

## **State-building, Identity Crisis and Ethnic Conflict: The Case of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The present study is an attempt to explore the nexus between state-building, identity crisis and ethnic conflict considering the case of CHT in Bangladesh. The study is based on multiple secondary sources of data and information (e.g., study reports, conference papers, documents and journal articles). It draws the nexus between understanding historical context and dynamics of conflict; identifies the motives, interests, strategies and capacities of conflicting parties to show how structural and proximate causes trigger violent conflicts in the CHT. The study also explores how state-building project escalates identity crisis and ethnic conflict in this region. However, in the case of social science enquiry, no work goes beyond limitation. And the present work is not exception to this point of view. The major limitations of this study include - outright reliance on secondary data. It was very hard for us to cross-check secondary data on the CHT conflict for deeper understanding on the CHT conflict from theoretical perspective.

### **Introduction**

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is the south-eastern extensive hilly part of Bangladesh with an area of 13,295 square kilometers which constitutes about ten percent of the territory of Bangladesh. This area is considered as the homeland of 13 indigenous communities (where Chakma, Marma, Tripura are predominant). These groups are collectively known as “Pahari<sup>1</sup>” or “Jumma<sup>2</sup>” (Ahsan & Chakma, 1989; Amnesty International, 2013). The CHT enjoyed autonomy with the status of “excluded area” as per the CHT Regulations Act-1900 under the British imperialists’ regime. The then Pakistan government repealed such special status and also constructed the *Kaptai* dam that uprooted above 100,000 indigenous peoples (Ahsan and Chakma, 1989). It can, therefore, be argued that the genesis of the today’s CHT conflict dates back to the rule of Pakistan. When the East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) emerged as an independent nation state in

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1971, the CHT conflict surfaced with new dimensions and new actors on issues around the Liberation War of Bangladesh, citizenship, identity and autonomy. Because, Mohsin (1997: 63) elucidates:

“In the new state of Bangladesh, Bengalis who constituted the new ruling elite and the core ethnic were not only the immediate neighbors of the hilly people, but more importantly this group endeavored to create a Bengali-dominated homogenous state in Bangladesh under the rubric of Bengali/Bangladeshi nationalism”.

This statement reveals how the state-building process deteriorated inter-group (indigenous vs. Bengali) relations which outburst with the protest of M.N. Larma in the parliament: “You cannot impose your national identity on others. I am a Chakma, not a Bengali. I am a citizen of Bangladesh, Bangladeshi. You are also Bangladeshi but your national identity is Bengali ... They [indigenous people] can never be Bengali” (Amnesty International, 2013:15). Shortly after independence of Bangladesh, this inter-group conflict at the leadership level turned into armed clash between the Shanti Bahini (SB) and Bangladesh military in 1977. This was the opening of violent phase of this conflict that sternly affected grassroots level in the form of massacres, forced displacement, sexual violence and repression in the period of 1980-1990. During the insurgency, particularly since 1985, dialogue set off between both parties to settle the long-standing conflict peacefully that reached the climax in 1997 with the signing of Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord (Amnesty International, 2013). Though the Accord has plausibly stopped direct conflict between the warring parties, there are many sources evident that violence in different forms (e.g., land grabbing, sexual harassment, imposed discrimination, etc.) still continues in the CHT in the post-accord regime (Siddiqui, 2016). However, more explicitly, this paper explores the question: *how do state-building and identity crisis account for causing violence in the post-Accord regime?*

### **Understanding State Building: Concept and Theories**

The modern history (1940-present) of state-building can be divided into two major parts- decolonization period and post-cold war period when a number of new quasi-states according to Jackson came into being without pre-colonial experience of statehood (Hehir and Robinson, 2007). Generally, state building refers to establishment, re-establishment and strengthening of a state capable of delivering public goods (Deutsch, 1966), establishing legitimate monopoly of physical force (Weber, 1984) and gaining legitimacy from the sovereign power of the people (Beetham, 1991). More specifically, the state-building project embraces the policy of changing names of the states and locations of capitals, national currencies, military conscription, religious and linguistic harmonization and national identity etc. (Ghatak et al., 2008) as outlined by Scott (1998) and Young (2012). But sub-nations or tribal people have resisted assimilation and harmonization policies of the state and its monopolization of power that have created violence between groups and the state as it happened in Turkey, Peru, Venezuela and Guatemala (Nagengast, 1994). The recent scholarship on state-building emphasizes on state reconstruction with humanitarian intervention of international community to save a state from crisis (e.g. Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq etc.) from global security perspective (Hehir and Robinson, 2007). In other

words, state-building is implemented in the fragile or weak states which have no infrastructural power as argued by Mann to penetrate society, regulate social relationships, extract and use resources in determined ways (Hehir and Robinson, 2007). In a nutshell, the present-day state-building projects are concentrated on weak states of Africa and Asia where ethnic conflicts have sparked from state failure (Taras & Ganguly, 2016: 210).

#### **Different Schools of Thought on Ethnicity**

Sometimes ethnicity used to refer to 'nation' in academic arena but ethnicity and nation are fundamentally different from each to other. According to Yang (2000), ethnicity is the outcome of the subjective perceptions based on several objective characteristics such as physical attributes, ancestry, culture or national origin. But this definition is not comprehensive in this sense that it cannot distinguish ethnicity from nationhood. Varshney (2009) has clearly drawn boundary between ethnicity and nation by arguing that a nation is a group whose members have a sense of collective belongings but has a political and territorial home. On the contrary, an ethnic group is smaller compared to nation and it can obtain nationhood establishing a sovereign political entity (ibid). The present paper briefly presented three dominant theories (e.g., essentialism, instrumentalism and constructivism) of ethnicity below.

The primordialist or essentialist school of thought, which dominated the thinking on ethnicity until 1970s, is based on three arguments. Firstly, ethnicity is an ascribed identity that persists from generation to generation. Secondly, it is static and fixed in drawing boundary between groups. Thirdly, it stresses the role of primordial factors for instance, culture, language and identity (Yang, 2000). The essentialism explains ethnic conflict from "primordial animosity" perspective. After the World War II, the state-building projects of decolonized nations faced resistance from ethnic groups due to century-old historical or primordial animosity (Taras&Ganguly, 2016; Varshney, 2009). On the other hand, ethnicity is seen neither as inherent in the nature of human beings nor valuable intrinsically. Hence, ethnicity is used in multiethnic societies as an instrument by political leaders for the sake of their political and economic interests which can be explained from the greed vs. grievance model of conflict (Collier, 2004). To put it more simply, interests are the sole elements of identity formation. Rational choice theory is the best example of this school of thought according to which, people act based on cost-benefit analysis (Taras&Ganguly, 2016; Varshney, 2009). Moreover, the constructivism is based on three major arguments. Firstly, ethnic identity is a social construction. Secondly, ethnic identity is flexible and dynamic. Thirdly, ethnic affiliation is determined by the society. Anderson in his "Imagined Communities" has said that ethnic identity formation is closely associated with the "print capitalism". Constructivism explicates ethnic conflict from the "master cleavage perspective" which is historically constructed and can be easily used by leaders to intensify or instigate violence just inserting local, often trivial, incidents and rumors into the "master narrative" (Yang, 2000; Varshney, 2009, Taras & Ganguly, 2016).

#### **Global Overview of State-Building Projects, Identity Crisis and Ethnic Conflict**

Ninety percent of the countries of the world are multiethnic states (Mishra, 2014) and most of the developing countries of Asia and Africa are wracked by

ethnic tensions and violent conflict (Taras & Ganguly, 2016). Approximately 80 ethnic conflicts are active in the world and 35 of them can be described as civil wars (Gurr, 1993). But there is an academic debate on why some states have ethnic conflict while others do not have. Edward Azar (1990) has rightly pointed out that majority of the contemporary conflicts cannot be elucidated from traditional perspective of conflict according to which conflicts arise due to big power politics and territorial rivalry. Rather the contemporary conflicts are arising out of internal dynamics of the societies revolving around the issues related to communal identity and the relationship between communal groups and the state. Simply speaking, the outbreak of ethnic conflicts and violence manifests under such a multiethnic state system where the government is failure to address the deprivation of basic needs. Mishra (2014) has identified the techniques the states apply to manage differences between ethnic groups as the root cause of conflict. In South Asia, all the techniques ranging from genocide and ethnic expulsion (negative technique) to territorial elimination in the form of secession, decolonization or partition (positive technique) have been used in the process of state-building. In short, the state-building projects have sparked ethnic conflicts in South Asia due to failure of national integration in the post-colonial period. Long-standing insurgency in north-eastern India, Mohajir movement and Sheikh problem in India, the Sindh, Pakhtun and Beluch problems in Pakistan, Tamil separatism in Sri Lanka, Drukpha community problem in Bhutan, ethnic tension in Nepal and ethnic conflict in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh present a set of analogous features: failure of articulation of a common political identity, applying the Western notion of nationalism without modifications, ancient hatred, security dilemma and fragility of state (Taras&Ganguly, 2016; Mishra, 2014). The status of minorities and their political demands for autonomy and statehood have contributed to ethnic conflicts in newly independent states in the Soviet Union, in eastern and south-eastern Europe after the demise of Cold war (Taras & Ganguly, 2016).

The post-colonial Africa is not also an exception. Identity conflicts sparked in the Algeria, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Niger Republic, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan and Uganda (Jinadu, 2007: 8). Let us consider two cases of Africa: Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Kenya was granted independence in the 1960's by the British government but the state-building project of Kenya came under the attack with the emergence of insurgency of Northern Frontier District Liberation Army (NFDLA) which waged a political program (secession) supported by the Somali Republic. In the context of the eastern part of Democratic Republic of Congo, ethnicity or identity politics is deep-seated in the society that is generating bottom-up tensions around issues of land, citizenship, resources, access to status and power (Soderlund et al., 2012: 9-13).

### **Theoretical Perspectives on Ethnic Conflict**

Ethnic conflict is as old as human civilization. Ethno-political movements emerge when ethnic groups compete to prioritize ethnically defined interests (e.g. legal and moral ownership over a given territory) on the agenda of the state but the strength of the movements depend on group solidarity (Taras&Ganguly,

2016). We have discussed three dominant theoretical perspectives on ethnic conflict in the following for better understanding of the CHT ethnic conflict. According to

Horowitz (1998), ethnicity can drive ethnic conflict based on ten propositions which have been highlighted below.

- I. Ethnicity is a primordial affiliation.
- II. Ancient hatred drives ethnic conflict.
- III. Ethnic conflict manifests a clash of cultures. Both parties perceive each other's values from negative perspective.
- IV. Ethnic conflict is caused by modernization.
- V. Ethnic conflict involves economic competition between traders and customers of different ethnic groups.
- VI. In ethnically divided states, dominant ethnic group(s) prioritizes their interests in the state policies at the expense of other groups and this imbalance of power creates conflict between privileged and deprived groups.
- VII. Interethnic conflict is the product of negative social relations rather than feelings of antipathy.
- VIII. Ethnic conflict is the result of political struggle of leaders to strengthen their powers by using ethnic identity.
- IX. The sense of insecurity derived from the threat of opponents generates ethnic conflict.
- X. Strong emotion among the group members about their identities and interests causes ethnic conflict.

However, human needs theory depicts a bunch of universal and nonnegotiable basic needs beyond the physical needs (e.g., like food, water, shelter and healthcare). The following table has identified such issues more explicitly.

**Table-1: Human Needs as Outlined by Theorists**

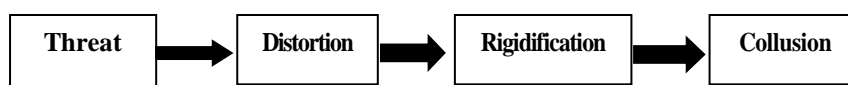
Maslow	Burton	Rosenberg	Max Neef
Food, water, shelter (1)	Distributive justice	Physical Nurturance	Subsistence
Safety and Security (2)	Safety and security	Interdependence	Protection
Belonging or love (3)	Belonging or love	Integrity	Affection
Self-esteem (4)	Self-esteem	Autonomy	Understanding
Personal fulfillment (5)	Personal fulfillment	Play	Creation
	Identity	Celebration and mourning	Identity
	Cultural identity	Spiritual communication	Leisure
	Freedom		Freedom
	Participation		Participation

Source: Danielson (2005).

In principle, the state is obliged to provide these indispensable needs through policies, public goods and institutions. Violence becomes inevitable when a state fails to fulfill essential needs of communities (Burton, 1990). Among all of these needs, identity works mostly as a catalyst of political mobilization by which group members can express their highest level of concerns and collective fears against state policies. Besides, it is the cheapest and quickest channel of political leaders to reach their political objectives (Doucey, 2011: 1-6).

Moreover, very often conflict is caused by feelings of threatened identity which can best be described as a multi-stage psychosocial process that starts at the stage of threat and moves on finally to the stage of collusion with increase in intractability. Northrup (1989) also argues that de-escalation of conflict can take place at any stage of a conflict (see the figure.1).

**Figure-1: Sequential Model of Ethnic Conflict**



The aforementioned figure shows that both conflicting parties perceive each other as the threat to their identity and survival at the first stage as it is observed in Israel-Palestine conflict. In the next, both parties move on to the distortion or aggressive stage involving the use of force according to Kelly (1955). Under this situation, both parties enter into the stage of rigidification where they interpret (self vs. other) from radical (intolerable) perspective. In this stage, communication between parties is wrecked, negative stereotyping and dehumanization increases with deployment of defense forces along national borders. The rigidification stage escalates into the stage of collision, the final stage of the conflict process, with extreme level of separation between conflicting parties (Northrup, 1989).

### **Historical Context of the CHT Conflict**

The following discussion may suffice to comprehend the historical context of the CHT conflict and its peace process.

#### **British Period (1860-1947)**

The British period can be marked with the armed clash between British army and Chakma king in 1776 which continued for decades. Finally this war was ended through signing an agreement between Lord Cornwallis and Chakma King Jan Box Khan. As per this treaty, British started trade with this region and the CHT was declared as an “excluded area” in 1860. Besides, British government passed a legislation titled “CHT Regulations Act-1900”, which is also called “Hill Tracts Manual”, with an aim to administer this region through transferring administrative and judicial powers to three circles – Chakma circle in Rangamati with small portion of Khagrachhari, Bomang circle in Bandaban and the Mong circle in Khagrachari. Each circle, headed by a circle chief called *Raja*, is divided into several mouzas which is under the jurisdiction of *Headman*. There are 380 Mouzas in this region and each Mouza is partitioned into several villages. At the lowest level of hierarchy, each village is administered by a

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*Karbari*. These traditional leaders – *Raja*, *Headman* and *Karbari* – are authorized to govern matters related to petty crimes, family disputes, allocation of lands, revenue collection and so on (Amnesty International, 2013; Chakma, 2010). The CHT Regulations Act-1900 was the first codified law that prohibited the sale of land to non-indigenous people and settlement of Bengalis in the CHT (Panday & Jamil, 2009) without permission from the deputy commissioner who was bound to take recommendation from the circle chief and Headman (Zahed, 2013: 97-98).

#### **Pakistan Period (1947-1971)**

The British India was partitioned into two independent [nation] states – India and Pakistan based on two-nation theory and it was decided that India would be composed of regions of non-Muslim population while Pakistan with Muslim majority regions. Bangladesh (earlier East Bengal) being a Muslim majority region was annexed to Pakistan with the CHT although its population (97%) was non-Muslim. Prior to independence of India and Pakistan, delegations of the CHT met Indian leaders, Patel and Nehru, to integrate the CHT as a tribal state into India and they were assured by the Indian leaders. Ironically, the Radcliffe boundary commission published its controversial report on 17 August, 1947 and the leaders of this region protested against the inclusion of the region with Pakistan (CHTC, 1991; Chakma, 2010). The Indian flag was hoisted in Rangamati on 14 August while the people of Bandarban erected the flag of Burma on 15 August, 1947 (Mey, 1994; Shely, 1992). From the inception of the Pakistan state, the government of Pakistan (GoP) marked indigenous leadership as pro-Indian. The GoP did not recognize the autonomy of the CHT as per the CHT Regulations Act-1900. Rather it repealed the Chittagong Hill Tracts Frontier Police Regulations-1881 (CHTC, 1991: 13). Furthermore, the GoP changed the status of the CHT from “excluded area” to “tribal area” with withdrawal of restriction on settlement of Bengalis in 1963. In addition, the construction of Kaptai dam (1960) for generating electricity displaced about 100,000 indigenous people from their ancestral lands (CHTC, 1991; Chowdhury, 2002). The GoP did not provide compensation and rehabilitation facilities to the victims (Ali & Tsuchiya, 2002).

#### **Bangladesh Period (1971-1997)**

Bangladesh started its journey with deep-seated misperception between indigenous peoples and the GoB on the issue of less active participation of indigenous peoples in the Liberation War (CHTC, 1991: 13). On 15 February 1975, a delegation of the CHT led by M.N. Larma met Shekh Mujibur Rahman, then Prime Minister, with a proposal of four points demand - autonomy with its own legislature, retention of the CHT Regulations Act-1900 in the CHT, continuation of circle chief's offices and restriction on the influx of Bengalis from plain lands (Haq & Hoque, 1990). The Prime Minister refused these demands with threat to assimilate into mainstream forgetting their identities and cultures (al-Ahsan & Chakma, 1989; Salam & Aktar, 2014; CHTC, 1991). Moreover, the constitution adopted in 1972 reflected Bengali chauvinism that triggered the hostility. The Article-6 of the constitution states that “The people of Bangladesh will be known as Bengali”.

The discriminatory constitution and state policies of Bangladesh pushed the CHT leadership to form a political organization named “ParbatyaChattagram Jana SanhatiSamiti (PCJSS)” to shape their destiny in 1972 which established an armed unit “Shanti Bahini (peace force)” in 1976. The democracy was cancelled by the military government in 1975 and the CHT leadership had to start insurgency. On the contrary, the GoB adopted three policies to combat insurgency. Firstly, it deployed one army person per six indigenous persons in the CHT in the name of national security and territorial integrity (Mohsin, 1999; Levene, 1999). Secondly, around 26, 220 Bengali families were rehabilitated in the 1980s in 8 Upazillas under Kharachari and Rangamati hill districts (see the table.2) on the lands of indigenous peoples to change demographic composition and land distribution of the CHT (Adnan and Dastdar, 2011). This added a new dimension (land conflict between locals and migrants) which is the biggest challenge in the postaccord period. Thirdly, the Islamization [proselytization] policy was undertaken by the government itself and a Saudi NGO named *Al Rabita* to convert indigenous peoples by offering food, money and jobs (Talukdar, 2005).

**Table-2: Upazila<sup>3</sup>-wise Rehabilitation of Bengali Settlers**

SI No.	Upazilla	Number of Villages	Number of Families
1	Dighinala	15	4,185
2	Khagrachari	4	1,167
3	Panchari	11	4,186
4	Matiranga	24	9,265
5	Manikchari	6	1,670
6	Mahalchari	6	1,088
7	Ramghar	11	4,310
8	Lakmichari	3	391
Total=80			26,220

Source: Chakma (2012: 31)

On the other hand, negotiation between the PCJSS and government of Bangladesh started since 1985 to resolve the conflict peacefully. In the long run, both parties reached the CHT Accord in 1997 that officially opened the window of peace-building process. The Accord has been successful to end armed conflict but failed to reduce communal riots, human rights violations and land conflicts in the region (Islam & Chakma, 2013).

#### **Analysis of the CHT Conflict**

Conflict analysis is the systematic study of the profile, causes, actors and dynamics of conflict. It can be conducted at different levels ranging from project and sector to community, district, regional and national level (Saferworld, 2004). The key elements of conflict analysis outlined by the Saferworld have been used to provide a critical analysis of the CHT conflict.

#### **Context**

The previous section of historical background of the CHT conflict reveals that the CHT was the homeland of indigenous peoples under the British period but population make-up, political and economic structure, history of use of violence by the state and deep-seated grievance among indigenous peoples have pushed

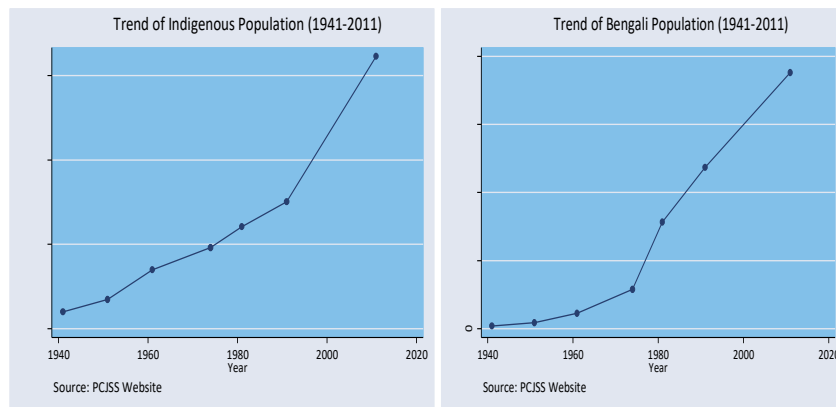


the CHT to a protracted ethnic conflict in Pakistan and particularly, Bangladesh period (CHTC, 1991; Amnesty International, 2013). More specifically, indigenous people started armed struggle for their nonnegotiable political demands which clashed with interests of the GoB (see the table.3).

**Table-3: Incompatible Goals of the CHT Conflict**

Nonnegotiable Goalsto the GoB	Nonnegotiable Goals to the PCJSS
Unitary state	Autonomy
Territorial integrity	Identity
Sovereignty and hegemony	Land rights
Protection of national security	Cultural rights
Disarmament of insurgents	CHT Regulations Act-1900
Assimilation of indigenous peoples	CHT special police force

The second crucial contextual factor is the change of demographic composition in both Pakistan and Bangladesh period. The graph-1 and graph-2 indicate that indigenous population increased slightly while Bengali population increased rapidly in the period of 1941-2011. According to the census of 1941, Indigenous peoples constituted 97.06 percent of the total population while Bengalis 2.94 percent. The first census of Bangladesh period was conducted in 1974 according to which the ratio of indigenous and Bengali stood at 77:23. Latter, rehabilitation of Bengali settlers in the 1980s altered the demographic scenario of the region drastically. As the 1981 census reveals, Bengalis share 41.48 percent of the total population of the region. The latest 2011 census reports that the current ratio of indigenous and Bengali population is 53: 47.



The rehabilitation of Bengali settlers has affected the life of indigenous peoples, particularly on their lands. Almost both indigenous and Bengalis have referred to the land issue as the core problem of the CHT in reply to the question of Amnesty international: “What is the core issue in the Chittagong Hill Tracts?” Therefore, it can be argued that the context of the CHT conflict is very much complicated due to presence of many intractable destabilizing factors.

**Structural Causes, Proximate Causes and Triggers**

As the Saferworld (2004) defines, structural causes are associated with policies, structure and fabric of the society that work as pre-conditions of conflict whereas

proximate causes contribute to a climate conducive to conflict and triggers are single event that escalate violent conflict. In the context of the CHT conflict, structural causes include exclusive citizenship, denial of identity of indigenous communities, forced assimilation policy, entrenched inter-community misperception and distrust. As discussed in the historical background of the conflict, proximate causes of the CHT conflict are human right abuses, insurgency, militarization and rehabilitation of Bengali settlers. On the contrary, land grabbing, sexual violence, kidnapping and murder cases trigger violent conflict between indigenous peoples and Bengalis (CHTC, 1991) as it has been observed in the Longdu violence (1989), Matiranga violence (1986) and Matiranga violence (2013).

#### **Actors (Local, National and International)**

The main actors of the CHT conflict can be categorized into three types: local, national and international. Besides, they fall further into two types based on their negative/ positive roles: anti-peace and pro-peace actors. Some local, national and international actors (e.g. Shanti Bahini, military, Bengali settlers and India etc.) engaged directly and indirectly in the conflict while others local and national actors (e.g. local mediation committee) played crucial role to establish peace in the region. The conflict became internationalized with international campaigns of Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission, Amnesty International and International Labour Organization (ILO) urging India to protect unarmed refugees and putting pressure on Bangladesh military for respecting human rights (CHTC, 1991). After the accord, European Union, Ausaid and UNDP have engaged in peace-building process through implementing multi-sector development projects.

#### **Consequences of the Conflict**

##### **Direct Violence**

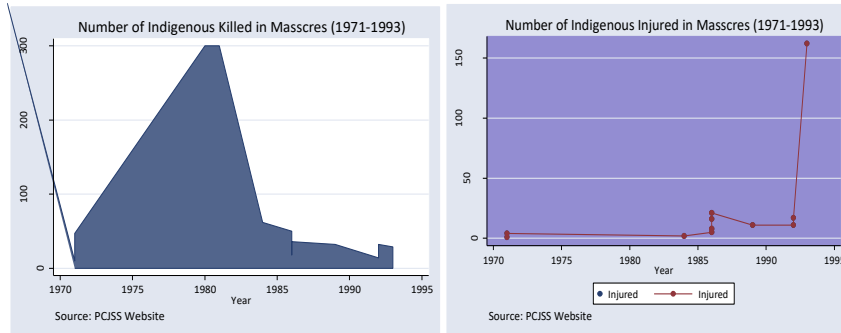
Since 1977 Bangladesh military and Shanti Bahini engaged in armed clashes. During insurgency period, Shanti Bahini waged the biggest organized attack on military and Bengali settlers in 1986. In turn, government forces and Bengali settlers carried out for reprisal attacks on indigenous villages. Attacks on the indigenous villages are mostly used to uproot indigenous and capture their lands. A Chakma refugee reported to the CHT Commission;

I lost my land. Settlers came and captured my land. They burnt our houses first. They came with soldiers. This took place on 1st May 1986 at Kalanal, Panchari. My house was in a village with a temple. The whole village of 60 houses was burnt. After seeing this we ran through the jungles and eventually reached India, coming to Karbook camp (CHTC, 1991: 54).

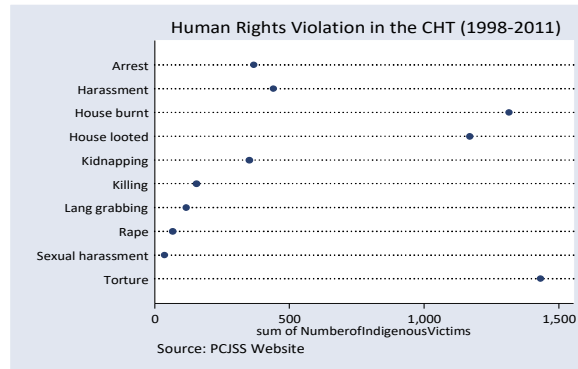
##### **Human Rights Violations**

Over the years, the security forces have been involved in gross human rights violations which have been well documented and internationally publicized. A total number of eleven major massacres have taken place in different places of this region in the period of 1979-1997 (CHTC, 2000; 12). Major General Manjur's statement is noteworthy here: "We want the land, not the people (Mohsin, 1999). The graph-3 and graph-4 present data on the number of indigenous persons killed and injured by security forces and Bengali settlers in these massacres.

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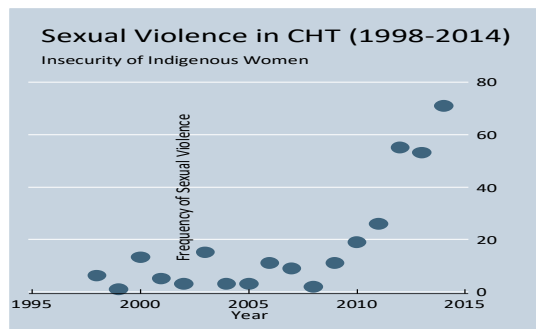


In the post-accord period, human rights are still being grossly violated (Islam & Chakma, 2013). The following graph-5 shows major areas of violation of human rights (e.g. burning and looting of houses of indigenous peoples, torture, harassment and arrest).



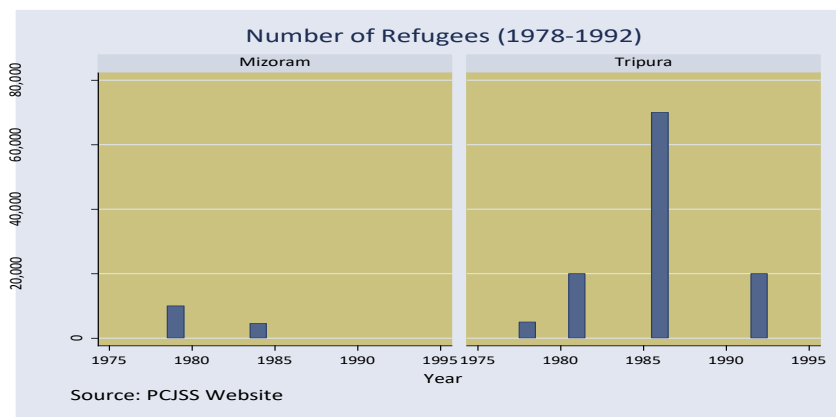
**Gender-based Violence**

There is no available statistics on gender-based violence of insurgency in the case of CHT conflict. The CHT Commission reports that rape was used as a systematic weapon against women in the CHT in this period. About 94 percent of rape cases were conducted by security forces and mostly female children were victims of sexual violence (AIPP, 2013). The trend of sexual violence against indigenous women of this region in the post-accord period also shows the upward trend (see the following graph).



### Displacement

Most of the massacres and large-scale violence (1978-1992) produced a large flow of indigenous refugees who took shelter in two states of India: Tripura and Mizoram. The graph-7 below shows that about 70,000 refugees, the large influx in the history of the CHT, reached six refugee camps established in Takumbari, Pancharampara, Karbook, Lebachara, Shilachari, and Kathalchhari of Tripura by the Indian government in the 1980s decade (Report of the CHT Commission, 1991).



### Conclusion

The CHT conflict is the product of failure of national integration that turned into protracted ethnic conflict. Although it started as a national problem but later received international attention in the 1980s when massive scale violence took place with large influx of refugees who took shelter in two states (Tripura and Mizoram) of India. The conflict set off on the issues of autonomy and identity but land disputes added as a new dimension in the 1980s when around 450,000 Bengali settlers were rehabilitated in the region by the government. Both parties were pressured by local, national and international actors to resolve the conflict. In the long run, both parties signed an agreement in 1997 that terminated the long-standing conflict officially. Ironically, the peace accord has been challenged by local and national political parties (spoilers of the peace process). Despite to presence of anti-peace elements, the accord is still the hope for the future of the CHT which opened the window of development intervention of national and international organizations.

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**Notes:**

1. The common identity of "Pahari" is used to denote 11 indigenous groups collectively of the CHT due to their residence in the hilly or mountainous region. The word "Pahari" refers to hill or mountain in Bengali language.
2. This is another collective identity which has been derived from their agricultural system which is called "Jum" and it is very much political identity in this sense that the PCJSS leadership called for a movement against injustices and racial discrimination of the government of Bangladesh. The "Jumma" nationalism united all the groups during the period of insurgency to fight against Bangladesh military.
3. The *upazila* is the second lowest tier of administrative system of Bangladesh which is known as sub-district in English.