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Winning Hearts and Minds

Foreign Aid and Militarisation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

Janneke Arens

Development aid to Bangladesh has, both directly and indirectly, not only added to continuing militarisation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and human rights violations, but also to a systematic destruction of the mode of production, way of life and culture of the Jumma people. Any political solution to the CHT conflict would require a fundamental change in the arrogant and neocolonial attitude of the donors, a willingness to completely alter the nature of aid itself based on an explicit choice for structural support to the poor, and a recognition of the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples.

INCREASINGLY donor governments have made development aid conditional to the observance of human rights and democratisation in the receiving countries. However, many donor governments and institutions practice double standards. In a large number of countries in the south violation of human rights has had few consequences for the aid disbursed. In a few cases it did lead to a decrease and sometimes even a stop on development aid, such as in the case of Indonesia: the Dutch government stopped all its development aid to Indonesia after a massive blood-bath by the Indonesian army in East Timor in 1991. However, here also the hypocrisy became evident when trade links were strengthened after that. Dutch-Indonesian trade is flourishing even more than before.

The application of the human rights criterion has turned out mostly to be dependent on the self-interest of donor governments and institutions. Despite serious human rights violations in Bangladesh donors have so far refused to stop or reduce their huge flow of aid to this country. In this paper the situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) which is characterised by militarisation and grave violations of human rights, taking nearly genocidal proportions, will be taken as an example. Donor governments and institutions have not gone further than expressing 'concern' about the situation in the CHT and refused to stop or reduce aid or to consider making continued aid conditional on or instrumental to a speedy solution to the more than 20-year old conflict between the government and the indigenous Jumma people. The often heard argument of donors is that it would be immoral to stop aid to such a poor country as Bangladesh; if aid would be stopped the poor people would suffer. However, this is pure hypocrisy. Only a small percentage of all the aid really benefits the poor. Most of the aid is spent on huge capital consuming infrastructural projects which do not benefit the poor at all and a lot of the capital comes back to the aid-giving countries in the form of goods delivered, salaries for consultants and experts, etc. The interest of donors in the natural resources of the CHT may play a role as well. There are large unexploited natural gas fields,

coal and uranium have been found and there is a high likelihood of oil. Foreign companies have already shown interest in exploiting these resources.

The half-hearted attitude of donor governments and institutions as well as the lack of information on and interest in the CHT among Bengalis has enabled the Bangladesh government to get away with its oppressive policy and to continue the military occupation of the CHT. It has allowed the government to put up a facade of negotiations with the Jana Samhati Samiti (JSS), the underground political party of the Jumma people (as the indigenous peoples in the CHT call themselves collectively), and repatriation of two batches of Jumma refugees, in total some 5,000 persons, from Tripura, India in 1994. However, three and a half years of negotiations have not had any fruitful results and it is clear that in reality there is no sincere willingness on the side of the BNP government to come to a political solution. Still the donors continue their aid as before and meanwhile sit back, awaiting the outcome of the negotiations.

In this paper, taking the example of the CHT, it will be argued that foreign interference, in particular development aid to Bangladesh has, both directly and indirectly, not only added to continuing militarisation of the CHT and human rights violations, but also to a systematic destruction of the mode of production, way of life and culture of the Jumma people. It is also argued that on the contrary, concrete steps by donor governments and institutions could contribute to a political solution of the CHT conflict. But this would require a fundamental change in the arrogant and neocolonial attitude of most of the donors, and a willingness to completely alter the nature of aid itself towards a just and equitable distribution of the world's riches, based on an explicit choice for structural support to the poor and oppressed classes to control their own lives and recognising the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples so that they can help themselves. The debate about the rights and wrongs of aid conditionalities, which is of course of interest here too, is not touched upon in this paper.

HISTORY OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN CHT

During the Moghul empire there has been a tributary relationship with the indigenous people of the CHT, but the area was largely left alone. Significant foreign interference in the CHT started with the annexation of the frontier region by the British colonial rulers in 1860 to safeguard their political and economic interests. With the recognition of the indigenous rajas (chiefs) who were appointed as collectors of revenue under the supervision of a superintendent and later of the district commissioner, the British established indirect rule. The British declared all land in the CHT as government property and the indigenous people were given tenancy rights over the land.¹ According to Jumma traditions however, all land is communally owned and yearly divided by the village headman among the people for 'jhum' (shifting) cultivation.

The British also introduced plough cultivation. Officially the argument was that jhum cultivation was detrimental to the environment, but the underlying argument was that this was expected to increase the land revenue and at the same time it would be easier to collect revenue from the people once they were settled in one place; the government would then be less dependent on the chiefs for tax collection. Even though the process was slow, Bengali immigrants took most advantage of the introduction of plough cultivation and the credit facilities that were given. At the same time the introduction of plough cultivation led to social and economic differentiation among the indigenous groups as well as among the members of the same group. Those from among the groups in the river valleys, mostly the Chakma and Marma, who managed to acquire plough land, benefited the most, whereas the groups on the mountain ridges, such as Mru, Bawm, Pankhua, continued to live mainly from jhum cultivation. The introduction of plough cultivation also led to "increase of population in the valleys, growth of commercial and urban centres, circulation of money and the growth of commodity production" [Dewan 1991:Ch 4]. Thus, the transformation of a self-reliant economy to a market-dependent economy

was set in. Also, to curb jhum cultivation further the British declared two-thirds of the area as forest reserve and access to these reserves became strictly limited, thus depriving the indigenous people from a large part of their jhum land. As a result the pressure on land increased and the fallow period of the jhum cycle decreased from 15-20 years to 8-10 year periods [Dewan 1991].

In 1900 the so-called '1900 Regulation' was introduced. This provided the CHT with a special administrative status and set strong limitations to the growing interference by the Bengali plainspeople in the CHT. With it a special judicial system was introduced for the CHT, the transfer of indigenous people's land to Bengalis from the plains was prohibited and all land transfers needed the approval of the district commissioner, in consultation with the local headman. The introduction of the 1900 Regulation was obviously for strategic reasons: the indigenous people who had strongly resisted invasion by the British were to be pacified to serve as a buffer against other 'wild races' on the frontiers of the British empire. Nowadays, however, Jumma people generally still value the 1900 Regulation highly, as it did give their area a special status and protected their (landed) interests much more so than is the case under the present government of Bangladesh. One of the demands of the Jana Samhati Samiti is the retention of the 1900 Regulation.

With partition in 1947, Chittagong town with its harbour was given to Pakistan to compensate for the loss of Calcutta. Its hinterland the Chittagong Hill Tracts, although originally promised to India, was traded off for the Sikh-predominant Ferozepur and Zira subdivisions in the Punjab [Mey 1984:98]. Under Pakistani rule the 1900 Regulation was amended several times to limit the special status and finally in 1964, during the military regime of Ayub Khan, the special status for the CHT was abolished. The result was an increasing influx of Bengalis from the plains and consequently a growing exploitation of the indigenous population.

THE FIRST 'DEVELOPMENT' PROGRAMMES

From the 1950s the economic exploitation of the CHT entered a new phase when the Pakistani government started opening up the hills and set up industrial development projects in the CHT aided by foreign capital. In 1953 the construction of the Karnaphuli paper mill at Chandragona was completed. The construction was carried out with the help of foreign funds, including a loan of \$4.2 million from the World Bank. The total cost was Rs 65.90 million (then approximately \$13 million) three-quarter of which was spent on purchases of plant and machinery from Europe and the US. Millions of tons of bamboo and soft wood have been

cut in the CHT for paper production. The mill created about 10,000 jobs but more than 95 per cent of the employees are Bengalis and the few Jumma people employed are only in lower ranking positions. The same counts for the Karnaphuli Rayon mill that was constructed in 1966 with foreign funds at a cost of Rs 1.3 million. Similarly, the Canadian-funded Betbunia Satellite Station, set up in the early 1970s, serves only the elite who can afford television sets and long-distance telephone calls. [Dewan 1991:224, 225, 239].

Between 1959 and 1963 the Kaptai dam and hydro-electric project were constructed with funds from USAID and at a cost of Rs 2.4 million. The special status of the CHT was abolished after the construction of the Kaptai dam and the hydro-electric project had been completed. Due to the reservoir created by the dam 1,036 square kilometers were inundated; including 21,853 hectares of plough land, i.e. 40 per cent of the arable land in the CHT [Dewan 1991]. One lakh people were displaced and most of them did not receive any compensation at all; many of them had no choice left than to move to India or to survive by jhum cultivation. Only 1 per cent of the energy generated by the Kaptai project (which provides only a very small percentage of the total energy consumption in the country) is used in the CHT. Besides most of the indigenous people do not even have electricity in their homes.

The Canadian consultancy Forestal which was invited by the then Pakistani government to study the possibilities for future development in the CHT concluded in 1966 that before the construction of the dam the indigenous people had "adequately adjusted to the limitations imposed by the physical environment". But after that a "disastrous cycle of over-cultivation had led to depletion of soil fertility, loss of forest cover, serious erosion and further increased pressure on the remaining land" [Anti-Slavery Society 1984:33]. It was further concluded that: "a change to a system of permanent intensive agriculture must be made wherever possible...More of the hill tribesmen will have to become wage earners in the forests or other developing industries and purchase their food from farmers practising permanent agriculture on an intensive basis on the limited better land classes" [Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission 1991:76]. This set the tune for all future development programmes in the CHT. Forestal recommended restriction of

jhum cultivation and the introduction of horticulture. Horticulture was introduced in the 1970s. With the construction of the dam and subsequently market-oriented development programmes, the destruction of the indigenous self-sufficient economy was set in.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AFTER INDEPENDENCE OF BANGLADESH

After the bloody war of independence of 1971 which cost the lives of three million people and resulted in the formation of the nation-state Bangladesh, a delegation of the Jumma people met prime minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1972. The delegation, led by Manobendra Narayan Larma, member of parliament for the CHT, demanded regional autonomy and retention of the 1900 Regulation. Strong Bengali nationalist feelings caused the government of the new nation to ignore the specific characteristics and history of the CHT. Mujib, the leader of the Bengali nationalist movement who had led the nation to independence, rejected the demands of the delegation as secessionist and said that it would encourage ethnic feelings. The Jummas were then left with no hope for any safeguards from the new government and set up their own political party, the Jana Samhati Samiti (JSS). A year later its armed wing, the Shanti Bahini, was set up, but it was not until 1976 that the first armed attack was carried out on an army patrol in the CHT. On a visit to Rangamati in 1975 Mujib added fuel to the discontentment of the Jumma people when he told them to become Bengalis and threatened them with consequences such as sending the army and settling Bengalis from the plains in the area if they would help the resistance movement [Mey 1984:58-59]. Thereupon the Jumma people angrily left the meeting.

In 1975 General Ziaur Rahman came to power through a military coup and martial law was imposed in the country. General Zia was favoured by western governments and co-operation with these, in particular with the US, increased considerably. Mujib had been an ally of the Soviet Union and India, and although he had received a lot of aid for relief and reconstruction from western countries, he had been reluctant to accept aid conditionalities, such as an Aid Consortium, from western governments and institutions who were eager to increase their influence in Bangladesh. Due to the worsening economic situation, especially after heavy

TABLE 1: POPULATION IN THE CHT

	Census 1991			Census 1981			Census 1974	
	Total	Tribal (Per Cent)	Non-Tribal (Per Cent)	Total	Tribal (Per Cent)	Non-Tribal (Per Cent)	Tribal (Per Cent)	Non-Tribal (Per Cent)
Bandarban	229,613	47	53	161,987	55	45	NA	NA
Khagrachari	340,095	48	52	265,590	65	35	NA	NA
Rangamati	397,713	57	43	289,897	63	37	NA	NA
Total	967,420	51.5	48.5	708,456	62	38	81	19

Source: *The Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission*, Update 2, April 1994, Footnote 11, p 9.

floods and the following famine in 1974, Mujib finally had been compelled to give in to their pressure and accept an Aid Consortium chaired by the World Bank [Riaz 1994: Ch 4].

During Mujib's time, however, no development programmes were planned in the CHT. When General Zia came to power, western aid was increased and the country became much more tightly incorporated into the global capitalist economy. Also for the CHT, development programmes were set up. Denationalisation of industries that had been nationalised under Mujib was completed. In contrast to Mujib, General Zia put emphasis on Bangladeshi nationalism, to be distinguished from the Bengali nationalism (which could be interpreted as embracing Bengalis from West Bengal). The power base of the government shifted more from the nationalist forces and the landed classes to the upcoming new rich merchant class and the army who were closely co-operating with each other. This trend continued under the regime of General Ershad.

While India had been an ally of Mujib and had played an important role in the liberation war, the relationship between the two neighbouring countries deteriorated after Zia came to power. After army officers had killed Mujib and his family in 1975, almost certainly with the help of the CIA, there were numerous rumours about a possible invasion by India. Since that time India has been perceived as a threat by the successive governments of Bangladesh and both countries played their power games. India constructed the Farakka Dam to control the Ganges waters for the benefit of Calcutta, but uses the dam at the same time to control the flow of water to Bangladesh. Both sides regularly accuse each other of supporting 'terrorist' autonomy or independence movements on the other's territory. Bangladesh blames India almost entirely for the continuing resistance of the JSS and the Shanti Bahini in the CHT, while India accuses Bangladesh of supporting Indian insurgency movements such as the Assamese ULFA and allowing the Pakistani intelligence service ISI to train Kashmiri insurgents in the CHT. It is not unthinkable that India uses these issues to pressurise Bangladesh for its own interests, such as a transit route from north-east India through Bangladesh. Similarly, Bangladesh points the finger to India as the cause of its problems in the CHT rather than facing its own role in the troubles there.

SETTLEMENT OF LANDLESS BENGALIS

During Zia's regime plans for the settlement in the CHT of hundreds of thousands of landless Bengalis from the plains were developed in secret and from 1978 the settlement schemes started. Simultaneously a huge military force was deployed in the CHT. In a secret memorandum dated September 15, 1980 from the deputy com-

missioner of the CHT to government officials in other districts, guidelines were given regarding the second phase of the settlement of landless non-tribal families from other districts in the CHT. Each family would be given 5 acres hilly land, 4 acres mixed land or 2.5 acres paddy land, as well as some cash money and foodgrains for 6 months [Anti-Slavery Society 1984: Appendix 1]. In 1982 a third phase was authorised under which another 2,50,000 Bengalis were to be settled in the CHT. In total, more than 4,00,000 landless Bengalis were given land in the CHT from 1978 to 1983. They were settled mostly in the fertile river valleys. Although the government settlement programmes have officially been stopped in 1985 Bengalis are still being settled in the CHT. For instance, in 1993 Bengalis who had been displaced by a government project in Comilla district were settled in the CHT. In 1993-94 Bengalis were settled in Mogban mouza under Rangamati thana on about 500 acres of land on which Jumma people had been resettled in 1977-78 for a collective farm project of the CHTDB. The Jummas received no compensation. Recently, Bengalis are being settled under the pretext of rehabilitating so-called 'floating people', but in fact most of these 'floating' Bengalis are newcomers to the CHT.

The government settlement programme meant a dramatic change in the demographic pattern in the CHT. While at the beginning of this century the indigenous population consisted of more than 98 per cent, in 1974 it had reduced to 81 per cent and now the less than 5,00,000 indigenous people are practically outnumbered by the Bengalis (Table 1).

Officially, the low population density in the hills and the overpopulation in the plains were given as an argument for the settlement of Bengalis, invalidly comparing the hilly land in the CHT to the fertile plains. However, the underlying motive was to outnumber the Jumma people and undermine their resistance movement and demand for an autonomous region. Moreover, many Bengalis illegally occupied Jumma people's land and often acquired false land documents for it too. The settlement of Bengalis increased the pressure on land even more and due to the large-scale alienation of their land Jumma people had to fall back increasingly on jhum cultivation as a last resort. The fallow period between

cultivation of a jhum field has now reduced to 3 to 4 years or sometimes even less than that.

Government officials did acknowledge to the CHT commission that the settlement of more than 4,00,000 Bengalis under the previous governments had been a mistake. However, the government refused to give in to the demand of the JSS to remove the settlers from the CHT with the argument that according to the constitution of Bangladesh any citizen is free to settle anywhere in the country. On the other hand, the Jummas argue that under the 1900 Regulation, which still has not been officially repealed, settlement of outsiders in the CHT is highly restricted and transfer of land needs the approval of the district commissioner, in consultation with the local headman. These rules have been grossly violated by the government. Secondly, the Bangladesh government claims that the more than 4,00,000 Bengalis who were settled in the CHT between 1978 and 1985 have been given 'khas' land (government-owned fallow land). Apart from the fact that many settlers have not been settled on khas land but on the most fertile paddy land, there is a problem with the concept of khas land itself. What the government regards as khas land is essentially the Jumma people's traditional jhum land and forest land which they regard as common property, belonging to the local community. The jhum land is yearly allotted to families for cultivation by the village headman, while the forest is for everyone to gather forest products. The concept of khas land in itself does not match with Jumma notions of landownership.

MILITARISATION OF CHT

With the settlement of Bengalis the military presence in the CHT was stepped up. The military in power could perceive only of a military solution to the CHT conflict. The Anti-Slavery Society reported in 1984 that by 1980 some 30,000 troops, an estimated one-third of all regular troops of Bangladesh, were operating in the CHT; the number of police stations had increased from 12 to 28 since 1976 [Anti-Slavery Society 1984: 57]. The international CHT commission gathered from military sources that there were more than 80 police camps, over 230 army camps and over 100 BDR camps in 1990. Cantonments have been built in Dighinala

TABLE 2: LIST OF MAJOR MASSACRES

Kanungopara, April 1979: 25 Jummas killed, 80 houses burnt.
Kaukhali, March 1980: more than 300 Jummas killed, 600 houses burnt.
Matiranga-Tabalchari, June 1981: about 500 Jummas killed, 100 houses burnt.
Bhushanchara, May 1984: more than 100 Jummas killed, 400 houses burnt.
Panchari-Dighinala-Kharachari-Matiranga, May 1986: 500 Jummas killed, 2,000 houses burnt.
Bagaichari, August 1988: 38 Jummas killed, 250 houses burnt.
Langadu, May 1989: 36 Jummas killed, hundreds of houses burnt.
Malya, February 1992: 30 Jummas killed.
Logang, April 1992: several hundreds of Jummas killed, 550 houses burnt.
Niniarchar, November 1993 (during the cease-fire period): 29 Jummas killed, 25 houses burnt.
Bandarban, March 1995: 300 houses burnt.

(Khagrachari district), Ruma and Alikadam (both Bandarban district) and a fourth one is planned in Ghagra (Rangamati district). There is a naval base at Kaptai and a counter-insurgency training centre in Mahalchari, Khagrachari district. It is difficult to know exactly the number of security forces (army and paramilitary) at present in the CHT. Figures vary from 35,000 to more than 60,000 troops. Taking the conservative estimate of 35,000 troops this still means that with an indigenous population of less than 5,00,000 in the CHT there is more than one member of the security forces to every 15 Jumma people.

Military officers explained to the CHT commission in December 1990 that the main purpose of the military in the CHT is containment of the guerilla forces by military operations against the Shanti Bahini or Shanti Bahini 'suspects' and military control of the hill people by counter-insurgency measures. These counter-insurgency measures are on the one hand to isolate the insurgents from the civilian population, cut off their lines of supplies and combat them militarily, and on the other hand to "win the hearts and minds" of the civilian population by so-called 'friendship programmes', small-scale projects such as income generating projects, construction of schools and temples, health care [The Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission 1991: Ch 3].² An important part of the counter-insurgency programme is resettling the population in cluster villages under the control of the army. The cluster village programme will be dealt with later on. As a result of the huge military presence the Jumma people live in constant fear and are terrorised in every aspect of their lives.

The army is still in control in the CHT, even though the government claims that the three 'elected' Hill District Councils (HDC) which were set up under the regime of General Ershad, are in control. The HDCs are widely rejected by the Jumma people because they legalise the presence of the Bengali settlers and they give no constitutional guarantees for the protection of the Jumma people's rights and identity. Besides, the Hill District Council Acts largely designed by the military, and the election process and its outcome were fully controlled and determined by the military. Moreover, the 1900 Regulation has not yet been repealed. Officially, the army is involved in making the government policy for the CHT through the National Council Committee for the CHT in which the GOC Chittagong, who is in charge of the CHT, has a seat. This council committee falls directly under the prime minister's office and is the policy-making body for the CHT.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CHTDB

As already mentioned, during Mujib's time no big development schemes were planned for the CHT, but during Zia this situation changed. General Ziaur Rahman declared in

1976 that the problems in the CHT stemmed from the underdevelopment of the area and the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB) was set up to carry out large-scale development programmes which were to solve the CHT conflict. Western donors stepped in to fund some of these programmes. Between 1976 and 1979 the World Bank was invited to undertake several missions to the CHT to investigate the possibilities and make proposals for development schemes in the area. However, the World Bank never got involved in financing the programmes itself. The Asian Development Bank, UNDP and WHO became the main funders of development schemes in the CHT.

The underlying motives of the CHTDB were political and military. A government official told the CHT commission frankly: "The CHTDB was established to fight the Shanti Bahini...Loans are given for private purpose, to businessmen and tribal leaders... they are showpieces of the government... It is mostly a political bribe to tribal leaders to buy them off so that they would not help the Shanti Bahini" [The Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission 1991:84]. A cinema hall in Bandarban town built with a government loan and owned by one of the indigenous leaders is an illustration of this. The counter-insurgency objective of the CHTDB became explicitly evident when the general officer commanding (GOC) of the Chittagong division, who is in charge of the CHT, was made its ex-officio chairman after General Ershad declared martial law in 1982.

Some of the major programmes of the CHTDB have been road construction, telecommunication, electrification and resettling Jumma people in 'model' villages or 'cluster' villages. Despite the rhetoric that these programmes are meant for the development of the people they serve military interests in the first place, in particular the counter-insurgency programme. To give an example: from every upazilla there are direct telecommunication lines to Dhaka, but what is the use of this for the hill people? They live mostly in villages where they have no telephones, nor electricity, while the towns and markets are now dominated by Bengalis. It is argued that roads are providing the people an opportunity to market their products in the towns, but roads are first of all needed for the military in order to move fast. The road from Bandarban town to Ruma is an example of this. The road is constructed exactly up to the cantonment a few kilometres before Ruma, a market town, the remaining kilometres can be made only on foot or by boat. It is also striking that most of the roads, such as those under the multi-sectoral programme in Khagrachari district (see later), have been built in those areas where the Shanti Bahini is the most active. Roads increase the mobility of the military to combat the Shanti Bahini and in the second place

serve Bengali businessmen. An international outcry as a result of reports of massacres and other serious human rights violations by the military that started coming out of the area, and the lack of security for the foreign workers in the early 1980s made Sweden and Australia withdraw its road construction forest development programmes.

Apart from the political motives behind the development programmes, the introduction of cash crop production, such as horticulture, forced the Jumma people into a dependency on the market economy. However, the markets are dominated by Bengali middlemen who force the Jummas to sell their goods for prices far below the market value and then sell the goods for much higher prices in the towns and in the plains. One Bengali civil servant told the CHT Commission: "Most money is spent on roads to improve our mobility. For instance the road to (name of a town), that road costs about 60 crore taka for only 4,000 people. What the hell will those 4,000 people contribute for our national economy. It is of no use in concept of economic activities" [The Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission 1991:84]. Similarly, the model – or cluster – village programmes serve the counter-insurgency programme, although the official objective was initially development and later on protection of the people against the Shanti Bahini. A military officer told the CHT commission frankly: "The main aim of the cluster villages is to cut the line of supplies to the Shanti Bahini and to bring the tribals and Bengalis into the modern line" [The Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission 1991:54]. The cluster villages are similar to the so-called 'strategic hamlets' set up by the US army in Vietnam to isolate the Vietcong from the support of the people. Strategic hamlets were also used by the British in the 1950s and 1960s in Malay to combat the communist insurgents. This served as a model for the army in the CHT.

FOREIGN AID TO THE MILITARY

During the Bangladesh Aid Consortium meeting in Paris in April 1994 a total amount of \$ 2.1 billion foreign aid to Bangladesh was sanctioned for 1994-95. The total annual development programme for 1994-95 of the Bangladesh government was \$ 2.8 billion, this means that 75 per cent is covered by foreign aid. For 1995-96 in total \$ 1.9 billion was sanctioned. Official annual expenditure for defence is about 15 per cent of the government budget, but it is common knowledge that unofficially military expenditure is much higher. A lot of the military expenses are budgeted under various other categories, such as telecommunication, housing, thus disguising the military purposes. Expenses for para-military forces such as BDR and for the police are also separately budgeted. It is also common knowledge that former president Ershad assured himself of the loyalty of high army

officers by allowing them unbridled corruption and loans against very low interest rates. Large amounts of money from foreign aid disappeared in the pockets of military officers. Ershad himself had a good share of the cake as well. After his downfall and arrest in December 1990 newspapers reported that local currency notes worth a total value of about \$ 1 million were found in his house. A Bengali lawyer claimed that as much as 50 per cent of the army ran on foreign aid. Although it is hard to prove that foreign aid is directly spent for military purposes, it is certainly true that without foreign aid the Bangladesh government would not be able to maintain a huge military force in the CHT. Foreign aid allows the government to reserve money for military expenditure.

To give an example from the period during which the militarisation of the CHT and settlement of Bengalis was at its peak: by 1985, compared to 1973, the defence budget had increased by more than 400 per cent. Over the same period the budget for health had risen only by 18 per cent. By 1985 the defence budget was more than three times higher than the health budget, whereas in 1973 it had been lower [Hartmann and Standing 1989:10]. Some more recent figures: for the financial year 1991-92, according to the budget submitted by the government to the parliament, the allocation for defence was Tk 1,209.83 crore (14.96 per cent), for the police Tk 307.07 crore, for the BDR Tk 157.51 crore. Defence, police and BDR together made up 20.45 per cent of the official budget. For education 1,255.57 crore (15.5 per cent) was allocated and for health and population control only Tk 409.75 crore. The estimated income of foreign aid was Tk 7,296.61 crore [Humanity Protection Forum 1992:12].

Some of the aid is directly spent for the military, for instance part of the food aid. About 10 per cent of the rice and 3 per cent of the wheat under the Public Food Distribution System (which all comes from food aid) is distributed under the category 'essential priorities' [The Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission 1992:15]. 'Essential priorities' mean the army, police and hospital patients; an FAO official in charge of food aid ascertained that the amount of food aid that goes to hospital patients is negligible. Besides a lot of food aid is distributed to people in the cluster villages, partly as free rations and partly as food for work. Between 1988 and 1991 per month 1800 metric tons of rice, at a value of Tk 200 crore, was spent on free food rations in cluster villages [Humanity Protection Forum 1992:17]. As indicated, the cluster villages are part of the counter-insurgency programme.

The US and the British have been involved in direct military assistance since many years. In 1976, under the regime of General Ziaur Rahman, founder of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), an aid agreement was signed with the British to provide

£ 7,20,000 for the improvement of police telecommunications. Under this agreement the British also provided telecommunication equipment. (The Dutch government had also been approached for funds, but rejected the request.) This was to complete a telecommunication scheme that had been set up with aid from the USAID Office of Public Safety during Pakistan times [Lifschultz 1979].³ In 1977 the British stepped in again. By that time martial law had been declared by General Zia. An eight-member British military advisory team came to assist in setting up the Defence Staff College at Savar near Dhaka. This advisory team was commanded by Colonel Gibson, a senior member of the SAS, the Special Air Services Brigade. The SAS is the counter-insurgency unit of the British army and the legacy of Robert Thompson's Emergency strategy against the communist insurgency in Malay. It was generally believed that the real purpose for the British military mission in Bangladesh was "to prepare dossiers for western intelligence on the entire officers corps forces and the Bangladesh Army in particular... To know who can be the next pro-western Ayub Khan... and who is politically reliable", because the November 1975 uprising initiated by a section of the army had taken the western countries by complete surprise [Lifschultz 1979]. Till today the advice of the British is used in the CHT: several military officers mentioned to the CHT Commission that Malaya was their model and Robert Thompson's book (1996) their handbook for counter-insurgency.

An agreement between the British and the Bangladesh government for military training (BIMET) ended in 1992. Three trainers from the British army, air force and navy were seconded to the Defence Staff College in Savar. Counter-insurgency was included in the training course. According to British diplomatic sources the British are still involved in military training. Military officers from Bangladesh have gone to Great Britain and to the US as well for training. Since the late 1970s there has been a military exchange programme with the US. So both Britain and the US are assisting the counter-insurgency policy of the Bangladesh army and can be held partly responsible for the human rights violations in the CHT.

FOREIGN AID INDIRECTLY TO THE MILITARY

In the late 1970s and early 1980s a number of development programmes were set up in the CHT. The area was to be opened up and the resources were to be utilised. The soil is rich with natural gas and minerals, such as coal, copper and uranium. There is also a high likelihood of the presence of oil. The natural resources, as well as the strategic position of the CHT bordering Burma and the insurgency-ridden north-east Indian states, explain at least partly the interests of

foreign powers in the CHT. Saudi Arabia and the World Bank have provided loans for oil exploration, respectively \$ 9.2 million and \$ 23 million [Anti-Slavery Society 1984:40]. In 1981 concessions for oil exploration for 25 years were given to Shell and jointly with Petro Bangla the search for oil was started. The Bangladesh government received a bonus of \$ 5 million at the time of signing the contract and Shell agreed to invest \$ 120 million in the CHT, a sum exceeding the total amount of all development projects in the CHT since independence [Nederland in Mey 1984]. In 1984 Shell was forced to move out after four of its employees had been kidnapped by the Shanti Bahini and were released only after a large ransom was paid.

Since 1976 the CHTDB has implemented several large-scale development programmes in the CHT, partly with foreign funds. One of the major programmes has been the multi-sectoral programme in Khagrachari district. The programme started in 1979 and was to be completed in 1987. Originally, its total estimated cost was \$ 41.8 million (Tk 623.89 million) of which \$ 28.5 million were provided by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as a loan \$ 0.4 million as a grant. UNDP provided \$ 0.7 million.⁴ In 1983 the programme was extended up to 1993 and an additional Tk 300 million was sanctioned by the ADB and UNDP. The total revised budget then came to Tk 1,380.04 million of which Tk 708.05 million was to be provided by the ADB and UNDP.

The Upland Settlement Scheme (USS) to settle shifting cultivators is one of the major components of the multi-sectoral programme with a budget of Tk 4,769.50 lakh. Under this scheme 2,000 families from Khagrachari district have been relocated in cluster villages. In total 8,000 acres of rubber and 4,000 acres of horticulture were to be planted under the USS. Each family was promised four acres for rubber plantation, two acres for horticulture and 0.25 acres for their homestead. When the CHT commission visited the area in 1990-91 the people had yet to receive documents for these lands. Officials assured that these would be given when the rubber trees would start producing rubber; the rubber will have to be sold to the CHTDB which has a monopoly to buy the rubber. In the meantime the people have to work as day-labourers in the rubber plantations. Even if they become the owners of 4 acres rubber plantation, then what can a family which was living on subsistence agriculture before, do with that land and no land for growing food?

Between 1976 and 1981 the CHTDB spent Tk 5,23,86,132 on model village schemes and set up so-called *joutha khamar* (co-operative farms) or *adarsa gram* (model villages) [Dewan 1991:242]. During that period 55 *joutha khamar* have been set up, in which 3,300 Jumma families were forcefully resettled and by 1982 model

villages accounted for 60 per cent of the expenditure of the CHTDB. In 1985 new schemes for resettlement were chalked out [Anti-Slavery Society 1984:41]. Another cluster-village programme started in 1988. By 1990 there were more than 200 cluster villages, including the cluster villages for Bengalis, in Khagrachari district alone. According to the Agartala-based Humanity Protection Forum, by 1992 an estimated total of 3,00,000 Jumma people and 2,00,000 Bengalis had been shifted to cluster villages [Humanity Protection Forum 1992:9]. This is more than half of the present population in the CHT.

People have been forcefully removed from their villages and ancestral lands by the army and resettled in cluster villages. In many cases the army came into their villages and burnt their houses, Bengali settlers take over the land. As early as 1979 some high army officers had declared at a public meeting in the CHT: "We want the land and not the people". In the cluster villages the people are dependent on food aid and made to work on plantations for daily wages. Often they are forced to give free labour to the army or work for extremely low wages. The people's movements are restricted and they are not allowed to go to their lands for cultivation. Bengalis have also been settled in cluster villages and many of them live a miserable life as well. Several people in the CHT expressed their suspicion that the people in the cluster villages actually serve as a human shield to protect the army against Shanti Bahini attacks.

Road construction is another major component of the multi-sectoral programme with a budget of Tk 6,448.30 lakh, that is 47 per cent of the total budget. Besides roads have been built under several other programmes as well. Australia provided funds for road construction. In 1981 the Australian government pulled out of an \$ 11 million road construction programme because of security reasons and international pressure. Over the last 15 years major roads have been constructed all over the CHT, reaching into remote areas, in particular those areas where the Shanti Bahini is active. The significance of roads for military purposes have already been dealt with above.

Another component of the multi-sectoral programme is the afforestation and settlement scheme with a budget of Tk 343.45 lakh. Under this scheme 300 Jumma families have been resettled in Khagrachari district. In Bandarban 500 'nomadic' Jumma families have been settled under other afforestation and settlement programmes. Until 1981 the Swedish government was involved in a £ 6 million afforestation programme but pulled out after critical reports in the Swedish press about the Swedish assistance to the Bangladesh army and exposing the severe human rights violations against the Jumma people. The Swedish-funded programme was part of a much larger commercial forestry

programme which involved the planting of about 1,000 square miles of seedlings, covering 20 per cent of the unclassified state forest, depriving the Jumma people from their jhum land and leaving them only the *joutha khamars* [Anti-Slavery Society 1984:39].

A smaller foreign-assisted programme in the CHT is the Unicef-funded community development programme with a total cost of \$ 3 million. In about 50 cluster villages community centres have been constructed. These centres include offices, godowns, training centres for skill development, schools, etc. Earlier Unicef carried out a drinking water scheme and the World Health Organisation a malaria eradication programme. Jumma people claim that these programmes mainly benefited the military.

The government continues to plan large-scale programmes in the CHT that are damaging for the Jumma people. In 1992 the government announced plans for a large-scale 'tree plantation programme', covering more than 1,75,000 acres in all three districts, especially in Rangamati district, to be carried out by the forest department and funded by the ADB. As a result, an estimated 40,000 families, mostly Jummas, would be displaced. Jumma people also commented that if the government was sincerely interested in the environment, it would make more sense to plan an afforestation project like this in the existing reserve forests or the other forests which have been looted and destroyed by logging contractors rather than along the roadsides as they had planned. As a result of large-scale protests by Jumma people, including the Rangamati MP and the Chakma chief, the government shelved the project, but the notifications were not cancelled.

In February 1994 a new large-scale integrated development programme, including rubber and tea plantations, was launched in Rangamati. Jumma people fear that this scheme will also result in many people being evicted from their land, and cause environmental damage. They see it as yet another move to deprive them of their traditional way of living and means of subsistence.

A few words should be given to foreign aid from private funding agencies. There are only a few non-governmental organisation operating in the CHT, most NGOs choose not to work in the CHT because there they will have to comply with the wishes of the army. Some Christian organisations like Caritas, CCDB and World Vision do operate in the CHT, mainly in Bandarban district among the Christian indigenous groups. They are involved in, e.g., income-generating activities in cluster villages and educational programmes. Though these projects are rather small they can only exist with the approval of the army. In this connection it is also interesting to note that World Vision is known for its links with the CIA.

The official objective of almost all the development programmes in the CHT is two-fold. First of all to curb jhum cultivation which is branded as the main cause of the ecological destruction. Generally governments find it more comfortable to forget about the huge loss of land due to the construction of the Kaptai dam, the almost 100 per cent increase of pressure on the land due to the settlement of Bengalis from the plains and the excessive logging by Bengali timber merchants and the military, which have all added grossly to the present ecological problems. The authorities prefer to blame the hill people's jhum cultivation for it. The second objective that has been emphasised time and again is to bring the hill people 'into the mainstream'. "We cannot preserve them in the stone age, we have to bring them out", as one of the high military officers told the CHT commission. The underlying objective next to counter-insurgency is no doubt to exploit the natural and human resources more effectively. What these so-called development programmes mean, as can be concluded from the above, is the transformation of a largely self-sufficient indigenous economy into a dependent market-economy in which the Jumma people are made into predominantly wage labourers on plantations and more easy to control.

It can be concluded that development programmes in the CHT have contrary to the rhetoric contributed only to the destruction of the indigenous people's lives and mode of production and has seriously upset the ecological balance. As long as there is no political settlement of the CHT conflict development programmes in the CHT will continue to serve military purposes in the first place.

NEGOTIATIONS

In August 1992 the Shanti Bahini declared unilaterally a cease-fire and the JSS expressed its willingness to negotiate with the government about a political settlement. The government, under increasing national and international criticism over human rights violations and its CHT policy, formed a committee of parliamentarians headed by communications minister Colonel (rtd) Oli Ahmed and subsequently negotiations between the JSS and the government of Bangladesh started in November 1992. The main demands of the JSS are regional autonomy within the state of Bangladesh, retention of the 1900 Regulation, demilitarisation of the CHT and removal of the settlers from the CHT. During the first three rounds of talks both parties came to a mutual cease-fire agreement. One of the agreed cease-fire conditions was to dismantle the cluster villages. Since 1993 a number of families have indeed moved out of the cluster villages, but many still remain; they have nowhere to go and no means of living as their

land has been occupied by Bengali settlers. Another cease-fire condition was to move the army out of the administration, but up to now the GOC is still the chairman of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB). There has been no reduction in the military presence in the CHT. On the contrary, while some army camps have been dismantled in line with the cease-fire agreement, more new army camps have reportedly been set up. During each round of talks both sides have accused each other of cease-fire violations. The JSS has documented cease-violations by the army and the government reported violations by the Shanti Bahini. The government allegations, however, have often been proved false, such as, e.g., the bank robbery in Rangamati in 1995 which the government ascribed to the Shanti Bahini.

So far there have been seven rounds of talks with the full government committee and six round with a government sub-committee consisting of only a few members of the full committee. However, there are no concrete results. Despite these talks a political settlement still seems far away. The government has delayed the negotiation process several times and is unwilling to give in to any of the main demands of the JSS. Whether a change in government will give more hope remains to be seen. The general feeling among the people is that the Khaleda Zia government has been negotiating solely because of outside pressure and to satisfy the foreign donors. Most likely the government is also under pressure from the army; at least a section of the army is against a political settlement. The army has its own political and economic interests in remaining in the CHT; they are the ruling power in the area, many army officers have made huge financial gains from timber trade, development programmes, sale of food aid, special benefits, etc., and the CHT is a training ground for counter-insurgency. Despite the cease-fire agreement reports about military operations and human rights violations by the security forces still keep coming out.

Since the start of the negotiations with the JS and the cease-fire, the military has partly changed its strategy and is recently more involved in stimulating and backing the formation of organisations of Bengali settlers to provoke communal riots. By backing these civilian communal organisations the military try to isolate and criminalise the democratic movement of the Jumma people which has come up in the 1990s. Their targets are in particular the Hill Students' Council (HSC), Hill Peoples' Council (HPC) and Hill Women Federation (HWF), which have widespread support, especially in the two northern hill districts. The HSC was set up in 1989, while the HPC and HWF were set up after General Ershad was ousted by a popular movement which made an end of 15 years of almost continuous military rule in Bangladesh.

In this context it is worthwhile mentioning that over the last few years, in contrast to the military-backed organisations of Bengali settlers, a few national-based Bengali organisations have come up to protest against the human rights violations by the military in the CHT and to defend the rights of the Jumma people. The most prominent and outspoken among these is the National Committee for the Protection of Fundamental Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. More and more Bengalis realise that as long as the military hold power in the CHT and keep a grip on the government there will be the imminent danger of a new military coup and military rule in the whole of the country. The support of Bengali organisations to the cause of the Jumma people is of great importance, but as the CHT issue remains a sensitive one so far only a few have dared to stick out their neck and actively supported the Jumma people. Most of the NGOs prefer to keep aloof because of their own interests.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The militarisation of the CHT together with the Bengali settlement programme organised by the government have led to large-scale violation of human rights in the CHT. Since the early 1980s numerous reports about massacres, torture, rape, illegal detention, looting, arson, forced labour, forced marriages and forced conversion to Islam have come out. The government has been accused of genocide. The massacre in Kaukhali in March 1980 was the first to reach the outside world thanks to an investigation by three opposition members of the Bangladesh parliament. More than 300 Jumma people were killed when the army opened fire indiscriminately on a large crowd of Jummas who had been gathered by the army near the market place on false pretexts. In the aftermath 600 houses of Jummas were burnt to ashes. Since then many more massacres and other human rights violations perpetrated by the security forces and settlers have been reported in which a few thousand Jumma people have been killed and wounded, valuables looted and complete villages burnt to ashes. Over the years hundreds of Jummas have been kept in illegal detention and many of them have been tortured. Hundreds of women have been raped, many of them gang raped, by the military and Bengali settlers, often in front of their family members. In the refugee camps in Tripura alone there are more than 250 women who have been raped, that is one in 10 of the total female Jumma population in the CHT. Many women have been forced to marry Bengali settlers and army personnel and have been forced into conversion to Islam. Many women and girls nowadays do not dare to wear their traditional dress as it makes them more vulnerable and increases the likelihood of sexual assault by military personnel and settlers. Even during the cease-

fire period reports about army operations, looting, beating, rape, harassment and arrests of Jumma people by army men keep coming out regularly. The massacre in Naniarchar has been the gravest among these. Some of the long lists of reported incidents are following:⁵

* On November 17, 1993 at least 29 Jummas have been killed and more than 150 wounded when Bengali settlers in collusion with the army attacked a peaceful demonstration of the CHT Hill Student's Council in Naniarchar, Rangamati district. The students protested against the use of a boat-passenger waiting shed by the military as check post.

* On February 10, 1994 police lathi-charged and fired at a protest rally of the Hill Student's Council to protest against the false implication of their leaders in the murder of a rickshaw driver. Ten students were injured. On the same day four students were arrested. The next day another six students were arrested without any provocation.

* On August 17, 1994 Inana Alo Chakma (30) was shot dead by a soldier Mohammad Abbasuddin from Naksachari army camp, Baghaichari area, when he returned home after having been forced by the army to carry a big load of food stuff to the army camp.

* On August 28, 1994 army personnel of 40 EBR from Naniarchar Military Zone raided the villages Dajyapara, Ramsuparipara and Sonachari, raped two Jumma women, looted houses and arrested 11 people, including a 16-year old girl. Five of the men were released after two days.

* On October 8, 1994 soldiers of Bamer Langadu army camp of 42 EBR gang raped Bhanu Mati Chakma and then stabbed her to death. The camp commander forced the relatives the next day during the cremation at gunpoint to sign a statement that the girl was killed by wild animals.

* On February 2, 1995 military of the 40 EBR of Naniarchar Military Zone in several villages carried out a four-day long combing operation. They looted many goods and burnt several houses of Jumma people.

* On March 15, 1995, 300 houses of Jumma people in Bandarban town were burnt down by Bengali settlers in collaboration with the police. The HSC had announced its annual meeting to be held on that day one month in advance. The day before the meeting the Parbattya Gana Parishad (PGP), an organisation of Bengali settlers that is backed by the army, announced to hold a meeting at the same venue. The district commissioner then imposed section 144, which prohibits the assembly of more than five people. The PGP held a demonstration on March 15 in violation of section 144, but the authorities took no steps against them. To avoid a clash with the PGP, the HSC changed their venue for the meeting and when the meeting was beginning there was a clash with the police. The police left only to come back a little later with members of the PGP and then fired teargas and blank cartridges to disperse the

students. The PGP members went on a rampage and burnt down 300 houses of Jumma people. 22 students and none of the PGP members were arrested by the police.

* On June 25, 1995 army men of Kojoichari camp, Baghaichari area in Rangamati district raided Inana Indriya Buddhist Temple of Kojoichari village, looted the temple, desecrated the Buddha images and harassed the monk and his devotees.

* On August 28-31, 1995 Lt Colonel Abdul Bari of Lakshmichari Military Zone, Lt Colonel Zakir Hossain of Mahalchari Military Zone and Lt Colonel Mijanur Rahman of Naniarchar Military Zone led a huge combing operation in Khagrachari district. They fired indiscriminately, beat up Jumma people and looted their houses. A Jumma woman and her baby were seriously injured.

* On March 7, 1996 members of the PPSPC, an organisation of Bengali settlers, dressed in army uniforms attacked the house of Bimbisar Chakma, president of the Khagrachari branch of the Hill People's Council in order to kidnap him. Not finding him at home they tied up his family members and beat them up. When the news of the attack spread many Jumma people gathered in Khagrachari town to block the way of the attackers. The army opened fire on the crowd of Jumma people, one Jumma, Amar Bikash Chakma, was killed and 60 others were injured.

* On March 31, 1996 Kyajai Marma of Pankhiapara village, Khagrachari was killed by the army when HSC and HPC members were protesting against the unwarranted arrest of HPC member Cha Thwai Marma on the day before. Later in the day a mourning procession carrying the dead body of Marma was baton-charged by the police which left more than 50 people injured, three of them seriously and two persons were arrested.

The government claims that measures have been taken against some of the perpetrators, but none of them have ever been tried in court and most of them could get away with their crimes without any repercussions. After the Logang massacre and the Naniarchar massacre the government set up a one-man investigation committee, but the Logang report was clearly biased and the Naniarchar report was never made public. None of the few culprits mentioned in the Logang report was ever tried in court.

Over the years more than 70,000 Jumma people have fled to India. Several times refugees have been repatriated, often by force. The last repatriation was in 1994 when under an agreement between the governments of India and Bangladesh the Jumma refugees were put under pressure to agree to the repatriation. After the government of Bangladesh had given in to several of their demands, such as return of their land which had been occupied by Bengali settlers, they agreed to repatriate an 'experimental batch' of 379 families, consisting of 1,846 refugees

in February 1994 and a second batch of 648 families, consisting of 3,323 refugees, in July of the same year. But after a delegation of the refugees, headed by former MP Upendra Lal Chakma visited the CHT a second time and noted that the government had not fulfilled many of its promises to the repatriated refugees, the refugees refused any further repatriation. Still there are more than 50,000 refugees in Tripura.

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

So far no systematic study has been done on the environment in the CHT, but there are clear indications that some of the processes that have been set in motion over the last 30 years have led to serious ecological problems. The hills were once covered with thick forest. Nowadays many of the hills are covered with not more than some small bushes and trees. While afforestation programmes are carried out, at the same time a large part of the forest in the CHT is being destroyed by logging contractors and the military. The military controls the granting of logging concessions to contractors. The forest department gives the final permit for a logging concession, but only after the army has given its approval. Only seldom concessions are given to Jumma people for fear that the money made will be given to the Shanti Bahini. The excessive logging is causing erosion of the hills and the silting up of the Kaptai lake. In 1993 for the first time in the history of the CHT landslides have been reported. These landslides caused the death of 39 people.⁶

Due to the interference and the introduction of industries and cash crops the biodiversity has reduced considerably. As a result of the increasing pollution of the Kaptai lake due to the industries, the paper mill and the rayon mill, already two kinds of fish have become extinct in the lake as reported by Jumma people. Seeds of some of the hill rice varieties and other jhum crops have been lost due to the eviction from their lands, the forced transition to cash crop production and the repression.

Despite all the claims by the government that the development programmes are aimed at curbing jhum cultivation and giving more opportunities to the Jumma people, its effect has been that the pressure on the land has increased and the people have had to resort more to jhum cultivation. As a consequence the jhum cycle has reduced from 15-20 years to about 3-4 years. Moreover, it is disputed whether jhum cultivation itself is responsible for ecological damage at all. The shortened cycle is no doubt a problem, but according to Raja Devashish Roy: "...most large trees are generally not felled and this provides a reasonable amount of forest cover. Moreover, many jhumia farmers nowadays plant middle to long-term plants along with traditional short-term crops. For example, banana, turmeric, citrus fruits, palm, coconut,

bamboo, teak, gamar, koro, etc. are now a common sight in the CHT, especially in the Rangamati district. In such cases, erosion is very minimal. In fact, in some cases, it is seen that jhumming leads not to the causation of erosion but to the prevention of erosion" [Roy 1994:5]. Much more study is needed to investigate the effects to jhum cultivation, the carrying capacity of the land and the ecological balance in the CHT.

Until the construction of the Kaptai dam the Jumma people were practising a sustainable form of agriculture, consisting of a combination of jhum plough cultivation. If the government of Bangladesh is seriously interested in sustainable development, it should give a leading role in the planning and implementation of real development programmes in the CHT to the Jumma people who have a vast experience with the sustainable use of local resources. The Jumma people themselves should decide what kind of development they want.

ALTERNATIVES FOR DONOR AGENCIES

If donor agencies are seriously interested in human rights and in sustainable development, as many of them say they are, they should first of all acknowledge the fact that due to their aid a huge military occupation of the CHT can be maintained which is resulting not only in serious repression and murder of the indigenous Jumma people, but also in an environmental disaster. The same counts for donors that are seriously interested, or say they are, in protecting human rights and the rights of indigenous people. In connection with the UN decade for indigenous peoples which started in 1994 several western governments have adopted a policy to give special attention to indigenous peoples. Donors should seriously reconsider their aid to Bangladesh as a whole and those who do not have any such policies should be exposed and boycotted.

The international CHT commission has brought forward the following suggestion to donor governments and institutions: Bangladesh government officials as well as the military have repeatedly declared to the CHT commission that the settlement of the more than 4,00,000 Bengalis in the CHT has been a mistake. On the other hand, many Bengali settlers have told the CHT commission that their lives in the CHT were miserable and that they would like to go "anywhere in the world" if they would be given the means. Here lies a chance for donor agencies to step in. They could come forward to provide funds for the resettlement of Bengalis outside the CHT [The Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission 1994:37] and so contribute to taking away one of the main bones of contention. Local NGOs that have experience with settlement of landless Bengalis could be involved in this.

Moreover, donor governments and institutions could go one step further and

consider possibilities for contributing to a political settlement of the CHT conflict. They could make their aid to the government conditional to a political settlement: funds for development programmes in the CHT, but only after the conflict has been settled and only if these programmes are on Jumma people's terms. As long as there is no political settlement, all development efforts in the CHT will continue along the lines sketched above. So long aid to the government of Bangladesh should be withheld by donors on the basis of their own criteria for giving aid, such as the observance of human rights, good governance, sustainable development and the rights of indigenous peoples. So long only Jumma people's organisations that are actively involved in the struggle against repression and for their rights and in strengthening the indigenous identity and way of life deserve to be supported.

Finally, with regard to development in general, it is high time that both the government of Bangladesh as well as donors revise their total concept of development. The disastrous effects of the development programmes in the CHT are exemplary for many development programmes elsewhere in Bangladesh and all over the world. Up to now development programmes in the CHT have only added to the destruction of the lives of the Jumma people, rather than that it has strengthened their economies, culture and way of life. In the name of protection of the environment and poverty reduction the so-called 'development' programmes have added to the exploitation of the people and of natural resources and led to the near extinction of some of the smaller indigenous groups. They serve the interests of the military, the government, Bengali merchants and foreign powers. The western concept of development is based on notions of control over and manipulation of resources and people and a maximum exploitation of these in order to achieve maximum economic growth and profits. This notion is diametrically opposed to the indigenous notion of development based on a subsistence economy in harmony with the environment and growth within the limits of nature. The Jumma people have the right to decide for themselves what kind of development they want and how they want to achieve that. That is an intrinsic part of their right to self-determination.

CONCLUSION

While some donor governments give aid to the Bangladesh army directly, others contribute indirectly to the militarisation of the CHT. Thanks to the huge amounts of foreign funds the Bangladesh government is able to maintain a large military force in the CHT.

There have been no fundamental changes in policy, with regard to the CHT since the

restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1991. Contrary to the official objectives, in the name of development which was set in with the construction of the Kaptai dam and pursued after independence of Bangladesh, 'development' programmes have uprooted the Jumma people from their traditional lands and their self-sustained economies have been destroyed. With the introduction of cash crop production they are forced into dependency on the market economy and employment opportunities created by the government with foreign funds and so made more easy to control. Their lands are largely occupied by Bengali settlers and jhum cultivation has become even more the last resort for Jumma people to survive. Development programmes, and for that matter also foreign aid for development programmes, continues to serve the counter-insurgency strategy and to maintain the present situation of repression, widespread human rights violations, environmental destruction and destruction of the ways of life and cultures of the Jumma peoples. This is contradictory to the aid policies set by donor governments.

Foreign donors could contribute to a solution of the CHT conflict if they would take their own criteria for giving aid seriously and search for alternatives that could solve the existing problems such as human rights violations, the land issue and the fast deteriorating environment, instead of adding to these. Another factor that could play an important role in contributing to a solution of the CHT conflict lies in the active support of Bengali political parties and organisations to the Jumma cause.

So far certainly the hearts and minds of the Jumma people have not been won by the present development programmes in the CHT nor by the foreign aid to the government of Bangladesh as a whole, rather it is destroying their hearts and minds, and has only added to a further alienation of the Jumma people from the mainstream Bangladesh society.

Notes

- 1 The Jumma people were given only tenancy rights by the British in contrast to the people in the plains who were given property rights. This itself was never a source of conflict, possibly because, according to the traditional Jumma notions of land ownership, individuals or individual families cannot own land, but only have the right to use it. It is also interesting to note that the three chiefs of the Jumma people have never signed any agreement with the British to transfer their traditional lands to the British crown or to the British Indian state; thus the legality of ownership of the land claimed by the government could be disputed.
- 2 I myself took part in the investigation of the CHT Commission in the CHT in December 1990 as one of the resource persons of the commission and spent altogether three weeks in all three districts Khagrachari, Rangamati

and Bandarban.

- 3 This USAID OPS programme had been abolished in 1975 after criticism had come up that the programme served CIA intelligence information purposes. There was, for instance, evidence of complicity in torture in foreign countries and training policemen in bomb-making.
- 4 These figures have been provided by the UNDP in a letter to Wolfgang Mey in 1984 and by the CHTDB to the CHT Commission in December 1990.
- 5 The incidents have been reported by the Hill Watch Human Rights Forum, The JSS, Commission for Peace and Justice and others.
- 6 Daily *Ittefaq* July 22, 1993, and *Bhorer Kagan* July 23, 1993, reported in 'Development', Ecology and Indigenous Women in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh' by Kabita Chakma, February 4, 1994.

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