

# Practice and Discourse of “Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord 1997” in Bangladesh

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## Abstract

Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is home to 12 indigenous communities in Bangladesh. Ethnicity and ethnic conflicts in the CHT has developed as consequences of British, Pakistani and Bengali Nationalism. Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 they have been struggling for their constitutional recognition. However, the government of Bangladesh rejected their demands and launched militarization in 1975. The government also resettled many Bengali people in the region. Resistances of indigenous communities have turned into conflict between two groups of people. A lot of people also died in the armed conflict between indigenous political parties and state military. After 20 years of conflict a peace accord was signed in 1997. This paper argues that the peace process remains detached from the local people. The accord is submerged by ideas and practices which do little to meet the demands of indigenous people who have been struggling for ethnic identities, land rights and militarization.

## 1. Introduction

This paper deals with the discourse and practices of ‘Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace accord 1997’ in Bangladesh. CHT is home to 12 indigenous communities and officially the communities have been identified as ‘tribal’. They are also collectively known as Jumma<sup>2</sup>. Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 they have been struggling for their constitutional recognition. However, the government of Bangladesh rejected their demands and launched militarization in 1975. The government also resettled 400,000 Bengali people in the region. Jummas reactions have turned into the conflict between Bengali and Jumma people. A lot of people also died in the armed conflict between indigenous political parties and state military. After 20 years of conflict a peace accord was signed in 1997. This paper discusses how and to what extent peace discourse has been being practicing in the area. The multidisciplinary field of discourse analysis is adopted as analytical tool for this paper.

The peacebuilding structures needed to address the root causes of conflict and support local capacity for peace management and conflict resolution (Galtung, 1969). Viewed from this perspective, it is very important to understand the peace building process by taking into account the history and everyday experiences of local people. Whilst apparently peace accord was employed in CHT, I argue that the peace process remains detached from the local people. The accord has unnoticed some important roots of conflict such as conflict between Settlers and Jummas, violence against women and local people participation. The peace accord is also submerged by ideas and practices which do little to meet the demands of indigenous people who have been struggling for ethnic identities, land rights and militarization, a form of connection that is discordant to discourses of peace building and sustainability.

CHT is studied by anthropologists in relation to its colonial foundation of ethnic identities (Tripura, 1992) or ethnicity or process of identity formation (Scendel, 1992), violence against indigenous women (Naher and Tripura, 2009) and the aspect of cultural development (Nasreen and Togawa, 2002). However, there has been no anthropological study of CHT that focuses specifically on discourse of peace. This paper re-examines the history of the region by given importance of discourse and practices of Peace Accord 1997.

This paper is divided into six sections. After introduction, section 2 deals with the notion of peace discourse in social science literatures. A brief overview of existing peace building issues in the contemporary world is presented. The definition of

local people of CHT is provided in section 3. The CHT peace accord 1997 is discussed in section 4. This section highlights the background and some salient features of CHT peace accord. Section 5 is deliberated some of important factors of CHT conflict which were unnoticed in the CHT peace accord. Finally, section 6 concludes with summary and recommendations.

## 2. Theoretical definition

A numbers of theoretical approaches exist in peace studies literature. However, discourse analysis is found relevant to this paper because it concerns the relationship between ideas and practices of particular peace building activities (Jørgensen and Philips 2002: 55). It also provides a complete package to examine the philosophical and empirical context of peace and conflict in a particular region. The detail of theoretical analysis of peace discourse is divided into following two subsections:

### 2.1 Peace as Discourse

Generally the term discourse requires a long and serious treatment or discussion in speech or writing. For instance, Van Dijk (1977) noticed that discourse refers to the different signals and signs that facilitate people to create a coherent meaning of their world, their reality. Van Dijk extended his discourse analysis by conceptualizing it in the domain of 'socio-political discourse'. This includes the analysis of knowledge, history, everyday experiences, and attitudes of people. To discuss the 'peace discourse' as an analytical tool for this article I have used three domain discourse analysis that has emerged in the multidisciplinary field of discourse analysis, a domain of study in humanities and social science. The dimensions are: (i) socio-political context (ii) discourse and its relation with power- knowledge, and (iii) the term 'peace discourse' in the peace related literatures.

(i) The activity of 'talking' is the core meaning of discourse. According to Gee (2000), the sociopolitical context of discourse does not merely concern with the content of the speech activity but it focuses on how something is talked about. In that sense, discourse can be seen as the boundary consisting of cultural, social, political and economic backgrounds, which people unconsciously use to create meaning and understanding of their world. The sociopolitical context of discourse devoted us to analyze peace discourse by its social, political, and historical context of a particular area.

(ii) Discourse, according to French social theorist Michel Foucault (1980), is related to power as it operates by rules of exclusion. Foucault discusses about discourse, its sign, gestures, and symbols by which power is exercised. Statements or words must not be codified in language. Rather they have to be put into practice through which discourse is meaningfully understood. Power-knowledge relationship is also important for the discussion of discourse. As Foucault says, it is plays of power that dictates and manipulates individuals. In other words, the study of practices through implementations involves analyzing the ways people operate in their everyday life. However, when we study a particular project or intervention we realize that each project has a locus of an often complex set of social relations. This is the social setting in which expert knowledge influences the form and content of representations. Apthorpe and Gasper (1996) elaborates this by remarking that "discursive practice" can be taken as an instance of the capture an exercise of power by some sort of people, arguments and organizations against others through specific happenings, in particular arenas, over various periods of time. From this point of view, power- knowledge relationship is very important to discuss in the analysis of peace as discourse and its practices. Particularly, this approach investigates who can speak or be involved in the peace process, for whom, from which points of view, and with what authority the terms will be negotiated. Finally, this also investigates the gap between discourse and practices of different models.

(iii) Johan Galtung (1969) one of the key proponents of peace studies, identified peace discourse based on the way how people around the world organize their understanding of conflict and violence. He added, conflict is not necessarily negative, nor does it need to lead to violence. It is necessary for progress and evolution. Any change in the world can be understood as a conflict with the status quo; and change can have positive effects. Galtung states, the peace discourse makes use of tested conflict analysis techniques. Conflict analysis broadens the scope of actors and stakeholders, takes into account root causes and basic needs and assumes that solutions must be based on legitimate goals. Consequently, Galtung detects three interrelated forms of violence: direct, cultural and structural. Direct violence is what we usually think of in terms of aggression, military force, etc. Cultural violence can be understood as the way a group has been thinking about another group for many years. This also includes conversation, images or beliefs which glorify physical violence. Structural violence is harm which is built into the laws and traditional behavior of a group or society. Harm is permitted or ignored. Each of these forms of violence can be equally destructive and detrimental.

Above definitions of discourse offers strong theoretical approach to analyze the context of peace process in different parts of the world. This theoretical approach is accessible to discuss the cultural aspects, historical background, and everyday

experiences of local people. Before moving to discussion of specific case of peace discourse the next subsection will analyze what kind of peace discourse arises in the contemporary peace building process.

## 2.2 Issues in Peace Building

United Nations (1992) states, peace building consists of a wide range of events linked to capacity building, reconciliation, and social transformation. On the other hand, many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) understand peace building as an umbrella concept that not only includes long term transformative efforts, violence prevention, advocacy work, military intervention, humanitarian assistance, and the establishment of peace zones but also tries to fix the core problems that underline the conflict and change the patterns of interaction of the involved parties. After the cold war, several discourses arise to the process and implementation of peace accord in the conflicted area. Spence (2001) provided a very comprehensive and normative definition of peace building. He argues that those kinds activities that focus on the root causes of the conflict, rather than just the effects; that encourage and support interaction between all sectors of society in order to repair damaged relations and start the process of restoring dignity and trust; that ensure the participation of all groups of local people, recognize the specifics of each post conflict situation; that encourage and support the participation of indigenous resources in the design, and promote processes that will endure after the initial emergency recovery phase has passed. Now I will discuss very briefly about the following three issues of peace building:

**(i) Self Identical recognition:** The notion of self-recognition or constitutional recognition of Indigenous communities has become one of the key issues in recent peace building activities. As argued by Maiese (2003), “at the heart of the notion of peace building must address the notion of identity recognition and worth”. UNESCO (1995) also argues that the lack of consensus on identical issues of ideology or religion can contribute to the development of violent conflicts. Lately the identical recognition has become one of the most considerable issues in peace building activities.

**(ii) Women’s participation:** The international community has extended consent on the need to include women in all aspects of decision-making related to peace. The Beijing Platform for Action, adopted by 189 governments at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, highlighted the need to ‘increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels’. The document of this conference notified that: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century, reaffirmed this objective and called on governments ‘to ensure and support the full participation of women at all levels of decision-making in the peace processes, including conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building’ (Schirch, 2008).

**(iii) Peace building from bellow/ local people participation:** Recently state centric peace building approach is criticized by many scholars. Within the system of peace building, government and political parties have authority over war and peacemaking (Oda, 2007). Local people, who are playing active role in the peace process, have been ignored in peace related activities and processes. As a result, the discourse of human security has newly appeared in the UN convention. Canadian Government also introduced the concept of ‘Canadian peace building initiative’ for improving the indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence (Chapin and Foster, 2001; p.16). The UN also emphasized that effective peace building requires active participation with the local parties, and that engagement should be multidimensional in nature (Durch, Holt, Earle and Shanahan, 2003). Lately the term ‘peace building from bellow’ became a central method of peace building to create amicable relationships with national, ethnic, racial, religious or political others and to build a social structure which is able to promote sustainable peace. This method of peace building is effective to meet the local people demands such as their rights, self-recognition, and identity.

Above discourses are central to the recent peace building activities around the world. Now let us see how and what agreements and its concomitant consequences in the understanding of peace discourse in the CHT region. First, however, some introduction of local people is as follows.

## 3. Identifying local people

The 12 ethnic communities<sup>3</sup> of CHT are religiously, linguistically and culturally different from majority Bengali Muslim population of the country. All of them are involved in hilly shifting cultivation process name ‘Jhum’. Accordingly they are known as the Jumma. Since colonial period they have been officially identified as “tribal”; however, they rejected the tribal identity from a long time. The Jummas are not homogenous in terms of their religious and ethnic backgrounds. There are hierarchical relationships within the 12 ethnic communities and the identity of Jumma is dominated by the Chakma population<sup>4</sup>. Though they have several ethnic fractions, politically they are more active in establishing their cultural and political rights in the region. The notion of Jumma has also a strong political meaning. The political party of PCJSS (The

Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti or United People's Party of the Chittagong Hill Tracts) was formed by those people who came from the different ethnic groups of Jumma people. They were unified under the umbrella of Jumma nationalism. The establishment of constitutional recognition of Jumma people was their main demand. Moreover, they fought against the militarization process from a long time. The PCJSS was also key stakeholder of CHT Peace Accord 1997. Similarly, the political party of United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) was formed by the member of Jumma communities. They argue that the constitutional recognition of Jumma people was not achieved by the peace accord. Following the peace accord they have been struggling for the constitutional recognition of the region.

On the other hand, until the 1980s only a small proportion of Bengali people had been living in CHT. However, resettlement project dramatically changed the composition of the population and the percentage of Bengalis in CHT rose from 26 percent in 1974 to 48 percent in 1991 (BBS, 1991). The Bengalis have also established their political and cultural influences in the region. In this context the Jumma's response turned into conflict between these two groups of people. The conflict scenario will be clearer when we look at the background of CHT peace accord in the following section.

#### 4. The CHT peace accord 1997

This section is divided into two subsections: section 3.1 is the background of CHT Peace Accord 1997 and section 3.2 is deals with some important features of the accord.

##### 4.1 The setting of peace accord in CHT:

CHT is commonly considered to be the largest area for Jumma Indigenous community of Bangladesh. Ethnicity, ethnic conflicts and violence in CHT developed as consequences of British, Pakistani and Bengali Nationalisms (Mohsin, 1997). The British first used their sub names like 'tribe', 'hill man' and make them separate from the majority of the Bengali people in the country. The British administration also started the process of land alienation by taking over the ownership of land rights in CHT with the creation of reserve forest (Dewan, 1990). The problems in CHT had largely begun with the building of the Kaptai Hydroelectric Dam between 1957 and 1963, when the area was administered by the Pakistan government. This dam flooded at least 54,000 acres of settled cultivable land farmed by the Jumma people (Nasreen and Togawa, 2002). During the Pakistan era, hydro-electric plant project undertaken by the state permanently displaced thousands of Jumma indigenous people without any compensation (Jenneke, 1997). After independence, a group of Indigenous people formally placed their demands for autonomy to maintain their cultural and linguistic identity. However, the first prime minister of Bangladesh told them to forget their ethnic identities and to be 'Bengalis'. Following this denial, the Indigenous people formed the Parbatya Chottogram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS, or the Chittagong Hill Tracts People's United Party) in 1972 and a year later its armed wing, the 'Peace Brigade' which is well known as '*Shanti Bahini*' in the region.

A new government came to power through a military coup in 1975 and ordered full militarization of the CHT. From 1976 to 1997, an internal armed conflict between Bangladesh's armed forces and the PCJSS insurgent group Shanti Bahini afflicted the region. Many Jumma people were killed. The Shanti Bahini also carried out a number of deliberate and arbitrary killings (Mohosin, 1997). As a result, 54,000 of Jummas crossed over to India to avoid the violence and 50,000 Jumma families remain internally displaced. Most of them were escaped into the deep forest areas (Jenneke, 1997; Barua, 2001).

Another main element in the counterinsurgency strategy was the settlement of 400,000 landless Bengalis from the plane lands of Bangladesh in the CHT between 1979 and 1985 under a government transmigration program. Many parts of traditional land removed by Jumma escaping the violence were occupied by the Bengali settlers. They had been encouraged by the government to migrate to the hills under army protection as part of a counter-insurgency strategy. Many of Bengali people also came in CHT without proper consent of resettlement authorities. In many cases, new Bengali settlers with the help of original settlers illegally occupied Jumma people's land. They attacked to the many religious temples of Jumma people and destroyed them. The Settlers are trying to establish Bengali culture in the region. Since 1980 there have been 13 major cases of massacre of the Jummas by the Bangladeshi settlers (IWGIA, 2012; Amnesty International, 2013). The Jumma indigenous people are at threat of being outnumbered by Bengali settlers who carry on taking over their land and attacking their religious and cultural values. The land and religious issues were further increased the conflict between Jumma and Settlers. In times of conflict and violence, the Jumma women often become most vulnerable victims by the people of non-Jumma communities<sup>5</sup>. The civil administration and the military are bystanders and they are the direct patrons and protectors of the Bengali settlers (Mohsin, 1997). Reactions of PCJSS arms wing turned into conflict between two groups of people. There was a peace accord signed between PCJSS and government of Bangladesh in 1997. Several issues have arisen in the accord. Let us see what kind of peace discourse arisen in the CHT peace accord 1997.

#### 4.2 Salient Features of the Peace Accord

'Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord 1997' is comprised of four parts (1) General part, (2) Hill District Local Government Council, (3) The Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council, (4) rehabilitation, general amnesty and other issues. Because of the limited space of this paper I will confine my analysis to carry out some of the critical features from 'Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord 1997' such as: (i) Uphold of cultural rights, (ii) Land rights issue, and (iii) Withdrawal of temporary military camps.

**(i) Uphold of cultural rights:** As we have seen, the root cause of CHT conflict was in the demands of self-recognition of Jumma people. From colonial period they have been identified as 'tribal'. On the other hand, Jumma people always tried to identify themselves as *adibashi* (indigenous people), instead of 'tribal'. They have been demanding for constitutional recognition for a long time. The revival of cultural identities became one of the central agenda of the peace accord. However, the notion 'uphold of cultural rights' did not fulfill their demands for the following three reasons:

Firstly, a simple calculation reveals that during the last three decades, since the Bengali resettlement project, the percentage of Bengali people in CHT increases to 48 percent from 24 percent (BBS, 1991). The Bengali Settlers are trying to establish their cultural values in CHT. During my field work a Jumma person Anup Larma (41) says,

"After the Bengali resettlement project at least 20 new mosques were built in Khagrachari town, however several temples were destroyed and many of our religious programs were attacked by the Settlers".

For this reason many Jummas complain that their cultural values and practices come to be in danger. The peace accord also promises to uphold the cultural identities of the Jumma people. Accordingly, the government of Bangladesh established some development institutions in CHT such as, 'Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board' (CHTBD), 'Tribal Museums' and 'Hill District Council'. However the accord repeatedly identified them as 'tribal' in terms of their rights. Similarly, the accord has recognized CHT as a region populated by 'tribals'. The accord did not properly recognize the root causes of conflict in the setting of 'self-recognition' issue of Jumma people. As we have seen, the Jumma people fought for the constitutional recognition for their identity for 20 years prior to the signing of the peace accord. However, by using such terminology like 'tribal museum', 'tribal region' and 'tribal rights', the 'tribal' identity was once more reproduced in the peace accord. As a result, the process of 'uphold of cultural identical issue' creates distance from the Jumma people. During my field work a Jumma school teacher Atish Tripura (47) commented,

"This kind of attitude would bring only disaster. It looks like the daggers are already drawn from the government side. However, many people are getting tired of movements, so it is time to create a pre-accord situation".

Secondly, conceptually the notion of tribalism is very problematic. The idea about 'tribal' people and society reflect the larger history of Orientalism, based on this way the colonial and new post-colonial interest are controlling the people (Said, 1978). In the colonial time, the concept 'tribal' was a sign of colonial difference, producing an ever widening chasm between the subjects and objects of colonial knowledge (Dirks, 2006). Like other indigenous territories in the world, British colonial government first introduced 'tribalism' in CHT. Similarly, after five decades of the end of British colonialism, the tribalism was further reproduced in the peace accord. In this regard a Jumma informant stated,

"Tribalism never recovered our identity issue; the revival of cultural identity is only propaganda. Colonial attitudes have further reproduced in the accord".

Thirdly, the notion tribalism has been used in negative ways. For instance, 'tribes' of CHT were represented as involved in primitive modes of subsistence agriculture. The state authority forced them to change their existing shifting agricultural arrangements. However, most of them have no scope for work except Jhum cultivation. Similarly, 'tribes' were seen as savages for having primitive religious practices. In this context, it is essential to mention that several religious programs of Jumma communities were vandalized by the settlers. There are also many cases of harassment of religious leaders of Jumma communities. In my field work I have been informed that the Lamuchari temple and Babupara Buddhist Temple in the Mahalchari Upazilla of Khagrachari district were burnt down by the settlers on 23 August 2003. Even the lord Buddha's images were destroyed and taken away. The main objective of which is supposed to be to deny the sense of ethics of 'tribal' society or to assert domination by superior clergy respected in 'tribalism'. In that way the notion of tribalism creates distance from the majority of the people in the country. This incident of attacking other religious beliefs has turned into a source of violence.

Above situation shows that the identity discourse arises as a result of overlooking local people demands. The peace accord did not properly identify the main reason of cultural identical issue such as the process of self and constitutional recognition of Jumma people. Thus after 15 years of peace accord the identity recognition issue still remains the central demand of Jumma indigenous people.

**(ii) Land rights issue:** Another root cause of conflict between Jumma and Bengali settlers in CHT is land rights issue. The accord tried to establish the land rights of 'tribal' people. However, the notion of land rights is very elusive for the following reasons:

First, the land ownership system of CHT is different from the other parts of the country. Land is maintained by customary rights. There are no legal paper documents for their lands. A Jumma person maintains land ownership by paying his tax to the headman. After the 1980s officially 400000 Bengali people were resettled in CHT. Following that, many settlers came without any consent of the government. Now they are increased to 700000. In many cases, settlers were settled down in the Jummas agricultural lands. Some Jumma people complain, new settlers with the help of previous settlers forcefully occupied their lands. However, without having the legal documents of lands the Jummas cannot claim the ownership rights to the authority. In this context, they became victims. We can understand the situation from following case:

Panchanan Chakma (53) originally is an inhabitant of East Gamaridhala village under Dadkuppy Mouza (No. 259), a few kilometers south of Khagrachari district town. His father had been in possession of the land since 1948. However, he has migrated to the Mohajan para in 1998. Still his younger brother is staying in original village. He had 2 acres of agricultural land in Gamaridhala village until 2001. They had grown mixed fruits and vegetables in this land. But in 2001 some settlers forcefully occupied his land. The legal court didn't receive his case without legal documents. According to him, approximately 40 Bengali settler families were settled on about 200 acres of land belonging to the Jumma people, including his 2 acres in Gamaridhala village. Many of them were brought in from Joysenpara, Kala Pahar, Shalbon of Khagrachari town- areas already over populated by settlers.

The settlers also took forest lands which were previously occupied by the Jumma people. After moving to the forest they destroyed all the trees and made it as like as residential area. They also changed the original name of the locality. The case of Shalbon village can be added in this regard:

The Shalbon village is known as the biggest Bengali resettlement area in the Khagrachari district. Before the 1980s it was a Shal tree forest managed by a rich Indigenous person named Chila Pru Chowdhury. According to his name this area was known as 'Chila Pru Chowdury Tila'. Some people called this as 'Bazar Chowdhury Tila'. This area is now fully occupied by Bengali people and they renamed it as 'Shalbon'. A Jumma person Shunil Chakma (47) says, "Previously this forest was a source of occupation for some of the Jumma people but it is now destroyed by settlers. By changing the name of forest they also changed Jummas culture".

However, the accord did not clarified the way of overcoming problem of lands occupied by the Bengali settlers.

Second, the accord didn't focus on the issue of Bengali settlers who are resettled without any permission of the concerned authority. As I have seen in my field work, after the 1990 many of the settlers were resettled in Shalbon and Lamuchari villages without proper consent of the authority. They don't have any legal document of possession. For this reason they are demanding the 'legal rights' of their occupied lands. Ramiz Mia (50), a settler of Lamuchari village stated,

"20 years ago I made my home in this land. My elder brother helps me to come here. My brother was resettled by the help of the government; he has legal documents. But I settled here without any consent of the government. I don't have any legal document and I am an unregistered settler. I already passed more than twenty years in this land. So I think I have every right to be a legal owner of this land. It is also essential for our future generations. For this reason we are demanding for legal documents of this land."

Though the CHT accord stated the land rights issue, it totally failed to address the issues of land rights of the unregistered Bengali settlers and their future in CHT.

Third, since Pakistan period, various development agencies and multinational corporations were asked to set up tourism industries and development projects in the region. Similarly, after the liberation of Bangladesh, a total 156,552 acres of land was acquired for the army, Bangladesh Rifles and air force camp (Chittagong Hill Tracts commission report, 1991; Mark, 1999). Many Jumma people claims, their lands are being forcibly acquired by government agencies and private commercial interests led by Bengali powerholders with connections to major political parties. These caused forceful eviction of many Jumma indigenous people from their home and land. However, peace accord did not recognize the problem of development projects and forceful eviction of Jumma people from their land.

**(iii) Withdrawal of temporary military camps:** The accord has documented that all the temporary camps of the army and other paramilitary forces would be withdrawn to permanent cantonments. However, no time limit was fixed for such withdrawal. About 240 out of more than 500 military camps in CHT were withdrawn to date (IWGIA report, 2012). The army still grasps the power and control over the CHT region by the name of 'Operation Uttoron' or 'Operation Upliftment'. UNPO

(2005) noticed, after the accord the government imposed 'de facto military rule' through their 'Operation Uttoron' in CHT. Conversely, a PCJSS leader stated that, recently some of these camps had been re-established or replaced by the other security forces in mid-2009 when 35 camps were withdrawn. To justify the military presence in the region the government clarified its position that after the accord military is needed to improve law and order. On the other hand, during my field work many informants also stated that, military has been continuing its operations in the CHT, interfering with the civil administration, providing support to Bengali settlers, controlling forest administration, road maintenance and construction and maintaining law and order. For instance, 'check post' or 'road protection camps' of army is still continuing in this region to prevent 'terrorist attacks' in daytime. From evening to late morning many roads of CHT are closed. One of Jumma interviewees informed,

"We are very much suffering by the check post and road protection activities of army. There are road protection camps on almost every hill top along the main roads in the village. We can't move at night. In daytime, the army searches all roads for explosives before opening them in the morning."

These kinds of road protection camps are not for the safety and security of Jumma people but for the help to settlers. Sometime many Jummas are physically tortured by these kinds of activities. Anil Kumar Marma is such a victim by the road protection camp of Bangladesh army. The case of Anil Kumar Marma can be added in this regard:

Anil Kumar Marma (38) is a small businessman and lives in Mahajanpara. He has no permanent shop but he vends clothes in different haats (weekly village markets) in Khagrachari district. After finishing his job on 17 April 2009 he was returning from the Pathachra village by bus. He had some clothes, cash of 40 thousand taka, and a mobile phone with him. When he was on his way back, about 5 kilometers away from Khagrachari town, he heard that problem had arisen between the Jummas and the settlers. Jumma passengers of the bus requested the bus driver not to go further for their security. But the bus driver didn't listen to them. He added, "at this moment, two army cars came in front of our bus. There were 12 army personnel in the cars. Some bus travelers asked the army men whether it would be safe for them to go on. They said, "Nothing will happen, we will help you". Then our bus followed the army cars. After some time, the settlers blocked our bus. There were four Jumma passengers in the front side of the bus. The settlers pulled them off the bus and threw them into a pond in front of a primary school. After some time, I saw another Jumma being taken away in a police car. I was sitting in a back seat. The settlers also pulled me down from the bus. They pulled all of my clothes through the bus window. They forcefully took my mobile phone, clothes and cash money.

Similarly, interviewees of Mohajanpara told me, in February 2010<sup>6</sup> of Khagrachari massacre in Mohajanpara village the army played the role of silent observer; they didn't try to minimize the conflict between settlers and Jumma. Moreover, many Jumma claimed that most of the armies are Bengali and they have been supporting and safeguarding the Bengali people. Before the accord Jumma people fought against them and after the accord the army always tried to establish Bengali settlers in the region. Thus the demilitarized issue is not being practiced in CHT.

## 5. Some important issues are overlooked

The peace accord has overlooked some important issues such as participation by local people, punishment of guilty, women abuse, etc. These issues are very significant for the escalation of conflict in the region. Now I will discuss very briefly some of these issues, namely: (i) overlooked women issue, (ii) unrecognized violence and conflict and (iii) rhetoric participation and everyday experiences of local people.

**(i) Overlooked women issue:** The overall status and conditions of women in Bangladesh is very different from men. For the patriarchal structure of the society, they have been facing discriminations in domestic and public sphere (Naher and Tripura, 2009). The Jumma women are suffering twice or more as much as the Bengali women. They are facing multiple forms of discrimination in terms of ethnicity, religion, class, and gender (Chakraborty, 2004). For instance, 75 indigenous women were sexually assaulted in 2012 in Bangladesh. Among these, 55 incidents occurred in CHT area (Kapaeeng Foundation, 2012). Women are one of the prime targets of torturers in CHT. Inhuman torture, rape, murder after rape, sexual assault on roads and in offices, and abduction of Jumma women became a regular phenomenon in this region. However, the accord is totally silent on the question of women's security and rights, their sudden disappearance, rape and human rights violations. Even no woman leader from the CHT participated in a formal capacity in the dialogues that culminated in the 1997 Accord. The 'gender-blind' accord did not even recognize the physical threats faced by women as well as children in the CHT. Peace accord was justified without recognize violence against women.

**(ii) Unrecognized conflict and violence:** The accord did not focus on the issue of conflict between the settler and the Jumma



community in the CHT. After the Bengali resettlement, many of conflict cases developed in CHT. At least 13 major Jumma-Bengali conflict incidents took place during 1980 - 1993 (CHT Commission Report, 1994). However, the accord also overlooked the question of punishment of the people found to be guilty for violence such as murder, abduction, communal violence, and others. One of the informants Rabindra Khisha (32) asked:

“In the peace accord you cannot find anywhere the subject of violence; without identification of violence, guilty, and victims, how will peace accord be a guideline of peace in this region?”

It is also important to mention that there is no provision for examining any future conflict or violence. The peace accord was made without identified conflict and violence. Thus, conflict and massacre are continuing in the region.

**(iii) Rhetoric participation:** The accord was signed on behalf of the government of Bangladesh by Mr. Abul Hasnat Abdullah; head of the parliamentary committee formed to resolve the issue while Mr. Jotyirindro Bodhipryyo Larma, the chair of the PCJSS signed on behalf of the Jumma people of CHT (Chowdhury, 2012). Other local political parties like Hill People Federation, Hill Student Federation and Hill Women Federation had refuted the Treaty. They protested that the accord has failed to endorse many important demands of the Jumma people and thus sacrificed the rights of the hill people. They established an organization named United People’s Democratic Front (UPDF) and declared a movement for achieving full autonomy for the hill people of CHT (Syed, 2001). This organization since its birth has been creating many impediments to the implementation of the accord. Besides, the peace accord was not accepted by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the main opposition party in the parliament and the main patron of Bengali settlement project in CHT. They claimed, it had arranged ‘too many allowances to the tribal interests’ (Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission, 2000). On the same ground, Jatya Party (JP), Jamat-e-Islami and other Bengali nationalist and Islamic political organizations refuted the accord. After the general election of Bangladesh parliament in 2001, BNP- Jamat-e- Islami coalition government came to the power and they didn’t take any initiative to implement the peace accord.

On the other hand, because of limited participation of local people the everyday experiences of violence were not focused in the accord. In addition to the communal massacre, murder or rape, the Jummas are also facing other forms of everyday violence such as theft, hijacking, verbal abuse, etc. It is needed to mention that, the socio-economic condition of settlers is related to the everyday forms of violence. Bengali settlers are the poorest portion of population in the country. They are not habituated with the hilly shifting agricultural system. So they are fully dependent on the government ration. Sometimes financial insufficiency encouraged them to involve in illegal or violence activities. A settler of Shalbon villages named Salam Ali<sup>7</sup> (65) stated:

“I resettled here from Noakhali District in February 1980. My wife and three sons came with me. The resettlement authorities took me with my families by truck. Almost 20 families came with us. After arrival some government people and army person provided me five decimal lands in Shalbon for building our house. After one month we were given another five acres of land in the hilly forest area for agricultural work. However, we are not habituated with the hilly agricultural system. We have no work, we cannot utilize the land. Just we depend on government ration. When I came here my sons were very younger. Now they are mature for work. But we cannot manage any job for them. Few years ago my eldest son was captured by police in a hijacking case. Because of limited possibility for work many young people became spoiled. We cannot do anything. Government brought us to live here but they do not provide us any scope for work.”

Conversely, new unregistered settlers (the settlers were settled without proper consent of resettlement authority) are not entitled to any government ration. Some of them are trying to engage in business or daily labor work, some of them have no work, and some of them are involved in theft, hijacking or other types of activities. Thus the law and order has been deteriorating in some of the Jumma villages. Another side of everyday experiences of violence is Jummas insurgency activities on the settlers. As a mode of resistance and demands for full autonomy the some political organization of Jummas’ has involved in several kinds of activities like abduction, threat, hijack, etc. Bengali settlers are feeling unsafe for these activities. Some of these activities have created massive scale communal conflict. However, the accord did not focus on the everyday forms of violence and no provision was made for the punishment for guilty. Thus these types of occurrences continue to occur.

## 6. Conclusion

I have argued that because of overlooking some important roots of conflict, the peace process of CHT remains detached from the local people. As we have seen above from the CHT peace accord, that this is a political process, that this was neither neutral nor natural, but very much the product of recognizable historical process. Its roots extend back to the colonial power

and its production of knowledge. Foucauldian discourse analysis reminds us of that discourse is always related to power as it operates by the rules of exclusion and knowledge is a central aspect of exercising power over subject. In regards we have seen that, colonial government first introduced the tribal identity. The ‘tribalism’ of CHT has become not only an identical issue, but also a dominant problematic or interpretive grid. However, the colonial terminology ‘tribalism’ was further repeated in the ‘CHT peace accord 1997’. The clauses of the peace accord were also influenced by the power game, knowledge, and ideology of the two political parties. The documents of the accord were prepared by bureaucratic political taskforce that worked with single sided political views to meet the political negotiation bypassing the opinions of the local people. As a result, the process of ‘peace’ has created distance from the local population. Thus the accord has been treated as an ‘elitist deal’ between the two political parties and has become difficult to be accepted by the local Jumma people, as well as by certain Bengali groups. On the other hand, the implementation process of the peace accord is also questionable. Withdrawal of the military camps was the central agenda of peace accord; however, in practice, it was partially implemented. Only 240 temporary military camps out of more than 500 have been withdrawn so far and the army still grasps the highest power in the region. Consequently, the accord did not clarified the way of overcoming problem of lands occupied by the Bengali settlers.

Similarly, as we learn from the Galtung analysis, “peace discourse is examining the root causes of conflict”. However CHT peace accord didn’t recognized the issue of conflict and the question of punishment of the people who are guilty for violence. The accord also overlooked the main causes of conflict like communal massacre or everyday forms of conflict. One of the Jumma people Shatish Chakma (55) said, “We cannot imagine a healthy tree if we do not take care of its roots. It is useless to pour water into the top of the tree”. The accord was not sufficient to reach to the grassroots voice. The involvement of mass people was very poor. For this reason, without addressing the issues of conflict between two groups of people, gender and communal violence, and active participation of local population, the main purpose of the peace accord will always remain futile.

### Endnotes

1. This paper is based on anthropological field work in the three villages (MahajanPara, Shalbon and Lamuchari) of Khagrachari district in CHT area from September to October 2011 and from February to March 2013. The research methods were largely qualitative, involving interviews and in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and, participant observation.
2. “Jumma” derives from the term “Jhum”, which means shifting cultivation practiced by many of the indigenous communities in the region. The Census of Bangladesh 2011 shows that the population of CHT is approximately 1,587,000 (<http://www.bbs.gov.bd>). It is estimated that around half of the population of the CHT comprises Jumma peoples, thus the number of Jumma peoples is estimated at 700,000 to 800,000.
3. Name and population number of 12 ethnic communities are: Chakma-241610, Marma-131230, Tripura-58455, Murong-17168, Tanchangya-16410, Bawm-5584, Pankho-1668, Khami-1091, Lusai-669, Chak- 798, Kheyang- 1328 and Bonogogi- 966.
4. Among the various ethnic communities three circles are playing significant role in the traditional administration system of CHT: the Chakma Circle (179 mauzas; 2,421 square miles, including 763 square miles of reserved forest), the Bohmong Circle (97 mauzas; 2,064 square miles including 620 square miles of reserved forest) and the Mong Circle (100 mauzas; 653 square miles, with no reserved forests)
5. From 1971 to 1994, approximately 2,500 indigenous women were sexually assaulted by non-Jumma people, as estimated by Ume Mong, an indigenous woman leader. See more at: <http://www.unpo.org/article/14300#sthash.Jc05ZUnC.dpuf>
6. On 23 February 2010, a communal attack was made on Jumma inhabited localities in Khagrachari municipality by Bengali settlers. The affected villages are: Mahajan Para, Madhupur, Govt High School Staff Quarter area, Satbaiya Para and Golabari area. More than five hundred houses of Jumma villagers were completely burnt to ashes. Two indigenous Jumma villagers were death. Villagers of Mahajan Para claimed that two villagers remain still missing.
7. Some informants requested me to not use his original name in the reports. Thus some names in the text are therefore Pseudonym.

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