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**THE ILO CONVENTION ON INDIGENOUS AND
TRIBAL POPULATIONS, 1957 (No. 107)
AND THE LAWS OF BANGLADESH:
A COMPARATIVE REVIEW**



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A COMPARATIVE REVIEW**

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and
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FOREWORD



The initial idea of undertaking this study came about in 2005 as a result of increasing requests by indigenous peoples' organizations in Bangladesh for the ILO to re-open dialogue with the Government of Bangladesh on implementation of ILO's Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, 1957 (No. 107). Although Convention No. 107 was ratified by Bangladesh in 1972, it had not been used systematically by the ILO and the Government of Bangladesh as an instrument for dialogue on development needs and strategies for indigenous and tribal populations in the country, despite its potential in this regard.

ILO Convention No. 107 (and the revised version, Convention No.169) are primarily development tools, which can provide useful frameworks for implementing indigenous peoples rights at the national level. The Conventions cover a wide range of topics relevant to the challenges Bangladesh is facing today. Among the most important are education and health, land and resource rights, traditional occupations, employment and vocational training, as well as the establishment of adequate mechanisms for consultation with and participation of indigenous peoples in processes that affect them and arrangements for self-management.

Since 2005, there have been some dramatic developments in the arena of indigenous peoples' rights, both at the national, regional and international level. At the national level, most significant among these has been the growing strength of Bangladesh's indigenous peoples' movement and sustained lobbying for political and legal reform. Particularly encouraging also, is the firm commitment of the current Government of Bangladesh to protect and promote the cultural, social and economic rights of the country's indigenous peoples, including full implementation of the 1997 CHT Peace Accord. At the international level, most significant was the adoption, in 2007, of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; while at the regional level, the relevance of the ratification of ILO Convention No. 169 by the Government of Nepal, in the context of the ensuing peace process, must not be overlooked.

This prevailing favourable climate thus presents an important opportunity for institutionalizing and implementing indigenous peoples' rights in Bangladesh, with a view to ensuring national stability and sustainable development, where diversity is celebrated and respected. It is hoped that this study will provide a solid basis for such a process to draw upon.

ILO would like to express its sincere appreciation to the author, Raja Devasish Roy, for his excellent and painstaking work in compiling this comprehensive report and in the process sharing his unparalleled knowledge related to indigenous people in the context of national and international law. We would also like to acknowledge with gratitude the interest and support shown for this and associated initiatives related to furthering the rights of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh, by Honorable Dipankar Talukdar, the State Minister, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tract Affairs. Last but not least, we would like to thank the European Commission's European Instrument for democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) for their financial contribution which made this work possible.

It is hoped that this report and its clear recommendations will provide a useful resource for government officials, the ILO and its constituents, development agencies, political leaders, indigenous peoples and their organizations, and others who are concerned with the complex issues facing indigenous peoples in Bangladesh and across the world today.¹ The ILO, with its mandate to promote social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights, remains committed to promoting the rights and improving the socio-economic situation of indigenous and tribal peoples, in compliance with the principles of relevant ILO Conventions.

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¹ In order to access a wide range of information resources; please visit: www.ilo.org/indigenous. In addition, PRO 169 has compiled a comprehensive training tool box, which includes background materials, video interviews, Power Point presentations and documentaries. All these materials are available online at pro169.org or upon request at pro169@ilo.org

AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



I am grateful to several people who have helped me in this study on the ILO Convention 107 and the Laws of Bangladesh. I apologize that they are too many to name here. However, I would like to particularly acknowledge those contributions without which this work would either not have been possible, or would have been of a far lower standard than it presently is. Of course, several errors and shortcomings remain, and I alone am responsible for them.

Let me acknowledge with deep gratitude the contributions of Birgitte Feiring, whose inspiring and innovative leadership (along with that of her other colleagues at the ILO's *Programme to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples*, who are named hereafter) has led to path-breaking and strategic alliances between the ILO and indigenous peoples and their organizations in different parts of the world. I am also grateful for her excellent suggestions, encouragement and patience concerning this study.

I am grateful to Coen Kompier of the aforesaid ILO project for sharing his knowledge, experience and humour. I have benefited much from the discussions I have had with him in the meetings attended together in Bangladesh and Nepal. A special thank you goes to Sarah Webster of the aforesaid project for her invaluable suggestions and friendly criticisms, and for sharing her wisdom. I am extremely happy that this draft, along with its earlier version, received her inputs before finalization. I hope the report faithfully produces some of the insights that I have borrowed from Birgitte, Coen and Sarah's repertoire. I have been very encouraged by the kind cooperation extended to me by Panudda Boonpala, ILO Country Director, Bangladesh and I am optimistic that the cooperation between the ILO Office, Dhaka and the government and the people of Bangladesh, including the indigenous peoples, will break new grounds. It is a very fortunate development that Abhilash Tripura has joined the Dhaka ILO office to help take this relationship forward, with regard to indigenous issues. I am grateful to Abhilash for his friendship and cooperation. Thanks are also due to other individuals in the ILO office, Dhaka and in New Delhi and Geneva, who have made this work possible.

I would like to express my gratitude to Advocate Pratikar Chakma of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh (now an Assistant Attorney-General) and to Advocate Dinanath Tanchangya of the Judges Courts in Chittagong and Rangamati for helping me with information regarding court cases and laws. I am highly obliged to Professor Dr. Sadeka Halim of Dhaka University for her inputs on gender and forestry issues, and for sensitizing me to gender issues over the years. Finally, thanks are due to Subrata Chakma of the Office of the Chakma Raja for his invaluable assistance in the layout of the contents section and tables, among other things.

I hope this study will help the process of necessary legal and administrative reform in Bangladesh in the light of the provisions of ILO Conventions 107 and 169, and encourage others to undertake research on several crucial matters, including on the national human rights process. The study will have been worthwhile if it helps bring the Government of Bangladesh, mainstream Bangladeshi society, development agencies, human rights workers and other members of civil society a little closer to the indigenous peoples of Bangladesh.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOCUS OF REPORT

This report compares the laws of Bangladesh concerning its indigenous (or “tribal”) peoples with provisions of the ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Populations, 1957 (Convention No. 107), and where relevant, with the provisions of the related ILO Recommendation No. 104, the ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, 1989 (Convention No. 169) and the ILO Convention on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation, 1958 (Convention No. 111). These laws include those that apply to the semi-autonomous Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region and those that apply to the rest of the country (referred to here as “the plains” region). The main purpose of the comparison is to ascertain to what extent these laws are consistent with the provisions of Convention 107 (and Recommendation 104 and Convention 169), or go beyond the standards of the aforesaid instruments, or fall below their standards, as the case might be. The report is supplemented with a table on the population statistics of the indigenous peoples of Bangladesh and a series of matrices comparing the Bangladeshi legal provisions with the major provisions of the various sections of Convention 107 (*General*, *Land* and *Recruitment, Training, Health, Education* etc.).² *Of course, any study of these laws would be limited and partial without a corresponding focus upon the related policies and implementation processes, including at the international level. Therefore, policy and process issues have also been included in this report, albeit with a lesser focus than legal issues.* It is to be hoped that future studies will look more deeply into these policy and process issues, whether at the international, national or local contexts. The study goes on to broadly examine the process of implementation of the concerned rights through the international human rights monitoring processes and touches upon the major difficulties in implementing the same at the national level.

BACKGROUND TO RATIFICATION OF CONVENTION 107 (CHAPTER 1.2)

Bangladesh has ratified several international human rights treaties, including ILO Convention 107, and its accompanying Recommendation 104 (which supplements with detailed guidelines the broad principles contained in Convention 107). Although the convention applied to it since 1960, when it was a province of Pakistan, Bangladesh chose to ratify it afresh in 1972, a year after it gained independence from Pakistan. Although Convention 107 was revised in 1989 and the more progressive Convention 169 was adopted, Bangladesh, along with seventeen other countries, remains party to the earlier Convention of 1957. On the other hand, twenty countries, including neighbouring Nepal, have ratified Convention No. 169, which rejects the integrationist

² See Annexe 1

approach conceived at the time of adoption of the 1957 Convention. *However, even though Bangladesh remains party to Convention 107, the provisions of Convention 169 are nevertheless relevant to the situation in Bangladesh (and other countries that are still party to Convention 107), both because of its inspirational value and also because the Committee of Experts – which monitors the implementation of Conventions No. 107 and 169 – follows the progressive spirit of Convention No. 169 and rejects the integrationist orientation of Convention No. 107.* It is encouraging to note that the Second National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP-II) of Bangladesh, adopted in 2008, supports the ratification of Convention 169 by Bangladesh.

AMBIT OF CONVENTION 107 AND RECENT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS (CHAPTERS 1.3 TO 1.5)

Prior to embarking on the legal and policy review, the study explains the ambit and scope of Convention 107, in particular, explaining the meaning of, and current relevance of, the population groups that the Convention specifically mentions: namely, 'indigenous', 'tribal' and semi-tribal' groups. It clarifies that the provisions of the Convention apply equally to all of the three populations groups mentioned above, without any difference. It explains that the Convention provides some subjective and objective criteria to help identify the groups concerned, rather than provide a formal definition of the aforesaid terms. It then goes on to compare the Convention's identification criteria with other comparable international legal instruments and authoritative studies. The report clarifies that although the term 'semi-tribal' still occurs in the Convention, it has little practical relevance today as the supervisory bodies and the ILO tripartite system as a whole no longer consider social and cultural integration of indigenous (and "tribal") groups as either inevitable or desirable. In the process, the reader is referred to the global advances made in recent years with regard to the promotion and protection of indigenous peoples' rights, including such landmark developments as the declaration by the United Nations of an International Year (1993), and two successive International Decades (1995-2004 and 2005-2015) for Indigenous Peoples, the establishment of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (in 2000) and the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (in 2007). Instead of providing a general description of the major provisions of the Convention, the study cross-references the provisions of the Bangladeshi laws under discussion with the related provisions of Convention 107, and where applicable, with Recommendation 104, Convention 169 and Convention 111.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF BANGLADESH, THE EROSION OF CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS & MINORITIZATION (CHAPTERS II & V)

The terminology used to refer to the indigenous peoples of Bangladesh is varied and contested, including "tribe", "indigenous" and "aboriginal" or their equivalent in the national language, Bengali ("Bangla"). The second chapter discusses the "politics" of identity and reviews the use of the various terms in legal instruments, other government policy documents and in the courts of law. It surveys the existing literature and provides a list of the indigenous groups along with the different names by which they are called by themselves and by others. Extracts from the census of 1991, the last census with ethnic break-up, is provided in an annexe. There follows a brief description of the process of minoritization and near-minoritization of the indigenous peoples by immigration of non-indigenous groups in areas where the indigenous groups hitherto formed the vast majority of the population,

particularly in the greater Mymensingh region in the north and the CHT in the southeast. *The minoritization of indigenous peoples is also linked to the gradual withdrawal of special constitutional safeguards for the indigenous peoples in the CHT and greater Mymensingh, which hitherto shared many similarities with the administrative systems in neighbouring Northeast India (which are still retained to this day).* The presence of special constitutional safeguards in the CHT and Mymensingh in the pre-independence period, and their subsequent erosion, is discussed in a separate chapter (Chapter V). In addition, the study provides a bird's eye view of the relevant provisions of the present Constitution of Bangladesh.

OVERVIEW OF LAWS IN THE PLAINS REGIONS (CHAPTERS III & X)

Upon review of the laws applicable to the plains region, it is seen that, unlike in the CHT - where there are several special laws on the region and its indigenous population - there are very few laws of the plains that directly focus upon indigenous peoples. Therefore, some of the core elements of Convention 107, including consultation and participation of indigenous groups in governance, legislation and development, are either absent or extremely marginal in the plains. The study refers to the few laws that directly and substantively concern the plains indigenous people, including those mentioned below. The most important of these is the major land law of plains Bangladesh, the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act, 1950 (Act XXVIII of 1950), which restricts the transfer of lands of "aboriginal castes and tribes" to non-aboriginals, and some provisions of the Drugs and Alcoholic Substances Control Act, 1990 (Act XX of 1990). In addition, there is the Vested and Non-resident Property (Administration) Act, 1974 (Act XLVI of 1974), which has been misused to appropriate lands of plains indigenous people (along with those of members of religious minorities), and the Forest Act of 1927 (Act XVI of 1927) and *Social Forestry Rules of 2004*, some of whose provisions violate the customary and other resource rights of indigenous peoples.

Finally, the concerned chapter discusses the practice of customary personal laws of the plains indigenous peoples and the challenges faced in resolving disputes, particularly as the traditional self-government leadership structures of the plains indigenous peoples are not formally recognised by law, unlike in the CHT. *A clear conclusion that emerges is that the overall situation of laws concerning the plains indigenous peoples is of a standard that is far lower than that contemplated in Convention 107.* This is not surprising as the plains region has produced only one indigenous Member of Parliament in the last several decades! *Thus, their dispersed population and the historical process of de-recognition of their self-government systems has no doubt accelerated the pace of marginalization of the plains indigenous peoples and perpetuated legal and policy neglect by succeeding governments over the centuries. It is indeed doubly unfortunate that the ILO Committee of Experts - which monitors the implementation of the Conventions 107 and 169 - has in recent years paid little attention to the situation in the plains, in comparison to the CHT.*

THE LAWS OF THE CHT AND ITS UNIQUE ADMINISTRATIVE & JUSTICE SYSTEM (CHAPTER IV)

In contrast to the plains, the CHT has a unique legal, administrative and justice system, which is distinctly different from that prevalent in the rest of the country. The CHT administration includes a number of institutions that occur only in the region, including the traditional system of hereditary chiefs and quasi-hereditary mauza

headmen and village 'karbaries' (dealing mainly with land, revenue and justice administration), indigenous-majority district and regional councils with tribal chairpersons (dealing with local self-governance and development, with certain consultative and other prerogatives concerning legislation) and a unique justice system that includes the courts of the indigenous chiefs and headmen and judicial officers under the Supreme Court and the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs. Many of the laws that apply to the rest of the country, including the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 and the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act, 1950 and the Land Acquisition Ordinance, 1984 do not apply to the region. The CHT Regulation of 1900 is the single most important law for the CHT. The Regulation functions in the nature of a constitutional legal instrument and vets the application of other laws that apply to the region, among others, by specifying the nature and extent of application of those laws. Other special laws that apply to the CHT include the CHT Land Acquisition Regulation, 1958, the Hill District Councils Acts of 1989, the CHT Regional Council Act of 1998 and the CHT Land Disputes Resolution Commission Act of 2001. Through the aforesaid laws and institutions, the primacy of the CHT indigenous peoples in governance, administration and development is ensured and entrenched up to a certain extent. In addition, the CHT Regional Council, and to a lesser extent, the hill district councils, enjoy the prerogative of framing regulations under the concerned laws (Act XII of 1998 and Acts XIX, XX and XXI of 1989, respectively) and of being consulted by the Government of Bangladesh concerning the framing of rules and the passage of Acts and Ordinances. Thus the presence of several of the aforesaid laws shows that the situation is at par with, and in some instances, ahead of the provisions of, Convention 107 and closer to the standards of Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. *The study concludes that the relatively high standard of laws in the CHT is the result of political struggles of the peoples of the region (resulting, for example, in the signing of the CHT Accord of 1997) or the historical legacies of specialised legislation from the British colonial period (this also applies in the case of the land transfer restrictions contained in the 1950 land law of the plains).*

GOVERNMENT POLICY AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (CHAPTERS VI & VII)

There is no single government policy document on the country's indigenous peoples, either for the CHT or the plains. However, some formal policies do mention indigenous peoples, the most important among which is the National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP-I and PRSP-II). The PRSP-I referred to the indigenous peoples as "Adivasi/Ethnic Minority" while the PRSP-II uses the terms 'indigenous people'. Both support the implementation of the CHT Accord of 1997, which may be regarded as another policy document, whose implementation has been seen to run into several difficulties over the years. That said; the recently elected Awami League-led government is on record as being committed to implementing its provisions in their entirety. There is much room for accommodating the concerns of indigenous peoples in the national sectoral policies of Bangladesh (which currently largely bypass indigenous issues), including policies on Health, Education, Employment, Land (including Water Resources), Environment, Forests, Climate Change and Women's Development, among others. The study attempts what it calls an "Equity and Gender" audit of Bangladeshi laws and policies (Chapter VII) and concludes that the marginalized situation of indigenous women and that of disadvantaged indigenous groups (especially those with small populations and low access to education) requires special measures to provide them with the true benefits of equality and non-discrimination. References are made

to the relevant provisions of the national constitution that safeguard or hinder indigenous peoples' rights. The problems associated in implementing the constitutional and international treaty rights within the Bangladeshi justice and human rights system are mentioned briefly.

THE ILO MONITORING SYSTEM (CHAPTER XI)

This chapter analyzes the ILO monitoring system, with particular reference to the monitoring body's - the Committee of Experts' - reports on Bangladesh. It concludes that while many of the reports provide an insight into the implementation gaps with regard to acts and omissions of the Government of Bangladesh, the focus of the reports seem to waiver at times, suggesting unsustained focus on different issues, with a clearly low focus on the plains regions. It is seen that submission of the government's reports has often been delayed. In sum, an analysis of reports and communications sent reveals capacity weaknesses within the monitoring body, the concerned agencies of the Government of Bangladesh, the ILO country office (which is expected to engage the government on its treaty obligations, including Conventions 107, 169 and 111), and most importantly, with indigenous peoples and their institutions and organizations (who have a major role to play in communicating relevant information to the concerned authorities).

One feature of the ILO system is critiqued, namely, the tripartite ILO system of governments, employers' associations and trades unions, wherein direct indigenous representation, as indigenous peoples, is currently absent. Thus indigenous peoples are excluded from the formal ILO process of decision-making concerning their rights. Following the example of the establishment of the high-level UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the study urges reforms within the ILO tripartite process, at least to provide observer status to indigenous representatives, when their issues are being discussed and decided upon. This would be in conformity with the spirit of the ILO Conventions 107 and 169 and that of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM (CHAPTER IX)

Chapter IX provides an overview of the international human rights monitoring system and its strengths and weaknesses. It briefly explains the legal and other differences between human rights treaties and declarations. It compares the scope of work of the three specialized UN agencies dealing with indigenous peoples' rights – the *Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues*, the *Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples* and the *Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and comments on their synergy levels and gaps, among others. It also refers to the Indigenous Peoples' policies of important bilateral development agencies and multilateral lending institutions.

In order to make the optimal use of the international human rights system, the report argues that human rights advocates of indigenous peoples' rights should, in addition to working through the ILO supervisory system, explore all possible avenues of redress, particularly the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the human rights treaty mechanisms offered by the United Nations system (ICCCPR, ICESCR, ICERD, CEDAW, CRC, CAT and the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court), the Special Rapporteur mechanisms (including the Special Rapporteur on the

Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Human Rights Council, and the nascent Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh (there are no inter-governmental regional or sub-regional human rights monitoring bodies in South Asia and Asia).

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS (CHAPTERS 5.3, 5.4 & 5.5.)

These sections of the report provide a brief overview of the national mechanisms to implement human rights (called “fundamental rights” in the Bangladesh Constitution), including the writ mechanisms in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court and the newly-established National Human Rights Commission and suggests that on account of the marginality of indigenous peoples special efforts for legal aid and other measures to provide access to the aforesaid bodies could improve matters. The provisions on the Ombudsman are also required to be put effect to. Ultimately, implementation of human rights at the national level is far more important than international processes as access to the latter is generally far more difficult for marginalised indigenous peoples. Also, it is a norm of international human rights processes that national remedies are first exhausted prior to seeking redress through international mechanisms.

OBSTACLES, CHALLENGES & WAYS FORWARD (CHAPTER XII)

Finally, the report attempts to identify the obstacles and challenges in protecting and promoting indigenous peoples’ rights at local, national and international levels. It puts forward a number of recommendations to meet the policy and implementations gaps, including on (i) the process of review of the convention by the ILO Committee of Experts; (ii) information about the convention and its monitoring process; (iii) sensitization of concerned actors; (iv) the need for a formal role of indigenous peoples in the monitoring and International Labour Conference system; (v) capacity-raising; (vi) networking; (vii) synergy-raising with other human rights processes; (viii) ratification of Convention 169; (ix) reform of the justice administration system; and (x) constitutional, legal and policy reform.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author (devasish59@yahoo.com) holds a *Barrister-at-Law* degree from the Inns of Court School of Law in London. He is the traditional *Chief of Chakma* (Chakma Raja) in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and an advocate at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh (High Court Division). He is also associated with several voluntary organizations in Bangladesh and abroad, dealing with human rights, indigenous peoples’ rights, environment and development. He has several publications on the aforesaid subjects in books, newspapers and journals in Bangladesh and abroad.

GLOSSARY



Adivasi	Indigenous/Aboriginal (Bengali/Hindi)
CAT	Convention against Torture
Chief or raja	Also 'Circle Chief'. Administrative head of a Circle responsible for the administration of "tribal" justice and customary laws of the hill people, for revenue administration and for advising the Deputy Commissioners, the Hill District Councils, the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board and the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs. There are three circles in the CHT.
CEACR	Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. Monitors the application of ILO Convention No. 107 & other ILO conventions and recommendations.
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHT	Widely used acronym for 'Chittagong Hill Tracts'. Formerly, one administrative district, now includes the three 'hill' districts: Rangamati Hill Tracts, Bandarban Hill Tracts and Khagrachari Hill Tracts. Should be distinguished from Chittagong, which is the name of a neighbouring district, and the name of an administrative division of which both Chittagong district and the hill districts are a part of. Chittagong is also the name of the second largest city of Bangladesh and the headquarters of Chittagong district and Chittagong division.
CHTRC	Premier CHT council supervising CHT administration. Responsible to Ministry of CHT Affairs.
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
Headman	Sub-chief. Also 'mauza headman'. Head of a mauza. The headmen (including a few women) are charged with revenue, land and "tribal" justice administration at the mauza level. The headman supervises the work of the karbaries (village chiefs or elders), of which there may be an average of five to fifteen in each mauza. The headman is responsible to the Circle Chief and the Deputy Commissioner, and to the Hill District Councils.
HDC	Hill District Council
Hill People/Pahari	Indigenous people of CHT
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
JSS	<i>Jana Samhati Samiti</i> , largest political party of the CHT people that led the movement for autonomy in the CHT.
Jum	Local name for swidden cultivation, also used in Northeast India. Also referred to as "shifting", "rotational" or "slash-and-burn" agriculture. Rainfed cultivation that involves burning of vegetation and planting of mixed seeds without hoeing or ploughing.
Karbari	Village chief or elder, an office that is largely hereditary. Traditionally nominated by the villagers and formally appointed by the chiefs.
Mauza	A mauza is composed of several villages. In the CHT, it is both a revenue and land administration unit <i>and</i> a unit of general and "tribal" judicial administration. The total number of mauzas in the CHT is more than 350.
Plains regions	Generic name to refer to the rest of Bangladesh in comparison to the CHT. However, some parts of the "plains" also include hills, such as in Sylhet division, Chittagong district, greater Mymensingh area, and the <i>Barind</i> tracts of Rajshahi division.
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy paper
UPDF	United People's Democratic Front, a political party of indigenous people in the CHT, led by founding leader, Proshid Bikash Khisa.

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