

# SOCIO-ECONOMIC BASELINE SURVEY OF CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS

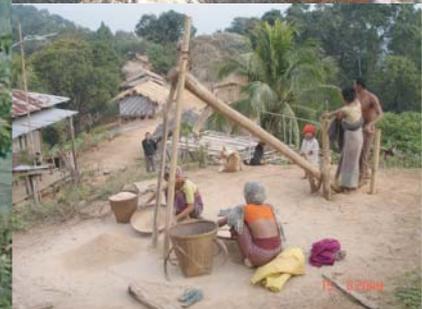
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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) with its diversity in geography, multi-ethnic population composition (including 11 Indigenous communities and Bangalees), displacement issues, deprivation in terms of socio-economic parameters, armed conflict, signing of CHT Accord and post-conflict development, etc. still remains as a region of crucial political and development discourse. The UNDP-CHTDF, the lead agency among the development partners in CHT, has sponsored the accompanying study titled “**Socio-economic Baseline Survey of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)**” for generating comprehensive knowledge-base on socio-economic status of the people living in CHT.

CHT is one of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable regions in the country in terms of almost all major development indicators, such as income; employment; poverty; health; Water Environment and Sanitation; education; women employment; access to infrastructure and national building institutions; peace; inter community confidence etc.

The study has been aimed at generating benchmark information for understanding periodic progress attained through interventions made into the region by UNDP-CHTDF. The accompanying survey has generated an extensive knowledge-base on multifarious aspects of livelihood of all the twelve ethnicities living in the region.

## Methodology

This study was designed to assess the baseline status of CHT population in terms of socio-economic indicators as well as status of peace promotion and confidence building. The study used both quantitative and qualitative data and information. At the design phase, a wide range of efforts, such as inception workshop with CHT stakeholders (UNDP-CHTDF personnel, development workers, local traditional leaders, relevant CHT experts at local and national levels, and others), numerous field visits – spending many days with the indigenous peoples and the Bangalees at their *paras* (villages), discussion with community leaders, relevant officials from the government and private sector - had been made aiming at sharpening the methodology and understanding the contextual issues pertaining to the study.

The sample population for the quantitative survey has been selected using appropriate sampling procedure. A two-stage random sampling strategy has been adopted. At the first stage, Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) – administrative units at lower tier (the *paras*) have been chosen. A representative sample size of PSUs (*para*) has been determined as 199 *paras*. At the second stage, the required number of households per selected PSUs has been randomly chosen. The representative sample size for households ensuring the scientific representation of all ethnicities has been determined as 3,238. In addition, qualitative exercises such as focus group discussions, stakeholder’s analyses, and consultation meetings with the knowledgeable and influential people of CHT have been

conducted to get deeper insights into the relevant issues. The required data/information have been collected through administering nine different data collection instruments. The study covered about two hundred (199) *paras* in twenty-nine (29) unions of thirteen (13) Upazilas of three (3) CHT districts.

Field survey operation was conducted in two phases: (i) household listing (conducted for about twenty days in December, 2007) and (ii) household survey and qualitative exercises (conducted for a period of 35 days from January 08, 2008 to February 13, 2008). The strategic strength of Field Team (56 field personnel) was the participation of enumerators drawn from all individual indigenous communities and the Bangalees which captured the socio-cultural diversities and heterogeneous features of CHT population.

## **Salient Findings**

**The *para* in CHT, synonymous to the *village* in the plain land, on average consists of about 46 households and a population of around 240 persons.** A 77% of the *paras* are inhabited by only one or more indigenous community(ies); 16% *paras* are inhabited by only Bangalees, and rest are mixed *paras*. Existence and condition of physical infrastructures in *paras* have been found deplorable: (i) only 16% of the villages have access to metallic roads, (ii) average distance between a *para* and the nearest metallic road is 4.5 km, (iii) Union Parishad and Upazila HQs are respectively 2.2 km and 5.7 km away from the *paras*, (iv) economic hubs such as market place/trading centre are about 7 km away from *paras*. Government primary schools and NGO schools have been found in one-third and half of the *paras* respectively and a secondary school is very rare in a *para*. The average distance between an NGO school and a *para* in CHT is about 0.8 km; and the same for a government primary school is 1.4 km. UH&FWC is around 5.5 km away from the *paras* whereas one-fifth of the *paras* have a satellite clinic. Common property resources like *mouza* reserve forest, grazing land and accessible lake/water-bodies are found in one-third of the *paras*. Accessible forest and rivers are around 2 km away from the *paras* on average.

The average **household size of CHT is 5.2** (national average being 4.8). The same among the Bangalees is 5.4, and among IPs (indigenous peoples) is 5.1. About 58% of the population belongs to below the age bracket of 24 years, and 5% belong to that of 60 years and above. The mean age of CHT population is 23 years with a little variation across the communities. The sex ratios of both the indigenous peoples and the Bangalees are estimated to be 104.4 (number of male per 100 female; national 106). A 72% of CHT population (age 15+years) is currently married and 5% widowed.

**Only 7.8 % of all CHT people completed primary education** and 2.4% completed secondary education. The average years of schooling for CHT population are only 2.8. The household dependency ratio in CHT is 82.1 (Indigenous peoples and Bangalees 76 and 91 respectively).

**Farming/cultivation (through ploughing) is the occupation of 18% of the total population in CHT.** *Jum* cultivation is the occupation of 14% indigenous population.

About 3% and 3.5% population respectively are involved in business and salaried jobs. More than 9% of the population is day labourers (farm/non-farm). About 25% of household members are students and more than 20% household members are old age people. About 9% of the households are female-headed (7% among indigenous peoples and 12% among the Bangalees).

**A 62% of the Bangalee populations are living in rural CHT for less than 30 years** (Around two-thirds of the current Bangalee population in CHT are transmigrated people). Around 31% of households had to ever change their usual place of residence in their lifetime, and the average frequency of such displacements is 1.7. Around 38% of indigenous peoples had to change the same for almost 2 times and 20% were displaced more than once. The Chakmas are the worst affected; and 72% of their households were displaced at least once in the last 30 years. A 22% Bangalee households had to change their permanent addresses during the last three decades. An average Bangalee household had to move from their first permanent residence in CHT about 1.5 times. In most instances, the settler households have preferred to move to locations adjacent to security forces' camps due mainly to security perceptions.

**At least one household member in 13% of CHT rural households had to out-migrate from its *para* before the signing of the CHT Accord in 1997.** In about 10% of CHT households, out-migrated member(s) returned after the signing of the CHT Accord. A 10% of migrated members migrated due to reasons related to security concern, and communal or political conflict.

Land ownership of a household in context of CHT is to be understood along with **three major types of ownership**: (i) individual registered ownership, (ii) traditional ownership (recorded and/or not recorded with headman) under usufruct rights, and (iii) usufruct rights to ownership of common property (different from that in plain land). For example, if a IP household uses part of *para* common property as homestead or as cultivated land, all members from his/her community/*para* traditionally honor his/her usufruct right of ownership on that part of common property.

Conservative estimation considering only registered ownership category reveals that only one-third population of the CHT enjoy land ownership with a significant variation between the indigenous (30%) and the Bangalee household (42%). Land ownership scenario becomes less gloomy when in addition to registered ownership the traditional customary (recorded) ownership has been taken into consideration. Estimation shows that half of the total CHT households which is 20% higher than registered ownership. Using the most liberal methodology of land ownership which considers all the three types of ownership – it is evident that almost all the CHT households (93%) have land irrespective ethnic identity. It implies that most CHT population – irrespective of indigenous and Bangalee – enjoy some kind of land ownership.

An average household owns 2.3 acres of land (including common property). An indigenous household owns on average 3.2 acres and a Bangalee household owns 1.3 acres. Agricultural land (plough and/or *jum*) is owned by 27% households. A 46% of households from among indigenous communities own *jum* land.

**Out of estimated 364,000 acres of available cultivatable land, about 73,000 acres are under plough cultivation and about 99,000 are available for *jum* and about 66,000 acres of land used for homesteads.** Among the indigenous communities, most lands fall under the category of traditional- customary property (55%). Over half (52%) of land properties have been categorized as ‘Registered Ownership’ for the Bangalees; and the same for the indigenous peoples is 21%.

**About 22% indigenous households have lost their lands.** The Chakmas are mostly affected by land dispossession (41%), followed by Tanchangya (22%). Majority of dispossession incidents took place during the life time of fathers of the current owners and 6% lost their lands during his/her own ownership period. On average, a CHT household has lost about 90 decimals of land during ownership of three generations (the current owner, father and grand father of the owner). An average indigenous peoples’ household has reportedly lost 115 decimals, and the same for Bangalee household is 58 decimals.

**Almost all households possess own houses in rural CHT.** The Bangalees are in a better position in terms of owning assets like furniture and tubewells as compared to their indigenous people’s counterparts. In terms of agricultural appliances, most indigenous household possess the same while substantially lesser proportion of the Bangalee households owns such appliances. Some indigenous communities possess more livestock, poultry and trees as compared to the Bangalees. The total valuation of assets owned by an average Bangalee household at current prices (of January 2008) is around Tk. 62,000, while the same for an indigenous household is around Tk. 43,000.

**The majority (63%) of the houses of IPs are *kutch* followed by *machan*. Almost all the houses of Bangalees (96%) are *kutch*.** Among the IPs, 55% uses straw/jute stick/leaves/*chaan* as the main roof construction material for the main house, while for 58% of the Bangalees CI sheet is the most frequently used roof construction material. On average, the indigenous peoples and the Bangalees possess around two rooms for dwelling purpose. On average, a Bangalee household in rural CHT has 333 sft. of floor space, while an average IP household has 282 sft. More than 91% of the IP households and 73% of the Bangalee households are non-electrified.

**On average, 52% of the total household members in CHT (2.75 persons per household (household size being 5.2) being either employed or employable.** The pattern for the same across the communities is similar. Almost all the employed or employable persons are over 15 years (98%) and more than 90% are full-time employed. Across the communities, two-thirds of the employed persons are self-employed. A 94% of the employed IPs and 72% of the Bangalees are income-earners. A 47% of the IPs and

30% Bangalee income-earners are females. The income-earners, on average, have employment for 9.36 months per year.

The **cultivation technologies** practiced in CHT for crop culture are **plough** and **jum** depending upon the suitability of the land. **Nearly two-thirds of rural households are farming households.** One-third (34%) households are involved in field cropping only, about one-fifth (19%) are involved in *jum* only, and a small proportion (9%) does both field and *jum* agriculture. Plough and *jum* cultivation have been found in more than half of all indigenous peoples' households while most of the Bangalee households depend on plough agriculture.

**An average rural CHT household has brought about 138 decimals of land under field cropping and 161 decimals under jum** in the 2007 cropping year. The field cropping area for Bangalee households, on average, is bigger (151 decimals) as compared to that for the indigenous households (132 decimals). At least 252,000 acres of land had been brought under field cropping and 296,000 acres under *jum* cultivation in the 2007 cropping year. More than 35 types of crop were cultivated. The major crops cultivated are limited to 7 types including paddy, turmeric, ginger, arum, *binny* paddy, and banana. In CHT, the productivity of paddy (34 maunds per acre) under field cropping is substantially higher than the average national scenario (27 maunds per acre). Productivity of field cropping is also higher than that under *jum* culture (15 maunds per acre).

**The annual household net income of an average rural household is around Tk. 66,000 (Bangladesh rural being Tk. 84,000).** The household annual net income of the Bangalees is around Tk. 71,000 and the same for indigenous peoples around Tk. 62,000. Agriculture-related activities are the prime sources of household income across the communities (ranging between 49% and 72% of the net income).

**The reported contribution of female members in generating household annual net income is low.** An average household has reported around Tk. 4,000 as the annual contribution of the female members. An average indigenous people's household has attributed Tk. 6,728 as female members' contribution to household income and the Bangalee households, on average, have attributed Tk. 2,898 for the same. This indicates that, across the communities, the income-earning work performed by the female members remains substantially under-recognized or less valued. It is to be noted that, this estimation does not include domestic work performed by the female members as income.

**The household annual expenditure in rural CHT is lower than that of rural Bangladesh (Tk. 62,000 vs. 73,000).** The same for an average Bangalee household in CHT is Tk. 68,728, and that for an indigenous people's household is Tk. 57,035. The share of food expenditure is extremely high across the communities (around 90%). The annual household expenditure on health and education for an average household are extremely low with Tk. 605 and Tk. 398 respectively.

**The share of annual household spending for the maintenance of female members is disproportionately low** (around 30%) and is indicative of high extent of intra-household discrimination against women and female child.

**About 87% households reportedly have some savings** (any amount from Tk. 1 or more). An average CHT household has savings (as on January 2008) amounting to about Tk. 3,542, while on average an indigenous people's household has Tk. 2,647 and a Bangalee household Tk. 4643 as savings which is relatively higher than that of the indigenous household.

**About 54% of all CHT households have some access to credit.** The average amount of credit received by a household during 2004-2007 is Tk. 4,597. An average indigenous household has received Tk. 5,283 as credit, while an average Bangalee household has received Tk. 12,674. Bangalee households were found more advanced in taking credit from formal sectors like banks and NGOs.

The largest proportion of households had spent the borrowed money for maintaining household expenditure (37%). However, about 28% households invested the borrowed amount directly for income-generating activities (IGA).

**Food habit of the CHT people is almost similar to that of the plain land people except that they consume a very few items like *nappi*** (a special type of fish paste), ***bamboo shoots***, and **dry vegetables**. The items consumed by the indigenous peoples and the Bangalees are mostly similar, except for some special dishes which are found to be consumed by indigenous peoples' households only. The average physical quantity of food intake per person in CHT is about 781 gm per day. The per capita food intake of Bangalee households is 800 gm, and the same among the indigenous peoples is 765 gm. Over 50% food intake comes from cereals (rice) followed by vegetables (30%). The female members of households, on average, get 17% lesser amount of food as compared to their male counterpart.

**The per capita daily energy intake of an average household is 1,798 k.cal, which is less than the level for the hardcore poor (below 1,805 kcal).** The per capita daily energy intake status of the Bangalees (1,842 k.cal) is slightly better than the indigenous communities (1,762 k.cal), but still under the level of the absolute poor (below 2,122 k.cal).

**'Food Poverty' is widespread in CHT. Most indigenous peoples in CHT are not secured in relation to availability of food during most time in a year;** *Ashar* (June-July) and *Sravan* (July-Aug) being the worse months. However, for the Bangalees the food security status is little better as compared to the indigenous peoples. Since CHT is a food deficit region of the country, the whole issue of improving food security status deserves special attention.

**About 62% households in the region irrespective of ethnicities, according to direct calorie intake (DCI) method, are living below the absolute poverty line** (below 2,122

k.cal), **while 36% are hardcore poor** (below 1805 k.cal). A 59% of the Bangalee households are absolutely poor, and about 31% are hardcore poor. The prevalence of absolute poor and hardcore poor among indigenous peoples are 65% and 44% respectively.

**About three-fourth of the households (74%) are living below the lower poverty line (<Tk.866/ person/month) and 86% below the upper poverty line (<Tk.1,025/ person/month), according to CBN method.** Households living below lower and upper poverty lines are 78% and 89% respectively among indigenous people and 69% and 83% respectively among Bangalee. Households below lower poverty line range between 100% for Lushai and 71% for Chakma and households below upper poverty line range between 100% for Lushai and 84% for Chakma.

**About 82% of children of 5-16 years are enrolled in primary or secondary schools** with the enrollment among the Bangalees being marginally higher than that among the indigenous peoples. Three-fifths of children go to government primary schools irrespective of their distances from the residences. The average travel time for going to a nearby school, irrespective of communities, is around half an hour. The dropout scenario among the students is highly unacceptable, 65% children discontinue their education before completion of primary schooling and 19% after completion of the same. *Financial problem* is the main reason for school dropouts. The other reasons include *distance of the school from the residence, children are not welcomed at schools, and medium of instruction is not understandable, un-helping parents, insecurity, and lack of interest of the child.* In almost all schools both at primary and secondary level, the medium of instruction is Bangla.

**Peoples' knowledge about health problems, health facilities and health service providers is crucial.** Awareness situation was found to be deplorable in terms of the following issues: how to prepare ORS, ANC checkup, PNC checkup, and delivery by medically trained provider, place to go for child vaccination, ARI treatment of child and place to go for treatment of TB/leprosy. Among the diseases of poverty, the average number of incidences per household of measles and ARI is reportedly 1.4 incidences per year each, and that for diarrhea 2 incidences per year. Average incidence of malaria per household per year is 2.7. Malaria incidence has been reported at a higher frequency among the Bangalees. Maternal mortality reported during last five years is 0.5 on average, and incidences of neonatal mortality are 2 per household.

**The contraceptive prevalence rate is 54% (national 56%), and the unmet need for family planning is 12% (national 17.6%).** Service provider's home visitation generally is low. However, it is relatively higher among the Bangalee and the Khumi households. Availing ANC and PNC check-up facilities is low, as the knowledge on danger signs of pregnancy. Habit of receiving TT immunization by pregnant women is also very low. Regarding reasons for not availing treatment services from public health system and/or NGO facilities, the most commonly mentioned reasons are '*don't know where to go*', and '*facility/ provider too far off*'.

**The major source(s) of drinking and cooking water in CHT are not safe.** Most tubewells have not been tested for arsenic contamination. People have to travel long distances to fetch drinking water and spend substantial amount of time for the same. The distance and traveling time varies by season (dry and wet). A widespread practice of gender discrimination in collection of water has been found; it is the female members who suffer most due to water scarcity and inadequate hygiene situation. The use of latrine by all household members is not practiced in most of the households having hygienic latrine. The practice of healthy personal hygiene, including hand washing at critical times and disposal of household waste, is below the optimum level.

**Overall 43% households (50% indigenous and 34% Bangalee) listen to radio,** and 60% households with 54% indigenous and 68% Bangalee watch TV. Of those not owning radio, 16% go to neighbor's houses and 13% to Hat/Bazar and relatives'/ friends' homes. Of those not owning TV, 29% go to neighbor's homes, 15% to Hat/bazar, and 13% to relative's/ friend's homes.

**The common people's day-to-day life in CHT is closely associated with the traditional power structure and lower tier of the local government, and to some extent with the security forces.** During last three months prior to the survey, one or more members of 51% households have visited Karbaris, 32% visited Headmen, 48% visited UP members, 40% visited UP Chairmen, and 10% have visited Army/ BDR/APB Camps for various day-to-day affairs. During the same time, visits have also been made by one or more members of sample households to health workers (30%), NGOs (24%) and Union Health and Family Welfare Centres (20%). Access to various government offices at local level is significantly low. Access to district and/or regional power structure is also negligible. Overall, at least one member from 3% of the households have visited the Circle Chief during last three years, 4% visited Hill District Council, and 1% visited both the CHT Development Board and CHT Regional Council.

**Overall participation in local level organization is low.** Only 20% of households have claimed about having participation (membership) in CBO activities by any of their (household's) members. Only 10% of households with 13% for Bangalees and 9% for IPs (9%) received any type of skill development training in last one year from one or more sources. Only 3% of the households of both the IPs and the Bangalees are involved in multi-community organizations.

**In terms of composite score on women and development issues, the IPs, on average, are in a better-off position with 12 percentage-points higher scores than that of the Bangalees.** However, the indigenous peoples and the Bangalees still need to achieve 56 and 68 percentage-points respectively to attain the ideal situation (100%).

**Majority of the population in CHT have extremely inadequate knowledge about the content of the CHT Accord 1997.** They rather merely know that there has been an Accord which is known as the 'Peace Treaty'. The plausible reasons for not knowing the key content of the CHT Accord 1997 include *lack of intensive discussion on the issues among CHT population, several closed-door negotiation meetings before signature of the*

*accord, lack of consensus between indigenous peoples and Bangalees, and low level of consciousness or awareness due to lack of education and memory recall problem.*

**Before the CHT Accord, a slightly less than one-fifth of the households had faced armed violence**, and 5% reported that at least some from their households were wounded or killed. **About 17% households with slightly less than 25% of the indigenous peoples and 8% of the Bangalees reportedly faced extortion during the last three years.** Overall 42% of the CHT households with 46% indigenous and 38% Bangalees do not feel secured in moving outside of their own community. According to the majority Bangalees, the relations between the Bangalees and the indigenous peoples are “*friendly*” and/or “*almost friendly*”; and the same according to the majority indigenous peoples is “*not friendly*” and/or “*hostile*”.

The **confidence building index** (CBI) comprising 20 pertinent indicators and estimated using a 5-point Likert Scale (0 being ‘no confidence’ and 4 being ‘highly confident’) shows a **moderate confidence level across the communities** (CBI = 2.1). Among the indigenous communities the value of CBI is 2.0, and among the Bangalees the same is 2.3. Therefore, it is still a long way to go to build confidence among the CHT people, and accordingly all-out efforts must be devoted toward that to expedite the whole process of accelerated human development in CHT.