Chapter 3
Socioeconomic Status and Development of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh: An Overview

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3.1 Introduction

The processes of growth, poverty alleviation, and sustainable resource management in the Chittagong Hill Tracts' (CHT) area of Bangladesh were seriously obstructed by 20 years of insurgency and armed conflict in the region which lasted until recent times. This period of insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh was brought to a formal end on the 2nd December 1997 with the signing of a peace agreement between the Bangladesh National Committee on the Chittagong Hill Tracts, representing the Government of Bangladesh, and the 'Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity' (PCJSS), representing the political wing of the insurgent 'Shanti Bahini', (Peaceful Sister(s) composed mainly of the militants among the tribe of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The two sides affirmed their full and firm allegiance to territorial integrity, sovereignty, and the constitution of Bangladesh.

The agreement was the outcome of a political process of peaceful dialogues and negotiations that extended over the tenures of three successive governments, dating from the eighties. Drawn up, finalised, and signed within a year and a half of the inception of the tenure of the Awami League Government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the peace agreement accommodated the demands for cultural, religious, and economic autonomy and equity of the hill people within the framework of sovereign

Bangladesh and hence successfully put an end to the armed violence in the strategic and economically promising territory. The process and the context in which a mutually agreed upon peace accord was brought to the region were democratic and peaceful. This was a natural outcome of the historical processes pertaining in Bangladesh.

Now that the peace agreement has been signed and democratising and participative measures have thrown open the doors of full participation to the hill people of the CHT at large, one can look forward to a future marked by peace and development in the CHT area.

The CHT peace agreement took as many as 25 meetings between the three successive governments of Bangladesh and the 'Parbattya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity' (PCJS). These meetings, records have it, were held five times during the government of former president H.M. Ershad, 13 times during the regime of Begum Khaleda Zia's BNP Government, and seven times between the National Committee of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (NCCHT) and 'Parbattya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity' (PCJSS). The present Awami League Government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had worked hard for what it perceived as an 'innovative, landmark achievement' that would bring peace and prosperity and facilitate the cause of national integration.

The real perspective of the historic peace agreement in the CHT would be missed, if one did not take into account the cooperation extended by India in the entire peace process. Scholars and researchers have pointed out time and again that India had an undeniable security interest in the political developments in the CHT. Many writers who have followed the developments in the CHT region of Bangladesh have stated that it was in Indian strategic interests that CHT tribal groups remained well disposed to the Indian government and did not establish a coalition with rebels in the seven Indian states neighbouring the Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. These scholars and writers have predicted, and quite rightly, that, with implementation of the peace accord and the delegation of more administrative powers to the tribal leadership, the economic, political, and military clout of Bangladesh in the CHT might wane.

It should be mentioned that, true to the prediction of some CHT watchers, the CHT peace agreement has not been accepted by all the ethnic groups in the region that had taken up arms against the government. Scattered incidents of violence have been taking place in the area ever since the signing of the peace agreement. Nevertheless, it is being increasingly felt that the government of Bangladesh has a genuine interest in bringing the hill people of the CHT region into the mainstream of national life. The hill leaders, on the other hand, seem to have realised by now that they will need the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) to enforce their newly secured authority. The government, on the other hand, will have to remain cautious so that the armed activists in the CHT do not misuse the new institutional structure to the benefit of those who have, in the past, harboured secessionist designs.

One cannot overlook the fact that the CHT, comprising three districts situated between 21.25 and 23.45 north latitudes and between 91.45 and 92.50 longitudes, have a landmass of 13,181 square kilometres (5,089 sq. miles) and account for about one/tenth of the total territory of the country, and that, with nearly half a million hill people and an almost equal number of Bengali settlers, it is an area of strategic importance from more than one perspective.Among the reasons for the importance of the hill tracts are the potentials of the maritime port of Chittagong, industries, Chittagong city, and the power generated by the hydroelectric resources located in the CHT. Navigation and irrigation through such rivers as the Karnaphuli, Sangu, Matamuhuri, Halda, and their tributaries also depend on the CHT ambience. Observers have also welcomed the CHT peace agreement on the basis of the continued exploration for gas and oil in the region.

The CHT peace accord provided for the formation of a 22-member Chittagong Hill Tracts' Regional Council (CHTRC) to be headed by a hill person with the status of a State Minister. One third of the council members are to be from the non-hill people, mainly Bengalis from Bangladesh settled in the CHT. The members of the hill district council are responsible for electing the CHRTC Chairman and members.

On 6th September 1999 the government formed a 22-member interim CHT Regional Council with PCJSS leader, Jotyrindra Bodhipriya Larma, alias Santu Larma, as its Chairman. This fulfils a provision in the CHT Regional Council Act 1998, legislated in Parliament on May 6, 1998. Meanwhile, Jotyrindra Bodhipriya Larma raised an objection to the formation of the interim council, accusing the government of 'violation of the peace treaty'. PCJSS sources in Khagrachari said the tribal leaders disapproved of inclusion of three Bengali leaders in the interim body. On the other hand, officials of the CHT Ministry refuted such allegations stating that there was nothing in the agreement about the list.

So the institutionalisation of peace arrangements in the Chittagong Hill Tracts faces teething troubles. One can only hope that these initial obstacles will be soon overcome with understanding and cooperation from both sides and that enduring peace and sustainable development within a framework of autonomy for the inhabitants of the hill region will be eventually ensured.

It is against the backdrop of these latest developments in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh that the present paper examines the growth, poverty alleviation, and sustainable resource management in the region.

Perspectives

Although Bangladesh is a young country, the Bengali nation has a long history. The region comprising Bangladesh was first inhabited by an Austric race who were followed by the Dravidians. Later, the Aryans from central Asia settled in the fertile region. The Mongolians, Persians, Turks, and Afghans added further diversity to the ethnic roots of the Bengalis. Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms flourished until the 12th

century A.D. Muslim conquerors appeared on the scene in 1201 A.D. and ruled the region until the 18th century. At times, there were independent rulers of the Hussain Shahi and Ilyas Shahi dynasties, while at other times the region came under direct Mughal rule. From the 15th century, Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British traders exerted economic influence over the region. British rule began in 1757 A.D. when the last Muslim ruler of Bengal was defeated at Palassey. After almost two hundred years of British rule, the subcontinent was granted independence and partitioned into India and Pakistan in 1947. Bangladesh won its freedom from Pakistan in 1971.

Bangladesh currently has a population of about 126 million, making it one of the most densely populated countries in the world. The population is evenly distributed throughout its 64 administrative districts, except for the three hill districts which are relatively less populous. Almost seventy per cent of the population live in rural areas. The capital city, Dhaka, has a population of around 10 million. Muslims constitute a majority in Bangladesh. Hindus comprise the largest minority, followed by Buddhists, Christians, and animists. Almost all have Bengali as their mother tongue, although there are several dialects. The educated are bilingual and use both Bengali and English as mediums of communication.

There are about one million tribal people in the country, the majority of whom live in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The problem in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh was often misperceived. Outside perspectives tended to be simplistic. The problem was seen merely as one of ethnic insurgency that could be solved with the military might of a relatively new-born nation-state, itself struggling against poverty and underdevelopment.

In reality, however, the roots of the problem lay deep in the past- both recent and remote. It was a problem that sovereign and independent Bangladesh did not create. In fact the struggle for the emancipation of Bangladesh during 1971 was dominated by a vision of political and economic justice principally stimulated by social democratic ideals. The basic commitment of Bangladesh to a liberal social democratic system has found strong reaffirmation in the nineties. A representative democratic order exists in Bangladesh. In such a dispensation the resolution of the problem in the Hill Tracts could not be and was not a function of armed might for resolution of conflict. On the contrary, the canons of this democratic polity encourage and compel the resolution of problems of sub-national and regional minorities through the democratic political process of peaceful dialogue and cooperation.

The problem that Bangladesh faced in the Chittagong Hill Tracts was not unique in the present day world. The challenge posed by assertive regional minorities is a widespread phenomenon shared by numerous states – both developing and developed. The problem of integrating them peacefully and equitably into the mainstream of national life through participation in democratic and socioeconomic participation is shared alike by many post-colonial developing and economically, technologically, and industrially developed states (Shelley 1992).

The Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh is a relatively small area in which this subcontinental drama has taken place. In this area, unlike in the South Asian subcontinent, there were even no original inhabitants. This land of hills and jungles, lush green valleys, and numerous rivers and streams, sprawling over the south-eastern part of Bangladesh was actually so inhospitable that it remained barren and unpopulated for a long time.

Records show that it was not until the 15th to the mid-nineteenth centuries that tribals, the Kukis being the earliest, moved into the area from regions now in present-day Myanmar (former Burma) and the Tripura region (now a part of post-colonial India). In time, among the 13 tribes of Sino-Indian descent, the Chakmas became most numerous and dominant. These tribes speak a wide variety of dialects, while the language of the Chakmas who constitute the largest community is heavily influenced by the Chittagong dialect of the Bengali language. Political developments in the region are comprehensible in reference to its economic links with the plains. Exchange of agricultural products between the hills and plains has a long tradition and, consequently, the rulers around the Hill Tracts used to fight for political power by using trade connections. On account of its geographical location, with easy access from Chittagong, the rulers in the plains found themselves in an advantageous position to make territorial claims over the hills. This was one of the main causes of strains in the relationship between the hills and the plains.

The Chittagong plains, punctuated by hills and jungles forming the same ecological environment as that of the CHT, had long been a bone of contention between three local centres of power: the Kingdom of Arakan to the south, the Kingdom of Tripura to the north, and Bengali rulers to the north-east. During the late 17th century, the influences of Arakan and Tripura were shattered by the Mughals. The stabilisation of Mughal power in the plains of Chittagong was followed by expansion of wet-rice cultivation areas to the east. The regular battles between the Chakmas and the Mughal forces gave rise to Chakma military might, but this was successfully contained by the Mughals by means of a peaceful settlement giving the Chakma military ruler control over the trade between the hills and the plains on payment of a fixed amount of cotton to Mughal agents. The Bengali movement into the CHT dates back to the 17th century when, braving the natural disadvantages, a small number of Bengalis settled in the inhospitable terrain of the region at the invitation of the Chakma chief.

British colonial rule had a number of impacts on the area. The rulers established themselves in the CHT and in 1860 separated it from the district of Chittagong to form the separate district of Chittagong Hill Tracts. The British rulers promoted inter-tribal conflicts as a means of retaining control over the area and tightened their administrative grip by promulgating the 'Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation 1900'.

During the post-colonial era, after the departure of the British from the subcontinent in 1947, certain mainstreaming and modernising measures by the successor government of Pakistan affected the tribal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts in a

number of ways. A section of them perceived these development and modernising efforts as detrimental to their interests.

However, some of these socioeconomic development efforts of the pre-1971 government had a positive impact on the life of the tribal people. Thus the spread of education benefited all of them in general and the Chakmas in particular, and by 1970 the rate of literacy among them had risen to more than 50%. Consequently, political consciousness also developed among literate sections who began to harbour new hopes and aspirations that not only contradicted Pakistani rule but also their age-old feudal traditions.

With the signing of a peace treaty, a better environment for speedy development of the region has been created. Multiple programmes covering all facets of socioeconomic and institutional development have been undertaken and several projects are being implemented as fast track activities.

3.2 Physical Features and Topography

Location

The Chittagong Hill Tracts, consisting of the districts of Bandarban, Khagrachari, and Rangamati are situated in the southeast of Bangladesh. The Chittagong Hill Tracts' (CHTs) region is marked, in contrast to other regions of Bangladesh, by chains of hills running from the south to north-west and deep valleys formed by the rivers of Feni, Karnafuli, Sangu, and Matamuhuri and their tributaries. The rivers are subject to severe flash floods during heavy rainfall during monsoon. The scenery throughout the region is picturesque with alternative hills and valleys covered with forests, bushes, and other vegetation. The general elevation of the relief is higher in the south and lower in the north. The relative reliefs are about 457-884 metres above sea level (masl) in the south and 305-610m in the north. The maximum height is in the Keokradong hills at 1,230m, situated in the east of the region. In the north, there are three major valleys – the Chengi, the Myani, and the Kassalong – and together they provide the largest area of contiguous flat and fertile land in the region. Because of the Kaptai Hydroelectric Project's dam, a vast lake covering an area of 1,039 sq.km (400 square miles) has been created in the upper reaches of the River Karnafuli. In the south, there are three smaller areas of flat land in the valleys of Raingkheong, Sangu, and Matamuhuri. Table 3.1 lists the agricultural land according to the topography.

Climate

The climate in the Chittagong Hill Tracts is very similar to the climate in the rest of Bangladesh, and it receives monsoon rainfall during July-August and dry weather from December-February. The average precipitation appears to be marginally higher in the region than in the rest of the country, amounting to 2,700 mm. There are, however, wide fluctuations in annual rainfall in the region (1,836 to 3,043) as shown

Table 3.1: Distribution of agricultural land by topography (sq.km)

Area	Highland	Medium Highland	Medium Lowland	Lowland	Very Lowland	Total
Bandarban	4,506.3	12.5	0	0	0	4,518.8
Chittagong Hill Tracts	5,047.6	27.3	4.6	0	0	5,079.5
Khagrachari	2,568.3	69.3	0	0	0	2,637.6
Hill Tracts (Total)	12,122.2 (99.1)	109.1 (0.9)	4.6	0	0	12,235.9 (100.0)
Bangladesh	33,220.0 (27.0)	59,075.5 (48.0)	17,543.2 (14.3)	10,957.8 (8.9)	21,58.5 (1.8)	122,955.0 (100)

Note: Figures within parentheses indicate percentages.
Source: BBS (1993)

in Table 3.2. There is little difference in temperature between Bangladesh and the Hill Tracts. The maximum temperature ranges between 30^0 to 37^0C and the minimum from 12^0 to 21^0C during the period from 1986-90 (Table 3.3). Seasonal variations follow the same pattern observed elsewhere in Bangladesh. Some variations have, however, been noted in the minimum temperature in winter (December-February), but nothing significant. From the perspective of climate, we may conclude that the Hill Tracts enjoy the same type of climate as prevailing in other districts of the country and, thus, differences in crop practices, if found in the region, are due to factors like land, topography, soil characteristics, water availability, and the culture of the people.

Table 3.2: Annual rainfall during 1985-90 in Rangamati and the Bangladesh average*

(in millimetres)

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Rangamati	1,836	2,442	2,990	3,043	2,595	2,681
Bangladesh	2,268	2,627	2,778	2,543	2,235	2,660

* Estimated from BBS 1992

Table 3.3: Maximum and minimum temperature in Rangamati and Bangladesh average during 1986-1999

	1986		1987		1988		1989		1990	
	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min
Rangamati	37.4	12.5	30.1	21.1	33.4	19.1	30.1	20.9	33.1	17.6
Bangladesh	38.0	10.3	29.1	21.4	32.8	19.1	32.5	18.7	31.5	16.2

Source: BBS 1992b

Soils

The soil of Chittagong Hill Tracts was surveyed in 1964-65 by the Forestal Forestry and Engineering International Ltd., Canada, with a grant from the Colombo Plan, for and on behalf of the then East Pakistan Agricultural Development Corporation in order to prepare a comprehensive agricultural development programme of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

According to the Forestal Report, the soils in the area can be classified into seven categories. The most important ones are clay loam, sandy loam, and silty clays. The most extensive is silty clay loam which covers 67% of the total area. The hill soils are mainly yellowish brown loams that grade at variable depth, usually from one to four feet. Over large areas, the hill slopes are steeper than 40%, rendering even tree cultivation difficult. The hill soils are very acidic and require relatively heavy use of fertiliser for sustainable agricultural production. The valley soils, consisting mainly of clay loams, sandy loams, and silty clays, are subject to seasonal flooding and are used for cultivation of rice.

Land capability

The Forestal Survey classified the land capability of the district by taking into account slope and other terrain characteristics, the water retention capacity, and fertility of soils. The system of land capability classification adopted by Forestal uses five classes, the limitations in use becoming progressively greater from Class A to D. A and B class lands are mostly agricultural lands and are used for paddy cultivation. Most of the C and D classes are unclassed forests and green vegetation.

Class A Lands have few limitations and can be used for a wide range of crops. They vary in slope from 0 to .5% and are not normally susceptible to erosion. The soils are deep, easily worked, and hold water well. The use of inorganic and organic fertilisers is necessary to maintain productivity, but other intensive management practices are unnecessary. Irrigation is a recommended practice on these lands.

Almost all areas of paddy land are included in this group. The predominant soil is the series and also, to quite a great extent, the Mogachhari (Karnafuli) series. Isolated patches of Class A land occur also in other soils, but are not extensive.

Class B Lands have moderate limitations which reduce the choice of crops or require certain conservation practices to reduce deterioration. Such practices are easy to apply. The limitations of Class B lands may include slopes of up to 20% and moderate susceptibility to erosion. Clean cultivation is not recommended and the use of fertilisers/ manures is necessary.

Class B areas are associated with non-dissected high and low 'bumpy' lands with the Teiabil series predominant. Irrigation may be possible in places and the use of terracing is usual on the slopes.

Class C Lands have severe limitations that reduce the range of crops or require the adoption of special, intensive conservation practices. Limitations may include slopes of up to 40%, high susceptibility to erosion, low moisture-holding capacity, and a shallow plant rooting zone. This class includes high 'bumpy' lands of the Hazaribak series. Soils are well drained or excessively drained: very susceptible to drought in the dry season and, because of their sandy nature, they may present problems for terracing. Clean cultivation is not recommended for these lands and terracing is essential but may only be possible in areas where soils are quite deep. Fertilisers/ manures are necessary to maintain or increase productivity.

Class C-D Lands are a complex class of soils that cannot be readily classified under C or D. The inferior Hazaribak soil is predominant.

Class D Lands have very severe limitations that restrict the choice of crops and require very careful management if used for agriculture. Conservation practices are difficult to apply. Slopes usually exceed 40%, erosion is prevalent, moisture-holding capacity is low, and soils are shallow. Clean cultivation should not be practised and terracing is difficult. Forest plantation may be the most economical use for this class.

3.3 Land Tenure and Land-Use Patterns

Land tenure

All lands in Chittagong Hill Tracts belong to the government, except for a few areas where settlement has taken place in the recent past and land has been leased out for commercial or industrial purposes.

Shifting cultivation is permitted only in unclassed state forests by traditional right. The 'Jhumias' (shifting cultivators) cultivate land on payment of jhum tax at a fixed rate stipulated by the Chittagong Hill Tracts' Manual 1910. For tax purposes there are three circles – Chakma, Bohmong, and Mogh – into which the CHTs are divided. Each circle is headed by a tribal chief on the basis of hereditary rights. Circles are divided into 'mouza'. Each 'mouza' is headed by a headman. Jhum tax is shared amongst the headman, tribal chief, and the government represented by the Deputy Commissioner, according to the proportion described in the CHT Manual of 1910.

The Jhumias enjoy perpetual right of cultivation on the land they first clear for cropping. A swidden size generally varies from two to four acres. The abandoned swidden may be cultivated by another person with the permission of the person holding the permanent right to cultivation.

Area under shifting cultivation was first reduced drastically in 1880 when a vast area in the CHT (3,23,886 ha representing nearly 25% of the total area of the CHT) was declared reserved forest where shifting cultivation was practised. Another major event leading to reduction in land under shifting cultivation was the construction of the Kaptai dam in 1963 submerging an area of 647 sq.km previously mostly used for

shifting cultivation. The gradual expansion of land under plough cultivation, especially since 1910 (and particularly after 1947) also significantly reduced the area under shifting cultivation. All these contributed to a greatly reduced jhuming cycle with consequential adverse impacts on the environment and ecosystem.

Community ownership of land has declined in recent years as a result of the development activities being pursued in the area. The rapid growth in population in general and concentration of land and resources in the hands of tribal elites and non-tribal businessmen contributed to increasing landlessness in the area.

Land-use pattern

Unlike other parts of Bangladesh, the CHT have a substantially higher proportion of land under forest (62.3% of the total land area in the CHT compared to 12.8% of the total land area of Bangladesh) and a substantially lower proportion of land under net cropped area (6.5% of the total land area in the CHT compared to 55.1% of the total land area of Bangladesh). According to the Statistical Yearbook of 1992 (BBS 1993), there were 3,285,000 acres of total area in CHT. Of this area, in 1990-91, around 23% was not available for cultivation, 62.3% was under forest, 5.2% was cultivable waste, 3.0% was under current fallows, 4.4 was under single cropped area, 1.7 was under double cropped area, and 0.5 was under triple cropped area. In 1990-91, the cropping intensity in the CHT was 140.2% compared to 172.7% in Bangladesh as a whole (Table 3.4). The cropping intensity was the highest in Khagrachari (152.4%), followed by Bandarban (142.9%) and Rangamati (133.9%). The area under forest was the highest in Rangamati (90.7%), followed by Khagrachari (55.6%) and Bandarban (27.6%).

3.4 Demography

Size, density and growth

Demographically little change is marked in the Chittagong Hill Tracts for the period from 1760 to the end of the 19th century. In 1760 the population was estimated to be approximately about 100,000. In the 1892 Census, the population was recorded to be 107,286. Immigration restrictions and high mortality account for this static position. The rate of population growth, however, started increasing from the beginning of the twentieth century. It had risen to 288,000 by 1951.

The population enumerated in 1961 in the district was 406,000 and 508,000 in 1974, implying a growth rate of 2.2% over the period from 1961-74. It grew at the rate of 3.98% per annum from 1974-81. The growth rate, however, declined to 2.66% from 1981-91. The population growth rate was lower in the CHT than the national average for Bangladesh from 1961-74, but the situation has been reversed in more recent years (1974-81 and 1981-91). In 1974 the CHT accounted for 0.71% of the population of Bangladesh; the percentage in 1991 was 0.93 (Table 3.5). In 1991, the population was 993,000, and in 1981 it stood at 754,000.

Table 3.4: Land-use pattern and intensity of cropping in the Chittagong Hill Tracts by district, 1990-91

('000 acres)

Land-use Pattern/ Intensity of Cropping	Bandar-ban	Khagra-chari	Rangamati	Chittagong Hill Tracts (2)+(3)+(4)	Bangla-desh
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Land-use pattern					
Total area	1,107	667	1,511	3,285	36,670
Not available for cultivation	580	167	8	755	7,958
Forest	305	371	1,371	2,047	4,693
Cultivable waste	117	40	15	172	1,442
Current fallows	42	47	8	97	2,379
Single cropped area	41	24	78	143	8,140
Double cropped area	17	14	25	56	9,634
Triple cropped area	5	4	6	15	2,424
Intensity of cropping					
Total cropped area	90	64	146	300	34,784
Net cropped area	63	42	109	214	20,198
Intensity of cropping	142.9	152.4	133.9	140.2	172.7
Land-use pattern (% total area)					
Total area	100	100	100	100	100
Not available for cultivation	52.4	25.0	0.5	23.0	21.7
Forest	27.6	55.6	90.7	62.3	12.8
Cultivable waste	10.6	6.0	1.0	5.2	3.9
Current fallows	3.8	7.0	0.5	3.0	6.5
Single cropped area	3.7	3.6	5.2	4.4	22.2
Double cropped area	1.5	2.1	1.7	1.7	26.3
Triple cropped area	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.5	6.6
Proportion of the total area under					
Total cropped area	8.1	10.0	9.7	9.1	94.9
Net cropped area	5.7	6.3	7.2	6.5	55.1

Source: BBS1993

Table 3.5: Population and growth rate in CHT

Area	Population ('000)					Growth Rate	
	1951	1961	1974	1981	1991	1974-81	81-91
Khagrachari	93	135	189	278	342	3.95	2.09
Rangamati	124	185	203	301	401	4.05	2.89
Bandarban	71	86	116	171	230	3.95	3.01
CHT	288	406	508	750	973	3.98	2.66
Bangladesh	(0.69) 41932	(0.80) 50840	(0.71) 71479	(0.86) 87120	(0.93) 104766	3.28	2.17

Figures in brackets show the % of the population.
Source: BBS (1992b)

The density of population within the then district was the highest in Ramgarh – at that time a sub-division (of 448.07 sq.km) which comprises most of the Chengi and Myani valleys. It is estimated that Chengi, Myani, and Kassalong valleys supported almost the whole of the population of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The population density for CHT and Bangladesh as a whole is given in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Density of population per sq.km

	1951	1961	1974	1981	1991
Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)	57	75	100	147	190
	(22)	(29)	(39)	(54)	(74)
Bangladesh	761	922	1286	1567	1884
	(294)	(356)	(497)	(605)	(728)

Source: BBS 1982, 1992a

The growth in population in the Chengi and Myani valleys and Kassalong Rehabilitation Zone are exceptionally high compared to the district as a whole. In Khagrachari and Mahalchari 'thanas', which form most of the Chengi Valley, the annual average growth rate in population from 1961-74 was 3.29%. Similarly in Baghaichari, Dighinala, and Langadu thanas, which are in the Myani and Kassalong valleys, the population growth rate was 4.76% from 1951-61 and 2.61% from 1961-74.

The tribal population is divided into as many as 13 tribes, of whom the numerically superior ones are the Chakma, Marma, and Tripura. It is well known that corresponding to the geological division of the hills into terrains of sometimes steep-sided hillocks and broad river valleys, the ethnic groups have chosen different habitats. The Chakmas, Marmas, and Tripuras are valley-loving groups, whereas the Khumi, Mro Lushai, Bawm, Khyang, Pankhu, Tanchangya, Chaak, Murung, and Riang live on the ridges of the hills. Most of the tribal people migrated from areas now in Myanmar between the 15th and the mid-19th centuries.

Age composition and life expectancy

An analysis of the age distribution of population indicates that the proportion of children is lower in the CHT than in the rest of Bangladesh, indicating a lower rate of natural increase in the CHT. This is so in spite of the fact that the ratio of women in the reproductive age groups (15 to 45) is larger in the CHT than in Bangladesh as a whole. Table 3.7 shows the age and sex structure of the population of the CHT.

Family size and age distribution of population

The average size of the family is 6.1, and this is very close to the national average of 5.8 members in a household, but in Bandarban district it is much lower (4.9 members); perhaps because of the higher incidence of child mortality there than in other areas.

Table 3.7: Age-sex structure of the population

Age Group	Percentage of Population			Sex Ratio (males per 100 females)		
	1951	1981	1991	1961	1981	1991
A. Hill Tracts						
0 – 9	32.4	31.0	31.5	102	105	108
10 – 19	19.0	21.2	20.3	116	114	112
20 – 39	31.3	29.8	30.7	143	128	122
40 – 59	13.5	13.2	12.8	145	149	145
60+	3.9	4.8	4.7	132	156	165
Total	100	100	100	123	120	118
B. Bangladesh						
0 – 9	37.0	33.2	–	101	102	–
10 – 19	16.8	22.7	–	112	110	–
20 – 39	22.3	25.9	–	104	100	–
40 – 59	13.7	12.5	–	122	116	–
60+	5.2	5.6	–	123	128	–
Total	100	100	–	108	106	–
Source: BBS 1982, 1992a						

The age distribution of population shows that infants (up to 5) comprise 11% of the population in the hill region, and this is significantly lower than the country's share (Table 3.8). This suggests that either child mortality is higher or birth rates are lower there. The former reason is more likely. In the region, the proportion of women to men is much lower than elsewhere in the country, the ratio for males and females being 100:90. This lower share is more noticeable in the adult population (15 to 60 yrs). Girls, on the other hand, outnumber boys in the minors' group (5 to 15 yrs). Such a pattern of population distribution, however, does not exist in all the communities uniformly.

Table 3.8: Family size and distribution of population by age group

Community	Size of the Family (no)	Distribution of Population (%)				
		Up to 5 yrs	5 to 15 yrs	15 to 60 yrs	60 yrs & above	Total
Chakma, Rang.	7.7	10.4	26.0	57.1	6.5	100
Tripura, Rang.	5.7	15.8	42.1	42.1	-	100
Marma, Khag.	6.9	7.2	30.4	59.4	2.9	100
Tripura, Khag	6.7	13.4	28.4	55.2	3.0	100
Marma, Bandar.	4.8	12.5	10.4	72.9	4.2	100
Murang, Bandar.	4.9	6.1	40.8	53.1	-	100
All Communities	6.1	10.9	29.7	56.4	3.0	100
Bangladesh (1991)	5.8	17.1*	29.9+	47.7	5.6	100

* (0-4 yrs), +4 to 14 yrs)
Source: BBS, 1992b.

3.5 The Ethnic Groups

The different tribes belonging to the Kuki group appear to have been the earliest arrivals in the area now known as the Chittagong Hill Tracts. They yielded to and were driven to the north-east by the invading Chakmas who had gained settlement in the southern portion of the district of Chittagong, having been ousted by the Marmas from Arakan during the time of the Burmese wars and forced to enter the Hill Tracts. They finally settled in the central and north-eastern portions of the Hill Tracts, while their former possessions were absorbed by the Marmas.

The tracts are at present inhabited by 13 tribes, each speaking its own dialect (Table 3.9). The three principal tribes are the Chakmas, Marmas, and Tripuras. In addition, there are the Mros, the Kukis, the Khyangs, and the Pankhos, all forming the Kuki group of inhabitants in the Tracts, and six other tribes.

Table 3.9: Different tribals groups of varying size, origin

Main Name	Alternative Names	Group Origin
Chakma	Thek, Tui-thek	Arakanese groups
Marma	Magh, Mogh, Maramgri	Bhyya
Tripura	Tipra, Tip (p) era	Tripura groups
Tanchangya		
Riang		
Murong	Murang, Mrung	
Lushai		Kuki groups
Panku	Panko, Pakhin, Pankho	
Bon	Bonjugi, Bawm, Bangogi, Banjogi	Mizo
Chak		
Khumia	Kumi	
M'ro	Mroung, Mru	
Kyang	Khayengs, Khanegas, Sho, Khuan	

The Hill Tracts tribesmen are ethnically different from the settled populace in Bangladesh. They have closer links with tribal groups from the vast region that extends from Tibet to Indo-China. They are short in stature, have black hair, prominent cheekbones, and narrow eyes; features that are generally known as typical of the 'Mongoloid type'.

The most important tribes, therefore, as mentioned previously, are the Chakmas, the Marmas (Moghs), and the Tripuras, and they account for nine-tenths of the non-Bengali ethnic population. The Chakmas are a Mongoloid race, probably of Arakanese origin, although they have intermarried, mostly with Bengalis. They are divided into three sub-tribes: Chakmas, Doingnak, and Tungijainah. The Marmas are, for the most part, descendants of the Arakanese. They were uprooted by the Burmese (who overran the country in 1784) and were given shelter in the territory now constituting

Bangladesh. They are divided into three sections. The Jhumia or cultivators of 'Jhums' (tracts for slash and burn cultivation), the Rohang or Arakan Marmas, and the Burma or Rajbansi Marmas. The Tripuras descended from the Hill Tripura. This tribe is divided into two classes, the Purana or Tripura proper and the Jamatiyas. Among the smaller groups are the Banjogi, the Pankho, and the Lushai who appear to be descendants of the oldest inhabitants of the area.

The Bawm and the Pankho claim to be of common origin, descended from two brothers, and in language, customs, and habits, they are very similar. These tribes are probably off-shoots of the Lais who occupy the Chin Hills between the Tashon country in the north and Zau country in the south. The tribal influences of the Lais extend from the Burmese (Myanmar) boundary on the east to the Lusahi county on the west. The Lais were probably formerly inhabitants of Arakan. Another small group is the Khyang. Principally, they live on the spurs of the hill range that separates the Chittagong Hill Tracts from Arakan. They call themselves Sho and are closely allied to the Chins. They are extremely shy, preferring to remain in the most inaccessible places. The tribe has no sub-castes or sects.

The Mro (Mrug), another group, usually live on the tops of the hills where they often fortify their villages. They are regarded as the true aboriginals of the region.

The Mrung and the Tripura seem to have the same origin, although they are now classified separately. The Tripuras migrated slowly from the Hill Tripura in the north. The Mrung, according to legend, were captured by an Arakanese king who brought them southward forcibly.

All these smaller groups have tended to intermingle, so that they cannot be classified properly as tribes but only as ethnolinguistic groups. On the other hand, the Marmas, the Chakmas, and the Tripuras are numerous enough and sufficiently organised to warrant being called tribes.

3.6 Literacy

A crude measure of the quality of manpower is the literacy rate. Table 3.10 shows the level and changes in the literacy rate among the population over five years of age. Only about one fourth of the population in Bangladesh is literate, with a marked improvement discernible over time, especially for women. The literacy rate in CHT was lower than the national average, but the 1991 census showed a literacy rate of 28% which is higher than the national average of about 25%. A district-wise breakdown of the literacy rate tends to show that the literacy rate in Rangamati is substantially higher at 38%, which possibly inflated the average for CHT. Another observation from Table 3.10 is that, whereas the male literacy rate in CHT has long been close to that of the country average, the female literacy rate has lagged far behind the national average. It thus follows that the literacy situation in CHT improved, although marginally, for men but substantially for women, over time, and that the rate is close to the national average.

Table 3.10: Literacy rate

Year	Hill Tracts			Bangladesh		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1961	20.6	3.2	12.8	26.0	8.6	17.0
1974	24.1	7.5	16.4	29.9	1.7	22.2
1981	24.3	7.6	16.6	31.0	16.0	23.3
1991	34.8	16.8	28.0	-	-	24.82

Source: BBS 1981, 1992a.

3.7 The Economy of CHT

Major sources of income

The Population Census (Zila series) 1991 provides information on the main sources of household income, and these are presented in Table 3.11. Farming is the main source of income for the biggest proportion of households (39%), followed by agricultural labour. Thus farming constitutes the principal source of income for 55% of households, either through self-cultivation or wage labour. About one-tenth of the households' income comes from other employment and an almost equal proportion from business. About seven per cent of households earn their living by selling labour in the non-agricultural sector while three per cent of the households have forestry as the principal source of income. This pattern is similar in all three districts, except that in Rangamati agricultural labour constitutes a smaller and 'employment' a larger share than in other districts in household income.

The CHT has a predominantly agricultural economy. Its topography and climatic conditions make it imperative that the people have to fall back upon agriculture. Only a small percentage of the population is engaged in business, trade, professions, and government services. Owing to the subsistence economy, the tribal people, apart from farming, are involved in other productive activities to meet basic needs other than food. CHT is currently a food deficit area.

Table 3.11: Major sources of income 1991 (% of households)

Source	Areas			
	Khagrachari	Rangamati	Bandarban	CHT
Farming	37.0	40.0	41.0	39.0
Agricultural labour	19.0	12.0	17.9	16.0
Non-agricultural labour	9.0	5.0	6.8	6.8
Business	9.0	10.0	9.5	9.7
Employment	10.0	14.0	9.5	11.0
Forestry	2.0	3.0	4.0	3.0
Livestock	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.7
Others	13.0	16.7	11.0	13.8
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: BBS 1992b

Participation in the labour force (economically active population)

The labour force participation rate, defined as 'active' population (working and looking for work) as a percentage of the total population is observed to be higher (at 35%) in CHT than in Bangladesh as a whole (27%) (Table 3.12). The rate is much higher (57%) for men than for women (8.5%). Of the population aged 10 years and more, 51% are in the 'active' population category - the percentage is 81 for men but only 13 for women. The corresponding figures for the country as a whole are 40.5%, 73.2%, and 4.3%.

Table 3.12: Labour force participation rates (1981)

	Hill Tracts ('000)			Bangladesh (in millions)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Total population	412	338	750	44.9	42.2	87.1
Population over 10 yrs of age	290	227	517	30.6	27.9	58.2
Active population	235	29	264	22.4	1.2	23.6
Population in the active age group as % of total population	70.3	66.8	68.8	68.2	66.1	66.8
Active population as % of total population	57.0	8.5	35.1	50.0	2.8	27.1
Activity rate (active population as % of population above 10 yrs. of age)	81.0	12.8	51.1	73.2	4.3	40.5

Source: Hossain and Bakht 1985

Amount of land owned and land use

Land owned by a household in the tribal community is of three types: (i) individually owned; (ii) government owned but right to possession enjoyed by the individual — usually known as 'khas' land; and (iii) jhum land — government owned but may be used by a household or a community for some time without claiming right to possession. In the case of land ownership categories, all these lands have been given here. Khas land inclusive of jhum land accounts for 14% of the total land, the highest being in the case of the Murang community which literally speaking does not own any land. The community actually practises jhum cultivation on khas land. The average size of land owned is 6.1 acres, which is about three times the national average. Among the different communities, the Tripura in Rangamati own the smallest parcels of land (Table 3.13) but they own the largest parcels in Khagrachari.

Land cultivated by the communities accounts for about half (47%) of the total land owned, which includes pure paddy land as well as land used to grow fruit and spices. Of this land, paddy covers 36%. Homesteads occupy 2.2%, the absolute size being 0.14 of an acre per household.

The functionally landless (up to 0.5 of an acre) households comprise 15% of the community, but this is quite low compared to the Bangladesh average of about 40%.

Table 3.13: Land ownership and principal use of land by community

Community	Average size of land (in acres)	Khas land as % of total land	Cultivated land as % of total land	Land use (%)				
				Home-stead	Paddy	Fruit Gardens	Vege-tables	Forests & Fallow
Chakma, Rang.	10.38	4.2	50.8	1.7	27.7	19.8	3.3	47.5
Tripura, Rang.	2.78	7.4	47.5	4.1	37.6	7.1	2.8	48.4
Marma, Khag.	5.61	0.9	43.4	2.8	43.0	-	0.5	53.6
Tripura, Khag.	10.64	2.7	54.4	1.5	34.7	13.1	6.7	44.1
Marma, Bandar.	3.90	18.4	61.0	3.2	52.8	8.2	-	35.9
Murang, Banda.	3.28	100.0	-	2.4	35.4	47.0	-	15.2
All Communities	6.10	13.6	47.0	2.2	36.2	15.0	3.2	43.4

Source: GOB 1991

This is obvious as land is relatively abundant there. Big landowners (7.5 acres and above) are a much higher proportion than the national average (27%). Big landowners are predominant in three communities (the Chakma in Rangamati, Marma and Tripura in Khagrachari). In contrast functionally landless households are predominant in the Marma societies of both Khagrachari and Bandarban (Table 3.14).

The predominant land cover is forests (43%), followed by rice cultivation (36%). Rice has a larger share of land (above 40%) in one community only (the Marmas in Bandarban and Khagrachari). They have the least vegetable coverage. A survey by Farid and Ullah in 1987 (cited in GOB 1991) found more rice coverage in the foothills and in the plains, and it was absent on the slopes of the hills. Fruit gardens are found

Table 3.14: Distribution of households by land size

Community	Total house-holds (no)	Functionally landless (up to 0.5 of an acre)	Small land-owners (0.51 to 2.5 acres)	Medium land-owners (2.51 to 5.0 acres)	Large land-owners (5.01 to 7.5)	Very large land-owners (7.51+)
Chakma, Rang.	10	1	0	0	3	6
Tripura, Rang.	10	0	4	6	0	0
Marma, Khag.	10	3	2	1	0	4
Tripura, Khag.	9	1	2	1	1	4
Marma, Bandar.	10	4	1	3	0	2
Murang, Banda.	10	0	5	1	4	0
All communities (%)	59 (100)	9 (15)	14 (24)	12 (20)	8 (14)	16 (27)

Source: GOB 1991

to be more important for the Murang of Bandarban and the Chakma of Rangamati (Table 3.13).

In the hill tracts, land used for rice may be considered suitable for general crop cultivation and paddy producers considered as farmers. Total tenant cultivators in the whole community number 21% and half of them are owner-cum-tenants. They account for 13% of the rice land. Tenant farmers are predominant in Khagrachari. Owner operators (half of the rice producers) cultivate about three-fourths of the rice land (Table 3.15).

Table 3.15: Distribution of rice farmers by tenancy

Community	Owner Operators		Share-croppers		Khas Land Operators	
	Number	Rice Acreage	Number	Rice Acreage	Number	Rice Acreage
Chakma, Rang.	8	25.2	1	1.6	2	3.6
Tripura, Rang.	8	8.6	1	0.8	1	2.0
Marma, Khag.	6	24.1	4	7.8	-	-
Tripura, Khag.	7	36.9	3	4.0	-	-
Marma, Bandar.	3	13.8	3	4.0	2	6.8
Murang, Banda.	-	-	1	1.6	10	11.6
All communities (%)	32 (53)	108.6 (71)	13 (22)	19.8 (13)	15 (25)	24.0 (16)

Source: GOB 1991

Crops grown and the adoption of modern rice

From the agronomic perspective, cultivation of a crop is dependent primarily on the soil and land topography as well as climatic factors. In the selected hill tracts, rice is the only crop and other crops like sugar cane, jute, wheat, potato, mustard and pulses are not grown much there. Pulses and oil seeds are cultivated as jhum crops. Jhum cultivation has four main crop combinations. They are (i) 'Aus' paddy and banana (ii) banana and papaya, (iii) peas and cucumber (marfa) and other vegetables, and (iv) sesame, cotton, and millets. Aus paddy, grown as a jhum practice, has a coverage of more than one-third of the total Aus area in the region. Maybe Aus as broadcast paddy is very compatible with the other crops grown.

Levels of adoption of modern rice are higher in the region than in the country as a whole. The average coverage was 66% of the total rice area compared to the national achievement of 45% in 1991. In terms of seasonal achievement the levels of adoption in the winter rice season (Boro) are 90%, in the late summer rice season (Aman) 81%, and early summer rice season (Aus) 36% (Table 3.16). Modern rice is not grown by the Murang of Bandarban who practise jhum cultivation only. The Chakma of Rangamati cultivate all their lands with modern rice in both the summer and winter seasons.

Table 3.16: Rice production in CHT

Community	Area under (acreage)			Total Rice Area	Total Modern Rice Area (in %)	Modern Acreage of Total (early summer) (%)	Modern Acreage of Total (later summer) (%)	Modern Acreage as % of Total (winter) Acreage
	Early summer	Later summer	Winter					
Chakma, Rang.	8.0	11.6	15.0	34.6	81.5 (28.2)	20.0	100.0	100
Tripura, Rang.	5.6	-	5.8	11.4	47.8 (5.4)	-	-	93.2
Marma, Khag.	7.6	23.1	-	30.7	86.3 (26.5)	71.0	91.3	-
Tripura, Khag.	22.1	36.7	9.0	67.8	69.8 (46.8)	59.3	72.7	77.8
Marma, Bandar.	14.0	13.8	8.6	36.4	58.2 (21.2)	34.3	71.0	76.7
Murang, Banda.	11.6	-	-	11.6	-	-	-	-
All Communities	68.9	85.2	38.4	192.5	66.5 (128.1)	36.1	81.2	88.6

Source: GOB 1991

Jhum cultivation

Jhum is the name of the system of cultivation that is traditionally practised by the tribesmen of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It is typical shifting cultivation and is declining gradually, although most tribals are still involved in Jhum cultivation.

The essentials of Jhum cultivation are the clearing and burning of surface vegetation before planting mixed crops of rice, millet, sesame, maize, vegetables, and cotton. The mixed nature of cropping ensures a supply of food for most of the year. At the end of an annual cycle, the land is left to revert to scrub and the cultivators move on to another area.

For centuries, Jhum cultivation worked effectively. There was no serious deterioration of the soil and the plots lay fallow for at least seven years. This allowed regeneration of the soil and natural growth of the forest. Fallow periods are essential for jhum, which is ecologically unharmful, but it demands large areas per family as only part of the land is under cultivation at any one time. If either the population increases or the land decreases, shifting cultivation is rendered unviable.

Land suitable for intensive field cropping accounts for less than five per cent and is confined to the bottom of river valleys; about two-thirds of the land is steep slopes and is considered suitable only for forests. Except for intensive crop farming in the alluvial plains, shifting cultivation is the most prevalent form of land use practised by the hill tribes, and it is allowed on all land outside the areas declared as forest reserves. This system of shifting cultivation has been practised for centuries with little effect on soil fertility, but as a result of heavy population pressure, in recent years the cycle of cultivation has become shorter than the optimum, causing imbalance in the system.

Livestock and farm implements

Only half of the households own cattle and the number owned by a household on average is 1.5, but this increases to four if only cattle-owning households are considered. Households owning sheep or goats are in the minority (30%), and this is contrary to our expectations as small ruminants can graze over wide areas in the hills. The proportion of households owning poultry is 70%. The average number of goats and sheep per household is four and 13 for birds, close to the average for Bangladesh. Pig raising is limited to two communities (theTripura of Khagrachari and the Murang of Bandarban). Among the communities selected, Khagrachari is observed to be better endowed with livestock, may be facilitated by the large land sizes there.

The average value of animals and farm implements (land excluded) is estimated to be Tk[1].13,000 per household out of which implements account for only 13%. The average price of a cow is found to be only Tk 3,278.

[1] There were 51 taka to the US dollar in December 1999.

Industry

In order to generate employment among the tribals, factories were established. They included paper mills, a plywood factory, and match factories at Chandraghona, Rangamati, and Kaptai. These industries, however, could not achieve their objectives, as they did not have labour recruiting policies that kept the special needs of the locality in mind. Moreover, the tribesmen were not considered suitable psychologically and technically to fill the ranks of the industrial labour force. The workers employed in these factories are mainly from the plains. The economic and technical considerations that motivated the expansion of industrial projects in reality failed to ensure the resettlement of the displaced Chakma people.

Most of the industries established in the Chittagong Hill Tracts are based on forestry resources. Karnafuli Paper and Karnafuli Rayon Mills are the two largest industrial units in the CHT. Located at Chandraghona, the two industries employ about 6,000 people. In addition there are five medium-sized industries: a cigarette factory, a textile industry, a match factory at Aziznagar, a woodwork factory at Kaptai, and a plywood factory at Shilchhari.

Several cottage industries have sprung up in Rangamati, Bandarban, and Khagrachhari, established with loans advanced under special schemes. Industrial estates are to be established to help establish more industries and create job opportunities in the area.

3.8 Major Development Projects: Two Case Studies

The Kaptai project

This project funded by the USAID was commissioned in 1963 on the River Karnaphuli near Kaptai. The reservoir created by the hydroelectric project submerged 250 square miles of prime agricultural land, accounting for 40% of the total cultivable land in the tracts. Some 100,000 tribespeople, mostly Chakma sedentary rice farmers, were displaced by the project. These people, one-sixth of the total tribal population, were promised both financial compensation and land. The compensation package did not work out well. Many left for India as refugees. Kaptai dam was to a) generate electricity; b) increase fish production; c) promote riverain communication; and d) bring more land under irrigation. The effects of the dam were the opposite: a) it displaced people, b) it shortened the jhum cycle to between five and seven years, c) it has resulted in shortened jhum cycles, declining soil fertility,and low yields, and d) due to inundation, pressure on the scarce land increased. A socioeconomic study carried out by a group of academicians revealed that 69% of Chakmas (interviewed) felt that they were better off before the project was commissioned.

The country's total production of electricity is 1,855 MW. Kaptai's five units produce 230 MW, 12.5% of the total production. The question of whether it was worth undertaking this project for a small quantity of electricity at enormous environmental and social costs arises. A survey published by Chittagong University in 1979 carried

out among the Chakmas found that 93% felt that the economic condition of the tribal people had been better before the dam was built (Ghafur et al. 1987).

Effects of the dam

With the construction of the Kaptai Dam and creation of the Karnafuli reservoir in 1962, resource allocation problems increased in the CHT. The direct and indirect impacts of this development have been felt in most parts of the CHT and in almost all sectors of the regional economy. The uprooted tribal masses were in need of resettlement. Consequently, competition for land became a most formidable problem. Decrease in the length of the cycle of shifting cultivation from 10 years to three to four years is the outcome of this.

The non-submerged hill and alluvial lands came under tremendous population pressure on account of displacement by the reservoir of about 10,000 families having land rights in the reservoir bed and 8,000 landless Jhumia families. It is estimated that 40% of the region's most productive land lies below the reservoir's full supply level.

The amount of non-submerged land of comparable quality available for allocation to these hapless tribal families was equivalent to less than one acre per family, while the average landholding of each of about 10,000 families having permanent rights to land in the reservoir bed was about six acres (2.43 ha). In view of the shortage of suitable land, a portion of Kassalong Reserve Forest was allocated for rehabilitation of the displaced persons. The addition of this land raised the acreage availability per family to only two acres (0.81 ha). The non-submerged lands of good quality that were put into the rehabilitation scheme accounted for one-third of the areas formerly held by the families in the reservoir bed. As a result, it was not possible to allocate lands of comparable quality to those families who had rights to land on the reservoir bed. By mid-1964, some 5,633 families were able to receive an average of approximately three acres (1.21 ha) of land: equal to about half the acreage held by the families earlier on the reservoir bed. About 4,500 families having productive lands on the reservoir bed could not be resettled on lands of comparable quality to their former holdings.

Upland settlement project

Funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Upland Settlement Project was taken up by the Government in 1979. The revised first phase (1979-1993) is over. The second phase (1993-2000) is in progress. The project implementation agency is the Chittagong Hill Tracts' Development Board (CHTDB) formed in 1976. The project area comprises of 12 mouza located in three valleys: the Chengi, Mayani, and Kassalong valleys in the northern hill region of Khagrachari and Rangamati districts. The main components of the project are: a) road networks, b) upland settlement, c) settlement and afforestation, d) cottage industry, e) health extension, f) agricultural extension, g) family planning, and h) horticulture (GOB 1993a).

The project, through its multi-sectoral approach, primarily aims to create conditions for socioeconomic development of CHT in order to improve the living conditions of the poor tribal people living there. During a tour of the project area, the researcher saw that upland settlement and afforestation programmes have made significant progress. It was too early to assess the rubber plantation project, as the gardens were young and needed four to five years to mature. Because of restrictions on movement and the overall security concerns of the area, the other project areas could not be visited (Dec.1992). The recommendations of the team are noteworthy. The team was of the opinion that, without proper protection and adequate security measures, some components of the project could not be implemented.

3.9 Development Programmes and Strategies

The Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts' Affairs (M/O CHTA) was established on 15th July 1998 according to the provisions of the peace agreement signed in December 1997. The activities relating to CHT were carried out by the Special Affairs' Division before the formation of the M/O CHT Affairs. The CHT activities that were under the Special Affairs' Division were included in the allocation of business of M/O CHT Affairs afterwards.

The area of Chittagong Hill Tracts is one-tenth of the area of the country. The agreement will play a meaningful and constructive role in implementing and fulfilling the expectations, hopes, and aspirations of those living in this undeveloped area. After the execution of the peace agreement, a congenial atmosphere for development has been created, the expectations of the people have risen, and a favourable situation prevails.

The expectations of the people in the area include the creation of physical infrastructure in rural areas, generation of employment opportunities for the unemployed, women's development, distribution of micro-credit facilities, programmes for income generation, and, above all, raising the standards of living. The government has given the development of CHT topmost priority. Foreign countries, donor agencies, and non-government organisations have extended their cooperation.

The development of CHT has gained importance during the last three years. The development allocations for this Ministry in the annual development plan (ADP) have been increased gradually. The allocations were Tk 43.47 crore in 1996-97, 56.85 crore in 1997-98, and 68.90 crore in 1998-99. Tk 112.65 crore was allocated for the financial year (1999-2000). In addition to this allocation different ministries/ divisions have taken up new projects in the area and their annual allocations have also been increased.

The construction of rural socioeconomic infrastructure has been implemented through the allocation made in favour of this Ministry. Development assistance is provided

to different sectors for poverty alleviation such as agricultural extension, rural development, electrification, education, health, water resources, and development of local government institutions. Comprehensive programmes to provide employment opportunities and extension of micro-credit have also been taken up for acceleration of poverty alleviation. Incomes have increased and extensive employment opportunities, including seasonal employment, have been created as a result of implementation of different development projects. A brief of development activities is given below.

Hill district council

The Hill District Councils in the three hill district of CHT were established in 1989. Annual block allocation is granted to these councils to implement development schemes/ projects and to run administrative activities. The councils implement projects on education, health, communication, agriculture, religion, culture, and social welfare with this allocation. Tk 67.13 crore have so far been spent on these activities. The three councils have implemented 2,654 small projects/ schemes. Tk 15.00 crore have been allocated in the current fiscal year for this.

CHT area is the only region in the country where local councils are constituted with public representatives as their members. The role of these councils has been increased to a great extent in the provision made under the amendment in 1998 of the Hill District Local Government Council Act 1989.

Chittagong Hill Tract Development Board (CHTDB)

Block allocation for CHTDB

The CHTDB was established in 1976. It implements projects for socioeconomic development, and these include projects for development of rural communication, agriculture, religion, drinking water, and sanitation. A sum of Tk 67.66 crore has so far been spent for the implementation of 1,230 projects.

Integrated community development project in CHT (UNICEF assisted)

The cost of the project is Tk 34.34 crore. The implementation period is from January 1996 to December 2000. As many as 4,103 community centres ('Para Kendra') are to be constructed by the project with a view to organising rural people for managing various rural development activities. A community centre consisting of 20-25 families will be the focal point for all development activities and will be looked after by a community worker. There will be a demonstration plot for vegetable and fruit gardening in each centre. In addition to that, education, health, and public health services will be provided at the centre level. One thousand eight hundred community centres have so far been established. Tk 10.55 crore have been allocated in the current fiscal year. Eight hundred thousand people will benefit from the activities of the project (GOB 1993b).

Sloping agricultural land technology (SALT)

With the technical and financial assistance of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), a SALT project has been implemented at a cost of Tk 4.55 million. Two demonstration farms have been established at Lama, Bandarban and Autila, Khagrachari for the development of appropriate and suitable technology for upland farming. Tk one million have been allocated for the project in the current fiscal year.

Projects under the block allocation for CHT

Eighteen projects under the CHT block allocation are now being implemented by CHTDB. Of these there are 12 projects for construction of 185 km of road, three projects for infrastructural development, and two projects for rehabilitation of shifting cultivators. One thousand families are being rehabilitated by providing 5.25 acres of land (homestead, rubber garden, and horticulture) through the project for shifting cultivators at a cost of Tk 300 million. In another project, 300 families from among those rendered homeless from the Upland Settlement Project (1st Phase) are being rehabilitated by providing the same facilities at a cost of Tk 73 million. The Khagrachari stadium at a cost of Tk 36.1 million and the seven kilometre Asambasti-Rangapari road at a cost of 36.1 million were completed under this allocation. Allocations for ongoing projects will be made very soon.

Micro-credit programme

A micro-credit project costing Tk 12.50 crore was undertaken during 1997-1999 to 1999-2000 with the block allocation of the CHT/Special Affairs' Ministry. Eighty thousand people will be enrolled in this project through formation of 8,000 cooperative groups. Twenty-one thousand six hundred people have been organised into 3,120 groups. In addition 8,075 people have been trained in different trades. The project envisages extending its credit programmes with the increase of development needs in CHT. Scope for self-employment of the poor has been created through project activities.

Agricultural extension programme

A project for extension of maize cultivation in Khagrachari district is being implemented during the period from 1998-99 to 1999-2000 at a cost of Tk 4.44 crore through the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE); 4,000 maize plots will be demonstrated and training will be imparted to 4,000 farmers. A sum of Tk 50 hundred thousand has so far been spent on the activities. So far, 400 demonstration plots have been established and 400 farmers trained.

A project on commercial cultivation of vegetables and fruit at a cost of Tk 4.42 crore has been introduced in Khagrachari district through the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE). There will be 7,000 plots with an area of 0.01 acre each. Tk 50 hundred thousand have so far been spent for establishment of 780 demonstration plots and for training 430 farmers.

In addition to crop-based activities there are projects under the block allocation of the CHT Ministry for the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARI), Cotton Development Board (CDB), and the DAE of the three hill districts.

Block allocation for the development of CHT

A special block allocation commenced for the multi-sectoral development of CHT from 1991-92. Tk 2.17 billion have so far been used for this activity. Under this allocation development projects are being implemented involving different development activities in communications, afforestration, sericulture, training and development of hand loom crafts, small cottage industries, electrification, fisheries, livestock, establishment of rubber and fruit gardens, and water and sanitation. Different ministries and divisions are involved in project implementation under this block allocation. At present there are 30 projects under this allocation. Tk 450 million have been allocated in the current fiscal year for this activity.

Block allocation for new projects in CHT

This block allocation began in 1998-99. One hundred million taka have so far been spent. Tk 350 million have been allocated in the current fiscal year. Projects include construction and reconstruction of primary schools, religious institutions, feeder roads, bridges,and culverts; establisment of fisheries, drinking water and sanitation, and electrification of Jurachari *thana* in Rangamati.

CHT cell

The Government has established a CHT Cell in the Planning Commission to process CHT projects. The Cell has established a process to accelerate project approval. It had by the writing of this paper (December 1999) held meetings for 42 projects and 11 projects have been approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC).

Scope of foreign investment in CHT

From 5-15 May 1998, UNDP fielded a 'Need Assessment Mission'. The mission report recommended 48 specific projects at an estimated cost of Tk 21 billion and short-term, medium-term, and long-term measures to be undertaken and executed in the CHT area; sustaining the peace process through strengthening amity among the people, creation of awareness about the peace agreement, food for work,and housing facilities for the staff of CHT. A Regional Council, rubber cultivation, afforestation, extension of small cottage industries, establishment of a growth centre, construction of a bus terminal and jetty, extension of tourism, electrification of the area surrounding Kaptai Dam,and construction of thana link roads are notable among the recommendations. Already the Asian Development Bank and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) have shown an interest in the development of CHT.

3.10 Concluding Remarks

The economy of the CHT area largely depends on agriculture. The biggest problem in the area is acute poverty, and as a result people have limited access to basic services. Underdeveloped communications, the terrain,and isolation of the communities in small settlements in different places make overall socioeconomic development difficult.

Thus, special attention for development of the CHT is necessary for the following sectors.

- Extensive road connections and telecommunication facilities
- Women's development
- Horticultural development
- Provision of safe drinking water
- Prevention of soil erosion
- Human resource development
- Housing and settlement for low income people
- Setting up fruit processing industries
- Extending agricultural extension services—including for fisheries and livestock
- Encouraging establishment of tourist facilities

All development projects in the CHT are to be examined from environmental aspects before their approval. Before approval of projects, it might be proper to incorporate the sociological/ anthropological aspects of the people there as an 'Ethnic Impact Assessment (EIA)'.

As the tribespeople are in a minority, accounting for less than one per cent of the total population of the country, they need to be assured that their rights as a minority will be safeguarded in all development projects in the CHT.

An integrated initiative by government and non-government sectors is necessary for overall development of the CHT. Hill District Councils, Chittagong Hill Tracts' Development Board under CHT Affairs, ministries, and other government organisations are trying to achieve this goal. Still the partnership of the private sector and active participation of NGOs are necessary to accelerate these efforts. Foreign investment has become necessary for the overall development of the different sectors: industry, agriculture, power, water resources, health, public health, communications, rural development, forestry, and fisheries.

Development is an ongoing process. The peace agreement was signed to accelerate development of CHT and to ensure a normal lifestyle for the people. The allocation for the development of CHT in the Annual Development Plan (ADP) has been increased in comparison with previous years. Importance has been given to project implementation in those sectors that are related directly or indirectly to social sectors

such as education, poverty alleviation, human resource development, and development of infrastructure such as communications and other related sectors. Development activities under the Ministry of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) are gaining momentum and playing a commendable role in reduction of poverty in the CHT.

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