in charge of one village, while several villages composed one Mouza. Each Headman collects Jhum rent and pays it to the Chief after deducting his share, while he pays the plough rent to the sub-divisional officer or the Deputy Commissioner after collection. He gets commission for collection of plough rent. The investiture of the Chiefs is regulated by the Bengal Government while the Headmen as already said are appointed by the Deputy Commissioner and they may be dismissed by the Deputy Commissioner for incompetence or misconduct after reference to the Chief concerned.

Thus the British through the Deputy commissioner took over absolute power in Chittagong Hill Tracts after enforcement of its Manual though as already said, in 1829, Halhed, the then Commissioner of Chittagong division 'reaffirmed that the hill tribes were not British subjects but merely tributaries'. Under the British India Act of 1935, Chittagong Hill Tracts was declared again as an 'Excluded Area'.

Marma

The Marmas are the 2nd largest tribal group in Chittagong Hill Tracts. According to the census figures of 1991, the total Marmas in the country are 1,54,216 but in Bandarban district they are the largest tribal group, where their population is 59,288. the Marmas known as Maghs also live in Khagrachari and Rangamati Districts. The Bohmong Chief, Chief of the Bohmong Circle lives at Bandarban. the chief of Mong Circle was also a Marma but since the death of the Chief Maung Prue Sain a few years back, the title of the Mong chief has been under dispute between two claimants. the case has still been pending in the High Court. Another of their groups also live in Cox's Bazaar, Patuakhali and Barguna districts, but in these three districts they are called as Rakhains, locally known as Moghs also. In 1784 Burma occupied Arakan, when thousands of Arakanese refugees took shelter in the adjacent British occupied territories of Bengal. The government sent Captain Cox to help and rehabilitate the refugees; Cox established a market for them. this market subsequently became known as Cox's Bazaar after the name of its founder. Now Cox's Bazaar is the Headquarters of Cox's Bazaar district. The refugees gradually spread out not only to the present Cox's Bazaar and Chittagong districts but in the present Bandarban district and in the Northern Chittagong Hill Tracts also.

A large number of them took shelter in present Patuakhali and Barguna districts also and permanently settled there after clearing the jungles which was then infested with wild animals. During the British period, the Rakhains were a prosperous community specially in present Cox's Bazaar district. The beautiful Buddhist temples and stupas now almost abandoned or derelict at Cox's Bazaar, Ramu and other places are testimony of their wealth and prosperity. they are now economically poor and socially downcast and downtrodden. they are fast decreasing in number also. As per census of 1991 the Rakhain population in Bangladesh is 16,932 whereas as per census of 1961 the Rakhain

population of Chittagong district alone was about 70,000.[1] The total Rakhain population in Barisal district (the Rakhains live in Patuakhali and Barguna districts then parts of Barisal district) in early 1950s was about 50,000 whereas the present Rakhain population of these two districts (Patuakhali and Barguna) is only 4500.[2] Both Marmas and the Rakhains are Buddhists and they speak the same language and their social customs are also same. They inter marry with each other and think themselves as one people.

Tripura and Ushai

The Tripuras are the third largest ethnic tribal group in Chittagong Hill Tracts and they live in all the three districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts but their main concentraction is in Khagrachari district. The Tripuras living in Bandarban district are known as Ushai Tripuras, while the Riangs a subgroup of Tripuras living in north Chittagong Hill Tracts are known as Riang Tripuras. However, some Tripuras also live in sylhet, Comilla, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur and in Chittagong districts. But original homeland of the Tripuras living in Bangladesh was Tripura, now a state in India. In the 15th Century AD. Tripura became a powerful state and all the districts mentioned above were under their hegemony and the Tripuras spread out beyond their original Kingdom, but when their Kingdom shrank to its present boundaries many stayed back. The Tripuras of Chittagong Hill Tracts entered the district during their hey days, when Chittagong was conquered by Dev Manikya defeating the Arakanese and present Northern Chittagong Hill Tracts came under the hegemony of Tripura King. The water reservoir near Amin Jute Mills under Panchlais Police Station within Chittagong City is still known as Tripura Dighi.

According to Baren Tripura, who did a lot of research work on Tripuras and wrote a number of books on them, the Tripuras are divided into 36 Dofas or clans. But in Chittagong Hill Tracts there are only 17 Dofas and the Ushais and Riangs are two

important Dofas or clans of them. The Ushais having lived in Bandarban district for many centuries amidst the Marma and Mro tribes have adopted some Marma and Mro words and pharases in their language. The total Tripura population including Riangs and Ushais in Chittagong Hill Tracts is 62,129 as per 1991 census. But as per 1981 census their total population in these three districts was 61,600. Tripuras are Hindus by religion and a branch of the larger Bodo group of people. The Ushais have been shown as a separate tribe in the booklet 'A Performance Review' published by the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board.

The Mros

The Mros or the Murungs are the 2nd largest tribal group in Bandarban district. Their total population in Bandarban district in 21,963 as per the census of 1991. Originally the Mros lived in Arakan. But in the late eighteenth century they were attacked and defeated by another tribe Khumi and were forced to take shelter in the present Bandarban district. But still now there are Mros living on the bank of the Mi, a tributary of the Koladan river in Arakan. A small group of Mros also live in Rangamati District. The Mros are Buddhists but still observes many precepts of animism. The Mros are still very backward and menfolks also keep long hair and tie the same making a tuft on the head.

The Chaks

The Chaks are a small tribal group living in Southern Bandarban district. These people entered Chittagong Hill Tracts in the 14th century after their Kindgom was overrun by the Arakanese. Still now there are Chaks living in Arakan. As per the 1991 census the total Chaks population in the country is 2000. Out of them about 1681 live in Bandarban and the rest in Rangamati district. The Chaks are Buddhists.

The Khyangs

The Khyangs are a small group, live in a few villages near Kaptai and Chandraghona in Rangamati district. Some Khyangs also live in Bandarban district. Their total population in the country is 2,345 as per 1991 census. According to the Khyang Chronicles, the Khyangs with their King entered Chittagong Hill Tracts when their Kingdom in Burma was overrun by the Burmese. But afterwards the king decided to go back to Burma. But his younger queen being pregnant could not accompany him. Hence she was left behind with some followers and kinsmen. The present Khyaangs are the descendants of this queen and her retinue. The Khyangs are Buddhists but some of them became Christians during the British period.

Khumis

Among the tribes in Chittagong Hill Tracts the Khumis were the warlike people. Earlier they were very often engaged in internecine or intertribal warfare with the Bawms or the Mros. The Khumis used to live in Arakan; when there was fierce battle between them and the Mros, the latter being defeated fled to Chittagong Hill Tracts. But subsequently the Khumis themselves entered Chittagong Hill Tracts after being defeated by a more powerful tribe.

Now the Khumis live in Ruma and Thanchi areas of Bandarban Hill Tracts. As per census of 1991 their total population in the country was 1214. But in the census of 1981, their population was recorded as 1258.

The Khumis are animists and still now very primitive. Their menfolks keep long hair and tie the same making a tuft on the head. They are still dependent on shifting cultivation and fighting for survival. Only in 1995 one of their members passed secondary school certificate examination.

The Bawms

The Bawms belongs to Kukichin group and in the past they lived in Arakan. In October 1838 the Bawms under the leadership of their young leader Lian Kung attacked the Khumis and killed 30/40 people and kidnaped 38 women including children. The British who were then administering Arakan sent a contingent of force to arrest the culprits. Liankung fled with his people, entered Ruma area and surrendered to the Bohmang Chief and sought permission to live in his area. The Bohmong Chief allowed them to live in his area. Earlier Lian kung released the captives. But before that, they killed two women and sold three to the Shendus, another fierce tribe of Burma. Since then the Bawms have been living in Ruma area. They embraced Christianity during the British period. Many of them are now educated and accepted Western dress and culture. As per 1991 census, their population is 6978. The Bawms are famous for their honesty and truthfulness.

Lushais, Pankhos and Bonjogis

The Lushais and Pankhos belongs to kukichin group of people. The Lushai Hills now called Mizoram, a state within India is their original homeland. As already stated the Lushais were a fierce tribe and used to raid Chittagong Hill Tracts and the adjoining districts frequently during the early British period and until annexation of Lushai Hills in 1892 by the British. A very small number of Lushais now live in Sajek valley while the Pankhos live in Barkal in Rangamati district close to Mizoram. A few of them also live in Bandarban district. In 1981 census the Lushai population in the country was 1098 but in 1991 census, their number came down to 662. In 1981 census the Pankhos were 2440 but in 1991 census this figure increased to 3227.

Though the Lushais and the Pankhos are indentified as separate tribes, they are culturally very close to each other. Both these tribes like the Bawms belong to Kukichin group. Though

the Lushais do not understand Pankho language, the latter understand the Lushai language. Both the tribes are known for their bravery, honesty and truthfulness. Like Lushais, the Pankhos also adopted Christianity during the British period and have adopted Western dress and culture. The Bongjogi tribe is a branch of the Pankhos and speak the same language with them. During the Pakistani period they used to live in some hamlets at Banjogichara under Barkal Police station in Rangamati Hill District and Bandarban also. Their population was less than one thousand. But in the recent years they are no longer seen and in the last census this tribe was not recorded. Perhaps due to disturbances in Chittagong Hill Tracts and shrinkage of Jhuming area (Shifting cultivable land), they went away to neighbouring Mizoram and got mixed up with the local Mizos, with whom they have close ethnic, cultural and religious affinity.

Bengalees

It is known to many educated tribal elders of Chittagong Hill Tracts even now that Bengaless first started settlement in Chittagong Hill Tracts during the reign of Chakma King Dharam Baksha Khan (1812-32). At that time the capital of the Chakmas was at Rajanagar near the present Rangunia but the Chakma Raja had his palace at Rangamati too. Raja Dharam Baksha Khan took some Bengalee families from Rangunia and settled them on the Rangamati beel not far away from the old palace now submerged in the Karnafuli Lake, to cultivate his vast land as the Chakmas did not like to work as domestic labours at that time. W.W. Hunter in his book 'Statistical Account of the Chittagong Hill Tracts' wrote that Raja Dharam Baksha Khan, Chief of the Chakma tribe imported a number of Bengalees and settled them on the Rangamati beel (Page-81). In his book the number of Muslims was shown as 381 (page 38). Francis Buchanon in his book 'Francis Buchanon in South East Bengal (1798)'. (page 108) wrote that he saw some Bengalees employed as servants in the palace of Bohmong Chief Konghla Prue of Bandarban. and they

built their own huts in the neighbourhood. R.H.S. Hutchinson who was Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1890, 1894, 1906-1908 and 1911 wrote that Bengalees moved into Chittagong Hill Tracts in order to find work especially as seasonal labours. They were employed in ploughing the fields and turning the fallow lands into cultivate land. They were engaged on a monthly wages to plough, plant and harvest. (Page 11, 'Chakma Resistance to British Domination 1772-98)' by Prof. Sunity Bhushan Kanungo of Chittagong university. Chakma writer Biraj Mohan Dewan in his book 'History of the Chakmas' (in Bengali) wrote that Raja Dharam Baksha imported Bengalees from Rangunia and settled them at Rangamati beel (page 194). I was born in 1937. In my young age even in early Pakistan period I saw large number of Bengalees working as agriculture labours in the homes of the well to do Chakmas. They used to work as seasonal labours during ploughing, planting and harvesting seasons only.

Now some Bengalee writers started distorting history and started writing that the Mughals started settlement in Chittagong Hill Tracts long before the Chakmas and other tribals. In the Banglapedia (Encyclopedia of Bangladesh), page-9, volume-9 the history of present Rangamati district was written and claimed that the Mughals ie the Muslims started settling in Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1666 AD and the Chakmas took shelter under the Mughals in Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1737 AD. I wrote a strong protest letter which was published in the Daily Jugantar a very respectable daily of the country on 15 February 2005. The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh did not issue any rejoinder. Dr. Jafar Ahmed Khan a former Deputy Commissioner of Rangamati Hill Tracts wrote a book 'Rangamati : Boichitrer Oikyatan' in which he tried to prove that the Chakmas entered and settled in Chittagong Hill Tracts long after the Mughals occupied and settled in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Humayan Kabir, now Deputy Commissioner Khagrachari Hill Tracts wrote a booklet 'Khagrachari 2001-2005' in which he wrote that the Chakmas, Tripuras and Marmas are intruders in Khagrachari District.

By such writings the Bengalee writers are trying to prove that the Chakmas and other tribes are not the earliest inhabitants of Chittagong Hill Tracts and they have no right to claim Chittagong Hill Tracts as their homeland rather they are intruders.

Captain T. H. Lewin, who was the Superintendent of Chittagong Hill Tracts from 1866-69 and 1871 to 1874 in his book "A fly on the wheel" spoke highly about the simplicity and honesty of the tribes of the CHT. He said, "They were the simplest, the most kindly folk, these hill people; truthful, and capable of strong attachment; having also a great appreciation of straight and even handed justice. I found them ground down by ignorant, narrow minded Chiefs. harassed by litigious, lying Bengali usurers and oppressed by the constant dread of Lushai or Shendu raids".[3]

Captain Lewin once attended the Great Mahamuni Fair (a place near Rangunia in Chittagong district) which was then ceremoniously observed by the hill people every year for three days, where thousands of old, young men and women used to get together. It was both a religious and a social gathering. He wrote, "..... but here in the Hill Tracts throughout the three days carnival, I had not seen one drunken man, nor witnessed any discourtesy to a woman. They are honest, kindly people, happy in their homes and in their simple Buddhist faith and I doubted much if they had any thing to gain from the introduction of European ideas".[4]

The tribal people are by nature simple, honest, truthful and liberal in out look. For ages different tribes have been living in the same neighbourhood, practising different religions in Chittagong Hill Tracts, but they were never engaged in fratricidal fight or organized attack with each other. There might be quarrels or litigations but they were all at individual level and very often the village elders intervened and settled the matter. Their women also, go out without veil, they work in the field, converse freely with friends, acquaintances, even sometimes with the unknown with much propriety. Though tribal young boys and girls mix

freely, they maintain respectful distance with each other and forced sexual crimes are almost unknown in the tribal society. The tribal women and girls very often go to the forests for collecting fire wood, sungrass or edible plants, fruits and roots, and sometimes they walk long distances alone to visit relatives but no tribal takes advantages of their loneliness or helplessness.

Another characteristic of the tribal society is that the girls are never given in marriage before they attain puberty. Captain Lewin in his book said "Marriages are contracted early, but never before the age of seventeen"[5].

All tribals in CHTs think begging as very disgraceful. Now famine like conditions prevail in many parts of Chittagong Hill Tracts almost throughout the year, but tribal beggars are rare and hardly seen.

It is generally believed that the tribals as they practise shifting cultivation, they are all nomands. But this is not correct. They have fixed settlements and from there they go to the 'Jhum' where they raise temporary houses for the sake of being near their 'Jhum'. Francis Buchanan during his journey to Chittagong. Chittagong Hill Tracts, Noakhali and Comilla, arrived at a Chakma village called Bassanta now under Jurachari Police station in Rangamati district on 1 May 1798 and wrote in his diary. "The village at the mouth of the Bussanta is pretty large containing about 50 houses and is extremely populous. It is one of the fixed residences of the Chakmas under the administration of a Dewan. In the season for cultivation the greater part of its inhabitants go out to the Khammars (farm house) as these became nearer to their Jhums; few spots only are cultivated for plantains, ginger, betel leaf, sugar cane, brinjal, tobacco and capsicum all of which seem to thrive well. The houses, like those of other Chakmas, consist of oblong stages, each about 40 feet by 20 and raised on bamboos about 12 feet high from the ground. On the whole the lodging is more comfortable and healthy than the common huts of the Bengalees".[6]

Earlier, on 18 April 1798 he visited Swalak, a Marma village under Bandarban Police station within present Bandarban district and wrote in his diary. "The Joomea of Sualak have in their ornaments a good deal of silver, and are cleaner and appear to be more comfortable than the common Bengalee. They also seem to have the good things of the world in greater abundance than the cultivators of plains or at least they are more willing to part with them"[7].

F.D. Ascoli, then a government official wrote in his "Report on the Administration of Chittagong Hill Tracts" published in 1918. "There is no doubt that the economic position of the plough cultivator (in Chittagong Hill Tracts) is better than in most favoured districts of Bengal. In one mouza of Maischari in the Chengi valley, a Mouja full of plough cultivators, I found the estimated stock of paddy in the village to be 24000 maunds averaging no less than 300per family, the available surplus stock amounting to 20,000 maunds valued at normal rates at Rs. 40,000/00. This is typical of areas under the plough and is due to extra ordinary fertility of the soil..... The rate of rent is low and his economic conditions in every way stronger than that of his brethren, whom I have seen and known in the Dhaka Division and in the district of Howrah"/ Of course, Ascoti admitted that the conditions of the hill people varied not only from year to year, but also from one season of the year to another because of rich or poor harvest."

In early 1980s Dr. Alimur Rahman of the Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka made a study on social development in tribal society in Chittagong Hill Tracts under the assistance rendered by the United National Children's Fund (UNICEF). In his study he said, "Though the shifting cultivation is an inferior mode of agriculture it has certain advantages for which it is preferred among some tribal population. First, inspite of high initial labour input, the overall labour requirements are low and discontinuous in shifting agriculture compared to plough cultivation. In a sparsely

populated area with large tract of land this is an important consideration. Secondly, multiple crops on the same field work as an insurance against famine because if some of the crops fail, there would always be some other, which would be available. In Chittagong Hill Tracts there was no death in the famine of 1770. Finally due to the fact that different crops were available continuously for sometime, the hardship of waiting for the next harvest is minimized"[8].

Earlier in 1906, Mr. Hutchinson, then Deputy Commissioner writing the gazetteer of the district stated the following :

"taken as a whole, the hill people are exceedingly well off. They get three rice meals a day and seldom have a meal without some sort of relish; while fish, flesh of goats, pigs and fowl are frequent additions to the daily meal. There are occasions of scarcity when the rice supply is not sufficient to carry them through the year and doubtless a considerable amount of inconvenience is felt at such times. They are well clothed and surround themselves with articles of luxury amongst may be mentioned cotton quilts, brass utensils, umbrellas, warm shawls and blankets and in prosperous years are very liberal in bestowing silver on their folk"[9].

Even in CHT District Gazetteer published by the Government of Bangladesh in 1971 the remark about famine in the Hill Tracts was as follows :

"Famine in the strict sense of the word is unknown. The good number of rivers with their large affluent and hill streams make the water supply perennial and the vast area of forest lands provides food for man and grazing in abundance for cattle. The forests are full of edible plants, fruits and roots; to people, who are aquatinted with them, it is an easy matter to procure from the forests the necessaries of a meal"[10].

Excepting the Southern Chittagong and Cox's Bazaar areas as mentioned earlier the Chakmas and other tribal people once lived in the central and Northern Chittagong. Still now the places like Rangunia, Ranirhat, Chowdhury Hat, Dhamai Khil,

Roazarhat of present Chittagong district bear Chakma and other tribal names and testify that these places were populated by the Chakmas and other tribals. Even places like Rajapur, Ranir dighi, Nandan Kanan of present Chittagong city which were in possession of the Chakma Raja and his subjects, still bear their names. Even the 'Lalkuthi' which was once the residence of the Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong during the British and Pakistani period and its hills belonged to the Chakma Chief and compensation for the 'Lal Kuthi' and its hills, was paid after acquisition in early Pakistani period. There was a big house of the Chakma Chief on a low hill at Rajapur Lane also. A few years back this hill and the house were sold away but still now there is a two storied building owned by the Chakma Chief and another house by another relation.

As a matter of fact after the conquest of Chittagong by the Moghals, there was influx of the Muslims and with the minimisation of power and influence of the Chakma Raja after British conquest, the tribals gradully retreated to deeper forests in Ctg. Hill Tracts. By vicissitudes of fortunes, the Tripuras and the Marmas, whose fore-fathers ruled Chittagong and vast areas of Bengal at different times of history turned into tribes and are now struggling for survival. Now different tribes of Chittagong Hill Tracts being further hard pressed because of fresh influx of Benaglee Muslims after the creation of Pakistan and then Bangladesh and due to systematic policy of the successive Governments, the tribals are gradually escaping to North-Eastern region of India and also to Burma, where geographic and topographic attributes are similar to that of Chttagong Hill Tracts and where similar ethnic groups of people also live, unlike the Bengalee Hindus who were escaping to West Bengal and other states of India where similar geographical and topographical environment exists and similar groups of ethnic people live.

It may be mentioned here that in 1947 at the time of partition of India, the Hindu population was 28% of the total population in the then East Pakistan and the other minorities were 1.96%. Now the minority percentage came down to 10.5%"[11]. If the normal

increase rate prevailed, the number of the Hindu community would have been more than four crore, in 1991 census the Hindu population was recorded as 1,11,79,000 i.e. during the fifty years the Hindu population has decreased whereas the Muslim population in the country has increased more than four times. In 1941 census the Hindu population of present Bangladesh was 1,17,47,000.

INDEX

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4. Ibid Page 224
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6. Francis Buchanon in South East Bengal (1798) edited by William Von Schendel page-120.
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8. Social Development in Tribal Society, by Alimur Rahman, Page-30.
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PAKISTAN PERIOD

In 1947 India was partitioned on the basis of two nation theory expounded by Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Pakistan was created as the homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent with the Muslim majority areas of the subcontinent. Chittagong Hill Tracts then had 97.5% tribal population. Even then the total Muslim population was only 1.5% in a total population of 275,000 in the district.[1] But Sir Cyrill Radcliff, Chairman of the Boundary Commission awarded the district to Pakistan violating the very basic principle of partition formulated by the British and accepted by the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress and thus Hill Tracts became a part of Pakistan. Since then the policy of the successive Governments of Pakistan was to reduce the tribal majority in the district and integrate them with majority Muslim society or force them to leave the country. In 1948 Chittagong Hill Tracts Frontier Police Regulation, 1881 AD was annulled and Chittagong Hill Tracts police force, then almost exclusively tribal, was merged with East Pakistan Police. All tribal police officials were transferred to other districts and they were replaced by the Muslim Force imported from other districts. Some thousands of Muslims were imported to Chittagong Hill Tracts and were rehabilitated at Rangamati, Langadu, Lama and Naniyachar, violating Chittagong Hill Tracts Manual which was still the Bureaucrat's hand book. In 1956 a new constitution was framed for Pakistan and in that constitution the special status of Chittagong Hill Tracts was maintained as the district remained as an 'Excluded Area' and its Manual was also retained. In 1958 General Ayub Khan seized power and in 1962 declared a new

constitution for the country. In that constitution Chittagong Hill Tracts was declared as a 'Tribal Area' but in 1966 this special status of the district was abolished. The Chittagong Hill Tracts was also made a forbidden area for the foreigners. Henceforth no foreigners could go to Chittagong Hill Tracts without permission of the government.

The Karnaphuli Project

The idea of a Project for harnessing the river Karnaphuli to the services of the people of the country and to check its uncontrolled devastating floods in the lower reaches of the valley developed in the early 20th century. But actual proposal in some details was drawn up only in 1940 when Mr. E.A. Moore, Superintending Engineer submitted in his proposal to construct the dam at Barkal, which was not far off from the Indian border of Mizoram. After creation of Pakistan, fresh study was made and it was found that if the dam was built at Barkal, a good portion of Indian state of Mizoram would be affected. Then there was fresh proposal to construct the dam at Chilakdhak which was 9 miles away from Rangamati towards north, but the idea was again dropped and ultimately the government took the decision to build the dam at the present site at Kaptai.

The construction of the dam was started in 1952 and was completed in 1958 but soon after the gates (spill way) were closed it collapsed. But after coming to power, Ayub Khan started negotiations with U.S. Government and ultimately with the assistance of the United states of America, the Kaptai dam was successfully completed in 1960.

As per survey report, the Kaptai lake was supposed to submerge an area of 213 Sq. miles but the actual submerged area was much higher, and it was about 350 Sq. miles. It was estimated that a total of 32,000 acres of cultivable land would be submerged but actual affected area of cultivable lands were 54,000 acres, which was about 40% of the total cultivable land of C.H.T. As a consequence many families were affected twice because some

people to be affected by the dam took settlement in some areas which were shown above submerged level but when the dam was brought into operation the water level of the dam began to rise, and their new settlement areas were again submerged. Due to the construction of the Kaptai dam about 100,000 people, mostly Chakma tribals were affected and uprooted from their ancestral homes in 125 Mouzas. The total number of families affected were 18,000 and out of them 10,000 families were wetland cultivators, while the rest were Jhumias (Shifting cultivators). To rehabilitate the affected people an area of 40 Sq. miles of Kassalong Reserve Forest was de-reserved, where about 10,000 area of agricultural land was found and 3734 families were rehabilitated. Besides 10,000 acres of land was found after de-reservation of Kassalong Reserve Forest, another 11,522 acres of agricultural land were found in non submerged areas of Ramgarh and Bandarban sub-divisions. But most of these lands were recovered from the tribals who used to cultivate them but could not or did not take settlement due to various reasons and these people were mostly Tripuras and Marmas. As a result many people of the un-affected areas of the Kaptai Project became also affected and some of them even became landless. Due to Kaptai Project 29 Sq. miles of Reserve Forest and 234 Sq. miles of un-classed state forest-all rich tropical forests went under lake water thus causing serious damage to the forest wealth worth of crores of takas.

Thus excepting the 8000 Jhumia families, a few thousand wet land cultivating families, who did not get farmland, were forced to become Jhumeas again in order to sustain themselves inspite of already severe shortage of Jhum land in the Hill Tracts. It may be mentioned here that each member of an affected family was given cultivable land up to maximum of ten acre per family.

In the chaotic conditions created due to sudden rise of the water level due to closure of the dam, many had to shift to other higher places where the lake water did not reach even without receiving any compensation for their lands and structures.

In these circumstances, many people without getting any land for cultivation and some of them without getting any

compensation left the country for India in 1964. Moreover, in early 1964 there were widespread communal riots in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna etc. of then East Pakistan (At Hazratbal Durgah in Kashmir, India prophet Muhammed's (sm) hair was stolen and the Hindu Muslims riots started in India & Bangladesh). There were some repercussions in Chittagong Hill Tracts also when many tribal women were violated and many men were manhandled in many places of the district. The Deputy Commissioner S.Z. Khan expelled the ring leader Ansari who was a timber merchant, from Chittagong Hill Tracts under Rule 51 of Chittagong Hill Tracts Manual. More than 40,000 tribals mostly Chakmas went away to India. India made a strong protest against Pakistan in the UNO. The then Srilankan Prime Minister Sri Mavo Bandaranike also expressed deep 'concern' to the Government of Pakistan about the Bhuddhist minorities. Then the Pakistani Government toók swift action and Governor Monayem Khan himself visited Rangamati and other interior places, from where the tribals went away to India and urged them not to leave their mother land. He assured them due compensation, rehabilitation and further assured them that they would be safe in Pakistan. All tribal officers who were posted outside Chittagong Hill Tracts were recalled and posted in Chittagong Hill Tracts. I was then posted at Gaibandha, then a Subdivision of Rangpur district. I joined Gaibandha in late April as a Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector after completing my probationary period in Sylhet. But barely one month after joining at Gaibandah, I was transferred to Rangamati. I submitted a representation to the Government saying that I joined Gaibandha only recently and as such I did not want my fresh transfer to Rangamati. Within a week I got a fresh order from the Government to join at Rangamati at the earliest and the Deputy commissioner, Rangpur was directed to release me forthwith. So I was released and I proceeded to Rangamati. After a few days of my joining at Rangamati I was ordered to proceed to Marishya, the Headquarters of a new Police station of Bagaichari from where maximum number of people fled away. It may be mentioned here

that a new police Station was established for the people of new rehabilitation zone created after de-reserving 40 Sq. miles of Kassalong Reserve Forest. At Marishya my duty was to persuade the Chakmas not to leave their motherland and to distribute relief among them. Due to my efforts, fleeing was stopped and some tribals also returned from halfway. I was at Marishya for about four months. When normalcy returned I was called back to Rangamati. The Refugees, who already went away to India, were rehabilitated in North East Frontier Agency (now Arunachal Pradesh) by the India Government but these unfortunate people still now did not get Indian citizenship and are now living there as stateless citizens. A few thousands also went away to Tripura State and Assam where they were mixed up with the local tribals.

Compensation

A Board of Revenue Compensation Office was established at Kaptai before the hydro-electric Project was completed and between 1959 and 1967 it disbursed 43 million taka (about $ 1.1 million). In 1980 the Far Eastern Economic Review published an article in which it was said that the Government of Pakistan earmarked an amount of 51 million US dollars for payment of compensation and rehabilitation of the affected people of the Karnafuli Project but only an amount of 2.6 million US Dollars was spent.[2] 'According to the 'Oity-hasik Prekkhapate' : Parbataya Staniya Sarkar Parishad' written by Gnanendu Bikash Chakma, a former Member of Rangamati Hill District Council and published by the same District Council, the total expenditure spent for rehabilitation of affected people was Tk. 194,02000.00 and this amount was spent during the period 1957-1966'[3]. According to the same author, who quoted Post Harvest Technologist B. Green Wood appointed by the Asian Development Bank, in all 7,395 families were rehabilitated outside the lake area giving in all 20,321 acres of land, while another 7,676 families including shifting cultivators were rehabilitated on the hills not submerged by the lake water but within the surrounding of the lake area and they were given in all

12,615 acres of land"[4]. But this scheme was not successful as most of the people abandoned them after their failure to sustain themselves.

Compensation was paid to the affected as follows :

1st Class land @ per acre Rs. 600.00 (in Pak. Currency)	
2nd Class land @ per acre Rs. 400.00	"
3rd Class land @ per acre Rs. 200.00	"
A family house on average Rs. 400.0	"
A fruit bearing tree @ Rs. 10.00	"
A banana tree @.25 paisa	"
A pine apple tree @.6 paisa	"
A non fruit bearing tree @ Rs. 5.00	"

The shifting cultivators and others were not paid any compensation for their homesteads as they did not have any recognized land rights. However, they got nominal compensation for structures and their fruit trees. It may be mentioned here that the tribals as per Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation did not require to take settlement of land for their homestead or Jhum land. However, for their Jhum land they paid Jhum tax @ Rs. 6.00 per family per Jhum.

Manabendra Larma then a student of B.A class in Chittagong Government College, who after liberation of Bangladesh organized a movement. for Chittagong Hill Tracts autonomy distributed a leaflet in Chittagong and in many places of Chittagong Hill Tracts narrating deprivation and cheating of the affected people of the Karnafuli Project for which he was arrested and kept in prison for two years without trial. Manabandra Larma and his younger brother Santu Larma formed the Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity after independence of Bangladesh to demand autonmy for the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

I was retired from govt. service in 1994. In March 1996 I went to see Md. Siddiqur Rahman, a former Ambassador of Bangladesh to Egypt and lastly Cabinet Secretary of the Government, at his request at his house in Dhaka. Siddiqur Rahman was Rehabilitation officer and ex. officio Addl. Deputy

commissioner and then Deputy commissioner, Chittagong Hill Tracts in early 1960s when rehabilitation work of the affected people was continuing. I also worked with him at Rangamati. Siddiqur Rahman was a kind and good man. During our discussion he told me that when he wrote to the govt. for allotment of fund for rehabilitation work, he was confidentially told by a govt. letter that the tribes men could live on leaves and other roots. So they did not need much help and he should not be much worried for them.

In Chittagong Hill Tracts cadastral survey was never held. Hence the people used to take settlement of the land by describing the boundaries of the land by giving an estimate of the area of the land and also by drawing a sketch map of the site. In most of the cases, the land prayed for settlement was full of jungles. Hence after settlement when the land was cleared of the jungles, the actual area was found more or less than the leased area. Moreover, many did not take settlement in order to avoid payment of rent or did not know that the land was in excess. People did not get compensation for the excess land in the submerged areas and in the non-submerged areas the excess land was settled with the affected people of Kaptai Project. Thus people of both submerged and non-submerged area were affected. In the non submerged areas the affected people did not get any compensation for their excess lands taken from them and distributed to the affected people of the lake.

The Karnaphuli Fisheries

Within a few years of its creation, the Karnaphuli reservoir became abundant in fish. So many of the tribals expected that they would be able to sustain their livelihood by catching fish. But the policy of the Government was otherwise. The fishery was controlled centrally. Many fishermen from Chittagong, Sylhet and other districts were imported for fishing. Still then many tribals became engaged in fishing and earned their livelihood. In the beginning they were encouraged by the Government too. But

after some years the tribal fishermen faced harassment from the more organized Bengalee fishermen. After creation of Bangladesh they were completely ousted as they could not go to the lake for fishing. Fishing is done at night. Tribals who went to fish at night were suspected as Shanti Bahinee insurgents. As a result many were harassed and many lost their lives. In the end the tribals gave up this profession.

Impact of the Karnaphuli project on the tribal society

The immediate consequence of mass upheaval of the hill men was that, simply in order to survive, a large number of hill men who were earlier wetland cultivators were forced to take up shifting cultivation again despite there was already severe shortage of Jhum land in the tracts.

The Jhumeas, who were 8000 families and had farmed the hillsides before they were flooded but had no land rights were simply ignored. About 60,000 received no compensation at all".[5]

In 1964 the Government appointed Forestall Forestry and Engineering International Ltd. a Canadian Company with the assistance of Canadian Government to survey the quality of land, impact of the dam on the tribal society and also to suggest development plans for Chittagong Hill Tracts. The company studied for two years from 1964 to 1966 and submitted its report in 9 Volumes. In one part of the report it was remarked, "The tribal people had attained a reasonable satisfactory way of life adequately adjusted to the limitation imposed by the physical environment before the dam was built. After the dislocation a disastrous cycle of over cultivation had led to depletion of soil fertility, loss of forest crop, serious erosion and further pressure on the remaining land."[6]

A survey carried out among the Chakmas by Prof. R.I. Chowdhury and his colleagues and published by Chittagong University found "69% Chakmas felt the dam created food and financial problems for them, 89% said that they had to change residence due to inundation, 87% faced problems due to change

of residence, 69% complained of inadequate Government help for settlement, 58% were distressed and that they had no scope for employment on the Kaptai Hydroelectric project and 93% felt that the economic condition of the tribal people had been better before the Kaptai dam".[7]

Over cultivation as is evident from a glance at the landscape, led to erosion and to server ecological damage. Hillsides were scarred by slips and the steep slopes are covered with scrubs. Soil washed off the hills rapidly began to silt up the lake. The former Jhuming cycle of ten to fifteen years allowed forest regeneration, so heavy was the pressure on land now that this has now been reduced to two to three year cycle. All electricity produced from the Kaptai Project was supplied to urban areas outside Chittagong Hill Tracts.

In 1976 General Ziaur Rahman visited Rangamati, met the tribal leaders, who submitted a memorandum to him. The memorandum had the following remark besides a charter of demands.

"The vast expanse of water captured by the dam provides a scene which impresses every visitor with its beauty. But could anybody have thought that this immense body of water is to some extent filled with the tears of the local people? Through the cables of the electric line not only current flows but also the sighs of grief".[8]

Industries

Chittagong Hill Tracts was a backward area and the people were always dependent on agriculture. Now, for its development the Government set up a Paper Mill said to be the largest in Asia at Chandraghona on Kaptai Chittagong Road situated on the bank of the river Karnaphuli. later a rayon mill was also added to it. The mill was established on the community land and private lands of the tribals. Only Rs. 250.00 per acre was paid as compensation to the affected people. The Government also declared the hill tracts a tax-free area to facilitate development, companies were

encouraged to exploit the area's resources and a few industries were also set up. A rayon and a match factory were set up at Chambi Mouza within Bandarban subdivision on Chittagong-Cox's Bazaar Road, many saw mills and timber industries were also set up all by private companies. But the tribals were not benefited by these developments as all employments went to the Bengalees. In the Karnaphuli Paper Mills out of 3290 work force only 14 were hill men.[9] In the private concerns, practically no hill men were employed though all these industries were established on the lands owned by the tribals or on the community lands of the tribals.

In the Karnaphuli Project itself, a huge work force was needed, a new township developed at Kaptai, which was a tribal hamlet before the start of the Kaptai Project. But the tribals were not benefited at all as all employment went to the Bengalees. Kaptai was declared a restricted area for security reasons and it became difficult for the tribals to visit Kaptai. As a matter of fact Kaptai was a forbidden area for the tribals and not a single tribal is now in the employment of Kaptai Power Development Board.

Hence development of Chittagong Hill Tracts meant development of Bangalees and uprooting of the tribals from their ancestral lands and homes and more industries and factories meant more jobs for the Bangalees and more hardships to the tribals.

INDEX

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LIBERATION WAR

On 7 December 1970, General Elections were held in Pakistan and Raja Tridiv Roy got elected to the Pakistan National Assembly from Chittagong Hill Tracts constituency as an independent candidate defeating the Awami League candidate. Awami League won absolute majority in the General Elections and every body expected that the party would form the Government in Pakistan. But General Yahiya Khan did not invite Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to form the Government. Zulfiquar Ali Bhutto who won the elections in West Pakistan already declared that there were three parties in Pakistan- Awami League, Pakistan People's Party and the Army. Throughout East Pakistan there were protests and rallies. In this situation the National Assembly was summoned by Yahya Khan to meet on 3 March, 1971 in Dhaka but on 1 March its meeting was postponed for indefinite period. The effect of the postponement of the session of the National Assembly was electric in East Pakistan. A complete "Hartal" (general strike) was observed throughout the province on 3 March 1971 when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared a nonviolent and Non-cooperation movement against the central Government. On March 7, 1971 at a historic meeting at Ramna Race Course, Sheikh Mujib announced with prophetic vision that the struggle was now for independence. Yahya replied with savage repression. Sheikh Mujib was arrested in the night of 25 March 1971, when the police and EPR Headquarters and other residential areas in Dhaka and other places were also attacked by the Pak Army. Thus war of independence really started. Unfortunately, as there was no existence of Awami League in

Chittagong Hill Tracts and there was no other political party also, the Deputy Commissioner H.T. Imam took the leadership in organizing local resistance movement on behalf of the central leadership of the Awami League. Rifle training of the young students and others was also started at Rangamati as else where in the country. At first wooden dummy rifles were supplied to the trainees but after a few days, some real rifles were procured but all of them were supplied to the Bengalee trainees only. Not a single rifle was supplied to the tribals trainees, though their number was much larger than the Bengalee trainees. It was done at the instigation of the Deputy Commissioner, who was the main instrument in organizing training and forming a Resistance Committee at Rangamati. Frequent meetings were held at his office Chamber. But Raja Tridiv Roy did not join the meetings as his relations with the Deputy Commissioner were very bitter and his attendance was not liked by the Deput Commissioner also.

After the fall of Chittagong in the hands of the Pak Army, H.T. Imam, the Deputy commissioner, left Rangamati for Mahalchori from where he went to Ramgarh and then to Agartala, the capital of Tripura state, India. On 16 April Tridiv Roy went to Chittagong with some Bengalee leaders and officials to contact the Pak Army and returned to Rangamati with a contingent of Pak Army. Of course Tridiv came back to Rangamati by road, while the Pak Army came to Rangamati from Kaptai, which they had already occupied, on the same day in the evening. In the meantime a large number of tribal youths and K.K. Roy, an uncle of Tridiv Roy and a contestant from one of the two Provincial Assembly seats allotted to Chittagong Hill Tracts under Awami League ticket also escaped to Agartala. But at Agartala, K.K. Roy was arrested on suspicion reportedly at the instigation of H.T. Imam. After this incident the tribal youths, who went to India to join the Mukti Bahini (Liberation Force) were not allowed to join the liberation force. So many of them returned to Chittagong Hill Tracts without joining the Mukti Bahini. But the youths, who went earlier and already joined the liberation forces, fought in the liberation war. It may be mentioned here that Major Zia and his

entourage also fled to India via Rangamati and Mahalchari. The tribal people extended all cooperation to him by supplying necessary food and rations. Ching Hla Mong Chowdhury popularly known as Murry, a Freedom Fighter of Chittagong Hill Tracts was with Major Zia and guided Zia and his party through Hill Tracts. Murry was the captain of East Pakistan Football Team in mid 1950s and was a player of the Pakistan National Team. From Rangamati the Pakistani Army gradually spread out to all important places of Chittagong Hill Tracts and hunted out Mukti Bahini and their supporters. At Mahalchari they killed three tribal leaders- Chitta Ranjan Chakma, Sabhya Mahajon and Gouranga Dewan for supplying rations to Major Zia and his party on their way to Ramgarh.

late Mong Prue Sain was one of the three tribal Chiefs of Chittagong Hill Tracts. His palace was at Manikchari, which was on Chittagong-Hathazari-Ramgarh Road. Thousands of refugees fled to India everyday through this road during the early liberation period. Raja Mong Prue Sain feted these fleeing people at his palace. He and his family escaped to India at the last moment and actively participated in the liberation war. The Pak Army destroyed his palace, the Buddhist shrines, the houses of his relations and burnt down the entire village. His wife Rani Nihar Bala told me that while fleeing they could take only the gold and some cash money. A few maunds of silver ornaments and silver coins and other valuables left behind were looted by the Pak Army. Two Buddhist temples of Mong Chief and his palace were levelled to the ground and one of Lord Buddha's statue made of gold weighing 20 kgs. two small images also made of gold were looted, other images were destroyed. Mong Queen told me that the total loss to her family would be 5/6 crore of Taka in those days. The Pakistanis did not trust the tribals and hence did not recruit any tribals in the Army. But, in the then East Pakistan Rifles, there were some tribals from Chittagong Hill Tracts and their names are as follows :

1. Habildar Nalini Ranjan Chakma
2. Habildar Amrita Lal Chakma

3. Lance naik Sneha Kumar Chakma
4. Lance Naik Matilal Chakma
5. lance Naik Sanjoy Keton Chakma
6. Sepoy Ching Ma Marma
7. Sepoy Chai Thwai Prue Marma
8. Sepoy Thui Prue Marma
9. Sepoy Konja Hla Marma
10. Sepoy Mong Hla Prue Marma
11. Sepoy Amy Marma
12. Sepoy Kullian Bawm
13. Sepoy Zing Pare Bawm
14. Sepoy Lal Sim Bawm
15. Sepoy Hema Ranjan Chakma
16. Sepoy Mong Chinu Marma
17. Sepoy Buddhiman Chetri
18. Sepoy Ramani Ranjan Chakma
19. Sepoy Ukkya Jhing Bir Bikram.

All of them participated in the liberation war and of them two were killed when fighting the Pak Army. Sepoy Amy Marma was killed at Bogra, while Sepoy Ramani Ranjan was killed at Ramgarh. The whereabouts of Sepoy Hema Ranjan Chakma was not known since liberation war. So it is presumed that he was also killed during the liberation war. Sepoy U. Khya Jhing was honoured with 'Bir Bikram' after liberation war for outstanding courage he had shown during the war. Among the civil officials who actively participated in the liberation war was Mr. A.B. Chakma, then Executive Engineer under Road and Highways at Barisal, Chitta Ranjan Chakma, then Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector, Baren Tripura, Kripa Sukh Chakma, Tripura Kanti Chakma, and Bimaleswar Dewan. Khagendra Lal Chakma who was a Police Inspector working in Comilla district was arrested before he could escape and was killed by Pak Army. Bimaleswar Dewan and Tripura Kanti Chakma, who were also Police Inspectors were appointed Superintendents of Police of Chittagong Hill Tracts and Comilla districts respectively after

liberation of Bangladesh.

Ukhya Zain, now retired Joint Secretary, Government of Bangladesh, Lt. Col. Rtd. Manish Dewan, Nilotpal Tripura now Thana Nirbahi Officer, Rana Bikram Tripura, formerly a member of Khagrachari Hill District Council, Asoke Mitra karbari, Rasbehari Chakma, Prabhudhan Chowdhury, Asoke Mitra Chakma, Sushim Dewan, Ananda Banshi Chakma, Kyaching Marma, Subodh Bikash Tripura, Hemada Bikash Tripura, Manindra Kishore Tripura, Gopal Krishna Dewan, Subilash Chakma, Ranjit Deb Barman, Mong Ching Marma, Kala Chan Dev Barman, Kongjoy Marma, Akya Mogh, Priti Kanti Tripura and many others joined the Mukti Bahini and after liberation of Bangladesh tried to help the tribals who fell victims to the Mukti Bahini just after liberation war. There were many other tribals who joined the liberation war but after liberation of Bangladesh they all joined the Shanti Bahini and many of them got killed by the law enforcing agencies or in their own internecine fighting. Some of them also went to India & started new lives.

As already stated, Tridiv Roy went to Chittagong to welcome the Pak Army and since then he became a staunch supporter of Pakistan Government. He was sent to Srilanka, Burma amd East Asain countries to canvass support for Pakistan, became a Minister in the Pakistan Cabinet and was sent to the United Nations Organization as leader of the Pakistani delegation. Though Tridiv became a strong Pakistani supporter, the Pakistani Army did not spare his own relations. Tridiv's own uncle Utpal Roy and his two college going sons were killed at Chittagong by the Pak Army during the liberation war. Because of Tridiv Roy and Aung Sue Prue Chowdhury, who won the Provincial Assembly Election as an independent candidate and subsequently became a Provincial Minister under Governor Malek during the liberation war, the tribals of Chittagong Hill Tracts were branded as supporters of Pakistan after the liberation war though during the entire Pakistan period they were suspected as anti-Pakistanis. They were never trusted and always faced discrimination and humiliation in all walks of life. Even during the liberation war,

the Pakistani Army terrorised and evicted the tribal population from the Feni Valley in Chittagong Hill Tracts bordering Tripura state of India as they suspected their loyalty and settled the area with Bengalee Muslim population after importing them from the present greater Noakhali district. The tribals still did not get back their lands.

5 December 1971 was a black day for the tribal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts. On that day a group of Freedom Fighters entered Panchari area about 14 miles towards north from Khagrachari from Tripura State of India. The tribals could not realize the intention of the Freedom fighters. hence many tribals went forward to welcome them but the Freedom fighters fired upon them indiscriminately. then they attacked the nearby tribal villages. As a result 32 tribals were killed and many were injured. About 200 houses were burnt down. Similar incidents took place at Dighinala area in the north of Chittagong Hill Tracts, when another 20 tribals were killed. On 14 December as the Freedom Fighters proceeded towards Khagrachari, then sub-divisional Headquarters, they burnt down at least 176 tribal houses, which fell on their way. My own house at Perachara where my mother and the younger brothers and sisters used to live 4 miles towards north from Khagrachari town was also burnt down along with many other houses of my village. My mother and other family members saved their lives as they already fled away. My distant cousin Subimal Chakma and his college going son and 22 others including women and children were killed as they failed to escape. The Freedom Fighters not only killed the tribal people, they also looted many tribal houses raped women and realized ransom from many and created terror in most of the areas in Chittagong Hill Tracts. At Rangamati the Chakma Raj family was saved due to intervention of the Indian Army. the Indian Army kept the Raj family under their protective custody at Rangamati. later on they were sent to India for security reasons by the Indian Army. But many were arrested and harassed as collaborators . On 6 January, 1972 the Mong Chief sent the following telegram to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

'Visited Rangamati. Stop extremely aggrieved to find innocent tribal people arrested indiscriminately as alleged collaborators stop. Earnestly request instruct Civil Administration immediate release of tribals so far arrested without prejudice and further arrest be ceased stop'

Mong Raja and tribal Advisor (Page 255 Insurgent crossfire by Subir Bhoumik)

Aung Sue Prue Chowdhury, who was at Chittagong at the time of liberation of Bangladesh saved his life as some of his well wishers took him to Chittagong Jail, where he surrendered to the jail authorities. His two college going sons fled away to jungles. During Ershad's time one of his sons became Chairman, Bandarban Hill District Council and now he is a BNP leader at Bandarban.

The members of the Bohmaong Raj family at Bandarban neither cooperated with the Pak Army nor with the Freedom Fighters. But after liberation of Bangladesh they were put to serious physical and mental stress. M.S. Prue, nephew of the Bohmong Chief was garlanded with shoes and was taken around Bandarban town. His head was also shaved. There was a public meeting at Bandarban on 9 January 1972 in which the Bohmong Chief was also present. In the meeting a Bengalee student leader of Satkania College of neighboring Chittagong District publicly threatened the Marmas and declared that if the Marmas wanted to live in Bangladesh, they must become Bengalees, otherwise they must have to go Burma. Such declaration, threats of humiliation to the members of the Raj family and the entire community created great consternation among the tribal people at Bandarban. As a result many tribal youths and families fled to the jungles, about 20,000 escaped to Burma also. When normalcy was restored, many returned to Chittagong Hill Tracts. But a large number of families did not return.

After liberation of Bangladesh, Relief Committees were formed everywhere in Bangladesh including Chittagong Hill Tracts and in Chittagong Hill Tracts Relief Committees were formed mostly with the Bengalees. Many of these committee

members were not respectable people in the area. They were mostly petty shop keepers and traders in the local bazzars but they were given the responsibility to distribute relief goods. Some of them were even servants of the tribals earlier.

It may be mentioned here that during the liberation war, when Aung Swe Prue Chowdhury became a Provincial Minister and Tridiv Roy, a staunch Pakistani supporter, a good number of tribals were recruited in the Civil Armed Forces by the Pakistani Authorities and some of the tribals also joined as Rajakars and Mujahids. After liberation of Bangladesh, the members of these forces became frightened and fled away to jungles. But when the new Government asked them to surrender and assured them safety, many of them surrendered with and without arms. But they were not treated well, rather some of them were killed. Further, the Government forces started vigorous search for them and killed those who were caught and showed no mercy at all. As a result the rest of the members did not surrender, rather they took shelter in deep jungles and began to organize themselves for self protection. At that time, there was no law and order in Chittagong Hill Tracts, and there were widespread theft, arson and looting even by the tribal miscreants. But the tribal Rajakars and Mujahids and civil armed forces suppressed the law breakers in strong hand and hence became known as the Shanti Bahini or the Peace Keepers to the people. They very successfully stopped crimes and atrocities, punished the culprits and in most cases returned the looted goods to the actual owners after recovering them from the culprits.

On 24-6-1972 when Manabendra Narayan Larma organized the Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity, these peace forces were invited by Larma to join his party as armed cadre. They gladly joined Larma's Party and became known as Shanti Bahini or Peace Keepers. This in brief is the history of the genesis of Shanti Bahini and J.B. Larma, the younger brother of M.N. Larma became its leader. Subsequently hundreds of tribal youths joined this Bahini.

The Far Eastern Economic Review reported in its 2nd August

1980 issue "when the Pakistan Army withdrew, ... the Bangladesh Army came and plundered the area. Eighteen people were killed when they came out to receive the Mukti Bahini (Freedom Fighters); another sixteen slaughtered in the jungle .... on 14th December 1971, 200 houses were burnt to the ground and twenty two people sheltering in trenches in Kukichara (under Khagrachari Hill District) were killed."[1] In his book-The Fearful State, S. Mahmud Ali further said, "when montagnard refugees returning from India at the end of the war discovered their land had been occupied by Bangalee settlers, many fought to retrieve their homes. Bangladesh's fledgling air force responded with strafing raids on tribals at Ramgarh in Northern Chittagong Hill Tracts and Bandarban in the South, precipitating montagnard resistance".[2] In this situation a tribal delegation led by Charu Bikash Chakma, who was an Awami League candidate in 1970 general elections met on 29 January 1972 President, Prime Minister and other leaders of the Awami League and demanded constitutional safeguards for the tribal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts. Then on 15 February 1972 another delegation led by Manabendra Narayan Larma, who became of member of the constituent Assembly met Bangabandhu and submitted a memorandum with four demands;

(a) Autonomy for Chittagong Hill Tracts with a legislature of its own,

(b) Retention of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900 in the Bangladesh constitution.

(c) Retention of the Tribal Chief's office

(d) Constitutional provisions restricting the amendment of the 1900 Regulation and imposition of a ban on influx of the non tribal people into Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Sheikh Mujib rejected the demands of the tribal leaders with scorn and threatened to drown the tribals in a flood of people from the plains. He reportedly said, "No, we are all Bengalees, meeting lasted only 3 or 4 minutes. The delegation was neither shown courtesy nor invited to be seated. He did not receive the

memorandum also'.[3]

The 1972 Bangladesh Constitution had no provision for Chittagong Hill Tracts. There was no mention of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation in the constitution also. Larma refused to sign the constitution.

It is in this context that the hill people's political party (Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanhati Samity) under the chairmanship of Manabendra Narayan Larma was formed on 24th June 1972. As already said, the Peace Keepers took the banner of Shanti Bahini under the leadership of Jatindra Bohipriya Larma alias Shantu Larma, the younger brother of Manabendra Narayan Larma. In 1973 general elections Manabendra Narayan Larma and with his support Cha-Thowai Rowza were elected members of the Parliament and when Sheikh Mujib formed the BAKSAL, Manabendra was persuaded to join BAKSAL. Sheikh Mujib appointed Mong Chief Mong Prue Sain, who was a Freedom Fighter and helped thousands of refugees to flee to India during the liberation war as Governor of Khagrachari district. While Bohmong Chief Mong Swe Prue Chowdhury was appointed Governor of Bandarban district. A.M. Abdul Kader, who was Deputy Commissioner Chittagong Hill Tracts district was appointed Governor of Rangamati district. Before his appointment as Deputy Commissioner Chittagong Hill Tracts, Kader was the Deputy Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office. He was a man of great human qualities. Earlier on his return from Pakistan, Bangabandhu sent Mrs. Benita Roya to the USA to bring back her son Tridiv Roy to Bangladesh. But Tridiv refused to come back. At this Bangabandhu became greatly annoyed with Tridiv Roy and rebuked him in a public meeting on 16 February 1973 at Rangamati when he unguardedly advised the tribals to be Bengalees. Addul Kader was a confidant, of Bangabandhu and tried his best to soften his attitude towards the tribals. Abdul Kader succeeded to convince Bangabandhu that the tribals who were suspected as anti Pakistanis throughout the Pakistani period, just after liberation of Bangladesh, could not be branded as Pro-Pakistanis because of Tridiv Roy, As a matter of fact no other

Deputy Commissioner worked so sincerely to protect the tribal interest as Abdul Kader did. All Deputy Commissioners after him tried to promote their own interests. Abdul Kader was withdrawn from Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1976. I was then private Secretary to Rajmata Benita Roy, who was an Advisor to the President Sayem. My name was proposed for appointment as the Deputy Commissioner, Chittagong Hill Tracts but General Zia did not accept it. Instead Ali Haider Khan, who had worked in Chittagong Hill Tracts for some years during the Pakistani period as Assistant Rehabilitation Officer for the affected people of the Karnaphuli Project, was appointed as Deputy Commissioner.

After killing of Sheikh Mujib situation greatly changed. Manabendra Narayan Larma fled to India. A delegation of 67 hill leaders came to Dhaka in late December 1975 renewing their demand for autonomy. Similar delegation led by Asoke Kumar Dewan met Major Genferal Ziaur Rahman at Rangamati in January 1976 and submitted a memorandum to him. General Zia did not reject their demands outright but increased military presence greatly in Chittagong Hill Tracts. The number of thanas were increased from 12 to 27 so also the BDR and Army posts. A Naval post was set up at Kaptai displacing many tribals, who were displaced earlier due to the Karnaphuli Project. Battalions of Ansars (Islamic Guards) were posted with automatic rifles, while arms licenses of the tribals were cancelled and their arms seized.

INDEX

1.2. The Fearful State-by S. Mohammed Ali, ZED Books, London and New Jersi, page- 183.

3. 'Life is not ours' by CHT Commission, May 1991, page-14.

CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS DEVELOPMENT BOARD

General Zia created CHT Development Board in 1976 with funding from Asian Development Bank. Ostensibly it was established to accelerate development activities, improve economic and social lives of the tribal people but its ulterior motive was to open up Chittagong Hill Tracts to the people of the rest of the country to facilitate settlement of Bengalees, construct new roads and in the process to ruin the social, economic and political entity of the tribal population of the district. In the beginning, the Board was headed by Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong Division and with a Consultative Committee, majority members of which were tribals. But the real authority was with the Cabinet Division of the Government. However in 1990 President Earshad set up a special Ministry to look after the affairs of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and other areas and this Ministry looked after CHT Development Board also.

In the beginning the Members of the Consultative Committee attended a few meetings but later on they refused to attend the meetings of the Board as their proposals, suggestions were all ignored. The consultative committee was not consulted at all in preparing and formulating projects. After promulgation of Martial Law by General Ershad, GOC, 24th Infantry Division, Chittagong Bangladesh Army was made the ex-officio Chairman of CHT Development Board. This system continued till the Awami League came to power in 1996, when Bir Bahadur M.P. was appointed Chairman of the Development Board.

It appears from "A Report on the problems of the Chittagong

Hill Tracts and Bangladesh responses for their solution" published by the Special Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's office in 1993 that the Government undertook among others the following development programmes for social and economic upliftment of the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

1. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board has so far implemented projects at a cost of 422.8 million taka.

2. An eleven component multi-sector project of 10 million taka has been implemented by the Development Board.

3. An Asian Development Bank assisted upland settlement project is being implemented at a cost of 52,500 million taka for the settlement of two thousand Jhumia families.

4. A UNICEF assisted integrated community development programme is being implemented at a cost of 309.045 million taka.

5. Some 23 Projects on road communication, telecommunication service, electricity, health agriculture, education, fisheries, livestock, cottage industries etc. have been implemented under a special programme at a cost of 3070 million taka till June 1993.

6. A project for the rehabilitation of the cyclone affected rubber garden and their infrastructure was implemented at a cost of 10 million taka.

7. An amount of 21.12 million taka was spent by the Government till June 1993 for the three Hill Districts Local Councils since their inception in 1989.

8. A total amount of about 4 million taka has been sanctioned and 81,684 metric tons of food grains have been allotted till June 1993 for relief and rehabilitation in the three districts.

Now let us see how much the tribals were benefited by these development projects. In 1982 the Institute of Business Administration Dhaka University published a socio economic profile of three Northern valleys (Chengi, Mayani and Kassalong) of Chittagong Hill Tracts with the title of 'Social Development in the Tribal Society'. The study was sponsored by

the UNICEF and was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Alimur Rahman, Associate Professor of the institute.

However, for a short while, when Dr. Alimur Rahman was called away for an assignment outside the country. Dr. Md. Shamsul Haque Associate Professor of the same institute supervised and organized the survey. Some salient findings of the study were as follows :

1. 'Agriculture is the prime occupation of the tribals comprising about 96% of all economic activities and income generated from industry, construction and services, which itself is not significant accrues to the Bengalee population. Likewise the income from the only hydroelectric project is a total seepage from the area.'[1]

2. 'In the Chittagong Hill Tracts the vast hilly regions are either uninhabited or sparsely habitated, while there is a concentration of population in the valleys which are overcrowded. In terms of cultivable land area, the population density in Chittagong Hill Tracts comes to 669 persons per square kilometer compared to 882 persons per square kilometer in Bangladesh. If the fertility difference of land is taken in to account, the overcrowding on the available cultivable land in the Chittagong Hill Tracts is of a worse magnitudes than in the rest of the country.'[2]

3. 'Per head availability of rice per day was 559 grams in 1951, 370 grams in 1961 and 499 in 1974. We have seen that the production of other major crops have also declined and so we can reasonably conclude that the consumption basket of the tribal population has decreased subsequently over the period.'[3]

4. 'Though the shifting cultivation is an inferior mode of agriculture it has certain advantages for which it is preferred among the tribal population. Firstly, inspite of high initial labour input, the overall labour requirements are low and discontinuous in shifting agriculture compared to plough cultivation. In a sparsely populated area with large tract of land-this is an important consideration. Secondly, multiple crop on the same

field is like an insurance against famine because if some of the crops fails, there would always be some other which would be available. Thus in Chittagong Hill Tracts there was no death from starvation in the famine of 1770. Finally, due to the fact that different crops are available continuously for some time the hardship of waiting for the next harvest is minimized.'[4]

5. 'Evidence suggests that now Jhum cultivation has almost vanished. In our survey in three northern valleys of Chittagong Hill Tracts we did not find an family practising Jhum'.[5]

6. 'There are about 78 market places and bazzars in the three districts all are owned, run and controlled by the Bengalee population'.[6]

7. 'Labour participation is the highest in the Chittagong Hill Tracts among all the districts in Bangladesh.'[7]

8. 'The literacy ratio in the district is extremely low but it is increasing at a fast pace. In 1974 census literacy rate came to 18.2% compared to 22% for the country as a whole.'[8]

9. 'The enrollment at the primary school is high, but the dropout is also so high that few students enter the secondary level and fewer still go for college education. The reason, educational expenses outweighed all other reasons for not sending children to school'. As per census report of 1991, the tribal literacy rate in Khagrachari district was 21.1% while at Rangamati district it was 26.5%. There was no separate tribal literacy rate in Bandarban district. But in its 'Report on the problems of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Bangladesh responses for their solution' published by the Special Affairs Division in 1993 the Government claimed that the Chakma literacy rate was now 72%, while the overall tribal literacy rate was 58% as against the country's 32%.'[9]

It is not understood where from the Government found these figures, while its own census report says otherwise. obviously it was for propaganda purpose at home and abroad.

10. 'Water borne disease is particularly endemic in the region for lack of pure drinking water. The usual source of drinking water for the rural households in the Northern valleys are natural

spring, lake, indira, well, tube well, pond and river. Due to shortage of fuel and general poverty, water is not boiled before drinking. In other words no difference is made between water for drinking purpose and other uses'.[10]

11. 'Tribal women have late marriage compared to Bengali women in the plains. Monogamy is the usual practice, divorce is rare and remarriage of widows is socially acceptable'.[11]

12. 'In almost all cases malnutrition increases rather drastically after age of two, which is the age when most children have been weaned. This means that once the breast feeding was over, malnutrition comes in, presumably because of lack of good substitute for breast milk.'[12]

13. 'The children in the tribal families are relatively more clean and healthy then the children in other districts of Bangladesh. The rate of malnutrition of the children below five years is low'[13].

14. 'The employment problem of the youth is severe and what is more critical is the lack of vocational training facilities to prepare them for the adult life. Nonagricultural life is totally absent in the area and opportunities for self employment are extremely limited'[14].

Lastly the conclusion of the study is as follows :

'From the snapshot of the six villages in the three Northern valleys of Chittagong Hill Tracts, we find that the tribal population live in a dismal condition. Poverty is endemic and seems to be increasing. It is found that while the average per capita income of the whole district in 1974 was Taka 1,084.23, in 1980 the average per capita income of the six villages stood at Taka 1,272.28 which shows a declining income in real terms over the period. What is more serious is that the income distribution among the rural households is skewed so that the hardship and misery is affecting a large section of the population. Apart from the disparity in income earnings, the number of people living below subsistence level is quite large.'[15]

On 23 April 1995 two news headlines 'State of Forest resources, arable land declining fast in Chittagong Hill Tracts' and 'Bamboo shoots second food of tribal people' appeared in the Daily Star, The newspaper said 'depletion of forest resources particularly bamboo plantations has allowed the top soil to be washed away by rain water drastically reducing fertility. A Horticulture Development Board was established guided by the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board in the Hill Tracts region with a view to encouraging fruit production. But the Project taken by the Horticulture Development Board did not succeed for various reasons'. It further said, "Many people, who lived on extraction and logging of trees have become destitute after the Government imposed restrictions in 1991 upon cutting trees and bamboo's".

The paper further said, "The bamboo shoots locally known 'Bash Karol' took the 2nd place of food because most tribals cannot afford expensive food like fish or meat. Not only there are starvation, there are reports of death from starvation. In May 1991 nine hill people died of starvation in Rangamati district. Some hill people had to resort to begging an unheard story in Chittagong Hill Tracts."

On 19 April 1975 there was another headline "Internal refugees are leading subhuman lives" in the daily 'Bhorer Kagoj' at Rangamati that in the eighties and nineties thousands of tribals became refugees due to internal disturbances but still now the government did not take any action for their permanent rehabilitation. The paper claimed that many internal refugees did not get back their landed properties, even when the court ordered restoration of their properties and the government had no headache for them and as a result the refugees have still been leading a sub-human life. (rendered into English from Bengali).

It is estimated that there are now 50,000 to 60,000 internal refugees in the three districts of the greater Chittagong Hill Tracts. There was a seminar at the University of Rajshahi held from 28-30 March 1980. In the seminar Professor M.Q. Zaman

said, "Twenty years ago tribals were literally lords of the land in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, free to live according to their traditional way of life with almost no interference. Within the last two well remembered decades they have become not only a minority in their own ancient homeland, but depressed and impoverished lower stratum often servants of those who have taken over their lands. The hour is late, but still some land remains under the tenuous control of tribesmen. If the present policy continues of making previously inalienable land alienable in another twenty years most of the best lands in Chittagong Hill Tracts will have passed out of tribal control. The region will have become a jumble of industrial plants and army camps, with tribesmen doing their best to hide from rich Bengalees and foreign tourists." He further said, "Bengalees now own the best agricultural land, hold top administrative, commercial and business positions. All shops in the bazaars (twice a week market places) are run by Bengali Businessmen and traders from other districts of Bangladesh. Not a single hill man will be found throughout the hill tracts running any shops in all bazaars."[16]

Professor Zaman emphasized that, "time is running out, if policies, deliberate or not, of ethnocide are to be successfully reversed"[17].

According to A report on "the problems of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Bangladesh responses for their solution" published by the Special Affairs Ministry of the Government in 1993 and amount of 56346.965 million Taka was sanctioned for different development projects of Chittagong Hill Tracts. Further, a total of 81,684 metric tons of food grains have been spent till June 1993.

But there was never any evaluation of the amount how much went to the welfare of the tribal people and its impact on the tribal society.

As already said, President Ershad created a separate Ministry namely Special Affairs Ministry (Now Chittagong Hill Tracts Ministry) to look after the affairs of the people of the three hill

districts and other areas. Though the Ministry was created to look after the welfare of the tribal people, not a single employee in the entire Ministry was recruited from the tribal people. I met the then Director General of this Ministry a few times and requested him to recruit at least a few tribals in the Ministry. He admitted the justification of recruiting tribal officials but no one was recruited. I also met Dr. Yusuf, the Secretary of the Special Affairs Division and raised the question with him also. He also admitted the justification, but no action was taken to recruit any tribal employee Different sources in the Special Affairs Division and outside told me that when I was promoted as Additional Secretary, it was suggested to appoint me as the Additional Secretary in Charge of the Special Affairs Division. But the proposal was turned down by Khaleda Zia. The real function of the Special Affairs Ministry was to approve the projects prepared by the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board and to process the suggestions proposed by GOC for CHT for approval of the Prime Minister. Hence this Division dealt with every sensitive subjects on Chittagong Hill Tracts and hence did not want to employ any tribal. Thus the allegations of the tribal people were that Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board and the Special Affairs Division were not created for their welfare and crores of taka spent for different projects in Chittagong Hill Tracts were also not spent for their benefit. Rather it created more landlessness and widespread poverty in CHT as already scarce farmland was being drastically reduced because of frequent acquisition of tribal lands for different development projects and money being spent on different Projects was a total seepage from the area. Thus it is no surprising that in 1979, the National Foundation for Research on Human Resources found that fewer children completed their primary education in the Chittagong Hill Tracts than in any other part of Bangladesh."[18]

INDEX

1. Social Development in a Tribal Society-Page-17
2. Social Development in a Tribal Society-Page-17, 18
3. Social Development in a Tribal Society- Page-26
4. Social Development in a Tribal Society- Page-30
5. Social Development in a Tribal Society- Page-32
6. Social Development in a Tribal Society- Page-36
7. Social Development in a Tribal Society- Page-37
8. Social Development in a Tribal Society- Page-78
9. Social Development in a Tribal Society- Page-81, 82
10. Social Development in a Tribal Society- Page-91
11. Social Development in a Tribal Society- Page-105
12. Social Development in a Tribal Society- Page-115, 118
13. Social Development in a Tribal Society- Page-132
14. Social Development in a Tribal Society- Page-132
15. Social Development in a Tribal Society- Page-77
16. Chittagong Hill Tracts, militarization, oppression and Hill Tribes by Antislavery Soceity-page-20
17. Chittagong Hill Tracts, militarization, oppression and Hill Tribes by Antislavery Soceity-page-20
18. Chittagong Hill Tracts, militarization, oppression and Hill Tribes by Antislavery Soceity-page-29

ETHNIC CLEANSING

Though Chittagong Hill Tracts is one-tenth of Bangladesh, in terms of cultivable land area and if fertility differences of lands of the plain districts and Chittagong Hill Tracts are taken into account, it is the most densely populated area in the country. Because of scanty cultivable land in the region, the British made a provision in Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation 1900 as a result of which a family could not hold more than 25 acres of cultivable land. At that time the total population of the district was on 124, 762"[1]. This land quota was reduced to ten acres during the Pakistani period. As already said, the then Pakistani Government could not provide cultivable land to a vast number of Kaptai refugees for want of cultivable land and about 40,000 refugees fled to India and many others who were earlier wet land cultivators had to adopt shifting cultivation again just for survival. But during the entire British period and the Pakistani period, there was no limitation to holding of any amount of land in the rest of present Bangladesh. But after liberation holding of land per family was limited up to 33 acres in Bangladesh except in Chittagong Hill Tracts, where this limitation was made up to 5 acres.

In 1964 the Government of Pakistan appointed a Canadian Company 'forestall" to make soil and land use survey in Chittagong Hill Tracts. The Company after two years survey made a detailed report in nine volumes and classified the lands of the district in the following four categories :

1. Land suitable for rice cultivation- 77,000 acres 2%
2. Land suitable for rice horticulture- 670,000 acres 21%

3. Land suitable for forest only- 1,600,000 acres 51%
4. Land suitable for reserved forest- 800,000 acres 26%

Even then in a Government meeting in mid 1979 presided over by President Ziuar Rahman, it was decided to settle 30,000 families in Chittagong Hill Tracts during the following years. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister Jamaluddin, Home Minister Mustafizur Rahman, Commissioner of Chittagong Division and Deputy Commissioner, Chittagong Hill Tracts among others. Two secret letters, one by Divisional Commissioner Saifuddin Ahmed and the other by Deputy Commissioner Ali Haider Khan were written to the Deputy Commissioners of other districts in Bangladesh about the Government programmes to settle Bengalees in Chittagong Hill Tracts and the facilities to be provided to the new settlers by the Government.

As a result of the meeting, implementation committees made up of Government officials and leading Bengalees were formed at district and sub-divisional levels. The Deputy Commissioner headed the district committees, while the sub-divisional officers the sub divisional committees. Each family was promised 5 acres of hilly land, plain and bumpy land 4 acres and paddy land 2.5 acres in addition to cash taka up to Tk. 700.00 followed by Tk. 200 for five months and 12 seers of wheat per week for six months. Here again the Government violated its own rules as earlier it had circulated an order by which in Chittagong Hill Tracts a family could hold only 5 acres of land. It may be mentioned here that the average Chittagong Hill Tracts family had only 1 to 1.3 acres of land.

The Government brought the new settlers in three phases. In the first phase some 25,000 families were imported and settled in Chittagong Hill Tracts. During the second phase, another 25,000 families were brought and settled. During the third phase, 30,00 Bengalee families were brought in for settlement, Thus in three phases, in all about 80,000 families with a population of about 400,000 were brought to Chittagong Hill Tracts though earlier it

was decided to import only 30,000 families. As already said each of the family was supposed to get hilly land of 5 acres, mixed land 4 acres and paddy land 2.5 acres. So the requirement of total land was:

i) Hilly land 5 acres X 80,000= 400,000 acres,
ii) Mixed land 4 acres X 80,000= 320,000 acres
iii) Paddy land 2.5 acres X 80,000= 2000,000 acres

Thus if all the paddy lands of the tribal people was taken over, still then the paddy land requirement for the new Bengalee settlers could not be met. Therefore, it was not surprising that in many cases, the new settlers were only given paper documents against the land and when they went to occupy their lands they found that most of these lands were already being cultivated by the tribal farmers and they had also documents against these lands.

In many cases survey officials who were all Bengalees measured the lands in possession of the tribals and also being cultivated by them but recorded in the name of the Bengalee settlers. Protestations were made orally and in writing but to no effect. A large quantity of lands especially paddy lands were handed over officially to the new settlers. The new settlers with the backing of the law and order enforcing authorities and civilian administration began to occupy the tribal lands and in many cases reaped away the crops grown by the tribals. In some cases in this kind of situation, the tribals approached the Shanti Bahini for protection, when the latter attacked the new settlers. This came as a blessing of God and became a plea for the Army to attack the tribal villages and wipe them out. It this way the Bengalee settlers occupied the tribal lands, their orchards and also their other moveables. The Bhusanchara massacre which took place on 30 May 1984 is an example.

The new settlers had no experience of hill slope cultivation. Hence as soon as they arrived in Chittagong Hill Tracts, many of them started encroaching upon the tribal lands, in connivance with the almost totally Bengalee administration. Excepting the

lands forcibly occupied by the new Bengalee settlers, the tribal people also have lost their lands in the following processes :

1. Land was acquired by the government authorities for development projects,
2. Land was occupied by the Bengalees through false deeds and documents,
3. By setting up cluster villages.

Very often the best paddy lands, orchards land and even homesteads were acquired by the government for different authorities for setting up different offices, for expansion of township, for establishment and extension of cantonments, police camps and also for construction of roads and other governmental purposes. Thus already scanty agricultural land was further reduced every year. Again the affected people were not given fair prices as compensation for their lands. The common practice to pay less for the acquired land was to remove from its set category and to classify it as lower valued land.

The clever Bengalee settlers also occupied the tribal lands by making false deeds and documents. The illiterate and credulous tribals very often signed in good faith on blank paper or signed on the documents produced by a Bengalee without understanding what was written but finally realised that it was a sale deed for his land. But at that time he had nothing to do any more.

On 9 March 1991 a fire broke out in the Deputy Commissioner's Office, Khagrachari. In this fire, all revenue and other records of the district were burnt to ashes. No proper inquiry was carried out to fix responsibility and no one was punished. Many suspect that this was deliberately done to destroy the land records of the tribal people and also to destroy the records of distribution of thousands of tons of relief food grains to avoid corruption charges. As a result of this firing, many tribals could not establish their claims on their own lands and some of them did not get compensation for their lands acquired by the government for different purposes.

Vast areas of lands owned by the community or individuals

were also acquired by the military authorities for their camps, residences, play grounds, etc. often without paying proper or any compensation for the acquired land.

The government claimed that Bengalee settlement was shut down officially since 1982. But it was not so. Even in august 1993 seventy Bengalee families from Shalban areas of Comilla district were settled in different places of Bandarban district, while eight Bengalee families, four from Chandpur and four from Sandwip took refuge at Khagrachari college ground on 18th February, 1994. They were rehabilitated in khagrachari District. So it was no joke when on 26 May 1979 Brigadier Hannan Shah (subsequently Minister of Jute of the Government of Bangladesh and Lt. Col. Salam (subsequently Major General and G.O.C. 24 Infantry Divission, Chittagong). both of them then serving in Chittagong Hill Tracts, declared at a public meeting at Panchari that 'We want the land and not the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts.'[2] Similarly Abdul Awal, the then Commissioner, Chittagong Division told in a meeting with tribal elders in Indrapuri Cinema hall at Rangamati that the tribals could leave Chittagong Hill Tracts if they wished and the government would be happy for that. As a matter of fact the government adopted a systematic policy of ethnic cleansing and became successful to a great extent. Hence during the last 5 decades the tribal population of Chittagong Hill Tracts did not even become double whereas in the same period the Bengalee population in Chittagong Hill Tracts increased at least 100 times.

Already some small tribes have decreased in number, while another small tribe called as Banjugi has disappeared from the census list of 1991.

INDEX

1. Bangladesh District Gazetteers : Chittagong Hill Tracts, edited by Prof. Mohammad Ishaque, Page-39.
2. Chittagong Hill Tracts : Militarization, oppression and Hill Tribes, by Antislavery Society, Page-61.

During the year 1994 the defense budget of this country was Tk. 1887.00 crores. In 1995 it went up to the amount of Tk. 1935 crores. But it is common knowledge that military expenses such as food, housing, infrastructure were accounted for under other budgets and were not marked as military expenses. If these expenditure were counted as military expenses, then the budget on the defense head would have been the highest far above the educational budget. On 2 June 1995 there was an 'open dialogue workshop on the Chittagong Hill Tracts' problems and its solution organized by the National Committee for Protection of Fundamental Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Dhaka in which one of the speakers claimed that Government spends about 2.00 crores every day on counter insurgencies in CHT. According to the report of the CHT Commission 'Life is not ours' 'Bangladesh spends about US$ 125 million on counter insurgencies in Chittagong Hill Tracts annually.'[1] 'This corresponds roughly to the figure of Tk. 1.5 crores daily on the military in CHT. Further, USA and UK continued to provide training to the Bangladesh armed forces.'[2]

Since the overthrow of General Ershad, the military started maintaining a low profile but there had been no reduction in the military presence, rather 27 new camps were established at different places.[3] In 1993 there were approximately 230 army camps, 100 BDR camps and 60 police camps.[4] This excluded Ansars (Islamic guards) and village defense parties who were about 5000 in two battalions. Moreover there is a naval center at Kaptai and a police training center at Shialbukka. A school of jungle warfare was opened at Mahalchari. It was generally

believed that there was one member of the security forces for every 4 to 5 hill families. But according to 'Insurgent Crossfire' there were more than 60,000 security forces deployed in the Chittagong Hill Tracts during Ershad's time.[5]

In early 1990s the military further acquired more land in Chittagong Hill Tracts to set up new army camps. Approximately 7000 acres of land at Swalok, Uttar Hangar and Dakshin Hangar Mouzas in Bandarban district, 400 acres of land at Ziptali Mouza in Rangamati district and 500 acres of land at Khagrachari sadar and Mahalchari were acquired in Khagrachari district. There was a new plan to establish a new cantonment at Ghagra in Rangamati district and another plan to acquire land for the army at Chimbuk in Bandarban district displacing more tribal people from their ancestral homes.[6]

Though the government officials strongly denied that CHT was under military control, yet these officials voluntarily expressed the opinion to the CHT Commission that they (the elected government) are "not on the ground" in the CHT.[7]

Some surveys of returned refugees from India were carried out by Chakma Groups and CCHRB. The survey of CCHRB May 5-8, 1994 covered 42 families and stated that 37% of the families did not receive both their homesteads and agricultural lands or the money for a pair of bullocks.[8]

Inspite of all the above facts, it is surprising that, the Bangladesh Government did not declare Chittagong Hill Tracts as Disturbed area though the troops deployed there got all the facilities generally available during the war.

INDEX

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5. Insurgent Cross Fire, North East India, by Subir Bhoumik, Page-305

6,7. Life is not Ours, C.H.T. Commission, March, 1992, Page-4.

8. State of Human Rights 1994, by BMSP, page-123.

DEFORESTATION AND OTHER PROJECTS

Construction of Kaptai dam improved navigation facilities of the Karnaphulli, the Kassalong and other rivers and opened up opportunities for commercial exploitation of the vast forest resources. In 1965 the Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation was set up for extracting timber from Chittagong Hill Tracts, and for establishing timber and furniture industries. It was planned to extract 45000 tons of timber annually.[1]

Thus economic activities suddenly increased many fold and thousands of Bengalees entered Chittagong Hill Tracts as timber merchants, contractors, wood cutters, carpenters and other work force. Earlier also with the clearing of the jungles in the area to be submerged in the lake water and with the uprooting of the people from their ancestral homes, thousands of Bengalees entered. Chittagong Hill Tracts. Many of them were even rehabilitated as displaced persons of the Karnaphulli Project and many of them also received compensation as the affected people of the project. Many of the Bengalees established saw mills, furniture factories and other wood-based industries. With the emergence of Bangladesh, these activities got further impetus and exploitation of vast forest resources was not only increased manifold but resources were recklessly extracted and used.

With the growth of the activities of the Shanti Bahini, the military and para military establishments were also set up and gradually vastly expanded. New roads were built and these roads not only facilitated the movement of the army and others, they facilitated further extraction of timber from the forest. Timber

business became so profitable and lucrative that many military officials gave up their jobs and became involved in timber business.

Now the army in order to ensure peaceful movement of traffic and to secure their own safety ordered clearance of the roadside forests on both sides of the newly built wide roads. The army also apprehended that these roadside forests could be used as hideouts by the Shanti Bahini. Hence they set up watch posts on the roadside hills to observe the movement of the Shanti Bahini and also to stop their surprise (guerilla) attacks from the hideouts and cleared the jungles of the roadside hills also.

It may be mentioned here that after the completion of the Kaptai Project, when the tribal people lost their agricultural lands many of them started horticulture and to help the tribals, a horticulture Development Board was set up with Headquarters at Rangamati. Many tribals also started raising private forests. Jhum cultivation was gradually given up. The army apprehended that many of the horticulture gardens and bamboo clumps near homesteads or adjacent to the villages could be used as hideouts by the Shanti Bahini. The army ordered many owners to destroy them. Many owners were also forced to destroy the plantation or to cut the branches of the trees.

As a result of reckless extraction of timber from the Chittagong Hill Tracts especially after massive construction of roads and high ways once the lush green forest of CHT disappeared, specially the dense forest lying on the river banks, roadsides and the forests, from which there is easy chance of extraction disappeared. Now road and river side hills are mostly covered by shrubs. As already said, 234 Sq. miles of rich tropical unclassified state forest and 29 sq. miles of reserved forest went under lake water, 40 sq. miles of Kasalong reserved forest also was deserved to rehabilitate the displaces people of Kaptai project. All these factors created serious environmental and ecological degradation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and rainfall drastically reduced in the catchment areas of the Karnaphulli lake. With the decrease in rainfall there is shortage of sufficient

water in the lake. hence production of electricity from Karnaphulli Hydro station also has reduced especially during the dry season in the recent years. Further, with the destruction of forest, vast wild life has also been destroyed in the Hill Tracts. Before construction of the Kaptai dam, there was 'Kheda Oepration' (catching of wild elephants) at interval of every two or three years in Chittagong Hill Tracts, But during the last three decades, there was no such operation for want of sufficient elephants in the jungle of Chittagong Hill Tracts. Navigation especially during the dry season is being seriously affected in he recent years as the river bed silted up. On the whole the total ecology has been disturbed. The vast afforestation projects executed or being executed in CHT have little impact as more tribals have become homeless or are going to be homeless. Further community land has been shrinking every year because of afforestation and rubber projects. It may be mentioned here that more than 20,000 acres of hilly lands have already been settled with non-tribals for rubber cultivation. Many of these non-hill men and non-residents of Chittagong Hill Tracts have removed almost all valuable trees but did not raise any rubber gardens in their allotted lands. On 16 February 1996 the Pahari Chatra Parishad (Hill Students Council) organized a rally at the Press Club premises at Bandarban, in which the Pahari Chatra Parishad leaders protested against the settlement of ancestral lands of the tribals to the non resident Bengalees for rubber cultivation and demanded their eviction.[2]

The Government of Bangladesh argued that the new roads would improve the hill people's access to markets and would reduce their cultural and economic isolation and sought international aid; but the real intention was otherwise.

The Government had three objectives in building roads in the Hill Tracts region :

1. To facilitate swift army movement into the tracts.
2. To enable the Bengalee settlers to push deep into the tracts in shortest possible time and

3. To create adequate communication structure for the exploitation of the resources of the Hill Tracts.

In January 1976 the tribal leaders of Chittagong Hill Tracts submitted a Memorandum before General Zia at Rangamati. For the improvement of communication in the CHT the following four demands were made :

1. An all weather road from Rangamati to Mahalchari and Khagrachari.

2. A similar road from Rangamati via Chandraghona to Bandarban.

3. The two roads from Khagrachari to Panchari and from Khagrachari to Dighinala (which were not then matalled) should be paved.

4. The rehabilitation zone i.e. the Baghaichari police station should be developed with the construction of roads.

Road from Rangamati to Bandarban via Chandraghona have not yet been constructed while the other roads from Khagrachari to Panchari and Khagrachari to Dighinala and then to Baghaichari were paved/constructed as these are strategically very important for the army. New roads such as Chittagong to Khagrachari via Hathazari and Feni to Khagrachari via Ramgarh and many other such roads which are not very important for the tribals were constructed to achieve the objectives noted earlier. Rangamati-Mahalchari-Khagrachari road has been metalled only in the recent years.

Similarly electricity and telecommunication projects do not benefit the tribals, who are too poor and are now fighting for survival. Water supply projects also did not benefit the tribals, 90% of whom get water from natural sources (Report from Bhorer Kagaj dated 10 May 1995). The tele-communication facilities only benefited the cantonments and a few rich Bengalees, while electricity is used only in the cantonments, market places and towns where mostly Bengalees live.

On the 3 August 1995, there was a news headline with the title, "In the hill districts 400 persons died from malaria in 2.5

months, no action to control in the vernacular newspaper" The Sangbad".

In the report it was claimed that 400 persons in Bandarban district, 65 persons in Rangamati district and 210 persons in Khagrachari district died from malaria in the last 2.5 months. The paper also claimed that 90% people in Bandarban district were found carrying malaria parasites; but there were not sufficient medicines and even doctors in the hospitals of the above districts.

About 54 joint farmers schemes-24 in Bandarban, 10 in Khagrachari and 20 in Rangamati Hill Tracts were implemented. Each family was given 5.25 acres of poor quality agricultural land mostly on steep slopes. The staple food rice, cannot be grown in these lands. So each family has to grow bananas, pine apple, vegetables, fruits trees and rubber plants in each acre of land. This requires knowledge of five different forms of production for the farmers who have no experience of some of these crops. The farmers maintained their existence as long as they received their grants. Now the conditions of these farmers are pitiable and many of them left their joint farming.

So the projects have not benefited the poor tribals, for whom they were meant. Rather the projects pushed them more into the deep forest without any hope for the future (ref. The Daily Bhorer Kagaj dated 10th May 1995).

INDEX

1. The Chittagong Hill Tracts, Militarazation, oppression and the hill tribes by Anit Slavery Society series 2, Page-38
2. The Daily Bhorer Kagoz, 17-2-1996.

CLUSTER VILLAGES

Traditionally, villages in Chittagong Hill Tracts are dispersed. A village's land can cover an area of 5 sq. miles or more. In this area, there will be four or five hamlets separated by agricultural land and situated on either on hills or valleys. During the two decades of bush war, the army realized that unless they succeeded in isolating the Shanti Bahini from the tribal populace, they would not be able to finish the bush war. Hence they adopted a new programme- the Programme of Cluster Villages.

This counter-insurgency cluster village programme was started in 1988 and the majority of cluster villages were set up for the hill men only. Later the government decided to set up cluster villages for the Bengali settlers as they very often became the targets of Santi Bahini when they lived in isolated areas.

In the report, 'Life is not ours', May 1991 published by the CHT Commission, 'In Khagrachari district alone there were 109 Gucchagram (Grouping village) for the Bengalees, 80 Borograms (big village) for Tripuras and Marmas and 16 Shanti Gram (Peace village) for the Chakmas.' (Page 73)

The villagers were forced to move into cluster villages and when they refused, their houses were destroyed by the law enforcing agencies who controlled movement in and out of the settlement. People in the cluster villages could not travel without permission from the army. In some cluster villages, in the process the tribals had to abandon their homesteads, farmland and orchards. Each tribal cluster village was protected by people of law enforcing agencies, who controlled movement in and out of the settlement. People in the cluster villages could not travel

without permission from the army. In some cluster villages the hill people had to hand over their knives and other implements at night. In the morning they used to collect them again with army permission. In the circumstances, the tribals termed them as concentration camps.

The general sentiment of the hill people about cluster villages could be summed up in the following sentences. There is no difference between living in a cluster village and a jail. Hence there is no wonder when one of the main demands of the refugees living in India for returning to Bangladesh was to dismantling of the cluster villages and withdrawal of restriction on movement, buying and selling of daily necessaries.

The Army divided the entire CHT into three different zones, red, yellow and white. The red zones were the interior hill people's areas, the white zones were the areas within two miles of the regional military headquarters, where the army was in full control, while the yellow zones were the Bengali settlers areas. In the red zone areas, the restrictions were imposed on the hill people but not on the Bengalees. all the hill people had to carry an identity cards and if they went for shopping, they had to carry a market pass. The market pass was a means of controlling the quantities of rice, kerosine oil and other goods, which they were allotted to buy. This was checked at all the military posts along the roads. People were asked where they came from, where they were going, and their bags were searched. There were also restrictions on quantity of medicines that a person could buy and in some places the people needed permission from the army before buying. These regulations were introduced so that essential items could not be supplied to the Shanti Bahini.

In the yellow zones the hill people were required to carry identity cards but market passes were not needed. In the white zones there were no specific restrictions but only those which applied throughout Chittagong Hill Tracts as a whole.

The above restrictions were withdrawn after the cease-fire agreement made between the Army and the Shanti Babini.

ISLAMISATION AND RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS

The Government of Bangladesh before the Peace Agreement did not allow any international non-Government Organization to open office or to start projects in Chittagong Hill Tracts, but their restriction did not apply in the case of Al-Rabita, a Saudi Arabia based NGO. This NGO had been working in Chittagong Hill Tracts since 1980 to convert the hill people. Its head office is in Dhaka and has offices at Barkal, Rangamati and Langadu, where it has also a hospital. At Alikadam in Bandarban district, Al-Rabita has an Islamic missionary center, where it could convert about 80 tribals, mainly Marmas and Mros. In Bandarban also there were reports of conversion. When converted, Al-Rabita took responsibility of the new Muslims to provide them with jobs. While the door for entering CHT was open for missionaries of Al-Rabita, the Government did not allow any other foreign aided NGO to work in CHT. Even it did not allow any foreigner including media people to enter the tracts without clearance from the Government.

Throughout Chittagong Hill Tracts mosque and Madrasha constructions continued to take place and Islamic names were given to the new Muslim settlements and the market places. Now every Muslim locality in CHT has a mosque and wherever there is Muslim concentrations there is a Madrasha. Perhaps, the growth of mosques and madrashas in CHT is the highest throughout Bangladesh. "In 1971 there were only a few dozen mosques but in 1987 there were 539 mosques."[1]

There were three types of religious persecutions : (i) destruction of temples and churches, (ii) prevention of worship, (iii) forced conversion. Some cases are narrated here.

23.12.1979 : 'Venerable Ajara Bhikku and Venerable Bannitananda were murdered by members of the Bangladesh Army at the village of Thakujjyama Kalak.'[2]

25.3.1980 : 'In the Kalampati massacre in which about 300 people lost their lives, nine temples were destroyed and twenty monks beaten up.'[3]

15.9.1980 : 'At village Rashyabil under Rangamati Police Station, apart from killing and burning of houses, the village temple was looted'.[4]

19.4.1981 : 'There was an attack when the people assembled on the funeral of Manabenera Larma's mother. The priest on the spot was also maltreated'.[5]

13.6.1986 : 'The destruction of the Boaklkhali Buddhist temple and orphanage got international publicity, when 72 students of the orphanage were taken into temporary care in France in 1988. At that time Dhalaima Buddhist temple beyond Dighinala bazaar, was also destroyed'.[6]

Baghaichari-Mukh Temple, Dighinala

'The CHT Commission visited the Baghaichari Mukh Temple, Dighinala on 15 December 1990, and found the broken statue of Lord Buddha at the site'.[7]

Pujgang Temple, Panchari

'The CHT Commission visited Pujgang on 17 December 1990 and found three headless (beheaded) Buddha's statues at the site of the temple and was told that the temple was attacked in 1986 and on 28 June 1989'.[8]

Tintila temple, Langadu

'The Commission visited Langadu Tintila on 9 December 1990 and came to know that the temple was destroyed on 4 May, 1989. The commission went to the site and saw the image of the Buddha slashed with dao. The image was brought from Thailand a few years back'.[9]

Betchari Charistian Para

'The Betchari Church was destroyed on 31 October 1990'.[10]

There are three ways in which worshiping was prevented in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Desecration

'The Maischari Buddhist temple some 40 miles North of Rangamati was desecrated and occupied for about 8 months by the Bangladesh Armed Police on the ground that they had no place to live. A petition about the matter to the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police had no effect'.[11]

Now I reproduce a statement of a Marma Buddhist monk from 'Life is not ours', May 1991.[12]

'The incident reportedly took place at Pablakhali, Dighinala in 1985. On that day first the settlers and the army surrounded the temple. I was caught and my hands were tied with rope as were my legs. Water was poured through my nostrils. I was kicked with boots and my leg was cut. People came into the temple and caught all the girls. They took the girls a little away from the temple. I heard the cries of the girls, may be they were raped but I did not see it with my own eyes. After a few days I met one of the girls but as a monk I have some restrictions and could not ask her what had happned'. (page 96)

"The army perform sacrilege in the temple. They go in with boots on and throw away food in the temple. Every day before 12 O'clock we offer food to the Lord Buddha. The Muslims say

'why does not stone eat it?' The army uses guns to break plates. Once I was about to offer food to the Buddha, and the Muslims entered and said, 'Let us see if stone can eat,' then they said, 'stone cannot eat,' and they took the plate from my hand and threw it on the floor. They bring animals (goats and cows) into the temple and slaughter them. Buddhist people never kill animals, so you cannot worship in the temple after that has happened. At Pablakhali in 1985 before the attack, about 35-50 army personnel entered the monastery with 100-150 settlers remaining outside. They cooked inside the temple and burnt wood on the dirt floor and brought wood in. They killed the animals outside the temple but within the boundary of the temple. They did this to crush Buddhism and establish Islam. There was no other reason for this".

I again quote from the same book[12]. This was again a statement given by another Marma Buddhist monk, "I was in Munigram Buddhist temple. On 12 June 1986, we tried to celebrate a function in the temple. All of a sudden some troops came and said, 'Hey, what are you doing?' we replied, 'we are going to wash our God.' The soldiers said, 'you cannot wash God because this is a Muslim State. You cannot worship the Lord Buddha, you have to abandon this religion and become Muslim.' We refused to do so. Then the soldiers caught us and tied our hands and started to pour water on our heads. I was the only monk there, the others were villagers numbering about 20. All of us were tied in pairs and the soldiers started pouring water and when they were not satisfied with it, they started kicking us with their boots. The water was not just water but it was mixed with green chillis. We were tied up from eight in the morning to four in the afternoon, a total of eight hours. They stood with bayonets over us so that we would not struggle. My skin started burning and most of us were injured as I was. I had cuts and sores on my legs. The soldiers untied us at 4 P.M. At about 5 O'clock they set fire to the temple and we went into hiding in the jungles. The settlers were not with the soldiers when they tied up, but they were there

when the village was burnt. There is a river called Chengi. After coming to the river we went hiding into the deep jungle. After four days trekking all through the jungle, I reached the border of Tripura and Karbook camp. In that lot we were around 450 people. Before 12 June there was no other incident. The only reason for the attack was religion. If we became Muslim, we could stay safe. I know one Marma, who was my friend called Ucha Mong. He was threatened that If he did not become a Muslim, he would be harmed with his relatives. He was forcibly converted. He came from a different village, Mahalchari in Khagrachari district."

Control over Religious Function

A Marma monk in Tripura, India explained to CHT Commission how the military authorities controlled religious ceremonies in CHT. Here, I reporduce from the Commission's report 'Life is not ours' May 1991.'[13].

"Religious functions need a permit from the authorities, for example, the Purnima full moon celebrations and several functions numbering about six in a year. We need permits for other functions too. Many people come to these functions. For a funeral ceremony no permit is necessary, but seven days later, the Seventh day ritual after cremation needs permission from the authorities. When some one becomes a monk you need such a permit. To celebrate functions you have to collect money and so permission is needed. The permit is both for money collection and the ceremony. The army officers give the permit. It was always army officers who give it. There is no cost for the permit. but it was a lot of trouble waiting to meet the officers etc."

Controlling Travel to Sacred Places

Chitmarm is the most sacred shrine of Buddhism in the CHT. It is in predominantly Marma area but every year thousands of Chakmas and other Buddhists travelled there to pay respect to the

ancient statue of Lord Buddha in the old temple. But in the eighties, it had been impossible for the Buddhists to reach Citmaram temple because of constant checks by the security forces. There were always 30/40 monks at this religious center but lately it was almost abandoned. The Commission visited the shrine and found only two monks, In different parts of CHT the people told the Commission that the main problem preventing their travelling to Chitmaram was 'Checking'. Now the restriction were been slackened, but very few people visit the shrine now-a-days.[14]

On 19 October 1990 there was a Kathin Chibar Dan Festival (Yellow robe offering Ceremony) at Raj Vana Vihar at Rangamati. Buddhists feel that if they attend the festival it will be beneficial. The festival is called 'Kathin Chibar Dan' means presentation or offering of yellow robes to Buddhist monks prepared very quickly and through a difficult process. Through this process people have to offer it within 24 hours starting from the preparing process i.e. prepare cotton, spinning, dying, drying, weaving, sewing and then offering through formalities, It is one of the most important festivals in the Buddhist calendar. To join this festival people from Kaptai went to the ceremony twenty six people-10 men, 14 girls and 2 women. On the way met some soldiers, who separated the men from the girls and women and then gang raped the girls. However this time the accused were caught and punished duly. (Page 87, Parbatya Chattagramer Sekal Ekal by S.S. Chakma).

Forced and induced conversion

The Tribal women who marry Bengalees whether by choice or allurement or abducted by force have to convert to Islam. Former prisoners of Chittagong and Khagrachari jails told the Commission in Tripura that they were placed in cells with majority Muslims, whose task was to try and convert the hillmen. (page 99 Life is not Ours, May, 1991)[15].

As already said, during the British and early Pakistani period

a great Fair was held at Mahamuni (a place near Rangunia in Chittagong district) which was then ceremoniously observed by the hill people every year for three days, where thousands of old, young men and women used to gather. It was both religious and social gathering Lt. Col T.E. Lewn wrote about this fair in his book. 'The Fly on the wheel'. The fair continued even during the early Pakistani period. Similar fairs were held at Baradam near Naniyarchar, Khagrachari, Boalkhali, Manikchari, Rangamati, Panchari, Ramgargh and other places where there were Buddhist temples. A few of these fairs were held even in 1972 AD. But no such fair is held anywhere in Chittagong Hill Tracts now. Monthlong fair was held at Rajanagar, the old capital of the Chakmas near Rangunia Police Station even during the early Pakistani period but now it is no longer held.

INDEX

1. Insurgent : Cross Fire, North East India by Subir Bhoumik, page-306
2. The Chittagong Hill Tracts : Militiarization, oppression and the Hill Tracts by Antislavery Society, page-59.
3. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts by Wolfang Mey, page- 152, 154
4,5. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, page- 152, 154
6-10. 'Live is not ours' May 1991, page- 93, 94, 95.
11. Genocide in Bangladesh by Survival International, Review No. 43, page-`16.
12,13. 'Life is not ours' May 1991, page-96, 97
14. 'Life is not ours' May 1991, page-98.
15. 'Life is not ours' May 1991, page 98, 99

ETHNOCIDE

As already said-the Government of Bangladesh never declared Chittagong Hill Tracts as Disturbed Area, but uncontrolled military operation were perpetrated, which resulted in all forms of human rights violations, such as mass killings, imprionment without trial, detention in Pits, rape, harassment, restrictions on the movement of essential commodities, destruction of tribal villages, rounding up of men, women and children and then subject them to different forms of torture. The men and boys were sometimes shot dead or crippled by having their fingers and legs broken. Many of those victims succumbed to their injuries and those who survived became invalidated for life. Evidently the men and the boys were crippled so that they could not hold weapons. The women and girls were very often raped.

Prisoners reported the repeated and consistent use of inhuman tactics to obtain information or to force confession. Methods used were severe beating, electric shock, uninterrupted interrogation, withholding of foods, water, standing in the sun, living and sleeping in pits, half drowning, etc.

Now some incidents of mass killings, mass destruction of tribal villages, different types of atrocities and harassment and other human rights violations are stated.

December, 1977

"In December 1977, the villages of Matiranga, Guimara, Manikchari, and Lakshmichari in present Khagrachari District were attacked. Apart from mass killings, a number of persons were abducted and put into pits. 54 of them died and 5000 tribal were forced to go to Tripura."[1]

25 December 1977

"The Army started from Panchari towards Logang and Pujgang in a convoy and set fire to all houses and temples on both sides of the road and asked the Bengalee settlers to loot the properties of the tribals. The tribals fled away to jungles for safety. The Bengalee settlers looted thousands of cattle, goats and fowls and collected other booties."[2]

30 December 1977

"The village Kukichara in Khagrachari District was attacked, the houses of Shanti LaL Chakma, Natha Chandra Chakma and Sukramoni Chakma were burnt down. 12 members of Chandra Chakma's family were killed, Shanti Lal Chakma was critically wounded and Sukramoni Chakma suffered severe injuries."[3]

22 December 1978

"Bangladesh Army attacked Dumdumya, Maindong and Panchari Mouzas where there were 50 villages with a population of more than 35000 people. Most of the houses were burnt to ashes and most of the people fled to the jungle, escaped to Mizoram, who were then pushed back to Bangladesh."[4]

9 January 1979

"All the villages in the subalong valley were attacked; a woman aged 71 named Bangla Kajha Chakma was burnt alive in her home. Earlier in December 1978 most houses in Dumdumya Mouza consisting of 22 villages were destroyed."[5]

21 February 1979

"Pujgang village, 20 miles north of Khagrachari was burnt down."[6]

5 March 1979

"Two students, Samiran Talukder and Alimoy Talukder aged 16 and a farmer Rallwa Chakma in the village Gargajyachari were

arrested and hacked to death."[7]

7 March 1979

"The entire village of Babuchara under Dighinala police station was destroyed."[8]

16 March 1979

"The Army surrounded Khagrachari and Khabangpuria, civilian quarters of Khagrachari town, rounded up men, women and children. Then men and women were separated. While the men were hung up on trees and beaten, the women were kept standing in the sun. In the evening all were released."[9]

9 April 1979

"On 9 April 1979 at 2 a.m. the Bangladesh Army raided civilian quarters in Rangamati Town, arrested about 70 men and women. They were released only after long period of detention. Many of them were beaten while in custody."[10]

2 April 1979

"The Bangladesh Army led a raid on the village of Kanungopara 16 miles north of Khagrachari and razed it to the ground. Sindhu Kumar Chakma, Arun Kanti Chakma, Anabil Chakma were shot dead in presence of the surviving members of the family."[11]

17 October 1979

"The Army raided and burnt several villages in Khagrachari area in retaliation for a Shanti Bahini action."[12]

November 1979

"A number of villages in Adharakchara area covering 50-60 square miles were burnt down in retaliation for Shanti Bahini actions. The entire area has been occupied now by the Bengalee settlers."[13]

23 December 1979

"The Army destroyed the village of Bangahata, Thakujyamakalak, Gulshakhali, Nala and killed among others two Buddhist monks-Ajra Bhikkhu and Bannitananda Bhikkhu. About 40 to 50 thousand poeple had to flee the area and still now did not get back their lands."[14]

January 1980

"The Bangladesh Army burnt down several villages under Matiranga Police station. About 4000 people fled to Indian state of Tripura. It was estimated that upto 12-15000 people had been detained by the police or army and some hundreds were either dead or wounded."[15]

25 March 1980

"On that day the local Army Commander-in-Charge of Kawkhali camp under Kalampati Police Station asked the local tribal elders and other people to attend a meting to discuss the problems of law and order and also to start repair work to Poapara Buddhist temple. When the people gathered, the army opened fire. About 300 people were killed on the spot, 30 women were abducted and taken into military camps and were raped there. Immediately after this shooting, the Bengalee settlers began to burn and loot the tribal houses and destroyed Buddhist temples. At lest 24 villages were affected, nine Buddhist temples were destroyed and twenty monks beaten up. After this massacre and burning and looting of the village of Kalmapati Union, the army raided, plundered and burnt to ashes the villages of Rosyabil, Chotalabil under Rangamati Police station and Nailyachari and Mejorpara of Kalampati union on 26 March 1980 again."[15a]

"After a few ways of Kawkhali massacre three opposition Members of Parliament Rashed Khan Menon, Shajahan Seraj and Upendralal Chakma made a tour of the affected area, interviewed some 500 people and made their findings public at the National Press Club, Dhaka on 25 April 1980. In response, the

Government promised an enquiry and a five number committee headed by the then Home Minister Mustafizur Rahman was set up, but none of its findings was made public."[16]

15 September 1980

"The Bangladesh Rifle men and the new Bengalee settlers attacked Rosyabil under Rangamati Police station. Apart from Killing, houses were burnt and the village temple was looted. On the same day, similar raid were made on Fatikchari, Noabanga, Kachukhali, Mobachari and Ghilachari village. On 19 September 1980 General Zia advised the tribal people at Sajek to imbibe themselves with the spirit of Bangladesh nationalism and engaged themselves in the politics of production."[17]

18 September 1980

"The Army raided Barapara under Betbunia Police Station, The houses of tribal people were plundred and people were beaten up and arrested."[18]

11 to 12 December 1980

"On that day large scale army action took place on Noa-adam, Rabindhan para village under Barkal Police station, Datkuppya village under Khagrachari Police Station. All villages in Bara Harina, Chota Harina, Taibong and Malchari Mouza (altogether 400 houses) were burnt down and a large number of people were killed."[19]

20 February 1981

"There was an Army raid on Ramsing Dewan village, under Panchari Mouza during the Tripura festival of Austa-Prahar Kirton, The Army also attacked on the people that gathered on the funeral of Manebendra Narayan Larma and Santu Larma's mother. The priest involved at the funeral ceremony was also maltreated."[20]

26 June to 28 June 1981

"The Government forces instigated a riot which devastated the whole area of Gargaria Nala, Gomti, Mohalchari, Changrachari, Belaichari, Ajodhya, Khedachara, Alutila, Dhallya, Taikadang, Daldali, Matiragna etc. leaving thousands of tribals destitutes and homeless. Thousands of new settlers continued their atrocities for three days in the entire area under the aegis of different law enforcing agencies, Hundreds of tribal houses were looted and burnt to ashes and about 500 tribal men, women and children were killed. Some of them were burnt alive, Thousands of them took shelter in the Indian state of Tripura".[21] These refugees were later forcibly repatriated to Bangladesh.

19, 23 September 1981 and October and November 1981

"Fresh attacks launched on tribals by the Army and the Bengalee settlers on tribal people in 14 mouzas in Feni Valley which forced another wave of refugees into Tripura. More than 500 persons including women and children were killed in the chain of incidents that continued for more than two months."[22]

As a result almost the entire Feni valley under Khagrachari district was depopulated of tribals and ultimately occupied by the new Bengalee settlers.

9 to 11 August 1981

"In the night of 9 August ten people including Juddha Chandra chakma aged 55, Head Master of Tarabanchara Primary School were picked up and they were never traced. On 10 August 100 houses in Mara Maischari village and 120 houses in Jeda Maichchari village were set on fire. 10 people including the son of Jara Khali bab (J.K.'s father) were arrested. They were also not traced.

On 11 August, 150 houses in the village of Logang were burnt down and a few innocent people were taken away. Their whereabouts were not known. In another incident, the Bangladesh army accompanied by the Moslem settlers entered

the village of Tarabanya and oppressed the innocent people and looted their properties. About 50 people including Sureshchandra Tripura and his wife were killed. Two or three 4-5 years old children were bodily lifted and smashed to the ground."[23]

1983

"The year was another year of genocides in Chittagong Hill Tracts. On 26 June 1983 the Army started operations in the areas under Panchari Police station and entered the villages of Golakpatimachara, Maichaya Chara, Tarabanchara, Logang, etc. to search out young people. The young people fled their villages for fear of life. During the night of 26 and 27 July, they surrounded the villages and arrested 12 people including Birendra Kumar Chakma, a Union Council Member, Jyotirmoy Dewan, Head Master of Taraban Primary School and his college going son Lalan Behari Chakma. Hot water was poured into Jyotiromy's eyes to blind him. The Whereabouts of Lalan Behari and the others were never known."[24]

"On 11 July 1983, 12 people from two families (consisting of 7 and 5 members respectively) in the village of Golakpatimachara were shot dead. Among them were three women and five children (aged 2-6 years old)."[25]

1984

"On 30 May 1984, the villages of Bhushanchara Union Parishad and other nearby villages under Barkal Police station not far away from Indian state of Mizoram were attacked by the Army, BDR and the new settlers as a retaliation against the attack of the Shanti Bhani on the new settlers who earlier had forcibly reaped away ripe paddy grown by the tribals. 62 tribals were killed, 13 were injured and 7 women were raped. About 15,000 tribals field to the jungles, out of whom 4530 took shelter in Mizoram, India, In December 1984 and January 1985, the tribal refugees were forcibly repatriated to Bangladesh. During forcible repatriation, many young girls were raped by BDR and some were brutally killed."[26]

1986

"This is one of the darkest year for the tribal people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In the year there were large scale raids, plunders, brutal murders in the areas under Panchari, Merung, Matiranga, Khagrachari and Dighinala and Ramgarh Police Stations. Hundreds and thousands of houses of the tribals were burnt down; 238 hill people were killed, more than 480 were seriously wounded and 209 persons mostly children and old men were missing."[27]

"The Changrachari massacre took place on 19 December 1986, when the army and the new settlers attacked the tribals who were collected at Changrachari Union under Merung Police station (presently Dighnala Police station) of Khagrachari district. At the direction of the Army, the new settlers attacked the tribals when 26 persons mostly women and children were killed."[28]

"According to Subir Bhoumik, BBC Correspondent, most of the killings occurred when the armed forces rounded up the rebels and allowed the new settlers to attack them. But the worst massacres was perpetrated by the soldiers themselves. On 18 May more than 150 tribals were trying to cross into India when they were pushed back by the B.S.F. A detachment of the BDR rounded them up and opened indiscriminate firing. Soon afterwards armed Moslems fell on them to complete the grisly massacre."[29]

By the end of the year, more than 60,000 refugees crossed the Indian border. After a few years, a few hundred refugees returned to Bangladesh on their own, while another 5000 returned to their homeland after the Government of Bangladesh assured their protection and rehabilitation in their own lands. But more than 50,000 refugees did not return.

8-10 August 1988

There were major incidents of human right violations and massacres at Khirachar, Khagrachari, Sarbotali and Pablakhali

village under Baghaichari Police Station under Rangamati Hill Tracts. These took place as a retaliation against attack on the army by the Shanti Bahini in which some army personnel lost their lives. The new settlers also took part in the attack on the tribal villages in which many tribals including women and children were killed. Tribal villages were looted and burnt down. Even the tribal officials including the then Upazilla Chairman Laksmi Kanta Chakma working in his own office at Baghaichari town was attacked and injured. Bibekananda Chakma, a teacher of Sisakmukh High School and Pulin Behari Chakma a teacher of Sarboatuli were among the killed. The tribal students of Chittagong Hill Tracts distributed a leaflet in September 1988 in which they claimed that about hundred tribals including women and children were killed and many women and girls were raped. In the leaflet they gave a list of 46 killed personnel with their particulars. Four names of gang raped women and girls were also given and it was claimed that they could not give more names as they could not visit the areas due to disrupted communications.

4 May 1989

"On that day Abdur Rashid Sarkar, the then Chairman of Langadu Upazila was killed by some unknown persons. But the new settlers and the members of village Defence Party, who were armed with guns supplied by the Government attacked the house of Anil Behari Chakma-Ex-Chairman of the Langadu Upazila, where about one hundred tribals took shelter. The house was set on fire and on the next day 5 dead bodies including the wife of Anil Behari Chakma were recovered. Other tribal houses were also attacked, looted and burnt to ashes. At least 36 tribals-men, women and children all of whom were named were reported to have been murdered in reprisal attacks although the figure could be higher, The tribal people think that at least hundred tribals were killed. The members of village Defence Party, a Government sponsored civilian defence force recruited from the non-trible settlers in Hill Tracts and trained by the Police led the attack on the tribal villages, in which hundreds of house

belonging to the tribal people were burnt, as several Buddhist temples and two Christian churches. The surviving tribals fled to the jungles for refuge and considerable number of them crossed the border into India state of Tripura. Between 14 and 31 May 1989, about 5800 tribal people were reported to have crossed into Tripura."[30]

7 and 8 April 1991

"After an encounter with the Shant Bahini in which five soldiers were killed and two wounded, the Army (Betchari Army camp, Naniarchar, Rangamati district) in reprisal attack arrested 22 men and two women. The men were badly beaten and tortured, while the women were gang-raped."[31]

29 June to October 1991

"One the 29 June 1991 Shanti Bahini attacked the Police camp at Burighat (under Naniarchar Police Station) in which 5 members of Village Defence Party and 9 members of Bengali settlers were killed. In the following day the members of the Bangladesh Army indiscriminately arrested and killed tribals in collaboration with Benagli settlers. Buddhist temples were desecrated and Buddhist monks were intimidated. On June 30, 1991 the army of Burighat camp fired indiscriminately on a group of tribals people, who were returning by boat from Kutukchari bazar. The tribals escaped by jumping in the river but one Bimaleshwar Chakma, son of late Bandalya Chakma of village Garket was hit and killed. On the same day two people were arrested while fishing by Army personnel from a day sentry post of Burighat Army camp and taken to Army camp. They wre beaten and burnt with cigarettes. On 1 July the Army personnel from Burighat Army camp raided the village Hatimara and shot indiscriminately. One Bijoy Prashad Chakma was seriously injured and later died in Chittagong Medical College Hospital. On 2 July, four persons from Hatimara village and two from kurakutya village were arrested and accused of involvement in a Shanti Bahini attack of 29 June, Four of them were released but the whereabouts of two

others were never known."[32]

"On the night of May 10, 1992 the army personnel of 5 East Bengal Regiment raided Mitingachari village in Kachukhali Mouza, Ghagra Union under Rangamati district in Search of Shanti Bahini. The villagers were abused and beaten and some houses were destroyed. Seventeen people were arrested and taken to Ghagra Army camp, where they were beaten. The next day 15 people were released.

On 13 May the mutilated body of Kashi Ram Chakma S/o. Brajamohan Chakma was handed over to his family. The Family was given some money for cremation and was told to say that Kashi Ram had been killed by the Shanti Bahini. The whereabouts of the other man Padma Bashi Chakma S/o. Suratya Chakma was never known."[33]

"On 22 June 1991 Tushar Kanti Chakma Son of Bairaggya Chakma of village Shikal Para, Naniyachar, Rangamati district was arrested from his village by the Army. He was tortured and both his thighs and one hand were broken. He died as a result of these injuries. His dead body was left on the Chowdhury Chara-Shilachari road and six or seven rounds of bullets were fired into it. The next day the dead body was handed over to his relatives and it was circulated that Tushar Kanti was fired upon when he tried to escape."[34]

"On 21 October 1991, the military started operations on Shanti Bahini members in Mahalchari area under the same Police Station, but on their return to base, they were ambushed. In retaliation, the Army began a week long assault in collaboration with the new setttlers in the area in which a large number of houses were looted, destroyed or burnt, one woman was raped, another was subjected to attempted rape, many were arrested, tortured and humiliated. One Buddhist temple at Ultachari was damaged and desecrated, Detention and torture of nine named individuals and beating. harassment on another nine people was reported to the CHT Commission."[35]

"On 2 February 1992 two bombs were exploded on a

passenger launch at Malya (under Langadu Police Station). The launch was on its way from Marishya (under Baghaichari Police Station) to Rangamati. Malya is now inhabitated by the Bengali new settlers. The explosion killed one passenger and injured the driver of the launch. But the survivors swam ashore but the armed Bengali settlers were waiting for them to attack the tribal passengers-men, women and children. About 30 of them were killed, 14 bodies were recovered and others were lost in the water.

The launch was to carry out a deputation of tribals to Rangamati and Dhaka to protest against recent misbehavior to some girls students and a Buddhist monk and desecration of three Buddhist temples. According to an eyewitness accounts, two members of the security forces boarded the launch at Durchari, carrying two kerosine tins. They disembarked at the next stop leaving the tins. These exploded when the launch reached Malya. Ironically, at the last moment, the deputationists did not go that day and those, who were killed were not connected with the deputation. The Bangladesh Press reported that the explosion was caused by the Shanti Bahini."[36]

10 April 1992

"The massacre took place at Logang cluster village in Khagrachari district perpetrated by the security forces and the Bengali settlers, allegedly as reprisal for the killing of a Bengali boy, who had attempted to rape a hill girl. Bengali settlers spread the rumor that the Shanti Bahini killed the boy and this triggered off the slaughtering of the hill people. In the massacre, about 300 hill men, women and children were killed and 700 houses were burnt to ashes. The massacre got widespread media coverage in the country and outside due to accidental presence of a Human Rights Group at Khagrachari just a few days before the occurrence. The Human Rights Group wanted to visit the place of occurrence but they were not allowed by the Army. Even the Chairman of Khagrachari District Council Samiran Dewan was not allowed to visit the place of occurrence. No civil or military

person was tried in the court and punished though some people were arrested."[37]

20 May 1992

The incident took place at Rangamati, the District Headquarters of the District. On that day the members of the Hill Students' Council after celebrating their third annual council meeting were going back to their respective houses in the town; suddenly some Bengali students and the new settlers under the protection of law enforcing agencies attacked the tribal students and the tribal civilian quarters of Katapahar, Dewanpara and Tribal Adam and burnt 61 houses. Though no tribal was killed, 9 tribals including some civilan employees were injured. Gautam Dewan, Chairman of Rangamati Hill District Council who earlier warned the Local Administration and advised them to take precautionary measures, resigned taking moral responsibility for his failure to protect the properties of the people and complete failure of law and order in the Rangamati town itself."[38]

10 April 1992

"On that day Mayang Marma of Gargajyachari, under Mahalchari Police Station, Khagrachari District was killed by the army of the 26th East Bengal Regiment from Bazarpara army camp, Mahalchari Zone."[39]

27 April 1992

"One Sadhulal Chakma aged 18 was shot dead while herding cows by the army of Ultachari camp, under Khagrachari district. His father was forced to sign a written statement that the boy was killed by the Shanti Bahini."[40]

30 May 1992

"On this day seven tribals were killed and a Buddhist monk was seriously injured; 40 houses were burnt down by the Bengali settlers in collaboration with the security forces at Dhalupara,

under Kawkhali Police Station within Rangamati district. In a dispute over land between two rival groups of new settlers, one settler had been killed by the rival group and the settlers spread the rumor that the person had been killed by the Shanti Bahini, which resulted in the attack on the tribal people by the settlers and the security forces."[41]

"On 15 June 1992 the Shanti Bahini attacked on army patrol Party in which one army personnel was wounded. In a reprisal attack, Babuchara cluster village within Dighinala Police Station was attacked. One Amar Kanti Chakma, who could not escape was beaten to death."[42]

"On 29 June 1992 Shanti Bahini attacked a road protection post on Mahalchari-Rangamati Road. In the attack, two members of the army were killed. In retaliation, the army from Naniarchar Zone Headquarters raided the villages of Firingipara and Shankala Para under Naniarchar Police Station. 80 people were arrested and taken to the jungle. 13 girls between 15 and 20 years of ages were gang-raped and 15 men were tortured."[43]

"On 31 May 1992 an army unit raided Betchari, Dajarapara within Naniarchar Police Station, gang-raped 7 women. 11 tribals were arrested and tortured, their houses were looted and then burnt."[44]

26 September 1992

"Four army men of 40th East Bengal Regiment from Chowdhury Chara camp, Naniarchar gang-rapped two young tribals girls."[45]

18 April 1994

"One Nitish Chandra Chakma, a student from Rangunia College, Chittagong was shot dead by a member of the Village Defence Party at Mahalchari when Nitish and some other students went to the local Power Development Board office to complain about not getting electricity supply during their examination period."[46]

4 May 1993

"An army group from Babuchara Zone, raided the village of Baghaichari in Dighinala Police Station, burnt two tribal houses and looted one."[47]

7 January 1993

"On that day the army raided Rattobapchara village of Dumdumya Union, Barkal Thana, because villagers had avoided being moved into a cluster village. They were beaten, their houses were burnt and they were forcibly taken to Chalkpara cluster village."[48]

26 January 1993

"On that day an army group of Jarulchri Army camp, Dighnala Thana raided the village of Rabindra Karbaripara, interrogated the villagers and searched their houses. Two villagers were arrested and tortured."[49]

13 July 1993

"One Juddhapati Chakma was raped by Muhammad Nukab Ali, Habilder Major of 26 East Bengal Regiment, Ultachari army camp, Khagrachari district."[50]

10 August 1993

"A 13 year old girl Sumita Chakma was raped by an Ansar at Guimara, Khagrachari districts."[51]

11 September 1993

"Chandra Khisa and Jiko Chakma of Ramharipara, under Naniarchar Police Station were arrested and beaten and water was poured down their nostril."[52]

29 June 1993

"Retma Marma was raped by Muhammad Rafiq of Block-II of Gacchabeel Bengali cluster village, Police Station, Mahalchari."[53]

5 September 1993

"Kaika Chama, was raped by rikshaw puller Muhammad Jairuddin in Dighninala Thana."[54]

2 October 1993

"Mrs. Anjalika Chakma was raped in her own house by Habilder Major Kalam of Bijitola army camp under Mahalchari Police Station. On 22 December 1992 eight tribals were severely beaten up by the security forces of Lakshmichari zone."[55]

12th August 1993

"Ms. Tipati Chakna and Ms. Nagari Chakma from Pilakpara, were kidnaped by soldiers of the 8th Battalion (Engineering Group) of Guimara, Khagrachari district. They were not heard since then."[56]

17 November 1993

"On 17 November 1993 at least 29 tribals were killed, 162 were seriously injured and 73 were missing (all named), when Bengali settlers, supported by the Bangladesh army attacked a peaceful rally of tribal people at Naniarchar on a market day. Since it was a market day, hundreds of tribals were gathered/collected. The local leaders of the Hill Students Council led a procession against the occupation of a passenger shed at the local launch ghat when the army and the new settlers swooped on the tribal students and the other tribals asembled in the market and also nearby tribal hamlets. On 18 November 1993, Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, accompanied by Inspector General of Police visited Naniarchar, promised judicial inquiry and punishment to the offenders. Justice Habibur Rahman was appointed to inquiry into the causes of massacre and report was supposed to be submitted within one month, but nothing was heard about his report. No one was also punished for this masskilling."[57]

6 December 1993

"Bilash Chandra Chakma, Hokkiya Udha Chakma, and Nakkala Chakma from Naiarchari were taken to Baghaichari army camp, Rangamari district by R.P. Lance Naike Selim. Despite investigation by their relatives, their whereabouts remained unknown."[58]

23 January 1994

"Jotika Chakma was gang-raped by Lance Naik Nurul Islam and others from Indra-Singpara army camp of 26 East Bengal Regimnet."[59]

There were hundreds and thousands of cases of human rights violations in Chittagong Hill Tracts and it is not possible to state all of them. According to Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission, published in their report 'Life is not ours' May 1991, there were 612 incidents of human rights violation in the Hill Tracts during the period from January to December 1990 alone".[60] However the Commission opined that the real figure might be higher. Another type of human right violation in Chittagong Hill Tracts was forcible sterilization of hill women by the Army. This was possibly to reduce the growth rate of the tribal population. An article was published on 11 October 1994 in the Daily Bhorer Kagoj in Dhaka in which Columnist Syed Sahid spoke of this when discussing birth control in Bangladesh.

"The CHT remains a sensitive issue and therefore freedom of expression was not allowed. Here I quote from 'Life is not ours' by the CHT Commission, April, 1004. "People who work openly in support of Jumma demands (let alone in support of the JSS) face intimidation and repression. Several publications concerning the CHT were banned by the Government, such as the irregular magazines 'Radar' and 'Satellite'. Several university teachers who published articles on the CHT were visited by the intelligence personnel and urged them not to write about the Chittagong Hill Tracts."[61]

"Another technique of controlling the press was by

withholding Government advertisements to the papers, which published information on the CHT, which the Government did not like. Government policy on the distribution of advertisements to the news papers was again reflecting old habits of supporting the friendly papers and depriving those considered antagonistic. Media professionals considered this a deliberate but subtle way of influencing editorial polices of the papers. The Bengali daily 'Bhorer Kagoj' was withheld advertisement for quite some time after they published critical reports on the Chittagong Hill Tracts."[62]

Since liberation of Bangladesh many mass killings, some of which were more serious than Mailai massacre of Vietnam took place in Chittagong Hill Tracts, but due to reasons stated above these did not get national or international media coverage. Only a few incidents could draw international media attention due to circumstances, which were beyond the control of the government. The real number of murders, mass murders, rapes and other rights violation will never be known unless an independent commission with eminent persons from inside and outside the country make public inquiry.

INDEX

1. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, by Wolfgang Mey, Page-150
2. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, by Wolfgang Mey, Page-150
3. The Chittagong Hill Tracts by Antislavery, Militarization, oppression and the hill tribes - page 59.
4. Genocide in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, page 150-151
5. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, page-151 and the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Militanrization, oppression and the hill tribes, page 59.
6. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, page-151
7. The Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, by the Antislavery Society, Page-59.
8. Genocide in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, page-151
9. Genocide in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, page-151
10. Genocide in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, page-151

11. The Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh by the Antislavery Society, pate-59.
12. Genocide in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, page-151
13. Genocide in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, page-151
14. Genocide in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, page-151
15. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Page-152
15a. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Page-152
16. The Chittagong Hill Tracts, by Antislavery Society, Page-60-61.
17. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Page-154
18. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Page-154
19. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Page-154
20. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Page-154
21. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Page-154, 155
22. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Page-154, 155
23. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Page-156, 157
24. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Page-156, 157
25. Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Page-156, 157
26,27 A Report on Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh & its people, by Peace Campaign Group, New Delhi, India, April 1994, page-10.
28,29. Insurgent Crossfiere, North-East India by Subir Bhaumik, page-300
30. 'Life is not ours'-May 1991, page-35, 36.
31. 'Life is not ours'-March 1992, page-9, 10.
32. 'Life is not ours'-March 1992, page-9, 10.
33. 'Life is not ours'-March 1992, page-9, 10.
34. 'Life is not ours'-March 1992, page-9, 10.
35. 'Life is not ours'-March 1994, page-16, 17, 18
36. 'Life is not ours'-April 1994, page- 16, 17, 18
37. 'Life is not ours'-April 1994, page- 16, 17, 18
38. 'Life is not ours'-April 1994, page- 4
39. 'Life is not ours'-April 1994, page-21
40-42. 'Life is not ours'-April 1994, page-22
43-56 'Life is not ours'-April 1994, page-22, 23
57. 'Life is not ours'-April 1994, page-18, 19
58, 59. 'Life is not ours'-April 1994, page-23
60. 'Life is not ours'-May 1991, page-51
61, 62. 'Life is not ours'-April 1994, page-23

REFUGEES

There were three types of refugees in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. First, there were about 50,000 internal refugees, who did not flee to India or Burma but have been living in different places in Chittagong Hill Tracts for the last many years.

Secondly there were more than 67,000 refugees who fled to Indian state of Tripura but returned to the country only after Peace Treaty was concluded.

Thirdly, due to frequent disturbances, destruction of villages, eviction from their hearts and homes, about 35,000 mostly Marma tribals from Bandarban district fled away to neighbour Burma. These refugees, mostly shifting cultivators, took shifting cultivation in the deep forest of Burma without bothering the Burmese Government. Since the refugees have been living in deep jungles, the Government of Burma also had no headache for them.

On 2 June 1995 there was a workshop on Chittagong Hill Tracts problems in the German Cultural Institute, Dhanmondi, Dhaka when one speaker from Bandarban demanded repatriation of these refugees from Burma. The Government of General Ershad always claimed that only few thousand of tribal refugees have been living in India. But ultimately Bangladesh admitted that the registered refugees in Tripuras were more than 67,000. There were also refugees, whose number may be a few thousands who did not register their names in the refugee campus, rather they preferred to take shelter with their relations or made their own arrangements.

The then Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Khaleda Zia visited India in May 1992, when the two Prime Ministers came to an

agreement to repatriate the refugees and the Bangladesh Government committed itself to create an atmosphere congenial to their return. But the refugees refused to return to Bangladesh as they did not feel secure and many who had returned earlier did not get back their landed properties. After several postponement and almost one year after the visit of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to India, an eleven member delegation headed by Col.(rtd.) Oli Ahmed, then Minister of Communication, Government of Bangladesh visited India in May 1993. The delegation reached an agreement with the Indian Government to repatriate the refugees in early June 1993. The delegation also visited refugee camps in Tripura and assured the refugees that they would be safe in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Upendralal Chakma, President of Refugees Welfare Association submitted a memorandum with 13 point demands.[1]

In a follow up meeting, the authorities of India and Bangladesh agreed to repatriate the refugees from 8 June 1993. But there were renewed local and international protests urging both the Governments of India and Bangladesh not to repatriate the refugees by force, and without ensuring the security of their lives and properties. The refugees also refused to return to Bangladesh as they did not hear anything about their 13 points demands from the Government of Bangladesh.

In July 1993 a Government delegation headed by Rashed Khan Menon, M.P. and a member of the Government Committee visited refugee camps in India, informed them about the Government's decisions on their 13 points demands and asked them to return to Bangladesh. Menon also asked the refugee leaders to visit Chittagong Hill Tracts to see for themselves the security arrangements made by the Government. I was also requested to accompany the delegation but I refused as I suspected the sincerity of the Government.

"A delegation of 18 refugee leaders headed by Upendralal Chakma, President of Refugees Association and 6 Indian Officials headed by Tripura Relief Commissioner visited

Chittagong Hill Tracts from 19 to 23 September 1993. After the visit, the delegation submitted a report which documented concrete examples of land grabbing by settlers, naming the actual owners as well as the illegal occupants and also lands in possession of Military camps. The report also documented many complaints about rape and abduction, religious persecution and forced conversion to Islam."[2]

After renewed refusal of the refugees to return to Bangladesh, Rashed Khan Menon M.P. and Kalpa Ranjan Chakma M.P. visited refugee camps again and tried to persuade the refugees to return to Chittagong Hill Tracts, but failed.

Now I quote main observations of the refugee delegation :

1. Although the Bangladesh Government declared that land grabbed by settlers was vacated, most of the homesteads and agricultural lands of the Jumma people are still being held by the settlers and by military camps.

2. The package offered to the refugees is inadequate. Unless all points under point 2 of the 13 point demand are fulfilled, the guarantee for proper rehabilitation cannot be ensured.

3. The law and order situation is not conducive to return of the refugees, The CHT is still under military control. Rape, abduction, religious persecution, Islamisation etc. still continue. Thus life of the Jumma people in the CHT is still insecure. The assurance given by the Government that the law will be applied impartially to protect the life and property of the Jumma people can be only credible if the culprits of these crimes are given exemplary punishment under the prevailing laws.

4. The refugee problem is an offshoot of the political crisis in the CHT and cannot be permanently solved without a permanent political solution. No progress has been achieved so far. It seems that the Government is killing time in the name of peace process. The peace process and the move to repatriate the refugees are nothing but a political gimmick to divert the world opinion from the actual issue".[3]

Now the Indian Government put heavy pressure on refugee

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Now the Indian Government put heavy pressure on refugee

leader Upendralal for early repatriation of the refugees, After several parleys, 5186 refugees of 1027 families returned to Chittagong Hill Tracts in two phases in 1994.

On 11-12-1994 the Repatriated Refugees Rehabilitation Committee held a press conference at the National Press Club, Dhaka, wherein they alleged the Government did not fulfil all the promises it made to the refugees and further alleged that many of the refugees did not get back their lands and homesteads, many of them were harassed and intimidated by the new settlers, who were still in occupation of their lands/homesteads.

In 'Life is not ours' published in April 1994, it was reported that "one family from Dighinala found their land occupied by an army camp. The army offered compensation and indirectly threatened the owner, who was reluctant to accept the compensation."[4]

Here it is noteworthy to mention that the government of Bangladesh rejected any involvement of the UNHCR or any other third party in the repatriation of its nationals while it pleaded for involvement and monitoring of the UNHCR in the repatriation of Muslim Rohingya Refugees, who are Burmese nationals.

The Refugees who returned to Chittagong Hill Tracts in early 1994 were only a small fraction of the total refugees languishing in Indian refugee camps and in Chittagong Hill Tracts itself. As already said, there were about 50,000 internal refugees, who did not go to India or Burma but were living in different places in Chittagong Hill Tracts, many of them with their relatives. Most of them had their own homesteads, cultivable lands and orchards, which were under occupation of the Bengalee settlers.

On 6 May 1995, there was a news in the daily 'Bhorer Kagoj' in which it was claimed that about 2500 tribals being uprooted from their ancestral lands in villages Rangipara, Bagachatar, Marishyachar, Chalyatuli, Bhasunya Adam, Khagrachari, Rangamatichara under Langadu Police Station were now living on a vacant hill near Rangamati. It was claimed in the daily that one of them Chandara Mohan Chakma, Headman of Bagachatra

Mouza got decree for his land of 7 January 1985 but he did not get possession of his land. According to the daily, Rangamati Hill District Council Chairman Parijat Kushum Chakma had a list of 6000 refugee families and last year 21 kgs of rice per family was supplied to 4000 families for six months. It was further claimed in the daily that for subsistence many tribal girls adopted prostitution unknown in tribal society in Chittagong Hill Tracts, earlier.

On 6 May 1995 there was another news headline saying 'The Government has got no headache for the internal refugees in Chittagong Hill Tracts in the daily 'Bhorer Kagoj'. The Bengali daily claimed that thousands of tribals were uprooted from hearths and homes but there was no actual account of these people. The Government had no headache for the internal refugees because the outside world did not know much of them and hence the Government did not face any embarrassment.

If the Government was sincere, it would have rehabilitated these internal refugees long ago. In that case the refugees who were languishing in refugee camps in India, would have been encouraged to come back to their motherland on their own and the Government would not require to send delegations to India to persuade them to return to their lands. After all these people were not passing happy life in refugee camps except that they could expect natural death there, which they could not expect in Hill Tracts.

However after the Peace Agreement between the government and the Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghatio Samity in December 1997 all the refugees, who were more than 67,000 returned to Bangladesh.

INDEX

1. 'Life is not ours'-April 1994, page- 12
2. 'Life is not ours'-April 1994, page-13
3. 'Life is not ours'-April 1994, page-13
4. 'Life is not ours'-April 1994, page-15

HILL DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS

With the massive exodus of the tribals to India and increase in human rights violations, the issue of Chittagong Hill Tracts gained considerable international attention. Reports of mass killings, rapes, destruction of human habitation and other human right violations were published in various print media of the world and also Amnesty International, the Antislavery Society, the International Working Group of Indigenous Affairs and other human rights organizations of the world. Allegation of gross human rights violations against the indigenous tribals of Chittagong Hill Tracts were raised annually in the United Nations Working Groups on Indigenous Populations. Allegation of gross violations of human rights went to the United Nations Human Rights Commission. From 1983, ILO also began to criticize annually and publicly Bangladesh for inadequate reporting on conditions in Chittagong Hill Tracts. In 1985, an ILO representative visited Bangladesh and filed a very critical report".

In the circumstances the Government was under serious pressure to seek settlement of Chittagong Hill Tracts issue. Hence the Government sought negotiations and a Liaison Committee was established with Upendra Lal Chakma, Nakul Chandra Tripura and K.S. Prue. A six member team called National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts and headed by Air Marshal (Retd.) A.K. Khondaker, the then Planning Minister was also formed to negotiate with Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity. The other members of the Committee were Major General Abdus Salam, the then GOC, 24th Infantry Division,

Chittagong, then Foreign Secretary Farukh Ahmed Chowdhury, then Commissioner Ali Haider Khan and others. Binoy Kumar Dewan, then Adviser to President Ershad on Chittagong Hill Tracts affairs was not invited to attend the meetings of the Committee. He was not invited even to attend the cabinet meetings called to discuss the Chittagong Hill Tracts issues. Once he was invited to attend one such meeting, but before the start of the meeting Dewan was asked to leave.

However, the real negotiating person from the Government side was Major General Abdus Salam. There were five sittings between the Government Committee and Parabatya Chattagorm Janasanghati Samity (PCJSS) when the latter submitted a five point demand, while the Government placed nine point Programme. Each side stood on its own ground. But the Government was in pressing need to come to some kinds of settlement. In these circumstances. Major General Abdus Salam directly started negotiation with the tribal leaders, whom he himself selected from the three hill districts. Some of the so called leaders were Government servants and ordinary students and most of them were never involved in Chittagong Hill Tracts Politics. He met these so called leaders of each district separately and started negotiations with them. When some leaders especially form Rangamati and Khagrachari district proposed that the leaders of the three districts should sit together and discuss the tribal problems as joint body as the problems of the three districts were same, he did not agree. He created pressure, coercion tactics and explained to them the District Local Government formulae expounded by him. When there were meetings between the National Committee members and tribal leaders. he did most of the talking. Under his pressure, threats and coercion tactics, first the leaders of Bandarban District accepted his formulae of present District Local Government Council system.

Then the Leaders of Khagrachari district succumbed to his pressures but the leaders of Rangamati district insisted on one Regional Council for the three districts. But ultimately they also yielded to his pressures when General Salam threatened them and

insisted that when the leaders of the two other districts accepted District Council formulae, they must accept the same. General Salam very often threatened the tribal leaders especially Upendra Lal Chakma of dire consequences when he (Upendra Lal Chakma) suggested to the National Committee members to conduct negotiations with Parbatya Chattagram Janasangahati Samity (PCJSS) as it was that organization which had been agitating for tribal rights and it was imperative for the Government to conclude an agreement with the leaders of this organization. But his suggestion was not heeded and the final agreement was signed between the tribal leaders of Rangamati and the National Committee members on 18 October 1998. Similar agreements were signed with the tribal leaders of Khagrachari and Bandarban districts earlier. On 14 and 15 December 1988, the sixth sitting was held between the Government representatives and PCJSS without any result though this time PCJSS agreed to Regional Council system but stuck to its other demands.

On 15 February 1989 the Rangamati Hill District Local Government bill, the Khagrachari Hill District Local Government bill and Bandarban Hill District Local Government bill were introduced in the Parliament and passed. The bills received the ascent of President Ershad on 6 March 1989. Binoy Kumar Dewan told me that he was not consulted when the agreements were signed by the National Committee members with the tribal leaders or when the District Council bills were introduced in the Parliament. Dewan told me further that President Ershad had told him earlier that he (Ershad) would grant Regional Council status to Chittagong Hill Tracts and an agreement with PCJSS was imminent. Dewan futher told me that after signing of agreement with the tribal leaders, he met President Ershad and reminded him about his earlier discussions with him. Ershad then told him that since the tribal leaders had accepted District Council System, he did not have anything to do on the issue.

On 25 June 1989, elections were held for three District Local Government Council. B.K. Dewan confided to me that, the

candidates who won in the so called election were all selected by the Army. However, he admitted that he was also involved in the process of selections. It may be mentioned here that the Chairman of Rangamati District Council Gatuam Dewan, Chairman Khagrachari Council Samiran Dewan were his nephews.

After the election, the Government wanted to prove to the World that the tribal people accepted the local Government system and normalcy has been restored in CHT. So the refugees languishing in different refugee camps in India can return to Bangladesh. The Government decided to send a delegation composed of tribal leaders and Government officials to the refugee camps to persuade the refugees to return to Bangladesh. B.K. Dewan was requested to lead the delegation. He was approached by the then Deputy Prime Minister Shah Moazzem Hossain and local Government and Cooperative Minister Naziur Rahman for this. But Dewan refused to go to India saying that if the internal refugees, who were about 50,000 are rehabilitated on their own lands, nobody would require to go to India to persuade the refugees living in India to return to Bangladesh. The refugees, who had been languishing in the camps would return on their own, when they would come to know that the internal refugees got back their lands and they were rehabilitated. After all the refugees in India were not having very easy lives in the camps except that they were living there without constant fear. Since Dewan refused to go to India, he was asked to resign. He resigned and went away to Rangamati. However, a delegation composed of Gautom Dewan, Chairman Rangamati District Council, Raja Devashish Roy and others were sent to India to persuade the refugees to return to Bangladesh. But the refugees refused to return to Bangladesh.

The term of the District Local Government Council was for three years. After overthrow of President Ershad in a mass-upsurge, Justice Sahabuddin Ahmed, the then Chief Justice of the Bangladesh Supreme Court was selected as interim President of the country by the opposition parties for holding a fair national election for establishment of democracy. Justice Sahabuddin on

assuming office of President of Bangladesh dissolved all District Councils in the country except the three in Chittagong Hill Tracts. The leaders of Pahari Gano Parishad and Pahaari Chatra Parishad (Hill People's Council and Hill Student's Council) met Justice Sahabuddin and requested him to dissolve the district councils of CHT. Instead he accompanied by General Nuruddin Khan, Chief of Army Staff went to Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban by helicopter and declared that elections to the three Hill District Councils were fairly held and there was no need to dissolve them, The Poeple of the country, especially the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts were stunned at the announcement of Justice Sahabuddin. Every body in the country knew that the army was the defacto ruler in CHT since long and no fair election was possible there.

However, the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts eagerly waited for the national elections to be held under the new Caretaker Government of Justice Sahabuddin. They expected that the next democratically elected Government would solve the vexed problems of CHT after fruitful dialogue with the Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity (PCJSS).

KHALEDA ZIA GOVERNMENT

Parliamentary Elections were held on 27 February 1991 under acting President Justice Shabuddin. Before the election the Awami League released a manifesto in which the Party said that if elected to power, they would solve the CHT Problems. Great hopes were aroused in the minds of the tribal people of CHT and all the three MPs from CHT were elected from the Awami League. However, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party led by Khaleda Zia won the elections and formed the Government with the support of Jamat-e-Islami Party, as the BNP failed to secure absolute majority. The new cabinet was sworn on March 20, 1991.

After formation of the new Government, the PCJSS expressed its willingness to start negotiation unconditionally. In October 1991, a Liaison Committee headed by Hangsadhaj Chakma was set up by the Government with the consent of PCJSS to mediate between the Government and PCJSS. In December 1991 the Government appointed an 18 (eighteen) member committee headed by the Military Commander of the Khagrachari District bypassing the Parliament for negotiation. Parliament members as well as PCJSS protested against this committee and proposed that a high level Parliamentary Committee be set up. In May 1992 Prime Minister Khaleda Zia visited India, met Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and agreed to create an atmosphere in the CHT conductive to the repatriation of tribal refugees from Tripura. In order to effectuate this promise, the Government set up a Committee of Parliamentarians headed by Col. (rtd) Oli Ahmed, then Minister of Communication but

excluding the MPs from CHTs However it was not Parliamentary Committee liable to report to the Parliament.

On 10 August 1992, the PCJSS unilaterally declared cease fire for three months and expressed its willingness to negotiate unconditionally about a political settlement and urged the Government to include an MP from CHT in the Government committee. Kalpa Ranjan Chakma MP from Khagrachari District was then included in the committee.

The first meeting between the Government Committee and the PCJSS was held on 5 November 1992. The PCJSS negotiation committee was headed by Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, President of PCJSS and further consisted of four members of JSS Central Committee.

The PCJSS put up the following demands to the Government Committee :

(1) The CHT shall be given a separate constitutional status with a legislature.

(2) Constitutional rights to the tribal people in order to safeguard their ethnic identity

(3) Statutory provisions for the status of CHT and the rights of the tribal people in the constitution.

(4) Constitutionally ensured land rights of the tribal people over the entire CHT and also laws restricting non-indigenous settlement on land in CHT and imposing control on entrance to and movement in the CHT by outsiders.

(5) Bengalee Muslims settled since 1947 should be removed to other districts of Bangladesh. With the above demands there were also other sub-demands.

In order to further the negotiation process, the PCJSS modified its demand and dropped their demand for a separate legislature.

Modified Demands of PCJSS

The main points of the modified demands were :

* Special administrative status of the CHT.

* Regional Autonomy with an elected body (Regional Council) and an administrative body (the Executive Council).

* The Executive Council shall have the power to frame rules, regulations, bylaws, orders, notices, relating to the subjects delegated to it and shall have the power to enforce them.

The Regional Council shall have the power to administer and regulate the following subjects.

1. The General Administration and law and order
2. Local Government institutions
3. Police
4. Land
5. Agriculture
6. Education
7. Forestry
8. Health
9. Law and order
10. Animal husbandry
11. Sales, purchase and settlement of land
12. Trade and Commerce
13. Small and cottage industries
14. Road and communications
15. Tourism
16. Fisheries
17. Land Revenue and taxes
18. Water and Power supply
19. Markets and Cooperatives
20. Finance
21. Social welfare, cultural affairs and information
22. Youth development and sports
23. Population control and Family Planning
24. Money landing, trade, rest houses, country liquor, graveyards and religious institutions
25. Jhum cultivation and preservation of environment
26. Jails

And also

- Constitutional provisions for the special administrative status of Chittagong Hill Tracts and for a ban on settlement of persons from other areas of Bangladesh, constitutional recognition of the ten different tribal communities.

- The Regional Council shall have the power to prepare and approve its budget independently.

- Establishment of a separate police force under the council.

- A special judicial system for tribal people.

- Place all lands except the Kaptai power station, state owned industrial areas at the disposal of the Regional Council.

- Withdrawal of security forces except the Bangladesh Rifles from CHT.

- Quota of jobs for tribals in defence and civil services, reservation of CHT Parliament seats only for the tribals.

- The name of CHT shall be changed to Jumma Land. Further the Government shall take the following measures to create a congenial atmosphere for a peaceful settlement.

- Unconditional release of tribal prisoners, abolition of all tribal cluster villages, demilitarization of CHT administration, and end to infiltration, settlement and illegal occupation of land by outsiders, withdrawal of settlers phase by phase.

- During the second and third round of talks a cease-fire agreement was formalized between the Government and the PCJSS. The Government agreed to take the following measures:

1. to dismantle tribal cluster villages
2. to release tribal prisoners,
3. to demilitarize the CHT administration and to
4. stop infiltration and expansion of Bengalee settlements and occupation of tribal lands by the settlers. (Page-6, Life is not ours, April 1994).

So far, there were seven sittings between the Government committee and the PCJSS. In the meantime the Government dismantled a few tribal cluster villages, released a few Shanti Bahini Prisoners but no action was taken on other points, rather more army camps were set up and more new settlers were taken

to CHT. According to 'State of Human Rights 1994, Bangladesh' published by Bangladesh Manabadhikar Samonnoy Parishad (Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh) 70 new Bengalee families displaced by the expansion of the Comilla Airport were settled by the Government in Bandarban in September 1993, while on 18 February four families from Chandpur and four from Sandwip were taken to Khagrachari college ground for settlement in different areas of Khagrachari district."

According to 'Live is not ours' April 1994 twenty seven new military camps were set up since 1992, (page-4). The military also remained in place and continued to exercise veto power on any matter that could affect security, though they had lowered their profile. Still now GOC, 24 Infantry Division continued to select tribal candidates for admission into medical and engineering institutes. Since Khaleda Zia came into power, four Bengalee students from the settler families were admitted every year on tribal quota in Medical colleges. It may be mentioned here that General Ershad ordered to reserve 12 seats for the tribal students in medical colleges in the country.

In the 5th sitting with PCJSS, Lt. Col. (rtd) Oil Ahmed gave the opinion of the Government in writing. The summary of the Government opinion on PCJSS's modified demand was as follows :

- The CHT has already been recognized as a special area through the three CHT local Government Council Acts and a separate administrative system. Almost all subjects mentioned have been transferred.

- The demand for a separate police force has been met through the Local Government Council Acts.

- Land rights and restrictions on the purchase of land and settlement by outsiders are included in the Local Government Acts.

- The tribal communities have already been recognized in the Local Government Acts.

- Inner Line Regulation (restriction on outsiders entering the

CHT) is contrary to the fundamental rights recognized by the constitution.

- The Local Government Council Acts have specific provisions for the settlements of disputes on tribal matters.

- With the normalization of the law and order situation in the area, all temporary camps required for security reasons will be withdrawn in phases. But the cantonments and their activities will continue.

- No reservation of Parliament seats is needed as the sitting M.P.s already belong to the tribal people. Quota for the defence services cannot be given.

- There is no logic nor a historic basis for changing the name of the CHT.

- The tribal refugees will be rehabilitated.

- The demand to create a congenial atmosphere for the peace process is a repetition of other of other demands.

- Measures with regard to the dismantling of cluster villages have been taken.

Although the Government claimed that the PCJSS's demand for a tribal Regional Council had already been fulfilled by the Hill Districts Council Acts, there were some basic differences between the Hill District Councils and the proposed Regional Council.

Under the latter, provisions were envisaged for constitutional guarantees for the status of CHT and the right of tribal people and about the land rights. The present councils have only veto power for settlement and on transfer of rights to a person, who is not a domicile of the Hill Tracts. The Councils have no veto right even on transfer of land to a domiciled non hill man and in the Hill Tracts it is not very difficult to obtain a domiciled certificate.

The sixth dialogue took place on 24 November 1993. Despite the Naniarchar massacre occurred just one week earlier, the PCJSS continued with the negotiations, showing its sincere intentions to come to a negotiated settlement. In the meeting Lt. Col. (rtd). Oli Ahmed stated that the Government wanted solution under the existing constitution and as such revised demands of

the PCJSS could not be acceded. He requested the other members of the Government Committee to give their view points. Rashed Khan Menon, M.P. opined that without discussing the points with other parties, he was not in a position to give his views. So the meeting ended without any agreement. However, the cease-fire was extended.

The 7th dialogue held on 24 November 1994 was also not fruitful. Besides the parliamentary committee, a subcommittee headed by Rashed Khan Menon M.P. was also formed by the Khaleda Zia Government and this committee held meetings with the Shanti Bahini leaders six times, which were also no fruitful.

GOVERNMENT OF SHEIKH HASINA

From the begining of 1996 a mass agitation was started against the Khaleda Zia Government for holding the next General Elections under neutral care taker government and in a mass upsurge Khaleda Zia was compelled to resign on 30 March of the same year. A care taker government headed by Justice Habibur Rahman, who recently retired as Chief Justice of the country, was formed.

After the formation of the care government, brisk political activities again started in the country. Awami League leaders and workers began to collect at the Dhanmondi office of Dhaka and there were frequent meetings and consultations among the leaders there. My friend A. K. M. Fazlul Huq Mia, who became an Advisor to Sheikh Hasina after his forced retirement form Government service by Khaleda Zia Government also attended such meetings. It may be mentioned that Fazlul Huq, also built a house at Uttara Model town like me. Sometimes I used to accompany him to the Awami League office as he was all alone and had some physical problems. At that time I met S.A.M.S. Kabria, who was the Political Advisor to Sheikh Hasina and some other Awami League Leaders.

At that time I saw the draft manifesto of the Awami League in which nothing was mentioned about Chittagong Hill Tracts. Then one day I told Kibria that in the election manifesto of the Awami League before 1991 General Elections one of the manifestoes was to settle Ctg. Hill Tracts problem politically if elected to power and for that reason all the three seats in three districts of Ctg. Hill Tracts were easily won by the Awami League

Candidates. So I requested Kibria to include the Ctg. Hill Tracts issue in the election manifesto of this year also. Kibria asked me to prepare a brief summary on Ctg. Hill Trats.

Accordingly I prepared a brief and I and Fazlul Huq went to his house and handed it over to him. After a few days Fazlul Huq told me that the issue of the Ctg. Hill Tracts was included in the election manifesto of the Awami League.

In June 1996 the General Elections were held, which was won by the Awami League. All the three seats allotted for the Ctg. Hill Tracts were again won by the Awami League Candidates. Sheikh Hasina formed the Government on 21 June and on 14 October 1996 she formed two committees- one National Committee and the other Technical Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts for solution of the vexed tribal problem. I was made a member of the Technical Committee.

The first meeting between National Committee and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity was held on 21 December 1996 at Khagrachari Circuit House. In the meeting both the parties realised that to solve the vexed problem they required to hold long and intensive discussions. So they agreed to hold the next meeting in Dhaka. Before the 2nd. meeting, I was made a member of the National Committee. In Dhaka there were altogether 6 sittings some of which were held for days.

The sixth meeting was started on 26 November 1997 and on 1 December it was announced that the National Committee and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity found a solution to the Chittagong Hill Tracts Problems and on 2 December 1997 the historic Peace Accord was signed between the National Committee and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity in presence of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Cabinet Ministers, three service Chiefs, diplomats, high civil and military officials. It may be mentioned here that three opposition members of the Parliament - one from Jatiya Party and the two others from the Bangladesh Nationalist Party were made members of National Committee. Though the member of Jatiya Party participated in all the meetings with the Jana Sanghati Samity, the B.N.P. members

refused to participate in any deliberation.

The vexed Chittagong Hill Tracts problem was more than two decades old, and its solution was not easy to solve especially when the B.N.P. declared that it would not allow the Awami League to solve it and did not allow its members to join the deliberations from the very beginning. Its solution became possible only because of sagacity, political wisdom, far sightedness and above all, the sincerity and commitment of Sheikh Hasina to solve the problem. As a matter of fact in 1985 Sheikh Hasina declared that the Ctg. Hill Tracts issue was a political problem and it should be solved politically. She also declared that the Awami League would solve the problem if in future it would come to power. A cell was also opened in the Awami League office to observe the happenings in the Ctg. Hill Tracts.

After coming to power by the Awami League, the Governments of India and Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding to the effect that in future they would not allow the secessionists and the lawbreakers of the two countries to take shelter in each other's lands.

Thus the leaders of the Parbaty Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity got the message that in future they would not get shelter on Indian soil. Further they also realised that of all the major parties in the country the Awami League and especially Sheikh Hasina was most sympathetic towards the minorities, especially towards the tribal people in the country. During the two decades struggle they also could not achieve much. So they were also serious to solve the problem.

On 10 February 1998 Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, President of the Parbaty Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity with his 739 comrades surrendered arms to Sheikh Hasina at the Khagrachari Stadium in presence of the Ministers, diplomats, high civil and military officials, mediamen and other distinguished guests and thousands of tribals though on that day the B.N.P. called a general strike in entire Ctg. Division including Khagrachari and Rangamati Hill Tracts in order to foil the grand

function. Subsequently on three other occasions the rest of the members of the Shanti Bahini, the armed wing of the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity in all about 2000 surrendered with their arms.

Sheikh Hasina showed her sincerity and sagacity and accepted all the 20 points demands of the tribal refugees, who had been in camps for more than a decade in India. As a result all the refugees, who were more than 67000 returned to Bangladesh from India.

Thus the Chittagong Hill Tracts problem, which was more than two decades old, was solved by Sheikh Hasina within 18 months of her coming to power. As per terms of the agreement four bills three of the hill district councils and the other for the Ctg. Hill Tracts Regional Council were passed by the parliament and they became acts after President Sahabuddin's assent on them on 24.03.1998.

It is estimated that during the last two decades more than twenty thousand tribals lost their lives or were found missing. Many were aslo wounded or crippled and thousands became homeless and shelter less.

Besides the refugees, who took shelter in India, there were internal refugees, whose number would not be less than 50 thousands. Further a few thousand tribals also took shelter in Myanmar, which was also said earlier.

Besides the tribals, a large number of the new settlers, who were brought by General Zia for rehabilitation in Ctg. Hill Tracts, a good number of members of Law Enforcing Agnecies also lost their lives in attacks by the Shanti Bahini. Further, about 1,50,000 new settlers were taken to cluster villages to save them from the attacks of the Shanti Bahini. They became solely dependent on dole by the government. A large number of military and para military personnel lost their lives in attacks by the Shanti Bahini. But unfortunately all the provisions of the Peace Accord could not implemented during the Awami League period due to various reasons and factors.

ADMINISTRATION UNDER 4 PARTY ALLIANCE

After coming to power after the general election held in 2001 the four party alliance headed by Begum Khaleda Zia started to disregard the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord. Even on the day of assumption of power the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia herself took the charge of Ctg. Hill Tracts Military though as per peace agreement a tribal should have been in charge of the Ministry. Instead, she appointed the tribal MP of Rangamati Hill District as Deputy Minister, who is merely a cipher and has no power. Even sometimes the Ministry's orders are issued without the Deputy Minister's Knowledge. As per peace accord, a tribal should have been appointed as Chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board, which is supposed to plan and execute all the major development programmes of Chittagong Hill Tracts. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia did not appoint a tribal as the Board's chairman. Instead she appointed Abdul Wadud Bhuiya, MP of Khagrachari District. She even did not appoint a tribal as vice chairman of the board. Hence Wadud Bhuiya ran the Board as his fief. Most of the schemes were prepared and executed to favour the settler Bengalees. Khaleda Zia appointed Justice (rtd) Mahmudur Rahman as head of the Land Commission which was supposed to settle up all land disputes between the tribals and non tribals. But she did not appoint other members of the commission and the commission did not start its work, though four years already passed. She also did not initiate to implement other provisions of the Peace Accord.

Since the Bengalee settlers who were taken to Chittagong

Hill Tracts by General Zia, they know very well that the four party government especially the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is very sympathetic towards them. Hence the Bengalee settlers very often try to terrorise the tribals, they loot their crops, occupy their lands, rape their women, they dishonor any tribal they like. Even the Buddhist monks who are respected in the tribal society are not spared. But the offenders are never booked or punished. Some people of the law enforcing agencies are very often found encouraging the settlers in their nefarious activities and sometimes they themselves become involved.

There is a cluster village for the Bengalee settlers at Bhuachari Mouza only 2/3 kilometers from Khagrachari District headquarter. There is an Army Camp headed by a Major and a police camp headed by a senior police officer to maintain law and order as there are tribal villages near the cluster village. On 19 April 2003 at deep night a large number Bengalee settlers from the cluster village accompanied by Army personnel of the nearby army camp suddenly attacked the nearby Chakma village raising Islamic war cry 'Naraye Takbir, Allah O Akbar'. They looted 23 tribal houses, burnt 9 houses. The tribals being frightened took shelter in the nearby tribal village. The tribals filed cases against the culprits, who very much known the them. But the police did not take any actions. No one was punished. Now the culprits built their own houses on the tribal lands.

Then on 26-8-2003 the Bengalee shop keepers and the settler Bengalees attacked 9 tribal villages of Mahalchari sub-district under Khagrachari district. It was reported in the National Dailys that some army personnel of Mahalchari cantonment also accompanied the Bengalees, who looted the tribal houses and burnt 371 houses after putting petrol on them. They also burnt 2 Buddhist temples, ransacked two, took away 4 statues of lord Buddha of valuable materials and broke to pieces one big statue of lord Buddha as they could not carry it. Moreover 9 women including mother and daughter were raped. It was alleged by the victims that some army personnel also raped some women. Further the Bengalee settlers killed Benode Bihari Khisa, a

former Chairman of Mahalchari Union Parishad and one 8 month old baby.

On getting the information, MP Wadud Bhuyan, Brigade Commander of Khagrachari army brigade, Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of police of the district went to Mahalchari and during their stay at Mahalchari, the biggest village Lemuchari of the area was burnt to ashes. Deputy commissioner Humayan Kabir Khan seeing such tragedy in his own eyes said to the newsman, 'The tribals are helpless and he himself is also helpless'. For saying this to the newsmen, Deputy Commissioner Humayun Kabir Khan was withdrawn from Khagrachari District. Though after the tragedy, a few miscreants were hauled up, after a few days they were all released. No culprit was put on trial. After the incident, I and Justice Naimuddin Ahmed visited affected villages, met some affected people and on our return met the UNDP representative Georgen Lissner, who sent some United Nations Staff to survey the damage. Later on the UNDP sanctioned 12 lakh US dollars for rehabilitation of the affected people.

Now the settler Bengalees have become more desperate as no culprit was punished after Bhuachari and Mahalchari tragedy. Now they are threatening the innocent tribals and occupying their lands at their will. They are telling openly that since the army and the administration are behind them, they will kill the tribals, and they will not burn their houses. Because if they burn the houses, the UNDP will build new houses for them. They ask the tribal people to go away from their villages.

On 13-5-03 the Khagrachari District Citizens Committee Organized a meeting of the Civil Society at Khagrachari. In the meeting the Representatives of Parbatya Bhikkhu Sangh (Hill Buddhist Monks Association), Khagrachari District Head men Association, and Chittagong Hill Tracts Tribal Refugees' Association were present. I was also present by special invitation. In the meeting it was told that now a days in Khagrachari District the new settlers are occupying the tribal lands, their orchards and even the lands of the Buddhist Monasteries and Hindu temples.

But the army and civil administrations are silent spectators. They are not taking any action to protect the lands of the tribals. In the meeting it was further told that Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board is now rehabilitating settler Bengalees on the land of the tribals in Manikchari, Ramgarh, Matiranga sub-districts. It was also informed that the new settlers have already occupied the lands of Parbatya Chattal Buddhist orphanage, the lands of the Buddhist temple of Kala Chand Mahajan Para, the lands of the Buddhist Temple at Tanga Mahajan Para. and the lands of the Hindu Temples at Krishna Dayal village and Noapara village and the lands of other temples also.

There is an orphanage cum High School at Saprue Karbari para near Maischari Bazaar. Venerable Sumana Mahathero is the founder of this orphanage cum School. There are eight acres of land recorded in the name of the orphanage and school. The local new settlers already have occupied 7 acres of the lands a few years back after Khaleda Zia formed a new government in 2001. Now the new settlers are determined to occupy the rest one acre land and also to force founder Sumana Mahathero to remove his orphanage cum school from the place. On 3 April 2006 in the morning some women of the settler Bengalees came to the land of the orphanage and started clearing the lands to establish their rights. Some Marma women saw this and protested, when they were attacked by the Bengalee women. At that time Sumana Mahathero was passing by the road on his way to Mahalchari. He protested to the Bengalee women , suddenly a large number of settler Bengalees accompanied by some men of the Armed Police Battalion stationed at Maischari appeared at the scene and caught Sumana Mahathero and was manhandling him. At this time some tribals also arrived at the scene when the settlers Bengalees fell on them. In the mele Sumana Mahathero escaped from the scene. In this situation hundreds of settlers Bengalees from the nearly bazaar and villages arrived and attacked the tribals. Some more tribals also joined. As a result the situation turned into communal riot- Bengalees VS tribals. The result was more than 50 tribals were injured, some of them seriously, one seriously injured Tuku

Moni Chakma was shifted to Ctg. for better treatment, others were admitted at Khagrachari District Hospital. Two settler Bengalees were also injured. They were also admitted in the Hospital. On 6-4-2006. 7 journalists of different Newspapers of Dhaka reached Khagrachari. They visited the orphanage cum shcool at Saprua Karbari para and the place, where the settlers Bengalees attacked the tribals. On their return to Khagrachari, they visited Khagrachari Hospital, where the injured tribals and the two settler Bengalees were getting treatment. They also interviewed the two victim tribal girls who were gang raped. Even on that day the victim girls were not medically examined on various pretexts. On 7-4-2006 in the morning, the journalists started to go to Nunchari and Lemuchari, where more than one hundred houses were built by the new Bengalee setttlers on the lands of the tribals under the protection of the Army. I myself and some other Human Rights activists of Khagrachari were with them. When we reached Bizitola half way to Nunchari and Lemuchari, We were stopped at the army check post. All of us gave our identity at the check post, replied to all their queries but we were not allowed to go to Nunchari and Lemuchari. So we returned to Khagrachari and went to visit Bhuachari and Betchari, where the settler Bengalees also occupied the lands of the tribals and constructed their own houses. At Bhuachari and Betchari we saw the tribal people very much frightened. At Bhuachari we were told that the women and children do not stay at their houses at night. Because the near by settler Bengalees very often threaten them and tell them to go away from their villages, otherwise they will kill all of them. We were told, the settler Bengalees tell the tribals, 'We are worshippers of Allah, who is our only God. But you tribals worship only Images, who cannot help you or protect you.' On hearing all these Complaints we were not only surprised, we were all stunned. On 8-4-2006 the Khagrachari District citizens committee distributed a leaflet throughout the district. In the leaflet it was alleged that since coming to power by Khaleda Zia in 2001, the settler Bengalees with the help and patronage of the army, occupied the lands of the tribals at

Katingtila, Lemuchari, Jaysen Karbari para, Kianghat, Pakujyachari, Kalapahar and Sindukchari under Mahalchari sub-district; at Gamaridhala, Nunchari, Bhuachari & Thalipara under Khagrachari sub district; at Pujgang and Bara Panchari Mouza under Panchari sub-district. Further the settler Bengalees occupied most of the lands of the tribals in Ramgarh, Matiranga and Manikchari sub districts of the District. In protest the tribals who were helpless, cancelled their greatest annual religious and social festival which the Chakmas call Bizu festival this year (2006). The Bizu festival is held every year for three days with great fanfare to say good bye to the old Bengali year and welcome new Bengali year, in the entire Chittagong Hill Tracts.

EPILOGUE

Bangladesh is always dependent on foreign aid in her execution of development programme for poverty alleviation. Many development works are also executed in Ctg. Hill Tracts but many of them are part of the government's counter insurgency programme or to attract more Bengalees to the Ctg. Hill Tracts or to build new roads for strategic reasons. Thus to the tribals, development means the development of the Bengalees as more Bengalees are attracted by it to Ctg. Hill Tracts and it accelerates the retreat of the tribals more in to the remote hills and forests, which has been fast disappearing now in the Hill Tracts.

The International Donor Community, especially the British and U.S. Governments have moral responsibility for protection of the tribals in CHT. Because violating the basic principle of partition policy of India in 1947, Chittagong Hill Tracts with 97.5% tribal majority was awarded by the British to Muslim Pakistan which was created as a Homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent arbitrarily and without judging the wishes of the people. Thus the British were primarily responsible for their subsequent plight. Again it was with assistance of the U.S.A. Government that the Kaptai dam was built by the then Pakistan Government and the then U.S.A. Government did not attach any condition for rehabilitation of the affected people nor did consider the humanitarian problem when granting aid for building the dam. The then U.S Government did not bother that one hundred thousands people and almost one third of the total population of the district would be uprooted from their ancestral hearths and homes by the project.

Every year Donar Countries used to offer about 2 billion dollars to Bangladesh for development programmes, many of which were executed in CHT during General Ershad's rule but against the interest of the tribal population and thus allowed themselves to become willing instruments in the hands of the Government of Bangladesh and became indirect accomplices to the human rights violations in CHT. They went no further than expressing 'Concern' about the situation in CHT. By getting aid every year, the government was able to divert its own resources for military purposes and for violating human rights in CHT in massive scale. Easily they could take concrete action such as making continued aid to Bangladesh conditional on a speedy solution to the CHT problem or applying cuts in the aid disbursed. For want of such concrete action, the Govt. of Bangladesh was able to maintain a large force in Chittagong Hill Tracts and continued to uproot the people from their ancient homes and hearts and continued other human rights violations causing their extinction inevitable in future. It is also bitter irony that the same Bengalees who only 2.5 decades ago fell victims to the genocidal policy of Pakistan, adopted the same policy to exterminate the tribals from their own land. Many of the 67 thousand refugees, who had returned from India almost after a decade after peace treaty did not get back their lands as their lands were already occupied by the Bengalee settlers. Many of them did not get back their homesteads and still now 29 families have been living in a Government Primary School at Dighinala since their return from India. There are also more than 50 thousand internal refugees, who were displaced from their ancestral houses. These people also could not go to their ancestral houses and did not get back their lands as their lands were also occupied by the new Bengalee settlers. Thus though Chittagong Hill Tracts is now peaceful, discontent is brewing and reign of terror is prevailing there.

Deprivations, and sufferings of the tribal people started with the creation of Pakistan as homeland for the Muslims of the sub continent. But they suffered most during the rule of General

Ershad, when several mass killings took place and violation of human rights of the tribal people were very frequent. General Ershad wanted to uproot the tribal people from Chittagong Hill Tracts and this was stated by his own Foreign Secretary and later on Advisor on Foreign Affairs Fakruddin Ahmed during the Care Taker Government of President Sahabuddin Ahmed of Bangladesh (1990-91). In his book 'Critical Times, Memoirs of a South Asian Diplomat', he wrote. 'My trouble with Ershad surfaced soon and the following are worth mentioning.

(a) While talking to a few correspondents, I said that all Chakmas who had crossed into India could return without any difficulty. Ershad was furious and demanded why I had not consulted with the army before talking to the correspondents. It was known that Ershad wanted that the number of Chakmas be reduced, (Page 191).'

Fakhruddin Ahmed further wrote, 'Ershad and his government should be publicly tried for being party to criminal conspiracy to create a situation in Chittagong Hill Tracts for bringing a about a particular kind of result in 1985-86 which led to large-scale movements of Chakmas in Indian territory and intensified armed revolt and insurgency movement in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

(b) Further, a high powered committee should be constituted to investigate into the alleged atrocities and that those found guilty of wanton cruelty and immorality should be duly punished.' (Page 193).

During the Vietnam war the USA bombarded heavily on the villages, towns and cities of North Vietnam but the USA forces did the most gruesome genocide at Mailai village where a few hundred innocent men, women & children were killed deliberately. When this most heinous and cruel genocide was leaked out and published in various newspapers of the world, there was public outcry throughout the world for trial of the accused. Demand for public trial of the accused was such in the USA. and the world that the USA government had to yield to it. Hence the accused Major General Samuel Coaster, Brigadier

General George Young, colonel Oran Henderson, company commander Earnest Medina and Platoon commander Lt. William Kelly had to face trial. In Chittagong Hill Tracts several Mailai like genocides took place during the rule of General Ziaur Rahman, General Ershad and Begum Khaleda Zia but no accused was tried and no one was punished. Judicial enquiry by a retired Judge of the High court was held on the genocide at Logang cluster village in Panchari subdistrict that took place on 10 April 1992 in which 300 men, women and children were killed and many more injured. The inquiry was also held on the genocide that took place at Naniyachar bazaar under Naniyachar Sub district on a market day on 17 November 1993, when 29 tribals were killed, 162 were injured and 73 were missing. The enquiry was held by another retired Judge of the High Court. But the inquiry reports were not published.

In other cases also, which were stated earlier in the book hundreds of tribals were killed, many were injured, many women were raped and killed but none was tried except once. That was in 1990. In that year on 10 October there was religious festival at Rangamati Rajban Vihar (Buddhist temple) . A group of 10 men, two old women 14 young tribal girls in all 26 were proceeding to Rangamati to join the festival. On the way they were met by several Army personnel. They separated the young girls from others and raped them. This was only once when the culprits were tried and punished. This was stated earlier also.

The Chakmas, Marmas and Tripuras of Ctg. Hill Tracts not only lived in many parts of Chittagong, Cox'sbazar, Comilla, Chandpur, Brahmanbaria, Habigonj, Sylhet, Moulabibazar districts of present Bangladesh but they ruled those places also. But this is known now only to the students of history and researchers. It is a bitter irony that in 1999 that the same countries the U.K. and the USA sent their airforces under NATO command to wage massive attacks on Yugoslavia for gross violation of human rights of the Moslems and also for uprooting them from Kosova and compelled her to withdraw her forces from Kosova. In the same year the UNO also compelled Indonesia to hold a

referendum in East Timur to determine whether the East Timurians wanted independence from Indonesia and subsequently compelled her to agree to East Timurian's independence while in the case of Chittagong Hill Tracts all remained silent spectators. They are not seen creating pressure on the Government of Bangladesh to implement the historic Peace Aecord, to stop violation of human rights and also other sinister designs of the government to uproot the tribal people from their ancient home lands. It is apprehended that if the present policy of the government is not reversed and all the provisions of the Peace Accords are not implemented, in a few years time the tribals will be totally extinct in Chittagong Hill Tracts and in future it will require the historians to do research to know that once upon a time in Chittagong Hill Tracts tribals used to rule ana live and tribal and non-tribal ratio was 97.5 : 2.5 in 1947, when the Chittagong Hill Tracts was awarded to Pakistan, created as home land of the Muslims in the sub-continent.

GLOSSARY

Ansar :	Islamic guard (para military force)
Aswini Purnima :	Buddhists religious celebration
Baishaki Purnima :	Lord Buddha's birth day
Brorogram :	Big village for Marma.Tripura (Cluster Village)
Crore :	Ten million
Dao :	Long knife
Dhakila :	Receipt for rent
Gucchagram :	Cluster village
Jhum :	Shifting cultivation on hills.
Jhumia :	Shifting cultivators
Joutha Khamar :	Cooperative farm
Kabulyat :	Document recording land lease
Karbari :	Headman of a village
Headman :	Headman of a Mauza (an area consisting of some villages)
Lakh :	100,00 (One hundred thousand)
Lathi :	A bamboo or wooden stick
Maghi Prunima :	One of the Buddhists religious festival
Maund :	Equivalent weight of about 40 kgs.
27.5 Maunds :	1 ton
Purnima :	Buddhists religious celebration of full moon Day
Shantigram :	Cluster village made for Chakmas
Shantibahini :	Peace Force (armed wing of PCJSS)
Taka :	Bangladesh currency (TAKA)
Union Council :	Smallest administrative unit below the sub-

	district
Thana :	Police Station
Thana Parishad :	Administrative Council below district level previously called Upazilla Parishad introduced during Ershad's time.
Kookie(Kuki) :	From the earliest period the hills lying to the South of Monipur, Cachar, Sylhet and north-east of Ctg. Hill Tracts were inhabited by the tribes known to the Benglees by the common name Kukie, Cookie or Kuki, which means something likes savage or wild hill people.
Lushai :	'Lu' meaning head and 'Sha' to cut so that Lushai would signify a decapitator. The British used the term 'Lushai' as the official designation for 20 different people, which is the generic name. Mizo covers all 20 people.
Magh :	The Bengalees used to call the Arkanese as Maghs, meaning, pirates as the latter used to raid eastern and southern Bangladesh frequently during the Moghal period. So the Arakanese who took shelter in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Chittagong, Cox's Bazaar and present Barguna and Patuakhali districts when their country was overrun by Burma in 1784 AD became known as Maghs, But the Maghs living in Ctg. Hill Tracts call themselves as Marmas.
Mauza :	The smallest revenue unit, the head of which is a headman.
Upazilla :	Sub-district.
Nirbahi :	Executive

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB		Asian Development Bank
BDR		Bangladesh Rifles
BFIDC		Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation
BMSP		Bangladesh Manabadhikar Samannoy Parishad.
CEC	:	Chief Election Commissioner
CHT	:	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CHTDB	:	Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board.
PCJSS	:	Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity (Chittagong Hill Tracts United People's Party)
JSS	:	Jana Sangahati Samity
NGO	:	Non-Government Organization
VDP	:	Village Defence Party
PS	:	Police Station
CCHRB	:	Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh
PDB.		Power Development Board.
OC		Officer in charge
UNO		Upazilla Nirbahi Officer
BJMC		Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation
RO		Returning Officer
ARO.		Assistant Returning Officer
SP		Superintendent of Police
PS		Police Station
UNO		Upazila Nirbahi Officer

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ANNEXURE-1

Translated English Version of Agreement Between The National Committee On Chittagong Hill Tracts Constituted By The Government And The Parbattya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity

Reposing full and unswerving allegiance in the State-sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bangladesh regarding its hill tract region within the ambit of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts on behalf of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Parbattya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity on behalf of the inhabitants of the Chittagong Hill Tracts region have reached the following Agreement, comprised of four Parts (A,B,C,D) with a view to upholding the political, social, cultural. Tracts region and expediting their socio-economic development process and preserving and developing the respective rights of all the citizens of Bangladesh.

(A) General

1. Both the parities, having considered the Chittagong Hill Tracts region as a tribe-inhabited region recognized the need of preserving the characteristics of this region and attaining the overall development thereof.

2. Both the parties have agreed to make, alter, amend and add to in consonance with the consensus and responsibilities expressed in the different sectors of this Agreement, the relevant laws, regulations and practices according to law as early as possible.

3. In order to monitor the process of implementation of this Agreement an Implementation Committee will be formed with the following Members:

(a) A Member to be nonimated by the Prime MInister Convenor

b) The Chairman of the Task Force formed within the purview of this agreement : Member

c) The President of the Parbattya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity : Member

4. The Agreement shall come into force from the date of its signing and execution by both the parties. This Agreement shall remain valid from the date of its effect until all the steps are executed as per this Agreement.

(B) Hill District Local Government Council

Hill District Council

Both the parties have agreed to alter, amend, add to and repeal the Parbattya Zilla Sthanio Sarker Parishad Ayin, 1989 (Rangamati Parbattya Zilla Sthanio Sarker Parshad Ayin, 1989; Bandarban Parbattya Zilla Sthanio Sarker Parishad Ayin, 1989, Khagrachari Parbattya Zilla Sthanio Sarker Parishad Ayin, 1989) and its various sections, as may be in force till the date of commencement of this Agreement in the manner set forth hereunder.

1. The word, 'Tribe' used in the various sections of the Council Act shall remain intact.

2. The name of 'Parbattya Zilla Sthanio Sarker Parishad' shall be amended and this Council shall be renamed as 'Parbattya Zilla Parishad.'

3. 'Non-tribal Permanent Resident' shall mean a person who is not a tribal and who has lands of lawful entitlement in the hill districts and who generally lives in the hill districts at a specific address.

4. a) There shall be 3 (three) seats for women in every Hill District Council. One third (1/3) of these seats shall be for the 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" appearing in the second life of sub-section (5) of Section 4 shall be substituted by the words 'Circle Chief' and 'Circle Chief's' respectively.

d) The following sub-section shall be added to Section 4 : "Whether a person is a non-tribal or not and, if so, which community he is a member of, shall be determined, subject to his producing a certificate from the concerned Mowza Headman/Union Council Chairman/Municipality Chairman, by the concerned Circle Chief and without a certificate in this connection being received from the Circle Chief, no person shall be eligible as a non-tribal to be candidate for the post of a non-tribal Member."

5. It is provided in Section 7 that a person elected to the post of Chairman or Member shall, before assumption of office swear or affairm oath before the Commissioner, Chittagong Division. This shall be amended by provisions to the effect that the Members shall swear or affairm oath before "a judge of the High Court Division," instead of the "Commissioner, Chittagong Division."

6. The words 'to the Commissioner, Chittagong Division' appearing in the fourth line of Section 8 shall be substituted by the words 'as per Election Rules'.

7. The words 'three years' in the second line of Section 10 shall be substituted by the words 'five years'.

8. It shall be provided, in Section 14 that in the event of the post of Chairman falling vacant for any cause or of his absence, a tribal member elected by other members of the Council shall preside over and discharge other responsibilities.

9. The existing Section 17 shall be substituted by the following sentences : "A person shall be entitled to be considered as legally eligible for enlistment in the Voters' List if he is (1) a citizen of Bangladesh, (2) not below 18 years of age, (3) not declared by any competent court to be of unsoundy mind, (4) a permanent resident of the hill district."

10. The words delimitation of constituencies appearing in sub-section 2 of Section 20 shall be distinctly incorporated.

11. There shall be a provision in sub-section 2 of Section 25 to the effect that the Chairman and in his absence a tribal Member elected by the other Members shall preside over all the meetings of the Council.

12. Since the entire area of Khagrachari districts is not encompassed by the Mong Circle, the words 'Khagrachari Mong Chief" appearing in Section 26 of the Act regarding Khagrachari Hill District Council shall be substituted by the words "Mong Circle Chief and Chakma Circle Chief.' Similarly, there shall be provision that the Bomang Circle Chief, at his will or on being invited, shall be entitled to attend the meetings of Bandarban Hill District Council.

13. It shall be provided in sub-section (1) and (2) of Section 31 that a Chief Executive Officer of the rank of a Deputy Secretary to the government shall be the Secretary of the Council and the tribal officers shall be given preference for appointment to this post.

14. (a) There shall be provision in sub-section (1) of Section 32 that the Council shall be competent, subject to approval by the Government, to create posts of officers and employees of different categories for the purpose of smooth completion of the works of the Council.

b) Sub-section (2) of Section 32 shall be formulated in the following manner: "The Council shall, as per Regulations, have competence to appoint Class-III and Class-IV employees and to transfer suspend, dismiss, remove or otherwise punish them; Provided that it shall be the condition attached to such appointments that the tribal residents of the district concerned shall have right to preferences."

c) It shall be provided in sub-section (3) of Section 32 that the Government shall, as per Regulations, have the authority to appoint officers in consultation with the Council and to transfer elsewhere, suspend, dismiss, remove or otherwise punish them.

15. The words as per Rules shall be inserted in sub-section

(3) of Section 33.

16. The words 'or in any other way determined by the Government' appearing in the third line of sub-section (1) of Section 36 shall be deleted.

17 . a) The provision starting with 'Fourthly' in sub-section (1) of Section 37 of the original Act shall remain in tact.

b) The pharac 'as per rules' shall be inserted in clause 'D' of sub-section (2) of Section 37.

18. Sub-section (3) of Section 38 shall be deleted and sub-section (4) shall be formulated as follows: 'At any time before the expiry of a financial year, a budget may be prepared and approved, if necessary, for that financial year.'

19. The following sub-section shall be added to Section 42 : "(4) The Council shall be competent to prepare, undertake and implement, with the help of money receivable from the Government development projects in respect of the matters transferred to it and all development programmes at national level shall be implemented through the Council by the concerned Ministry/Department/ Institution."

20. The word 'Government' appearing in the second line of sub-section (2) of Section 45 shall be substituted by the word 'Council'.

21. Sections 50, 51 and 52 shall be repealed and in their stead the following Section shall be enacted, "In order to ensure harmonization of the activities of the Council with the purposes of this Act, the Government shall have the authority to give the Council advice or instructive orders, if necessary. If the Government be convinced on having received evidence that any activity done or proposed to be done by or on behalf of the Council is inconsistent with law or contrary to public interest, it shall then have the authority to call for in writting from the council information and explanation about the matter concerned and give advice or directives in that regard.

22. The words 'after the expiry of the period of being defunct' in Sub-section (3) of Section 53, shall be deleted and instead

thereof the words 'Within 90 days of cancellation of the Council' shall be inserted before the words 'this Act'.

23. The word 'Government' will be replaced by the word "Ministry" in the third and fourth lines of Section 61.

24. a) Sub-section (1) Section 62 shall be amended as follows: "Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, Sub-Inspectors and all members of ranks subordinate thereto of the Hill District Police shall be appointed by the Council as per Regulations and prescribed procedures and the Council shall be competent to transfer them and take punitive action against them in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the Regulations."

Provided that, the tribals of the district shall have preference in case of the said appointments.

b) The wrods "subject to the provisions of all other laws for the time being in force" as appear in the second line of sub-section (3) of Section 62 shall repealed and substituted by the words "as per Law and Rules."

25. The words 'to render assistance' in the third line of Section 63 shall remain in tact.

26. Section 64 shall be amended and enacted as follows:

"a) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, no land and premises, including the leas able Khas lands, within the territorial limits of the Hill Districts shall be transferable by Ijara, Settlement, purchase of sale except with the prior permission of the Council.

Provided that this provision shall not be applicable in respect of the area of Reserved Forest. Kaptai Hydro-Electric Project, Betbunia Satellite Station, State-owned industries and factories and the lands recorded in the name of the Government."

b) Notwithstanding anything contacted in any other law for the time being in force, no land, hill or forest under the control and within the jurisdiction of the Council shall be acquired or transferred by the Government without consultation with or the consent of the Council.

c) The Parishad may supervise and control the works of the Headman, Chairman, Amins, Surveyors, Kanungos and Assistant Commissioners land).

d) The reclaimed fringe lands of Kaptai Lake shall be leased our on priority basis to the original owners."

27. Section 65 shall be amended and formulated as follows: "Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law or the time being in force, the responsibility of collecting the Land Development Tax of the district shall rest in the hands of the Council and the collected tax of the district shall be deposited in the fund of the Council."

28. Section 67 shall be amended and formulated as follows: "In the event of necessary for harmonization of the works of the Council and the Governmental authorities, the Government or the Council shall raise proposals on specific subject and the harmonization of works shall be effected through mutual communications between the Government and the Council."

29. Sub-section (1) of Section 68 shall be amended and formulated as follows: "With a view to carrying out the purpose of this Act, the Government may, upon consultation with the Council, make Rules through Notification in the Government official Gazette and the Council shall have a right to apply to the Government for review of the said Rules even after they are already made.

30. a) The words "with prior approval of the Government" in the first and second lines of sub-section (1) of Section 69 shall be repealed and after the words "may make" in the third line the following proviso shall be added.

"Provided that if the Government does not agree with any part of the Regulations made, it shall be competent to give advice or directive to the Council towards amendment of the said Regulations."

b) The words conferment of the power of the Chairman on any officer of the 'Council' in Clause (h) of sub-section (2) of Section 69 shall be deleted.

31. Section 70 shall be deleted.

32. Section 79 shall be amended and formulated as follows:

"If, in the opinion of the Council, any law made by the National Parliament or by any other authority as applicable to the hill district is one which creates hardship for the said district or is objectionable for the tribals, the Council may, upon stating the cause of hardship or objection, apply to the Government in writing for amending or relaxing the application of such law and the Government may take remedial measures in accordance with such application."

33. a) The word 'discipline' appearing in Item No. 1 under the heading the Activities of the Council in the First Schedule shall be substituted by the word 'supervision.'

b) In Item No 3 of the Council's Activities, the following shall be added : "(1) Vocational education, (2) Primary education through mother tongue, (3) Secondary education."

c) The words 'reserved or appearing' in clause 6 (b) of the Council's Activities shall be deleted.

34. The following subject shall be included in the Functions and the Responsibilities of the Hill District Council.

a) Land and land management;

b) Police (local);

c) Tribal law and social justice;

d) Youth welfare;

e) Environmental protection and development;

f) Local tourism;

g) Improvement Trust and other Institutions concerning local administration, other than Municipality and Union Council;

h) Issuing license for local commerce and industries;

i) Proper utilization of rivers and streams, canals and beels and irrigation system other than water resources of the Kaptai Lake;

j) Maintaining of the statistics of birth and deaths;

k) Wholesale business;

l) Joom cultivation.

35. The following items shall be added to the subjects for imposition of taxes, rates, tolls and fees by the Council as stated

in the Second Schedule:

a) Registration fees for non-mechanical transports;

b) Tax on buying and selling of commodities;

c) Holding tax on lands and buildings;

d) Tax on selling of domestic animals;

e) Fees for community adjudication;

f) Holding tax on Government and Non-government industries;

g) A specified part of the royalty on forest resources;

h) Supplementary Tax on cinema, Jatra, Circus;

i) Part of the royalty received by the Government against granting Licenses of Pattas for the exploration and exploitation of mineral resources;

j) Tax on business;

k) Tax on lottery;

l) Tax on catching fish.

(C) Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council

1. Subject to amendment and addition of the various sections in the Parbattya Zilla Sthanio Sarker Parishad Ayin, 1989 (Act, IXX, XX and XXI of 1989) for the purpose of making the Hill District Councils more powerful and effective, a Regional Council will be formed comprising that Local Government Councils of the three Hill Districts.

2. The elected Members of the Hill District Councils shall by indirect mode, elect the Chairman of this Council whose status shall be equivalent to that a State Minister and who shall be a tribal.

3. The Council shall consist of 22 (twenty two) Members including the Chairman. Two thirds of the Members shall be elected from amongst the tribal. The Council shall determine the modality of its functioning.

The constitution of the Council shall be as follows:

Chairman	1 person
Member (tribal male)	12 persons
Member (tribal female)	2 persons

Member (Non-tribal male) 6 persons
Member (Non-tribal female) 1 person

Of the male tribal Members, 5 shall be elected from the Chakma tribal, 3 from Marma tribe, 2 from the Tripura tribe, 1 from the Murong and Tanchangya tribes and 1 person from amongst the Lusai, Bwom, Pangkho, Khumi, Clak and Khiang tribes.

Of the female tribal Members. 2 persons shall be elected form each district.

Of the female tribal members, 1 person shall be elected from the Chakma tribe and another from the rest of the tribes.

4. There shall be reserved 3 (three) seats reserved for the women in the Council and one third (1/3) thereof shall be for the non-tribals.

5. The Members of the Council shall by indirect mode, be elected by the elected Members of the three Hill District Councils. The Chairmen of the three hill districts shall be ex-officio Members of the Council and they shall have right to vote. The qualification and disqualification of candidature for membership of the Council shall be similar to those of the Members of the Hill District Councils.

6. The tenure of office of the Council shall be 5 (five) years. The procedure and other matters regarding the preparation and approval of the budget of the Council, appointment and control of the officers and employee, etc. shall be similar to the procedure and other matters as are applicable to the Hill District Councils.

7. There shall be in the Council, a Chief Executive Officer of the rank equivalent to that of a Joint Secretary to the Government and the tribal candidate shall be given preference for appointment to this post.

8. a) If the post of Chairman of the Council falls vacant, one person from amongst the other tribal Members shall be, by indirect mode, elected Chairman for the interim period by the Members of the three hill district councils.

b) If the post of a Member of the Council falls vacant for any

reason, it shall be filled up by by-election.

9. a) The Council shall coordinate all the development activities carried out by the three Hill District Councils and shall also superintend and harmonize all the affairs assigned to the three Hill District Councils. Besides, in the event of lack of harmony or any inconsistency being found in the discharge of responsibilities given to the three District Councils, the decision of the Regional Council shall be final.

b) This Council shall coordinate and supervise the Local Councils, including the municipalities.

c) The Regional Council shall coordinate and supervise the three Hill District Councils in matters of general administration, law and order and development.

d) The Council shall coordinate the activities of the NGOs in additional to disaster management and carrying out the relief of programmes.

e) Tribal Law and Community adjudication shall be within the jurisdiction of the Regional Council.

f) The Council shall be competent to grant License for heavy industries.

10. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board shall discharge the assigned duties under the general and overall supervision of the Council. The Government shall give preference to the eligible tribal candidates in appointing the Chairman of the Development Board.

11. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulations of 1900 and other related Acts, Rules and Ordinances being found inconsistent with the Local Government Council Act of 1989, it shall be removed by law as per advice and recommendations of the Regional Council.

12. Until the formation of the Regional Council through direct and indirect election, the Government shall be competent to constitute an interim Regional Council and to empower it to discharge the responsibilities of assignable to the council.

13. In making any law in connection with Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Government shall enact such law in consultation with

and as per advice of the Regional Council. If it becomes necessary to amend any law which bears an adverse effect on the development of the three hill districts and welfare of the tribal people or to enact new law, the Council shall be competent to apply or submit recommendations to the Government.

14. The source of the Council Funds shall be as follows:

a) Money received from the District Council fund.

b) Money or Profits received from all the properties vested in or managed by the Council.

c) Loans and Grants from the Government and other authorities.

d) Grants given by any institutions or person.

e) Profits earned from the investments of the Council Fund.

f) Any money received by the Council.

g) Money received from other sources provided to the Council as per direction of the Government.

(D) Rehabilitation General Amnesty And Other Matters

In order to restore normalcy in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region and, to that end, in respect of the works and matters of rehabilitation, general amnesty and allied issues, both the parties have arrived at the following consensus and agreed to undertake programmes as follows:

1. With a view to brining the tribal refugees staying in the Trupura State of India back to the country, an agreement was signed on the 9 day of March '97 at Agratala of Tripura State between the Government and the Leaders of tribal refugees. In pursuance of that Agreement, the tribal refugees started coming back to the country since the 28 day of March '97. This process shall remain un-hindered and to that end all possible cooperation shall be given from the end of the Janasanghati Samity. After ascertaining the identity of the internally displaced persons of the three hill districts, rehabilitation measures shall be undertaken through a Task Force.

2. After the signing of the Agreement between the Government and the Janasanghati Samity and implementation

thereof and rehabilitation of the tribal refugees and internally displaced tribals, the Government shall, as soon as possible, commence, in consultation with the Regional Council to be constituted under this Agreement, the land-survey in Chittagong Hill Tracts and finally determine the land-ownership of the tribal people through settling the land-disputes on proper verification and shall record theirs lands and ensure their rights thereto.

3. In order to ensure the land-ownership of tribal families having no land or lands below 2 (two) acres, the Government shall, subject to availability of land in the locality, ensure settling 2 (two) acres of land per family. In the event of non-availability of required land, grove-lands shall be tapped.

4. A Commission (Land Commission) shall be constituted under the leadership of a retired Justice for settlement of disputes regarding lands and premises. This Commission shall, in addition to early disposal of land dispute of the rehabilitated refugees, have full authority to annul the rights of ownership of those hills and lands which have been illegally settled and in respect of which illegal dispossession has taken place. No Appeal shall be maintainable against the Judgment of this Commission and the decision of this Commission shall be deemed to be final. This provision shall be applicable in case of Fringe-lands.

5. This commission shall be constituted with the following Members:

a) Retired Justice;

b) Circle Chief (concerned);

c) Chairman/Representative of the Regional Council;

d) Divisional Commissioner/Additional Commissioner;

e) Chairman of the District Council (concerned).

6. a) The tenure of office the Commission shall be three years. But its tenure shall be extendible in consultation with the Regional Council.

b) The commission shall resolve the disputes in consonance with the law, custom and practice in force in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

7. The loans which were taken by the tribal refugees from Government agencies, but could not be properly utilized on

account of the state of belligerency, shall be remitted along with interest.

8. Land allocation for rubber and other plantations: Out of the lands allotted to non-tribal and non-local persons for rubber and other plantations, the lease (allocation) in respect of the lands of those who did not undertake any project during the last ten years or did not properly utilize the lands shall be cancelled.

9. The Government shall allocate additional finance on priority basis for the implementation of increased number of projects towards developments in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The Government shall implement new Projects on priority basis for the construction of required infrastructure for the development of the region and shall allocate necessary finance to this end. Keeping in view of the environment of this region the Government shall encourage the development of tourism facilities for the tourists, indigenous and foreign.

10. Quota reservation and stipend grant: Government shall maintain the quota system for the tribals in respect of government service and in institutions for higher studies until their attainment of parity with other regions of the country. To the aforesaid end, the Government shall grant increased number of stipends for the tribal male and female students in the educational institutions. The Government shall provide necessary scholarship for higher education and research in foreign countries.

11. The Government and the Elected Representatives shall strive to uphold the characteristics of tribal creed and culture. The Government shall patronize and help the cultural activities of the tribes towards their efflorescence at national level.

12. The Janasanghati Samity shall, within 45 (forty five) days of the signing of this Agreement, submit lists of all its members to the Government including the armed ones, and the particulars of arms and ammunitions in its possession and within its control.

13. The Government and the Janasanghati Samity shall, within 45 (forty five) days of the signing of this Agreement, jointly determine the date, time and place for surrender of arms. After the determination of the date and place for surrender of arms and ammunitions of the listed members of Janasanghati

Samity, all sorts of security shall be provided for the return of the members of Janasanghati Samity as per list also of their family members to normal life.

14. The Government shall declare amnesty for those members who will surrender arms and ammunition on the scheduled date. The Government shall withdraw all those cases which were lodged against them.

15. In the event of any person's failing to surrender arms within the specified time-limit, the Government shall take-legal action against such a person.

16. A general amnesty shall be given to all the members of the Janasanghati Samity after their return to normal life and a general amnesty shall also be given to all the permanent inhabitants connected with the activities of the Janasanghati Samity.

a) For the purpose of rehabilitating the returning members of the Janasanghati Samity, Taka 50,000 shall be given per family at a time.

b) After surrender of arms and return to normal life of all such members, including the armed ones of the Janasanghati Samity against whom cases were filed, warrants of arrest were issued 'hulias' were published or sentence was given on trial in absentia, as against them all cases shall be withdrawn, warrants of arrest and 'hulias' shall be called back and sentence given in absentia shall be remitted as early as possible. If any member of the Janasanghati Samity is in jail, he too shall be set at liberty.

c) Similarly; after surrender of arms and return to normal life, no case shall be filed against or punishment be given to or arrest be made of any person merely on account of his/her being a member of the Janasanghati Samity.

d) The loans which were taken by such members of the Janasanghati Samity from Government Banks and Establishments, who could not have utilized the loan properly on account of the state of belligerency, shall be remitted with interest.

e) Those of the returned members of the Janasanghati Samity, who were previously in the service of the Government or of

government organizations, shall be reinstated to their respective posts and the members of the Janasanghati Samity and members of their qualification. In this respect government policy regarding relaxation of age-bar for them shall be followed.

f) Priority shall be given to the members of the Janasanghati Samity in giving bank loans on simple terms with a view to helping their self-employment generating activities such as cottage industries, horticulture, etc.

g) Education facilities shall be provided to the children of the members of the Janasanghati Samity and their certificates obtained from foreign Boards and Academic Institutions shall be treated as valid.

17. a) After the signing and execution of the Agreement between the Government and the Janasanghati Samity and immediately after return of the members of Janasanghati Samity to normal life, all Defence Force, excepting the Border Security Force (BDR) and permanent Army establishments (being those three at the three district head-quarters and those at Alikadam, Ruma and Dighinala), shall be taken back by phases from the Chittagong Hill Tracts to permanent cantonments and the time-limit shall be fixed for this purpose. In case of deterioration of law and order situation, in time of natural calamities and for similar other purposes. Armed Forces may be deployed under the authority of the civil administration in adherence to laws and Rules as are applicable to all the other parts of the country. In this respect, the Regional Council may, in order to get the required or timely help make requests to the appropriate authority.

b) The lands and premises abandoned by the cantonments the Camps of the military and paramilitary forces shall be made over to their real owners or the Hill District Councils.

18. Against all the posts of officers of all ranks and employees of different classes in the government, semi-government, local government and autonomous bodies of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the permanent dwellers of the Chittagong Hill Tracts shall be appointed, subject to priority being given to the tribals. But in case of non-availability of a qualified person among the permanent dwellers of Chittagong Hill Tracts for any

post appointment may be made to such post on deputation from the Government or for a definite period.

19. A Ministry on Chittagong Hill Tracts shall be established by appointing a Minister from among the tribals. The following Advisory Committee shall be constituted to lend support to this Ministry.

1) Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs;

2) Chairman/Representative, Regional Council;

3) Chairman/Representative, Rangamati Hill Distract Council;

4) Chairman/Representative, Khagrachari Hill District Council;

5) Chairman/Representative, Bandarban Hill District Council;

6) Member of the Parliament, Rangamati;

7) Member of the Parliament, Khagrachari;

8) Member of the Parliament, Bandarban;

9) Chakma Raja;

10) Bomang Raja;

11) Mong Raja;

12) Three non-tribal Members nominated by the Government from amongst the permanent residents of the three hill districts.

This Agreement is prepared in the aforesaid manner in Bengali language and executed and signed in Dhaka on Agrahayan 18, 1404 corresponding to December 2, 1997.

On behalf of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Sd/Illegible

(Abul Hsaanat Abdullah)

National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts, Government of Bangladesh

On behalf of the inhabitants of Chittagong Hill Tracts

Sd/Illegible

(Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma)

Parbattya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity

ANNEXURE-2

23 July 1947

Dear Mr. Nehru,

Please refer to your letter dated 19 July about the Chittagong Hill Tracts. I agree with you that in the Indian Independence Act, 1947, the Chittagong Hill Tracts have been included as part of India. This is in accordance with the principles of the Statement of 3 June, since the Chittagong Hill Tracts form a predominantly non-Muslim area.

I am sure, however, that you will agree with me that, now that the Boundary Commission has been set up we must leave it to the Commission to determine whether any issue that might be raised before it does or does not fall within its terms of reference.

Yours sincerely,

Mountbatten of Burma

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Source: Durga Das, edited Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945-50 Vol. IV (Ahmedabad : Nabajiban Publishing House), p. 166

ANNEXURE-3

Members of the National Committee formed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

1. Abul Hsanat Abdullah, Chief Whip and Member of Parliament
2. A.B.M. Mohiuddin Chowdhury, Mayor Chittagong City Corporation
3. Engineer Mosharaf Hossain, Member of Parliament
4. Ataur Rahman Kaiser, Social Worker
5. Kalpa Ranjan Chakma, Member of Parliament
6. Dipanker Talukdar, Member of Parliament
7. Bir Bahadur, Member of Parliament
8. Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, Member of Parliament
9. Syed Wahidul Alam, Member of Parliament
10. Advocate Fazle Rabbi, Member of Parliament
11. Ali Haidar Khan, Retired Commissioner, Chittagong Divission
12. Saradindu Sekhar Chakma, Retired Addt. Secretary Government of Bangladesh.

Leaders of Parbattya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity

1. Jyotirindra Bodhiprya Larma alias Santu Larma
2. Goutam Chakma
3. Rupayan Dewan
4. Sudhasindhu Khisa
5. Raktotpal Tripura

ANNEXURE-4

Commissioner
Chittagong Division

Memo No. 665

Mr.

It has been decided that landless/river erosion affected people from your district will be settled in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTS). The settlement will be done in selected zones and each family will be given khas land free of cost according to the following scale;

Plain land- 2.5 acres
Plain and bumpy land mixed-4 acres
Hilly land-5 acres

It has been decided that you will send 5000 families.

You are requested to collect particulars of intending and suitable families from the chairman of the concerned Union Parishad, sort them out and furnish list to the Deputy Commissioner, Chittagong Hill Tracts through special messenger by the 30th September, 1980 at the latest. To keep proper record of the selected settlers, group leaders and issue of identify card in all the districts in an uniform manner, detail guidelines have been prepared (copy enclosed) so that you can ensure strict compliance of the concerned Union Parishad Chairman.

It is the desire of the Government that the concerned Deputy Commissioner will give top priority to their work and make the programme a success.

You are requested to immediately call a meeting of the concerned Chairman, Union Parishads and give them detailed instructions in this matter.

I would like to have a report about the action by you in the matter by 15-9-80 positively for information of the Government.

Sd/Saifuddin Ahmed
4.9.80
Commissioner
Chittagong Division.

ANNEXURE-5

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Deputy Commissioner
Chittagong Hill Tracts

Memo No. 1025(9)c Dated Rangamati, 15 September, '80

From : Ali Haider Khan
Deputy Commissioner
Chittagong Hill Tracts
To : Mr

Sub : Settlement of Landless non-tribal families in Chittagong Hill Tracts-2nd phase.

With reference to our discussion in Dhaka on 21-8-80 and reference to Commissioner, Chittagong Division's letter no. 66(a)c dated 4-9-80 on the above noted subject, I Furnish below a guideline regarding the programme of settlement of landless non-tribal families from other districts in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

i) Selection of families should be completed by 15 October, 1980.

ii) The chairman of the Union Parishads concerned will issue identity card to the selected families in the form enclosed at annexure(A).

iii) Names of families group wise should be sent to us by 22 October, 1980. On receipt of these lists we shall decide as to where they will be rehabilitated and shall indicate to you on which dates the groups should report to the reception centre at the Haji comp (Pilgrimage camp), Chittagong.

iv) At the reception Center an officer will take care of the settlers and will make arrangements for their journies to the rehabilitation blocks. The settlers will however, arrange their own food.

v) At the reception center settlers will be given taka 200.00 per family and on their arrival at their rehabilitation blocks they will be paid another instalment of taka 500.00. After that, each family will be given further grants taka 200.00 per month for five whole months. In addition for six months, the settlers will be given 12 seers of wheat per family per week under food for Work Programme for construction of their own houses, reclaiming their lands, making village roads for them and for digging tanks in their own paras (areas). For another six months there will be provision for wheat under strict Food for Work Programme.

vi) In rehabilitation blocks each family will be settled with khas land at the following rate:

a) 5 acres hill land, b) 4 acres mixed land, c) 2.5 acres paddy land.

I enclose herewith an annexure B. and instruction for the chairman of the Union Parishad where from the families will be selected.

sd/Ali Haider Khan
Deputy Commissioner
Chittagong Hill Racts.

ANNEXURE-6

Khagrachari Zone
Khagrachari Cantonment
Telephone : Ministry : Nil

21 August, '86
5030/9/59/Op
see Distribution :

Disbandment of cloth

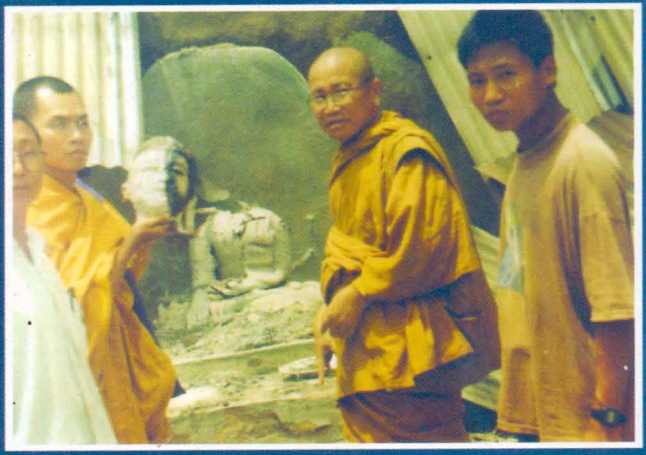
1. No tribals will put on olive green and black shirts/pants with immediate effect

2. Please inform all chairman and members of the union councils and Headmans and karbaris of the Mowzas and paras.

Sd/Md. Anisur Rahman
Major,
For Zone Commander

Distribution:
Action:
Upazilla Chairman, Khagrachari
Upazilla Chairman, Matiranga
Memo no. 667(50) general

Copy forwarded for information and necessary action:
1. Chairman (All UPS)
2. Member (all wards of U.P)
3. Headman (all Mouzas)
4. Karbari (All Paras).



Broken statue of Lord Buddha at Lemuchari village temple after Mahalchari tragedy on 26th August 2003