State, Development and Indigenous People of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

By

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between the indigenous people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and Bangladesh state has been a long standing issue. After two decades of conflict between the indigenous people, manifested in the ethno-nationalist movement, and Bangladesh state, the peace agreement of 1997 promised a new era in the state-ethnic relation. Most studies on state and development in the CHT view the state-ethnic relation as a dichotomous relationship characterised by domination from above by the state, and contestation from below by the indigenous people. Less attention has been paid to the ways in which it is also a social relation of domination and subjugation which is produced and reproduced in the everyday life of the indigenous people.

The present study is an attempt to address this gap. It examines the relationship between the indigenous people of the CHT and Bangladesh state within the context of their everyday encounters in the setting of basic development provisions, such as health and education services. In particular, it assesses the impact of development on indigenous people's capacity to (re)negotiate the relation. By employing postcolonial, development and critical citizenship approaches, it focusses on a long-term development project entitled 'Integrated Community Development Project' (ICDP). Through critical discourse analysis of ICDP documents, in-depth interviews with ICDP officials, and interview and focus group discussions with indigenous project participants and non-participants, the study examines the impact of the ICDP in enhancing indigenous people's ability to articulate their citizenship rights, and in particular, their rights to education and health services of the government. In relation to education, the findings show that indigenous people viewed the opportunity of ICDP pre-schooling very positively, as an opportunity for their children to access formal education. However, the indigenous people were unable to claim their citizenship right to health through the ICDP because in the absence of any formal

agreement between the government health department and ICDP, the implementation of the ICDP's health programme was sporadic and partial. In the absence of state provision, indigenous people's citizenship practices emerged out of everyday livelihood struggles resulting in adoption of practical strategies of resilience.

This thesis breaks new ground in analysing indigenous people's citizenship practices in the CHT by demonstrating that development is not just a determining force that controls the life of the indigenous people. A key finding is that indigenous people's citizenship practice primarily constitutes practical engagement with the state to access basic service provisions to improve their material condition. By using development to claim their citizenship rights, the indigenous people demonstrate that resilience is a citizenship practice that challenges the discursive practices of the Bangladesh state. However, they also articulate citizenship in ways that stretch the existing boundary between Bangladesh state and indigenous society. This involves complex and sometimes contradictory processes through which the state-society boundary gets reworked, reconstituted and reinforced. Thus, indigenous people's citizenship practices in the CHT underpin a politics of contingency and contestation.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed ..... Date: 28/07/2018

Mya Mya Ching

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ACRONYMS

CDA	: Critical Discourse Analysis
CHT	: Chittagong Hill Tracts
CHTDB	: Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board
EPI	: Extended Programme on Immunisation
HDC	: Hill District Council
ICDP	: Integrated Community Development Project
NGO	: Non-governmental Organisation
ODPEO	: The Office of the District Primary Education Officer
PCJSS	: Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti
PEDP	: Primary Education Development Programme
UNDP	: United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	: The United Nations Children's Fund
UPDF	: United People's Democratic Front

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis offers an analysis of the relationship between the Bangladesh state and the indigenous people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) as dynamic, constituted and contested. It provides an analysis of the state-society relation in very real terms as ordinary and mundane by drawing on indigenous people's experiences and engagement with a development project, the 'Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP)'. By so doing, it departs from the tendency in much of the postcolonial scholarship on the CHT to see the relationship between the state and the indigenous people in dichotomous terms as one locked in hostilities. Instead, it offers a more nuanced approach of seeing the relationship in more fluid terms of postcolonial citizenship where people see the state in multiple and contradictory ways.

Further, this study pays particular attention to the experiences of state led development of the ordinary indigenous people and seeks to understand the range of perspectives they voice about development. It charts the rich, layered, everyday engagement and negotiation of the indigenous people with the state in the context of the ICDP to foreground the citizenship practices of the indigenous people of the CHT. In examining how citizenship is experienced, expressed, and articulated from below, this study seeks to uncover the politics and agency at work in the CHT people's lived, experienced and social worlds.

This study makes a case of the need to understand the varied forms of indigenous people's agency vis à vis their politics as embedded in their ordinary, day to day life. It

shows how agency entails different meanings and forms for different people. Indigenous people face great challenges and fears, and they have experienced the state as distant. Yet, they also have aspirations and hopes for the reformulation of their lives in the future. While the thesis highlights myriad articulations of indigenous people's agency, it also argues that indigenous agency does not lie in some pure, autonomous space outside of power relations, but is constituted through these. Therefore, in the context of CHT, Bangladesh, indigenous agency is best understood as the negotiation, rather than negation, of modern state power.

1.1: The Indigenous People, Development and Everyday State

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region is located in the south-eastern part of Bangladesh, and has been the site of armed conflict lasting almost two decades from 1977 to 1997. Anybody with a scholarly interest in the CHT will come across chronicles of the region that are mostly told from a conflict paradigm, reflecting the political turmoil that the region witnessed throughout these decades (Zahed 2013, p. 99). This thesis makes a modest claim that in the context of CHT, Bangladesh, the problem with examining indigenous agency has been the overwhelming focus on resistance, especially armed resistance. What is missing from the academic literature is a nuanced understanding of indigenous people's agency as articulated in their daily life, which entails rich negotiation and engagement with the everyday state.

Further, the critical scholarship mostly represents the viewpoints of those indigenous people who are more visible in the political and social realms of the CHT. However, the majority of the indigenous population are ordinary or common people who may have been unwilling parties to the conflict, but did not actively participate in it. Hence, this research takes a different approach to the conflict paradigm. For common people, life still goes on

despite these political problems. How do CHT people make sense of their world? How do they see the Bangladesh state in the context of the undercurrents of state-ethnic tensions? How do they get on with their lives? Are their lives filled with hope or despair? It is with these questions in mind that I embarked on this research project.

For most people living in developing countries, the presence of the modern state and its development programmes are an inescapable reality of everyday life (Sharma 2011), as is the case for the CHT. The state provides basic provisions of health, education and water—necessities people cannot do without in their day-to-day lives. To access these services, one needs to engage, or be involved, with the state. The concept of the 'state' has been interrogated from a range of perspectives in the literature. The spectrum ranges from the state comprising a bureaucratic machine to it being an 'imagined' construct, an abstract entity imbued with sovereign power that looms large over us and our society (Anderson 1983; Ferguson 1990). Despite these varied conceptualisations, it nonetheless 'comes into existence through very real and everyday encounters' (Tarlo 2009, p. 74), so that people 'see the state' in highly context-specific ways (Corbridge et al. 2005). In the context of the CHT, it is through development provisions that the ordinary people experience the state in the everyday. Chandra (2015a) suggests that indigenous people's engagement or encounter with the state is very close and even 'intimate'. However, most studies engaging in the analysis of the state-society relation in the CHT lack this anchoring in the everyday. To address this gap in the literature, this thesis analyses the everyday state's intimate exchange with indigenous people in the CHT through the ICDP project. It pays close attention to the routine and everyday practices of the state through the ICDP, drawing on indigenous people's experiences and engagement with it to show that state-society relations exist in a dynamic relationship with one another.

1.2: The State, Development and the 'Othering' of Indigenous People

This thesis charts the state-society interaction as dynamic, constituted and contested. In the context of the CHT, most studies examine the interrelationship between the state, indigenous people, and development through large events, such as large-scale development projects or ethno-nationalist conflicts. James Scott's (1999) seminal work *Seeing Like a State* has had an enduring appeal in this strand of scholarship. State-led development that aims to increase the living standards of the people by social and economic development policies and projects is viewed mostly as outside intervention (Sengupta 2014, p. 317). The first major state development intervention in the CHT, which at that time was part of East Pakistan, is the construction of Kaptai dam. The dam flooded 40 percent of the total cultivable land, displacing 100,000 indigenous people, about 25 percent of the total population of the CHT (Parveen & Faisal 2002, p. 198). The CHT is home to eleven ethnic groups: the Chakma, Marma, Tanchangya, Tripura, Pankhu, Mru, Lushai, Khumi, Kheyang, Chak, and Bawm. Both the government and Bengalis, who constitute the largest ethnic group in the CHT and also Bangladesh state, consider indigenous groups 'tribes', but collectively they refer to themselves as Jumma (hill people) (Chowdhury 2008, p. 61). According to the most recent Census, indigenous people constitute 51 percent and the Bengalis 49 percent of the total population of the CHT (Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs 2013, p. 8).

Around 60 percent migrated to India and Burma, while the rest remained as internally displaced people (Nayak 2008, p. 206). Hence, from an historical perspective, the state functioned as an agent of domination and displacement for the indigenous people of the CHT. In addition to the problem of displacement, indigenous people suffer from the construction of their ways of being as 'nomads' and 'hill tribes' (Nasreen & Togawa 2002;

Schendel 2011), which results in their positioning as outside of, or resistant to, development. The Pakistan government did not take into account the trauma their drastic uprooting from their lands might entail for the indigenous people. Rather, it held a false stereotype of indigenous people as 'migratory hill tribes' engaged in the 'pernicious practice' of swidden cultivation, called *Jhum* in the local language (Sopher 1963, p. 348). Scott (2009) explains that in the context of Southeast Asia, the 'hill tribe' is associated with 'backwardness'. The state perceives the hill people as 'uncivilised', 'wild', living in a state of 'nature' rather than 'culture' because they do not have a fixed abode, live on the mountain-tops and practice unproductive, 'primitive' Jhum cultivation. The Pakistan state constructed the indigenous people of the CHT as 'primitive' and 'backward', and resettlement of these 'nomadic' hill people in a permanent location was considered extremely difficult (Sopher 1963, p. 348). In practice, the indigenous people did not shift from hill to hill, rather they had a long cycle of Jhum cultivation. Before the flooding caused by the Kaptai dam, the average cycle of Jhum cultivation was from seven to ten years, and in some cases ten to fifteen years. However, after inundation of the valleys and loss of fertile agricultural land, this cycle was reduced to only three to five years, as thousands of local people were compelled to rely on their 'primitive' Jhum cultivation practices for survival (Parveen & Faisal 2002, p. 202). The practice of Jhum cultivation is strongly linked to the culture and identity of the indigenous people in the CHT.

The history of the construction of the identity of the indigenous people is varied and complex. During the colonial period, the British administrators branded the CHT people 'hill-men'. Then, during their incorporation into the post-colonial Pakistan state, the government termed the CHT people 'tribal'. In the independent Bangladesh state, the CHT people are referred to as both 'Upajati' (sub-nation) and also 'tribal' (Uddin 2010, p. 291). Both the terms 'Upajati' and 'tribal' are used in a derogatory sense. The word 'tribal' has been used to represent the CHT people as 'primitive', 'swidden cultivators', 'nude',

‘illiterate’, ‘uncivilised’ and ‘wild’ (Uddin 2010, p. 288). Further, ‘Upajati’ is a Bengali word where the prefix ‘Upa’ means ‘sub’, and ‘Jati’ means nation. Therefore, it refers to people who belong to the ‘sub-nation’ rather than the nation proper, and correspondingly, to a lower race (Uddin 2010, p. 290). The Bangladesh state now officially refers to indigenous people of the CHT as ‘Khudro Nri Gosthi’ or ‘small ethnic groups’. The use of these terms is part of the state policy to create a homogeneous identity for the Bangladesh state. Hence, these are political terms, and have been contested by indigenous people. The indigenous people of the CHT have used various terms, such as ‘Adivasi’ (original people), ‘Pahari’ (hill people), ‘Jumma’ (swidden cultivators) and ‘indigenous’ to refer to themselves (Gerharz 2014, p. 554). These terms are an attempt on the part of the indigenous people to avoid the connotations of racial superiority that the terms used by the state connote (Gerharz 2014, p. 554); they seek to construct a different cultural identity for indigenous people to use as a political resource in the fight for indigenous rights in Bangladesh (Gerharz 2014, p. 562). This thesis employs the term ‘indigenous’ to refer to the CHT people collectively, but also uses the terms ‘ethnic group’, and ‘ethnic people’ to refer to various ethnic groups within the umbrella term ‘indigenous’. With regard to the concept of ‘indigeneity’, two broad approaches exist: positivist and constructionist (Kingsbury 1998, pp. 414-5). The positivist approach treats ‘indigenous people’ as a legal category requiring specific definition as to who does or does not have a particular status, and who is eligible to enjoy certain rights that should be available to all citizens of a nation-state (Kingsbury 1998, p. 414). This definition conforms to state-centric, bureaucratic decision-making practices in which ethnic identity is viewed as an ‘indivisible and irreducible social and cultural construct’, comprising a specific combination of physical features, language, culture, and history unique to a particular social group (Adnan 2007, p. 1; Corntassel 2003, p. 76). In contrast, the second approach avoids any ‘fixations’ that the concept of identity might imply (Gerharz 2014, p. 554). More importantly, it views the employment of the term

‘indigenous’ as a political work of articulation (Kingsbury 1998, p. 415; Li 2000, p. 151). In this regard, Tania Li (2000, p. 151) asserts that a group’s self-identification as indigenous is not simply ‘invented, adopted, or imposed’. Rather, Li considers that it is a positioning, an articulation of agency which emerges from particular patterns of engagement and struggle:

> The conjunctures at which (some) people come to identify themselves as indigenous, realigning the ways they connect to the nation, the government, and their own, unique tribal place, are the contingent products of agency and the cultural and political work of articulation (Li 2000, p. 151).

This thesis uses the terms, ‘indigenous’ and ‘ethnic people’ in the contructionist understanding of the terms. Chapter Five of this thesis point to the nuances in the deployment of these terms and the meanings they conjure up in the context of the CHT.

The CHT became part of Bangladesh with the independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971. The newly formed Bangladesh state pursued a homogeneous Bengali nationalism, and citizens of Bangladesh were defined as Bengali in the *Constitution* with no acknowledgement of a separate identity for the indigenous people (Mohsin 2000, p. 61). On 15 February 1972, when a CHT people’s delegation called on the President of Bangladesh to provide constitutional recognition of indigenous people (Mohsin 2000, p. 61), Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman rejected their demands, insisting that there could be only ‘one nation’ in Bangladesh. He urged the hill people to forget their separate identity and become Bengalis (Mohsin 2010, p. 122). Thus, in the newly modern, independent Bangladesh state, there was no place for the indigenous people of the CHT. In a continuation of the post-colonial Pakistan state’s construction of the hill people as the ‘Other’, the indigenous people of the CHT serve to fulfil the role of modern Bangladesh’s Other. The story of modernity is one in which ‘people tell themselves about themselves in relation to Others . . . [it] is a powerful story because nation-states organize the body politic around it’ (Rofel 1992, p. 96). The modern Bangladesh state was founded on Bengali

nationalism as both dominant and central to national identity construction, so that state unity, or one-nationhood, was premised on the identity and culture of the dominant Bengali ethnic group (Mohsin 1995). When a nation is defined in these cultural terms, it gives priority to those possessing the attributes, or belonging to the ethnic community who make up the cultural nationhood (Brown 1994, p. 261). This foundational ideology of the Bangladesh state is used to 'other' the indigenous people of the CHT, who are considered not to possess Bengali cultural identity. For indigenous political leaders, the constitutional means to press home their demands for recognition of indigenous identity ended when the political scenario in Bangladesh changed with the assassination of the Prime Minister in 1975, and a military takeover of state powers began (Chakma 2010, p. 288). Consequently, the leader of the *Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti* (PCJSS), the political party of the indigenous people of the CHT, went underground, organising a guerrilla force, *Shanti Bahini* (peace force, the military wing of the PCJSS) (Chakma 2010, p. 288). In response, the military government of Bangladesh stepped up its operation against the indigenous militia. The armed conflict between the military and Shanti Bahini that began in the 1980s continued for more than two decades, killing thousands of people. The conflict ended with a Peace Accord and the disarmament of the guerrilla forces in 1997 (Gerharz 2014, p. 555).

Given the pre-Accord context of political turmoil in the region, most studies of the CHT and its relation to the Bangladesh state focus on the state's institutional character as an organisation (Migdal, Kohli & Shue 1994, p. 11). This is anchored in the idea that the state constitutes a 'distinct segment of the social whole', which then 'interacts with', 'intervenes in', or 'regulates' other social spheres such as 'the economy' and 'private life' (Painter 2006, p. 753). In this interpretation, state actions, including development, are efforts to manipulate 'from above' (Ferguson & Gupta 2002, p. 982). Therefore, in the scholarship on the CHT, indigenous people and development, the state-society relation is mostly

analysed as dichotomous, positioning the state against the indigenous people of the CHT. This emphasis on the state as a monolithic structure tends to explain how indigenous people's lives in the CHT are shaped by consistent patterns of domination and control, but not how or whether these patterns and forms change over time (Sewell 1992, pp. 2-3). These are pertinent questions in the context of the signing of the Peace Accord. In the interplay of indigenous people's demands and state responses (discussed in detail in Chapter Three), there have been compromises and concessions on both sides. The indigenous people have conceded some of their demands for autonomy in the CHT. The state has also conceded by accommodating some of the demands of the indigenous people in signing the Accord.

In this context, one of the flagship projects of the government, the ICDP, implemented by the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB), offers an apt lens to examine changes in the dynamics of the state-ethnic relation. Firstly, the ICDP is a CHT specific project which covers both the pre- and post- Accord periods. The first phase of the project was carried out from 1985 to 1995 in the context of armed insurgency (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 80). The second phase of the project started with the signing of the Peace Accord in 1997. Just after the Accord was signed, there was renewed hope for development, peace and greater political emancipation of the indigenous people. Secondly, the ICDP incorporated non-indigenous Bengali people as project participants in its second phase, but in its earlier phase, only the indigenous people were the targets of the project. The first phase of the project, occurring in the political context of armed insurgency, and the targeting of indigenous people as sole project participants can be interpreted as a way in which the Bangladesh state has used development as a means to control the indigenous people of the CHT. However, in the context of the Peace Accord, with the end of armed conflict and an expansion of the project to include non-indigenous people, state intent can be interpreted as less focused on subjugation and domination, and

rather on consolidation and integration of post-conflict inhabitants of the CHT into the folds of the nation state (McDuie-Ra 2011, p. 79).

The existing literature focuses on the state's agenda and its use of development as a tool of domination or imposition, but this does not pay adequate attention to the experiences of the ordinary people who live through, and are affected by, the state's agendas. The ordinary people, the project participants, are seldom seen as subjects, but tend to be constructed as passive and ignorable *objects* of state development (Sengupta 2014). The state constructs development project participants as people who have needs and problems, and such constructions are governed and dominated by the state, according to the governmentality theorists (Li 2007b; Sengupta 2014). However, the problem with the dominant readings in the governmentality literature is that they tend to be based on the assumption of a single, collective experience of colonialism and development (Kirkham & Anderson 2002, p. 6). Treating the indigenous people of the CHT as a homogeneous community with a pre-determined attitude towards the Bangladesh state and development also essentialises indigenous people and their politics, reducing the relationship to a simple dichotomy in which indigenous people are positioned against the state. Development produces multiple subjects at different spatial locations—local, regional and national—and this does not always relate to ethnicity. People of the same ethnic group may experience development in different ways, depending on their geographical location, their positioning in terms of class and gender, as well as other variables (McDuie-Ra 2007, p. 55). This thesis pays heed to these criticisms and seeks to understand the way the state is experienced and 'lived' in two rural locations of Bandarban in the CHT. By so doing, it seeks to understand the range of perspectives indigenous people voice about development. What has been their experience of development? In the context of their experience of development, how do they see the Bangladesh state? These questions frame my analysis.

This study highlights the multiple, contested, and contradictory views of the indigenous people of the CHT about development, so as not to render the experience of development as unitary or homogeneous (Chhotray 2011, p. xviii). Further, in charting indigenous people's experiences, this research is located in those strands of scholarship that focus on the ways indigenous people contest their experiences of the state and its development programme, not always as resistance, but also as negotiation and engagement with the state (Chandra 2015a; Mohsini 2011; Sharma 2011). Seminal work concerning indigenous agency has often found a story that involves subversion of or resistance to the dominant structures of the state (Scott 1985), thereby positing a dichotomous understanding of the state-society relation. This thesis takes a departure from those readings of the state-society relation that locate indigenous people's agency only in resistance (Mohsin 2003, 2010). This approach retains a concern with issues of power and resistance that comprise a central theme of the radical critique of development that has emerged since the 1990s, but modifies this in an important way. Departing from a traditional conceptualisation of power and resistance as opposed, the study takes the position that resistance does not simply mean resisting the state by rejecting its power, or indeed, asserting that indigenous people always oppose development (Nilsen 2016, p. 273). Rather, it recognises that indigenous resistance also involves working within the structures of power, in this context, state power, to appropriate and renegotiate its institutions, procedures and discourses, and to allow for indigenous aspirations to inform development practice (Nilsen 2011, p. 110).

In the scholarship on subaltern agency, acts of resistance are often assumed to pose a radical challenge to the state and societal structures of power (Abu-Lughod 1990; Scott 1985). In this conceptualisation, power is conceptualised as an 'exterior constraint', its source a 'sovereign authority' both 'above and outside' society (Mitchell 1991b, p. 92). Further, state power is conceived of in the form of decisions that the state takes, and the

system of ‘orders and prohibitions that direct and constrain social action’ (Mitchell 1991b, p. 92). Anchored in this dualistic understanding of power and the state-society relation, subaltern resistance studies have interpreted indigenous politics as a ‘post-colonial tragedy’ where indigenous people are viewed as ‘primitives’, ‘victims’ trapped in modern state imaginaries, or as triumphalism (Chandra 2013, p. 53). In this scenario, agency is found in the figure of a resistant subject contesting state domination who ‘stands outside the state and refuses its demands’ (Mitchell 1991b, p. 93). However, Mitchell (1991b, p. 93), following Foucault, and referring to the productive dimension of power, argues that ‘rather than [being located] in some wholly exterior social space, political subjects and their modes of resistance are formed as much *within* the organisational terrain we call the state’.

Taking up this position, South Asian Studies scholars have attempted to recover a dialectical understanding of Indian subalternity (Nilsen 2012a; Sundar 1997). Subramanian (2009, p. 4) has shown that India’s Southwestern fishers are neither simply ‘nonmoderns’ who inhabit a ‘bounded cultural world’, nor ‘moderns’ who are wholly dominated by the state. Rather, they establish themselves as subjects with rights in the context of existing history, hegemony and social order. In such readings, subaltern groups, therefore, do not simply or solely resist the state, but rather, engage with the system as best they can (Corbridge & Harriss 2000, p. 25). Building on this scholarship, more recent literature examines ‘differential experiences of the state from the margins and the various forms of politics’ that are informed by this encounter (Chopra, Williams & Vira 2011, p. 244). Following this, thesis examines how the articulation of indigenous people’s agency is informed by its encounter with the Bangladesh state in the context of development. This thesis posits a dialectic understanding of the indigenous people of the CHT to illustrate the myriad ways they seek to rework, challenge, and (re)negotiate the frameworks that order their lives, communities, and societies (Staeheli et al. 2012, p. 642). It highlights

indigenous people's engagement with the ICDP as one of the means by which this renegotiation and reworking of state power and the development process proceeds. It aims to examine the extent to which indigenous people have been able to achieve a reworking of state structures through their engagement with the ICDP, and also, conversely, the role that the ICDP project has played in facilitating these processes of (re)negotiation.

1.3: Indigenous People, Development and Citizenship

Indigenous people's engagement with the state, in the context of South Asia, is largely interpreted as involving assertion, articulation and claiming of their citizenship rights (Gupta 1995; Sharma 2011; Subramanian 2009). In the South Asian context, the state provides a wide range of social welfare goods and services to its citizens, including health, nutrition, education, housing, employment and sanitation. Hence, citizens seek to access these services (Kruks-Wisner 2018, p. 123). However, in most places, the gap between policy and implementation looms large and these crucial, and indeed, basic resources remain beyond the reach of a large share of the population. Some citizens exercise voice, while others seek private alternatives. In this context, those occupying the margins of the state, such as the poor, indigenous or women, can assert themselves to access these social welfare goods and services, which is understood as a process of making claims upon the state (Sharma 2011; Williams, Vira & Chopra 2011). Citizenship studies pay attention to those acts such as public demonstrations which take place in the public arena. Even while focussing on the private arena, for example, in the study of 'infrapolitics' (Scott 1985, 1990), the emphasis has been on those activities that mobilise, express concern, show consciousness and are ultimately tied to claim-making (Mariot 2010 cited in Neveu 2014, p. 87). This focus leaves out the majority of the population in the particular context of

the CHT, who, for whatever reason, whether because of disinterest, distance or non-availability of government services, do not engage in claim-making activities.

Hence, this thesis not only highlights claim-making citizens but also brings into focus the everyday practices of non-claim-making indigenous people as well, because citizenship practices exist 'alongside, outside of, and across the constraints of government policies and practices' (Rumsby 2015, p. 1). The people who are not ICDP project participants, hereafter referred to as non-ICDP participants, are a case in point. They either choose not to engage with the ICDP or are not able to access its services, for reasons such as non-availability of service, distance and so on. These people carve out their own strategies and mechanisms to deal with the struggles and constraints that shape their lives. By bringing into the foreground the experiences and citizenship practices of non-ICDP participants, alongside those of active ICDP participants, this research seeks to broaden the horizons of how the citizenship practices of the indigenous people in the CHT are theorised in the context of development.

Indeed, this study deviates from the traditional concept of political agency which is delimited to a specific type of practice comprising political activities being carried out in the public arena (Kallio & Häkli 2013, p. 8). Instead, it subscribes to a relational reading of politics with an emphasis on 'the constitutive' in an attempt to uncover how indigenous people's citizenship and agency is lived and practised in the everyday (Subramanian 2009, p. 251). As Staeheli and Kofman note:

> The constitutive implies an approach to the political as an on-going process in which societies are made—are constituted—in and through struggle. This is understood to be a complex and multivalent struggle, involving actions and behaviours in both the formal spaces of the state and spaces of home, neighbourhood, workplace, community, and media (Staeheli & Kofman 2004, p. 3).

This approach also relies on providing a detailed understanding of the context of the CHT, in particular Bandarban, to understand how indigenous people's citizenship is configured.

John Agnew (1993, p. 261) argues that, in order to explain human behaviour, there must be an emphasis on the 'micro episodes' of everyday life and their 'embeddedness' in specific contexts (Poland et al. 2005, p. 172). 'Sensitivity to the contextual open-endedness of everyday political agency means that we do not necessarily know what issues, experiences, events, or actions are, or become, political, in a given situation' (Häkli & Kallio 2014, p. 183). Therefore, what constitutes political depends on the 'situation' and 'context'.

In the context of accessing the health and education services, the practices of the ICDP and non-ICDP participants highlight many different forms of politics. These range from claim-making in the traditional conceptualisation of citizenship, to seeking well-being, health, better employment and secure futures for future generations. This further highlights that indigenous people do not simply 'insert themselves' into the state's citizenship agenda, or development, but rather, they add their own agendas. Thus, in focussing on indigenous people's citizenship practices, this study does not order them hierarchically by contrasting apparently 'mundane', 'infrapolitical' practices with the more 'heroic' ones (Neveu 2015, p. 149). Instead, it pays attention to the changes, problems and transformations. This is more appropriate since a person's experiences and practices of citizenship as grounded in everyday, mundane life are not made up of 'clear breaks or cut-off points'. They are more often grounded in messy connections between everyday routine practices and public acts (Neveu 2015, p. 149).

This thesis does not offer a panoramic view of state, society and citizenship by focussing only on the public sphere. Rather, it uses the lens of the ICDP to pay attention to the minutiae of the everyday lives of the ordinary people of the CHT, bringing into view the complex agencies that are at work here. The myriad articulations of agency of the indigenous people of the CHT necessitates a more elastic framework (discussed in detail in Chapter Two) that does not simplistically locate indigenous people's agency only in

resistance, nor pre-emptively closes off the dynamics of the state-ethnic relation into a reductive framework that pits the Bangladesh state against the indigenous people of the CHT. Taking its cue from Subramanian (2009, p. 254), this research posits an understanding of the state and indigenous people as mutually imbricated, arguing that postcolonial citizenship is not merely a construct of a dominant nationalism or culturally specific subjectivity in a nationalist framework; rather, it comprises a dynamic, locally constituted process through which indigenous people seek to make sense of, understand, and (re)negotiate their relationship to their community and the nation-state. It is on the basis of the analytical terrain drawn so far that this study examines the relation between the indigenous people of the CHT and the state of Bangladesh in the context of state-led development, using the case of the ICDP to analyse the impacts of these interventions in enhancing indigenous people's ability to (re)negotiate the state-ethnic relation.

1.4: The ICDP Project

The ICDP is one of the longest-running projects in the CHT, and so far, has had three phases. The government of Bangladesh and UNICEF signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 11 July, 1980, aiming to work together to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people of the CHT (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2010, p. 11). A pilot scheme of the ICDP began in 1980. The pilot project was carried out from 1980-1985 (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2010, p. 12). After the pilot, in 1985, the first phase of the project began and continued for a decade until 1995, covering 75 mouzas[1]. The second phase ran from 1996 to 2012 (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2013, p. 45). The third phase of the project was completed in March 2018.

[1] Mouza is the lowest revenue collection unit. A number of villages constitute a Mouza.

The overarching goal of the ICDP project is to improve the quality of life of the 'disadvantaged' people of the CHT (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2015, p. 5). The ICDP was initiated with a specific goal: the social and economic development of the 'tribal people' of the CHT (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, pp. 1, 12). To achieve this, it offered a package of integrated basic services which included income generation, household food production and nutrition education. These were supplemented by facilitating increased access to government health services, and the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation to 24,000 poor indigenous families (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, pp. 16-7). The families participating in the project were selected by the Project Implementation Committee and Project Organizers (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 23). Any indigenous family having less than 2.5 acres of land was eligible to participate. Project participants were termed 'beneficiaries' in the project documents (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 23) and their participation in the project was voluntary. This thesis focuses on the second phase of the project. Considering the large scale of the ICDP, and time and budget constraint of my research project, the present research has sought to focus on the second phase of the ICDP (1996-2011). Additionally, during the start of this PhD project, the third phase of the ICDP was still being implemented. Consequently, this thesis focused on the second phase. However, to provide background information about the ICDP, in particular, its goals, objectives, service delivery methods, and the changes between its first and second phase, the following sections briefly outline the first two phases of the project.

1.4.1: First Phase of the ICDP (1985-1995): Service Delivery Method and Self-employment, Health and Education Services

The main vehicle for the ICDP's service delivery during its first phase was mouza-level indigenous people's collectives or cooperatives. Project participants were organised into groups, named 'pre-cooperative groups' in a mouza (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 23), and the mouza was the focus of service delivery (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development

Board 2015, p. 5). There were three categories of groups: men, women and youth or mixed groups, with 30 participants in each group. Participants could choose to become a member of any of these groups. In most cases, the groups would mostly consist of men, while a few comprised both men and women, and a small number of groups consisted of a majority of women (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 44). These groups were formed to achieve three objectives: to create self-employment opportunities; engender leadership; and provide basic health and education services to the project participants (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 15).

To create self-employment opportunities and also increase the incomes of project participants, the ICDP used the co-operative model for collectivisation. Their approach is based on the Comilla Cooperative Model, an approach to village development pioneered by the Bangladesh (formerly Pakistan) Academy for Rural Development at Comilla (Bangladesh Rural Development Academy (BARD) 2015). Though the ICDP did not fully adopt the Comilla approach, as discussed in Chapter Five, the similarity between the two approaches lies in the belief in a community development process 'rooted in the concept of the individual as a responsible, participating member of society [to] encourage self-help efforts to raise standards of living' (Ruttan 1984, p. 393). Thus, the ICDP focus was on the individual for income-generating activity. The project participants formed pre-cooperative groups to generate savings among the group members and invest in profitable, income-generating activities. Each member was required to deposit Tk 10 (equivalent to $US 0.13 in current term) per month at the monthly meetings of the group (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 23). Additionally, the project provided each group member a starter fund of Tk 1200 (equivalent to $US 12 in current term) which was invested in income-generating activities, such as pig raising or small business, to increase their incomes (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 60). A further aim of the project was to foster 'development of leadership' among the participants (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 43). To achieve this,

training on group organisation and management was provided to group members, especially the group Chair and Secretary. However, despite these initiatives, the income generation component of the project has not been successful (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, pp. 60-1). Given the poor outcome of the micro-credit component of the project, UNICEF did not agree to release the funding for income-generating activities in the second phase. Consequently, income-generating activities were not included in the project proposal for the second phase (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 1996, p. 13).

In addition to income-generating activities, the ICDP offered health and education services to the project participants. The ICDP provided primary health services to improve the health of indigenous mothers and children (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 43). These comprised both curative and preventive services (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 43). Curative services included provision of medicine for common diseases such as malaria, colds, fever, and diarrhoea, and maternal and child health services such as access to a trained birth attendant during pregnancy, delivery and post-delivery (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, pp. 43-7). Preventive services had three components: health and nutrition education; immunisation and vaccination of children; and family planning awareness-raising programmes. The nutrition education aimed to change 'food habits' (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 49), by increasing awareness of the nutritional value of local fruits and vegetables. It additionally offered training on the production and processing of nutritious food through the creation of a kitchen garden (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 49). The last component of ICDP's health service was a social awareness programme which sought to increase awareness about family planning and health care practices (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 47). Community health workers and trained birth attendants were employed by the ICDP to provide these health services to the project participants during the monthly general meetings of the pre-cooperative groups (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 49).

The ICDP, through its education service, aimed to increase the literacy rates of the 'tribal' people (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 65). The project offered both non-formal and formal education so that parents send their children to school (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 17). Non-formal education constituted a pre-primary education service, while formal education constituted access to formal education through the establishment of a residential school for less privileged ethnic groups. Through its non-formal education service, the ICDP aimed to make children aged four to seven years school-ready, and thereby facilitate indigenous children's enrolment in primary school (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 67). The nearest primary schools or project offices served as pre-primary centres, operating daily for two hours from eight to ten am (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 67). To run these centres, mostly female teachers were recruited (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 67). Whereas non-formal education was offered to all project participants, formal education was only offered to 'disadvantaged tribal children' (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, pp. 17, 68). As a part of its education services, the ICDP established four residential schools during the first phase of the project, located at Alikadam, Ruma and Rajasthali (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 68).

1.4.2: Second Phase of the ICDP (1996-2012): Introduction of One-Stop Service Delivery Point and Services

The second phase of the ICDP is marked by the introduction of *para*[2] (village) centres as a one-stop service delivery point, and a shift in the project's focus to early childhood education through its para centres. The ICDP underwent a strategic shift with the introduction of delivery of services at the village level, through these para centres (Org-Quest Research Limited 2012)[3]. This has resulted in changes both in service delivery and in service providers. Rather than using specific service providers as in the first phase, for

[2]Small villages consisting of 20-100 families are known as *para*. There are around 4600 paras in the CHT (Org Quest Research Limited 2012)
[3]This organisation was commissioned by the UNICEF to evaluate the second phase of the ICDP project.

example, community health workers and birth attendants in the health services and female pre-school teachers, all the services of the second phase of the ICDP are provided from one platform and by one person. Para workers of the ICDP in para centres provide all ICDP services. The para worker, usually a female community member, is selected by the community to manage the centre and provide services to the community (Org-Quest Research Limited 2012, p. 9). Each para centre is monitored by a Para Centre Management Committee, composed of five community members including the para worker to ensure smooth running of the centre. The network of para centres is managed by ICDP staff under the direct supervision of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB) (Org-Quest Research Limited 2012, p. 9). In the second phase of the programme, around 3500 para centres were built to serve 115000 families (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2011, p. 10). These were constructed in the vicinity of, or in the centre of, the villages. Communities provided land and labour, while UNICEF provided roofing materials and basic construction materials (Org-Quest Research Limited 2012, p. 9).

Just as in the first phase, the objective of the second phase was to provide a package of basic health and nutrition, education, water and sanitation services at the village level to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people of the CHT. In relation to health and education services, there are similarities between the first and second phases of the project, although the focus has shifted to pre-school. The pre-school service was provided to all children in a village, and was not limited to project participants. The ICDP also continued its programme of residential schools for the less privileged ethnic communities. The ICDP early childhood development programme, titled '*shishu bikash o park prathomik shikha*' (child development and pre-primary education), aimed to prepare children for enrolment in primary school. It consisted of a multi-grade and multi-level curriculum for three- to five-year-old children incorporating local ethnic culture and heritage. Para

workers use the local dialects and languages to communicate with the children. The teaching method used by para workers is learning through play; to achieve this, supplementary books and educational resources such as posters, charts, and exercise books were provided. Pre-school was offered to children for two hours daily, over a period of two years (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2010, p. 19).

With regard to the health service of the ICDP, in its second phase, it offered only preventive health services (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2010, p. 22), whereas, the ICDP offered both preventive and curative health services in the first phase. Moreover, the ICDP does not offer any specific health service, but rather, supports various government health programmes and promotes health awareness among the project participants through the para centre. Para workers operate alongside government workers employed by the Health and Family Planning departments to implement various government programmes, including immunisation, vaccination and vitamin A supplementation programmes (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2010, p. 22). This thesis focuses on education and health services of the ICDP because these are the most significant service components of the project. Additionally, these are basic service provisions which require the ordinary people to engage with the state. Therefore, it is within the setting of these two service components of the ICDP, education and health, that the present research examines the indigenous peoples' experience of the state-led development programme and its implications for the broader state-ethnic relation.

1.5: Organisation of the Thesis

The introductory chapter has provided the background and rationale for studying the state-ethnic relation between the indigenous people of the CHT and the state of Bangladesh. It has outlined the analytical terrain from which the research questions and objectives of the present research have emerged, and introduced the ICDP project.

Chapter Two offers a review of the critical literature on the state, indigenous people and development to provide a conceptual framework for the analysis of state-ethnic relation in Bangladesh. This review draws on theories of governmentality, postcolonialism and critical citizenship in relation to agency to highlight the gaps in the literature in current understandings of indigenous people's relation to the Bangladesh state. Therefore, as a way of addressing the gaps in the literature and also to answer the questions raised about indigenous agency in the introductory chapter, this chapter provides the theoretical framework for rethinking indigenous agency in development interventions.

Chapter Three focuses on the political and development history of the CHT to emphasise its role in the constitution of the state-ethnic relation in Bangladesh. By so doing, it offers the Bangladeshi context for the existing state-ethnic relation, and situates the ICDP project within this.

Chapter Four provides the methodological design of the study. It offers the rationale for using a postcolonial theoretical lens to study the state-society relation in Bangladesh, to show how this theoretical framework has informed the selection of methods, subsequent data-gathering, and analysis offered in the chapters that follow.

On the basis of the postcolonial theoretical and methodological framework, Chapter Five offers a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) analysis of the ICDP documents as a way of understanding state intent behind development. The CDA is fundamentally concerned with analysing the 'structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control as manifested in the language' (Wodak & Meyer 2009b, p. 2) of project documents and the representations that rationalise state intervention in the CHT. Consequently, this chapter focusses on the development discourse of the ICDP to analyse how and whether these discourses support existing power relations. It seeks to analyse how the state has envisioned development for the indigenous people of the CHT and, in the process, how it

has produced or constructed the indigenous people. This chapter argues that the indigenous people of the CHT are represented and constructed as 'backward' and 'primitive' to justify the ICDP's development intervention, which in turn, is predicated the state intent to control ethnic identity. This chapter focuses on the power of discourse and its implications for state-ethnic relations.

Chapter Six carries forward the theme of state-society relation and situates it within the everyday experience of accessing the ICDP's pre-school education service. It focuses on the implementation of the ICDP's development intervention on the ground and draws on the divergent perspectives of officials and indigenous people, ICDP participants and non-ICDP participants, about the project's effectiveness. The findings highlight the messiness of state practices on the ground to cast doubt on the contention by governmentality theorists about the totalising effects of development discourse. Additionally, the analysis demonstrates that, although predicated on the discursive state practice of buttressing citizenship education and a homogeneous Bengali identity, the ICDP pre-primary education service has provided an opportunity for the indigenous people to claim their entitlements from the state. This chapter discusses how the indigenous people have experienced and negotiated the Bangladesh state in the context of education.

Chapter Seven traces the state-society relation within the ICDP health service delivery setting. The experiences of the 'lived citizenship' of the indigenous people in accessing health services offer a critique of the state's failure to provide effective health services to the people in the CHT. However, the narratives of the ICDP and non-ICDP participants also point to the dynamics of local political structures that affect indigenous people's experience of health in the Bandarban district. This chapter reveals the interplay between state structures and the local political structures within which the indigenous people's experience of health is embedded.

Chapter Eight focuses on the agency of the indigenous people as embedded in their everyday lives and struggles. Employing the conceptual framework of agency as discussed in Chapter Two, this chapter captures the myriad articulations of indigenous people's agency to argue that indigenous agency does not lie in some pure, autonomous space outside power relations, but is constituted through these. Therefore, indigenous agency is best understood as the (re)negotiation of modern state power.

Chapter Nine offers key findings of this study of indigenous people and state development in Bangladesh, to discuss the implications of the research with regard to indigenous people's struggle for political emancipation in the post-colonial Bangladesh state. This chapter also highlights the original contribution of this thesis to the scholarship on indigenous people and development. It situates the state-ethnic relation within the context of everyday development encounters. Offering the perspectives of common indigenous people about the state-ethnic relation, it shows that state-led development operates in the everyday as a very real and mundane relation structuring outcomes for indigenous people. It further argues that, although state development is a tool used to exert power and control over the indigenous people, they have actively sought to engage with it to claim development entitlements to improve their material conditions and also to rework their subordination. This contention is taken up throughout this thesis. Chapter Two begins this work, offering a critical insight into the role of the state and its mechanisms of governmentality, as a framework for the rethinking of indigenous agency that forms the basis of my analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUALISING INDIGENOUS AGENCY IN POSTCOLONIAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

2.1: Introduction

This chapter considers how development constitutes the state-society relation. The scholarship on indigenous people and development in South Asia generally falls into two broad categories. The first consists of studies that look at the relationship between the state and ethnic minorities in the context of development through the lens of governmentality, and tend to posit a dichotomous understanding of the state-society relation. In this view, state-led development involves a complete transformation of traditional ways of life, and operates as a means to control ethnic identity. Such studies locate indigenous people's current predicament in their political disenfranchisement, which they argue is connected to state control over their identity. In this interpretation, the state is seen as a dominating entity that controls society, so that the state-society relation is rendered dichotomous. By contrast, a second group of studies locates indigenous people and the state within the boundary of the local. They focus on the ways indigenous people contest their experience of development, not always by resisting it, but also by negotiating and engaging with the state. Therefore, such readings posit a dialectic approach to the state-society relation. In this view, the state-society relation does not constitute a binary that positions the state versus the society. Rather, the state-society relation is understood as a social relation, and it is in the everyday lives of indigenous people that this relation is produced and reproduced (Nilsen 2012a, p. 616). Therefore, this everyday, mundane context provides the ground for understanding the state-society relation, and also the indigenous peoples' negotiation of this relation through the articulation of their everyday agency. However, this articulation is not autonomous and outside the power relations that

structure the development process. Therefore, by addressing the issue of power, this chapter offers a conceptual framework for understanding indigenous peoples' agency. It contends that indigenous people's agency is best understood as a negotiation of state power.

This chapter is organised into three parts. It first explores the critical literature on development and state-ethnic dynamics through the lens of governmentality theory. Then it reviews postcolonial perspectives of state-led development. Finally, it draws on critical citizenship theory to offer a framework for studying the entangled nature of the relationship between the state, indigenous people and development.

2.2: The State, Development and Governmentality

Development refers to a praxis covering a broad spectrum of goals (Harris 2006, p. 2). Nederveen Pieterse (2001, p. 3) suggests that 'we can probably define development as the organised intervention in collective affairs according to a standard of improvement', noting that even this allows for a broad scope of interpretation. This definition can be further extended by distinguishing between the concept of development as means, and the concept of development as goal, implying process and intention (Schech & Haggis 2000, p. 2). Development understood as process refers to an innate process through which the new is created by destroying the old, and is thus cyclical. By contrast, development as intention refers to the notion that the innate process can be intervened in to avoid negative effects (Schech & Haggis 2000, p. 2). Development has come to denote 'a linear movement of human improvement' (Cowen & Shenton 1996, p. 57). In developing countries, the state formulates development policies and strategies to achieve better outcomes for its people so that development has come to be referred to both as a 'process of change' and an intervention (Schech & Haggis 2000, p. 3). Drawing on these meanings,

this thesis is concerned with development as intervention because it is concerned with the development programme initiated by the state of Bangladesh.

Development plays a pivotal role in the relationship between the state and ethnic people (Sengupta 2014, p. 319). Regardless of how it is conceptualised, development ideas, practices and processes shape the contour of this relation (McDuie-Ra 2011, p. 79). State-led development, through the imposition of economic and social development policies, has altered the lives of indigenous people. Their traditional and customary practices which are often regarded as 'backward' are the target of change in development policies and projects (Roy, Tauli-Corpuz & Romero-Medina 2004, p. vi; Sengupta 2014, pp. 317-8). In addition, indigenous people have little or no control over the processes of change that will affect them (Kosko 2013, p. 294). Consequently, they are among history's greatest 'losers' in development (Guha 2007, p. 3305). Hence, the critical scholarship on state and development often interprets development as an imposition. In this view, development acts a tool for the state to control society so that it can act on it. This strand of scholarship interprets the relation between the state and society using the concept of governmentality, originating in Michel Foucault's (1991) idea that 'governmentality' is 'the conduct of conduct' (Dean 2010, p. 10).

Governmentality refers to the innumerable ways that the conduct of human beings is controlled by the mechanisms of government (Ferguson & Gupta 2002, p. 989). A range of institutions, including the state, work to regulate the conduct of a population and to direct it towards a particular end. Ferguson and Gupta (2002, p. 989) suggest the concept of transnational governmentality to extend the notion to relations between states and a host of supra-national and transnational organisations that considerably overlap with the functions of the state. This is in the context of neoliberalism and the much lamented retreat or diminished role of the state.

Barry, Osborne and Rose (2013, pp. 11-2), however, contend that neoliberalism, rather, involves a transfer of the functions of government to non-state bodies. The social and regulatory functions of the state are gradually 'de-statized' and taken over by a range of 'quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations' (Rose 1996, p. 56). But this is not a matter of less government. Rather, it points to a new technique of government, which works by creating apparatus that functions 'all by themselves' to produce governmental results through the transfer of risk onto the 'enterprise' or the individual and the 'responsibilisation' of subjects who are ever more 'empowered' to discipline themselves (Barry, Osborne & Rose 2013; Burchell 1996; Rose 1996).

The ICDP, the development project of the Bangladesh government and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), can be interpreted as a manifestation of this neoliberal ideology that is predicated on producing educated, aware individuals who will facilitate the process of economic development, as Chapter Five will demonstrate. It is governmental in the sense that it aims to mould the behaviour of the project participants to produce aware and active subject-citizens who participate in productive activities. It is therefore possible to treat both the Bangladesh state's and UNICEF's governmentality within a common frame. As Ferguson and Gupta (2002, p. 994) contend, transnational organisations like the UNICEF do not supplant the structure of nation-states but coexist with it. In this interpretation, it is possible to think of these organisations not as contenders of the state from below, but rather as 'horizontal contemporaries of the organs of the state'. This thesis deploys the concept of governmentality to signal the diffusion of varied actors in the project of rule. However, the Bangladesh state remains the most powerful among all the nodes of governance in the context of development in the CHT, as Chapter Three explains.

The phenomenon of state-initiated development is sometimes analysed as social engineering in the development literature (Escobar 1995). Scott (1998, p. 92) explains how the state attempts to exercise control over its citizens through social welfare provisions,

arguing that the state envisions an artificial or engineered society where personal hygiene, diet, child-rearing, housing and family structure are subjects for active management by the state. In the process, the poor and destitute become the objects of social engineering (Scott 1998, p. 92). Social engineering is predicated on the ideology of high modernism, which comprises scientific and technical progress, expansion of production, and the designing of the social order (Scott 1998, p. 89). Scott further considers that governmentality comprises both discipline and regulation. However, governmentality does not denote a negative relationship of power, marked entirely by discipline and regulation; rather, it has productive dimensions (Ferguson & Gupta 2002, p. 989). As mentioned earlier, governmentality works by creating mechanisms that work to being about governmental results. One of the mechanisms is representation and framing to instil qualities of 'enterprise', or 'responsibilisation'. Several scholars have pointed out how this framing operates as a key governmental mechanism through which populations are regulated and managed (Li 2007b; Sengupta 2014). Indigenous people are framed as 'backward', 'primitive', 'unproductive' or 'deficient', and thus, in need of 'improvement' through development intervention. Tania Li (2005b, p. xiv) shows that the indigenous people are variously viewed as innocent 'tribals', continuing customary ways of life; as peasants, though rather inefficient ones; as forest destroyers; and as savages. Having created an image of indigenous selves as inherently 'backward' because they lack formal education or because they continue the practice of swidden cultivation, the state seeks to alter and transform their traditional and customary practices in an attempt to raise their living standards as subjects of development, forcing economic and social development policies on them (Sengupta 2014, p. 317). Development projects use governmental interventions such as 'village level planning' that seek to make development participatory by transforming the behaviour of farmers and villagers (Chambers 1994). In her subsequent work, Li (2007b) traces the extent to which the various participatory

development practices, such as conservation programmes, village participation and management exercises produce ‘conforming’, ‘responsible subjects’ who act within degrees of freedom defined by the improvers. In this way, development programmes explicate how ‘deficient’ subjects *should* live. They attempt to change the practices, behaviours of target population by making them ‘entrepreneurial’, ‘participatory’ or ‘responsible’. Development thus plays an important role in conditioning the minds of ethnic minority members desiring to attain these aspirations. In this model, state-led development requires complete overhaul of the customary ways of living of ethnic people. This, in turn, is related to the state’s control over ethnic identity and the traditional ways of life connected with that identity (Sengupta 2014, p. 324).

2.3: Post-colonial Nation States, Development and Postcolonial Theory

Guha (2007, p. 3305) contends that the political disenfranchisement of *Adivasis*, also known as the ‘scheduled tribes’ of India, has resulted in their present deprivation, and this, in turn, can be traced to their adverse incorporation into the post-colonial state. In this thesis, the word ‘post-colonial’ with a hyphen is used to denote post-colonial nation states, and the term ‘postcolonial’ without a hyphen is used to refer to postcolonial theory (Naylor et al. 2018, p. 2). Explaining the pre-colonial state, Kaviraj (2010, p. 12) argues that before colonialism, the state had a ‘two-layered’ form of sovereignty: ‘a distant...all-encompassing empire’ commanding deference from its subjects, [that was] however, marginal in its capacity to interfere in the “regulation of … everyday lives”’. The colonial power sought to overcome the marginality of the state both politically and economically (Nilsen 2012a, p. 618), and education was one of the key means of addressing this marginality. A small, educated group of political élites was inducted to run the ‘political apparatus’ and was brought into the public sphere, in the process constituting a ‘modernist discourse of political liberalism’ anchored in colonialism (Nilsen 2012a, p. 618). Eventually, nationalist

ideas were formed in the ‘discursive space’ (Kaviraj 2010, p. 50) provided by the ‘imperial polity’, with the result that the élites flourishing in this space ultimately appeared ‘at the helm of the newly sovereign nation-state’ (Nilsen 2012a, p. 617). In these new states, Third World intellectuals and Western theorists advocated the building of a secular nation-state using the concept of ‘nation building’ as a strategy to achieve modernisation and economic development (Sheth 1989, p. 380; Tambiah 1996, p. 14). With a view to achieving this, states in South Asia pursued development projects, which, for indigenous people, led to transformation of their traditional ways of living and categorisation of them as ‘backward’ and ‘primitive’.

Postcolonial theorists, therefore, are very critical and suspicious of the ‘development project’, because they see this as part of the ‘dominant, universalising, and arrogant discourses of the North’ (McEwan 2009, p. 27). Postcolonial, post-development theorists perceive development discourse as a means of control and violence (Escobar 1995; Mohanty 1991; Sachs 1992). Escobar (1995), Esteva (1992) and Sachs (1992) contend that development functions as an ideological system of domination by defining ‘norms’ and identities’ for the nations and people of the global South, and thereby exerting control over them. Escobar accuses development studies of ‘inventing’ poverty as a discursive instrument (Escobar 1995, p. 21). Similarly, Mohanty (1991) stresses that both the ‘Third World’ and the ‘subaltern’ are produced through development discourse. For example, in applying a measurable indicator of development to their situation, people in the Third World become knowable as ‘poor’ and ‘underdeveloped’ (Escobar 1995; Mohanty 1991). Further, development in its practice, through projects and programmes, aims to improve the material condition of the marginalised. In the process, it perpetuates colonialist and Western discourse (Sharp & Briggs 2006, p. 7) by implicitly assuming Western standards as the benchmark for development and progress (Escobar 1995, p. 8). Thus, development

discourse produces specific constructions of the Third World subject, and through this construction, exercises power over the South (Escobar 1995, p. 8).

However, Gupta (1998, p. 16) importantly points out that it is necessary to 'maintain the tension between the universalising and globalising power of development discourse and its disputed and contentious redeployment in particular cultural and historical locations' in the South. For many formerly colonized nations, development and modernisation have become two key strategies of nation building (Gupta 1998, p. 33). As Gupta (1998, p. 33) argues, India, after its independence in 1947, pursued national development as the key to its progress. For the ruling regimes, development has served as the chief legitimating tool, and 'reason of state' in independent India (Gupta 1998, p. 33). Rather than arguing that 'Third World development' becomes a means to recolonise the Third World, he asserts that it enters a series of relationships that institute a new form of government rationality (Gupta 1998, p. 33). He shows how the shifts in national agricultural policies in keeping with the transformations in the world food economy affected the everyday practices and lives of farmers in North India (Gupta 1998, p. 34). These changes in the policies and programmes for the development of agriculture served as a critical link in the forging of a 'modern' nation in India (Gupta 1998, p. 34). Therefore, Gupta (1998, p. 34) states 'postcolonial modernity is defined by the centrality of "development"'. Thus, development discourse has not only functioned to enable Western domination over the Third World through various institutions, but also constructed 'underdevelopment' as a form of identity for the people of the post-colonial nation state (Gupta 1998, p. 11). Postcolonialism therefore casts light on the ways in which development discourse has assumed the 'power to name and represent' other societies, cultures, and people (McEwan 2009, p. 120). It raises questions about how development is theorised, how development problems are identified, how solutions are authored, and what knowledge remains marginalised. It is fundamentally concerned with the relationship between power and knowledge and its

impact on people (McEwan 2009, p. 314). Postcolonialism therefore attempts at radical reconstruction of knowledge to recover the viewpoints of the marginalised, excluded and dominated (McEwan 2008, p. 125).

Critics of postcolonialism contend that the overt concerns with the language of development is very perplexing while there are important material problems that need attention, such as poverty in the world (McEwan 2008, p. 126). They argue that postcolonialism offers complex theories that do not take account of the real problems faced by people in their everyday life in the global South. As Sylvester states, postcolonial studies is not concerned with ‘whether the subaltern is eating' (Sylvester 1999, p. 7). Hence, postcolonial studies has been criticised for not paying direct attention to issues of materiality (Sylvester 1999, p. 718). Kapoor (2008, p. 17) points out, postcolonialism only concerns itself with material questions to the extent that it approaches them from epistemological perspective. It moves away from the important political task of ‘prioritizing or adjudicating’ between economic or environmental narratives. One of the reasons for this is that postcolonial theory does not offer ‘holistic social explanations’, and instead focuses on ‘heterogeneity’ and ‘ambivalence’ (Kapoor 2008, p. 17). However, as Kapoor explains, the focus on ambivalence and heterogeneity poses a problem for postcolonial agency vis à vis politics. Postcolonial theory’s stress on local discourses and resistance has resulted in the neglect of broader structures and its impacts (Hall 1997). Kapoor (2008, p. 17) therefore poses the question of how the ‘micro-political scale of postcolonial agency with its micro-size agents can meaningfully affect macro-politics’. As an example of such connections, he questions whether the subaltern’s inequitable access to education or health would not incapacitate the ability of the subaltern to engage in political battle (Kapoor 2008, p. 125). Picking up on these critiques, this research is concerned to make visible the material inequality of the CHT people and the extent to which they are able to

address it, not only by claiming and accessing the resources of the state, but also through their everyday practice of citizenship.

Concerned with addressing material inequality, Kapoor (2008, p. 136) puts forward a 'hybridizing strategy'. This concept draws on Homi Bhabha's (1994) work on postcolonial agency, in which he seeks to retrieve subaltern agency from the backdrop of discursive colonial authority and subjection. He reconstructs a 'critical politics despite and because of hegemonic and orientalist representational systems' (Kapoor 2008, p. 118). Drawing on Bhabha, Kapoor (2008, p. 124) proposes agency as a form of negotiation. He refers to the political campaigns of contemporary social movements, such as *Chipko Andolan,* and *Narmada Bachao Andolan* of India, to explain that an important strategy of environmental resistance struggles in India is to exploit various contradictions within the state (Guha 1989, p. 177). A hybridising strategy aims to exploit the instabilities of power, which involves taking advantage of conflicting laws, contradictory policies, and unfulfilled promises (Kapoor 2008, p. 139). It treats laws and policies, and institutional practices as deconstructable and involves manipulating the 'spills and strains' within the institutions (Kapoor, 2008, p. 138). However, there is no guarantee that a strategy of hybridisation will succeed (Kapoor 2008, p. 144), and there is a lot of unpredictability. Such unpredictability involves not only how the adversary acts, but also how the subaltern, in turn, learns and adapts (Kapoor 2008, p. 144). Drawing from Kapoor (2008), this thesis argues that hybridisation is a strategy that applies to the current political context of the CHT, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Three. In making this argument, I call for a less dramatic form of postcolonial politics and contend that for the moment, engagement with the state via its institutions might be the best possible strategic option for the indigenous people of the CHT.

2.4: Engagement with the State: a Dialectic Approach to the State, Indigenous People and Development

There is a body of literature in the context of South Asia which stresses that engaging with the state to access development entitlements has been a crucial aspect of subaltern politics (Chandra 2015a; Sharma 2008; Subramanian 2009). According to this argument, subaltern politics is as much about redefining development as about accessing entitlements through using governmental categories and means (Sharma 2011, p. 979). Sharma (2011, p. 974), for example, shows how marginalised groups in India access government resources from a corrupt local administration. Similarly, Chandra (2013, p. 52) elucidates how indigenous people in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand have utilised the contradictory mechanisms and meanings of modern state power. Thus, people living on the margins of the state and society do not passively constitute the margin, but rather, through their everyday engagement with the state, facilitate the process of reworking and transforming the state (Williams, Vira & Chopra 2011, p. 17).

In contrast to governmentality studies that paint a dichotomous state-society relation, this strand of literature takes a different approach to development as governmentality by adopting a dialectic approach to the state-society relation. In this regard, Migdal (2001, p. 20) focuses on the iterative relationship between state authority and everyday agency, revealing how state and societal actors transform and mutually constitute each other. State-society relationships exist not in a zero-sum equation, with clear winners and losers, but in a dialectical process that leads to constant social reinvention, change, and unintended consequences (White 2013, p. 5). Similarly, the state-ethnic relationship and the role of development in this relation, is a complex phenomenon which contests the often perceived notion of the homogeneity of ethnic groups. Members of the same ethnic group may experience development differently, and this is reflected in the way they demand

future development projects and programmes (Sengupta 2014, pp. 328-9). In the case of the Reang ethnic people in Tripura, India, they aspire to be modern and access the opportunities that the state offers through various development projects to expand their wealth and secure a better future. The Reangs are acutely conscious of their economic condition, and their demands for state-led development arise out of their aspiration to have adequate money and a comfortable livelihood (Sengupta 2014, p. 328). Similarly, Li (2007b, p. 227) shows that indigenous peasants in Indonesia see the need to protect the environment, but they also want to make a profit. They are not anti-government, but simply want to participate in and be recognised as valuable assets to their country (Li 2007b, p. 280). Hence, rather than there being only one-more or less united development agenda, a variety of contending agendas are advanced by numerous actors at varying locations and scales. Indeed, equating the people's relationship to the state to imposition or resistance ignores the more subtle and ambivalent manner in which the relationship is transformed, reworked and resisted. Therefore, development is more than a disciplinary regime imposed on passive subalterns. It is a productive and shifting discourse, shaped from above and below, that both forms and informs citizen-subjects (Sharma 2008, p. 123).

In examining how people make claims on the state, Holston (2008) pays attention to the citizenship practices of ordinary people. The national citizenship agenda gets implemented by institutions and actors at local and regional levels, and in the process these actors insert their own 'experiences, understandings, and interests' (De Koning, Jaffe & Koster 2015, p. 123; Verkaaik 2010). Therefore, the citizenship agendas that arise at the heart of the nation-state, and at its margins, are often competing and contradictory. These intricacies require a conceptualisation of citizenship beyond the idea of a 'single dominant discourse' assumed in many governmentality theories. Recent scholarship on citizenship illustrates the myriad ways citizenship is formed, contested, and reformed (Isin & Turner 2002; Staeheli 2011, p. 7). In an important article, Aihwa Ong et al. (1996, p. 737) argue

that citizenship emerges as a process of 'simultaneous subjugation and self-assertion' where both the state and its subjects engage. By contrasting the dynamics of the subjectification experienced by new immigrants, namely Cambodian refugees and Chinese business people, they demonstrate the critical role of the state institutions in making different kinds of minorities. However, these migrants are not passively absorbed into an overarching Asian American identity, but rather, make space for 'Asia-Pacific cultural production within the West' (Ong et al. 1996, p. 750). Therefore, it is necessary to view citizenship as a dialectic process between the state and its people (Ong et al. 1996, p. 751). In line with this position, there has been a shift in the conceptualisation of citizenship, to recognise that it not only involves being, and being accepted as, a member of the state, and a set of responsibilities and entitlements which individuals accrues by virtue of that membership (Isin & Wood 1999, p. 15), but also functions as a practice (Nordberg 2006, p. 526). Isin and Turner (2002, p. 4) contend that citizenship should be viewed as a social process 'in which the emphasis is less on legal rules and more on norms, practices, [and] meanings'.

In an examination of citizenship practice in the context of rural poor in South Asia, Corbridge et al. (2005), Gupta (1995, p. 284) and Fuller and Harriss (2001) highlight that the rural Indian poor encounter many faces of development in their daily life, and that 'complex and overlapping boundaries' exist in the state-society relation. Therefore, I take the position, following Williams, Vira and Chopra (2011, p. 16), that subaltern agency does not denote acts of resistance in the classic understanding of the term, and also it is not always transformative in intent or realisation. Rather, it involves resilience and reworking primarily predicated on securing a daily existence. Katz's (2004) framework of agency as resilience, reworking and resistance is useful to capture the myriad ways agency gets articulated by the indigenous people of the CHT.

2.5: Conceptual Framework: Agency as Resilience and Political Action

This section provides a conceptual framework of agency. While I draw on Katz's conceptualisation and categorisation of agency as resilience, reworking and resistance, I reinterpret the framework to move away from a dichotomous understanding of agency and power, and steer towards a more relational conceptualisation in the context of state-society relation in South Asia.

Katz (2004, p. x) categorises agency into three clusters: resilience, reworking and resistance. She provides a social definition of resilience (DeVerteuil & Golubchikov 2016, p. 143). For her, resilience consists of 'autonomous initiative [and] recuperation', or 'getting by', in acts of protection, care and mutualism that enable people to survive, but do not contribute to transforming the [power] structures that make their survival difficult (Katz 2004, p. 242). Taking up the question of the transformative potential of the concept of resilience, critiques have tended to consider it apolitical, neoliberal or a form of 'responsibility without power' to people (MacKinnon & Derickson 2013, p. 255). The concept of resilience has multidisciplinary moorings based in ecology, systems theory, disaster management and development organisations (Lang 2010, p. 16; Walsh-Dilley & Wolford 2015, p. 174). Walsh-Dilley and Wolford (2015, p. 175) argue many development organisations advocate resilience of the individual and community through market mechanisms, entrepreneurship and self-exploitation. They provide some services to the vulnerable communities, thus pose as humanitarians, but do not advocate transformation (Walsh-Dilley & Wolford 2015, p. 175). Similarly, critiquing the resilience approach in policies and programmes of disaster management, scholars contend that the dominant policy approach has been to build the resilience of disaster-affected communities so that they can 'bounce back', take 'knock after knock', and keep getting up with little or no assistance being provided to them (MacKinnon & Derickson 2013, p. 254; Manyena 2006).

This concept of resilience, they argue, privileges the maintenance of existing social structures, and do not address broader questions of social change which require 'interference with', and 'transformation of', entrenched social orders (MacKinnon & Derickson 2013, p. 254). In this way, resilience is constructed as depoliticised.

DeVerteuil and Golubchikov (2016, p. 143) counter the de-politicised argument to highlight everyday politics of resilience as survival. Resilience sustains survival (DeVerteuil & Golubchikov 2016, p. 146), acknowledges the inevitability of change, and seeks to adjust to new conditions, situtations and constraints (Klein, Nicholls & Thomalla 2003, p. 39). It requires 'multiple, mutual, and nuanced forms of adaptation' by individuals, families and communities to each other's activities and to the 'wider conditioning order' (DeVerteuil & Golubchikov 2016, p. 148). Therefore, rather than being an endpoint or a static condition, resilience is a 'proactive renegotiation' of day-to-day situation, practices and relation, which can facilitate more radical, transformative acts such as resistance.

The argument that resilience is depoliticised and the concurrent privileging of the concept of resistance understood as oppositional, counter-hegemonic agency, is premised on the idea that agency is enacted in the political space. It is also the ground in which the traditional conceptualisation of the exercise of citizenship is rooted (Hickey & Mohan 2004, p. 5). DeVerteuil and Golubchikov (2016, p. 147) rightly argue that not everybody is interested in resistance. In this regard, Lister also observes:

> Political participation is a vital element of citizenship on the one hand but…it should not be regarded as obligatory on the other. Where, you might ask, does that leave those women (and men) who, for whatever reasons of choice or constraint, including severe disability, frailty, or chronic illness, do not participate in politics, at whatever level? Do they not deserve the accolade of citizenship? Are they somehow lesser citizens? (Lister 2003, p. 41).

Lister (2003) points out that traditional concepts of citizens and citizenship are premised on the separation of private and political life; where the private life is composed of the home and the family, while the political life is located at the public arena, such as

community and the state level (Kallio & Häkli 2013, p. 7). Grounded on a conventional reading of Arendt (1958, p. 24), this approach equates political agency to 'rational intentional action concerning collective matters' which have political significance and exercised by actors who are able to recognise and act on the matters through formal mechanisms. These politics are traditionally exercised in specific spaces that are demarcated for political action and discussion (Kallio & Häkli 2013, p. 7; Kurian, Munshi & Bartlett 2014, p. 442). In the former approach 'the political' becomes fixed, and 'agency' entails specific kinds of action being exercised by a particular type of actors. When applied to the indigenous people of the CHT, this conceptualisation does not leave much space for granting their political agencies as embedded in their day-to-day lives.

Another approach considers the private, the personal and the mundane as political. In this view, 'politics is often portrayed as constitutive and contested, and agency is defined in proportion to the effects and dynamics that spark off, advance, alter, or oppose certain politicised or politicising processes' (Kallio & Häkli 2013, p. 7). In this understanding, anybody can practice politics, and anything can constitute political (Kallio & Häkli 2013, p. 7). This approach seeks to find politics in people's 'experienced and practised worlds'. By seeking to find politics within the everyday and the mundane, feminist scholars have attempted to destabilise the boundaries of public and private sphere (Kuus 2017, p. 2). This has enabled to recognise political agency that emerges out of the everyday practice of people, and the 'politicisation of new matters, actions, actors and places' (Kallio & Häkli 2013, p. 8).

A key premise in my effort to locate and delineate the political in the indigenous people's lived worlds requires subscribing to a relational understanding of politics, which allows for an emphasis on 'the constitutive' (Staeheli & Kofman 2004, p. 3). In this approach, the political is read as an 'on-going process' through which 'societies are constituted', constituting a 'complex and multivalent struggle' located in the 'actions and behaviours' of

various actors in both the formal and non-formal arenas (Staeheli & Kofman 2004, p. 3). Further, I highlight the importance of context to understand the interrelationship between actions and behaviours that originate from the home space. What constitutes political depends on the situation and context at hand, Chapter Eight elaborates this point. Similarly, Kuus (2017, p. 3) argues that a person's capacity to act depends upon the specific context that he or she is able to act within. She calls for deeper attention to the specificity of context that links agency and subjectivity together, and thereby broadens our conceptualisation of what constitutes both politics and political action (Kuus 2017, p. 3). In agreement with these scholars, I contend that politics is about 'matters of importance' in people's everyday lives, because it is only the people involved who may tell what the stakes are (Häkli & Kallio 2014, p. 183; Kuus 2017, p. 3). In this conceptualisation, resilience can be understood as political.

2.5.1: Agency, Power and Reworking

Katz (2004, p. 247) uses the concept of 'reworking' to refer to those practices which 'alter the conditions of people's existence to enable more workable lives and create more viable terrains of practice'. Reworking involves those initiatives or projects that explicitly recognise problematic conditions, and offer pragmatic responses and solutions. Reworking does not challenge hegemonic power, but rather, attempts to undermine its inequalities. In this connection, Kerkvliet (2005, p. 237) in his study of a state initiated collective farming project in Vietnam illustrates how the everyday practice of farmers has led to the local modification of a national policy. When collective farming began, the authorities insisted that villagers not grow paddy in their household plots. Paddy should only be produced collectively. However, gradually more people started to grow paddy in their household plots. Within a few years, authorities gave up trying to stop them (Kerkvliet 2005, p. 237). Similarly, the authorities wanted animals to be raised collectively and looked after by teams, which resulted in sharp decline in the number of animals. To reverse the trend,

local officials allowed individual households to care for the water buffalos and oxen on behalf of the cooperatives, arrangements that higher authorities criticised but accepted (Kerkvliet 2005, p. 237). Local officials accepted these practices in exchange for sufficient compliance from the villagers so that they could show to their superiors a positive outcome of the cooperatives (Kerkvliet 2005, p. 235). The everyday politics of Vietnamese farmers involved quiet, mundane acts that ultimately led to the local modification of national policy (Kerkvliet 2005), an exmaple of reworking of the dominant rules and order.

Katz (2004, p. 247) further stresses that reworking deploys a different kind of consciousness, and this separates it from the concept of resilience. Building on the concept of reworking, other scholars have added the concepts of 'intention' and 'consequences' to the concept of agency as reworking. Jones and Murphy (2011) argue that agency can be delineated regarding its 'intentions' and 'consequences'. Intention refers to any activity that drives one to participate in a routinized or improvised social practice. Consequences are intened or unintended outcomes of that practice. In addition, to understand intentions and consequences, it is necessary to examine the 'socio-spatial dimensions', or the cognitive, material, performative, and structural factors that constitute it within a particular place and time (Jones & Murphy 2011, p. 382). Vinthagen and Johansson (2013, p. 18) take an opposite stance. They contend that to infer a certain kind of consciousness or intention to define an act as agency and/or resistance is a mistake when the context of everyday life is taken into consideration. Further, they assert this follows the classic theorising of agency by Scott (1985) for whom the actor's conscious, intent is crucial to classify an act or behaviour as resistance founded in agency (Scott 1989, pp. 49, 50, 53). Scott argues intent is rather a relevant indicator than outcome, since 'acts of resistance do not always achieve their desired effects' (Vinthagen & Johansson 2013, p. 19). Vinthagen and Johansson (2013, p. 19) critique this conceptualisation and call on researchers of resistance to move away from the focus on consciousness and

intention (Weitz 2001, p. 670). They point out that in the classic sociological definition of social action, when people act, they always have intentions. Therefore, everyday resistance is indeed enacted with intent. However, it is not simply with one type of intent and neither nor necessarily, is this intent a political-ideological one (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009, cited in Vinthagen & Johansson 2013, p. 20). Actors might have a variety of intents, which may include the most basic: to survive, to solve a problem; satisfy needs; pursue a desire; or acquire status or position or something different (Vinthagen & Johansson 2013, pp. 20-1). Therefore, if a category of action is demarcated in terms of the political consciousness or intention of the actor, there is a risk of excluding 'not-yet political awareness', or 'differently-motivated resistance', in privileging *political* intent (Vinthagen & Johansson 2013, p. 21).

The centrality of consciousness or intention in the conceptualisation of agency by Scott and Katz arises out of a tradition that theorises power and agency, understood as resistance or oppositional consciousness, as opposed (Lilja & Vinthagen 2014, p. 111). Katz (2004, p. 252) cites the example of resistance in Harlem where consciousness raising enabled articulation of collective political agency. A neighbourhood based activist group, West Harlem Environmental Action, opposed the construction of a huge sewage treatment plant in Harlem. The group largely constituted of elderly women of the neighbourhood who drew on local knowledge to situate their campaign within the context of community based politics, such as well-being and environmental illness. They organized direct campaigns and lodged a legal case against New York City for the damage caused by the sewage treatment facility. In their suit against the city, they collaborated with the powerful 'Natural Resources Defence Council' who in turn secured legal representation by a law firm. Ultimately, the case was settled out of court and the West Harlem community was awarded $1.1 million settlement fund, to be managed by the West Harlem Environmental Action and Natural Resources Defence Council (Katz 2004, p. 252). In the triumph of the

neighbourhood based political action, Katz has seen the seeds of a revolutionary imagination. However, this also puts a problematic expectation on local actors to inspire new social movements. Because it obscures the role of diverse postcolonial actors in the reshaping of inequalities and exploitation. As Hollander and Einwohner (2004, p. 550) assert dichotomising resisters and dominators in this way ignores the fact that there are multiple systems of hierarchy. It additionally divides the population into powerful and powerless (Miller 1997, p. 32).

This division reproduces a dichotomous understanding of the state-society relation. Power is thought of as an ‘exterior constraint’, its source a ‘sovereign authority above and outside society’, which functions by imposing ‘external limits’ to behaviour and instituting ‘negative prohibitions’ (Mitchell 1991b, p. 92). State power is understood in terms of decisions, or a ‘system of orders and prohibitions that direct and constrain social action’ (Mitchell 1991b, p. 92). This offers an image of the state as a single, totalising structure of power (Mitchell 1991b, p. 90). This approach, therefore, posits a rigid boundary between the state and society. Simultaneously, in an attempt to draw intellectual and political attention on the marginalised and oppressed groups (Mitchell 1990, p. 546), subordinate groups are presented as self-formed political subjects (Mitchell 1990, p. 573). In the case of Scott, his subjects preserve a space of mental autonomy against a form of physical coercion (Mitchell 1990, p. 573). He conceives power as having two dimensions, with a ‘physical and a mental mode of operation’ (Mitchell 1990, p. 545). This has led to a notion that resisting subjects are autonomous in their relation to a dominating power (Moore 1997, p. 92), so that resistance constitutes an ‘intentional thwarting of “external” forces from an imagined space of autonomy conceived as somehow outside of power’ (Sharp et al. 2000, p. 24).

Anchored in this dualistic understanding of power structuring the state-society relation, subaltern resistance studies have interpreted indigenous politics as a ‘post-colonial

tragedy' where indigenous people are viewed as 'primitives', 'victims' trapped in modern state imaginaries, or triumphalism (Chandra 2013, p. 53). In these interpretations, agency is found in the figure of a resistant subject contesting state domination who stands outside the state structure and dismisses its demands (Mitchell 1991b, p. 93). However, following Foucault and referring to the productive dimension of power, Mitchell (1991b, p. 93) argues that 'rather than [being located] in some wholly exterior social space, political subjects and their modes of resistance are formed as much within the organisational terrain we call the state'. He contends disciplinary power does not function externally, rather it operates internally; not at societal level, but at the level of each individual; and not by 'constraining individuals and their actions, but by producing them' (Mitchell 1991b, p. 93).

Taking up this position, some scholars in South Asian Studies have attempted to recover a dialectical understanding of Indian subalternity, discussed earlier under section 2.4 of this chapter (Subramanian 2009; Sundar 1997). Subramanian (2009, p. 4) has shown how India's Southwestern fishers are not just 'nonmoderns', wholly controlled by the state. Rather, they constitute themselves as subjects of rights with respect to prevailing, hegemonies and the social order (Subramanian 2009, p. 4). Crucially, in this reading, subaltern groups appropriate the institutions, procedures, and discourses that constitute the pillars of hegemony (Nilsen 2011, p. 110). Subaltern groups therefore mostly do not resist the state, but use the system as best they can (Fuller & Harriss 2001, p. 25).

This scholarship also offers a different position on governmentality theory. Chatterjee (2004), for example, posits binaries between the governing and the governed, the legal and the illegal, the governmentality-produced population and the 'moral community', civil society and political society. However, the boundaries between these categories are very fluid. Another example is Sharma's (2011, p. 965) research which shows how the subaltern claim on development entitlements draws upon multiple discourses which extend

beyond the legal, to mix ‘morality and materiality, ethics and politics, and traditional and bureaucratic languages of power’. These examples illustrate the multiple forms of politics used by the poor and subordinate. Taking up on this trajectory in the research, I adopt Katz’s (2004, p. 247) conceptualisation of reworking, while also drawing from Chandra (2015a, pp. 565-6), to posit that indigenous practices of reworking recognise the structures of power and negotiate it to generate pragmatic responses, and thereby work towards improving the material conditions of indigenous subordination.

2.5.2: Resistance: Negotiation of and Entanglement with State Power

This approach to reworking rests in a relational understanding of the dynamic and dialogic processes of domination and resistance (Nilsen 2011, p. 110). This also has implications for understanding resistance. Rather than conceptualising resistance as opposition, or as empowering ‘counterhegemonic’ agency, as Katz (2004, p. 242) and others do, I draw on Chandra (2015a, p. 565) to refer to the Latin root of resistance ‘re + sistere’, which means enduring or withstanding. I draw on both Chandra (2015) and Haynes and Prakash (1992) to re-orient the traditionfal conceptualisation of resistance as ‘opposition or negation’ towards a ‘logic of negotiation’ (Chandra 2015a, p. 565). This redefinition is anchored in a Foucauldian analysis of power as ‘ubiquitous’ rather than being located in the hands of certain social groups, productive instead of oppressive, and relational instead of reified (Bartlett 2005, pp. 360-1; Johansson & Vinthagen 2016, p. 420).

Traditionally, power and resistance are considered as disconnected or detached from each other (Sharp et al. 2000, p. 20). However, Haynes and Prakash (1992) and Sharp et al. (2000, p. 20) argue that power and resistance are entangled, and that one is always present in the constitution of the other. That is why even the seemingly most overt and absolute forms of dominance are punctuated by incidences of resistance. Haynes and Prakash (1992) illustrate how the subordinate groups in India persistently challenge the dominant power in their everyday struggle. They further argue that even occasions of

successful resistance, rather than dismantling domination (Haynes & Prakash 1992, p. 20; Harp et al. 2000, p. 23), can sometimes reinforce and/or create new power relations (see also Lilja et al. 2017, p. 45). One feature of this process is the ‘minor’ reversals that occur within resistance practices, manifested in the internal hierarchies, the suppression of dissent, and violence, within resistance movements (Sharp et al. 2000, p. 23). As a consequence of such practices, various forms of ‘hegemony are internalised, reproduced, echoed’ (Sharp et al. 2000, p. 23). Therefore, domination and resistance are neither autonomous nor totalising (Haynes & Prakash 1992, p. 3; Moore 1997, p. 92). Rather, each is ‘fragmentary, uneven and inconsistent to varying degrees’ (Sharp et al. 2000, p. 20). Due to this entangled nature of the relations between power and resistance, the boundary between the state and society is elusive and not stable (Mitchell 1991b, p. 94).

While I abandon the rigid reification of the state-society boundary, following Mitchell (1991b, p. 94), I stress that the concept of the boundary or demarcation between state and society nevertheless remains conceptually significant because it offers a way to recognise the complex political processes that gives rise to the “uncertain yet powerful distinction” between the state and society through which state power is maintained. As Mitchell (1991b, p. 94) argues, ‘modern politics is essentially about the production and reproduction of the contingent lines of difference’ that seek to separate the state from society (Mitchell 1991b, p. 94). Extending this argument, a range of scholars have theorised the nature of the state and the ways that state power operates. Jessop (2014, p. 485) argues that the state is a heterogeneous institutional ensemble, comprising a territory, an apparatus, and a population. The purpose of state power is to create the appearance that it is a unitary entity, separate from society; in this way, it orients political subjects to coordinate heterogeneous powers and resources to both enact and reproduce the state itself (Jessop 2014, p. 485). This is how state power generates the ‘state effect’.

To understand the state, it is important to acknowledge its “paradoxical quality” (Migdal 2001, p. 22). The state represents both the:

> ... powerful image of a clearly bounded, unified organisation that can be spoken of in singular terms...as if it were a single, centrally motivated actor performing in an integrated manner to rule a clearly defined territory [and] the practices of a heap of loosely connected parts or fragments … with boundaries between them and other groupings … often promoting conflicting sets of rules with one another and with 'official' Law (Migdal 2001, p. 22).

In the context of South Asia, resisters recognise these structures of power and dominance in the society. This study employs Chandra’s (2015) work on resistance as negotiation of state power to show how the subordinate groups work within the system of domination (Chandra 2015a, p. 566) to articulate their claims and manipulate ‘crevices and cracks in social arrangements’, thereby advancing the subaltern political cause. Nilsen (2015) illustrates this with a case study of forest-dwelling groups in central India to illustrate how subaltern groups negotiate and re-work the structures of power from below, even though these are deeply influenced by the ‘languages and logics of modern state-making’ (Chandra 2015a, p. 566). Subaltern resistance, in this understanding, comprises reworking or negotiating state power. Following the critical tradition of Scott’s *Weapons of the Weak*, this argument is also concerned with a postcolonial politics of emancipation and an aspiration to appreciate the ways subaltern actors ‘seek to undo, however partially, the conditions of their subordination’ (Chandra 2015a, p. 568).

2.6: Conclusion

This chapter has argued that development is an arena which operates as a means to both entrench and critically examine the categories of indigenous people, state and citizenship. Thereby, it also provides an opportunity to reshape and produce alternative kinds of citizens, states and communities. This chapter has unravelled the complexities and contestations of development discourse and its practices to show that development is an arena that both informs and forms the categories of the state, personhood, and

communities. It operates as a key mode of social distinction within and between indigenous and state actors. However, at the same time, it offers an important ground for the disenfranchised to critique inequalities and re-imagine themselves. Chapter Three mobilises these conceptualisations of the state, development and indigenous agency to consider the relations between indigenous people of the CHT and the post-colonial state of Bangladesh.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BANGLADESH STATE AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: MAPPING THE CONTOURS OF SHIFTING POLITICAL RELATIONS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter revisits the history of state-ethnic relations between the Bangladesh state and indigenous people of the CHT to provide the political and development context of the ICDP project and to situate it within these relations. It considers the Bangladesh state's nation-building, and Bengali-identity-building imperatives to illustrate that the CHT has been, and remains, a very important site for its nation-building project, a discussion that is extended in Chapter Five. This chapter shows that these imperatives have formed the basis of the relations between the Bangladesh state and indigenous people. This chapter also explains that the counter–political struggle of the indigenous people has taken the form of ethno-nationalism, and argues that the Bangladesh state has not been fully successful in its nation-building project in the CHT. Indigenous peoples' response to it is indicative of how the nationalist project has been directly opposed and frustrated. The history of armed conflict between the Bangladesh state and the CHT's indigenous people posits a dichotomous state-society relation. However, by focussing on the pre- and post-Accord negotiations between the Bangladesh state and indigenous people, this chapter argues that these relations have not been static. Rather, they have undergone many changes marked by patterns of domination and resistance, but also periods of negotiation. Tracing these patterns allows for an understanding of state-ethnic relations as dialectic.

To trace the contours of this dialectic relationship, this chapter first examines the history of state-led development intervention in the CHT, to show how this has created rifts in the state-society relation. Tracing the widening of this rift to the emergence of the post-colonial

Bangladesh state and its consolidation of state sovereignty, this chapter argues that nationalising imperatives shape the contours of both the state's political imagination and its development practice. It also examines the ethno-nationalist counter-political struggle of the indigenous people, which demonstrates the CHT people's concerns to ensure access to state resources and regional development. Finally, this chapter offers an analysis of the pre-and post-Peace Accord situation in the CHT to trace tensions in the region caused by the failure of the state of Bangladesh to fully implement the agreed terms of the 1997 Peace Accord. This has implications for the broader state-society relation generally, and in particular, for the indigenous people's political project of emancipation.

3.2: Historical Overview of Development in the CHT

Located in the south-eastern part of Bangladesh, the CHT region is constituted administratively of three districts: Khagrachari, Rangamati and Bandarban. The CHT region, constituting ten percent of the landmass of Bangladesh (Nasreen & Togawa 2002, p. 97), differs from the rest of Bangladesh in terms of topography, social organisation, and ethnic composition (Chowdhury 2008, p. 61). The region comprises hilly terrain where eleven ethnic groups live, alongside non-indigenous Bengali people from the plains (Adnan 2007, p. 4). As discussed in Chapter One, these indigenous groups collectively refer to themselves as Jumma, Adivasi or Pahari, meaning hill people (Chowdhury 2008, p. 61). However, differences exist among the ethnic groups. For example, each group has its own language. Additionally, there are differences among them in terms of religious practices and social organisation, kinship systems, and marriage customs. For the majority of the indigenous people in the CHT, the traditional method of cultivation has been Jhum (swidden cultivation), which markedly distinguishes them from the Bengali people, who mainly practice plough cultivation (Chowdhury 2008, p. 62).

The CHT is one of the most disadvantaged regions in the country, and indigenous people lag behind in almost every major development indicator: income, employment, poverty, health, education, and access to resources (Barkat et al. 2009, p. 1). According to the population Census 2011, the latest Census, the literacy rates of the people of three CHT districts are 44 percent in Rangamati, 41.8 percent in Khagrachhri and 31.7 percent in Bandarban, well below Bangladesh's average literacy rate of 51.8 percent (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2012). The people of the CHT experience more poverty than the people of rural Bangladesh. Around 75 percent of CHT households are living below the poverty line (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility 2012b, p. 4). With regard to health, the same dismal picture prevails. Bandarban, partly due to the absence of skilled birth attendants, has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the country, at 63 deaths per 1000 live births, against the national average of 49 deaths per 1000 births (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility 2012b, p. 5). The mortality rate of children under five years old is 85 deaths per 1000 in the CHT, compared to 64 deaths per 1000 nationally (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility 2012b, p. 5). Hence, development of the CHT is a major concern, as it provides a means to address inequalities between the indigenous people and the dominant Bengali population.

For the people of the CHT, the history of state-led development intervention has not been positive. The first large-scale industrial development project in the CHT was during the period of Pakistani control, and comprised the establishment of the Karnafuli Paper Mill (Gain 2000, pp. 32-3). The mill was set up in 1953 to enhance local production of paper to reduce imports, and was given rights to extract raw materials from the forest for 99 years (Gain 2000, pp. 32-3). The mill project created 10,000 jobs, but only five percent of jobs went to the hill people, who were mainly employed in low-paid unskilled labouring roles (Gain 2000, p. 33). A few years after the construction of the mill, in the early 1960s, the Kaptai Hydro-electric Project was initiated to meet energy needs for industrialisation and

domestic consumption (Barkat et al. 2009, p. 2). Many studies cite the building of the Kaptai dam as the single most defining event in the history of development in the CHT (Mohsin 2000; Nasreen & Togawa 2002). Just as developed and developing countries after the Second World War adopted a development strategy of economic growth through large-scale industrialisation, so too did Pakistan (Nayak 2008, pp. 103-6). This strategy focussed on improving infrastructure, such as roads, power networks, and railways (Nayak 2008, p. 103). In line with this goal, the Kaptai dam was constructed to meet East Pakistan's energy needs (Barkat et al. 2009, p. 2). The dam is the only hydro-electric power source in Bangladesh and produces approximately 5 percent of the country's total electricity (Parveen & Faisal 2002, p. 197).

During construction, the dam flooded 40 percent of the total cultivable land (Parveen & Faisal 2002, p. 198). After completion of the dam in 1962, the indigenous families who were resettled experienced displacement again when the water levels of the reservoir rose, and most of the resettlement area was flooded (Nayak 2008, p. 206). This made the hill people doubt the government's intentions, and, this uncertainty led to around 60,000 people migrating to neighbouring India and Myanmar. Those who stayed in the CHT, an estimated 40,000 people, faced internal displacement. The indigenous people were labelled 'nomads' and 'hill tribes', which contributed to distortions of the problems of resettlement. In a detailed and critical account of the problem of resettlement, Sopher (1963) contends that, according to official accounts, most of the displaced people were to be resettled on the slopes of the Kasalong and Chengi rivers during the early phase of the project (Parveen & Faisal 2002, p. 198). However, the 'development refugees' were actually moved to the low-lying areas of Langdu, Barkal and Bhaghaichari (Parveen & Faisal 2002, p. 199). The then government had hoped to replace as much cultivable land as was lost through this resettlement (Sopher 1963, p. 348), but failed to fulfil this promise to compensate the people, primarily due to its small budget and land scarcity (Parveen &

Faisal 2002, p. 202; Sopher 1963, pp. 339, 62). However, the Bangladesh government contended in 1975 that the displaced hill people were adequately compensated:

> [I]n consideration of the backwardness of the tribal people of this district as for the sacrifice that they made for the good of the rest of the country, government took up the responsibility to compensate and rehabilitate the displaced persons. A majority of the displaced families have been rehabilitated … (Bangladesh District Gazeteers 1975, p. 126).

These constructions of indigenous people as 'backward' by the Bangladesh state illustrate that 'development is central to the ways ethnic minority identities are constructed by the state' (McDuie-Ra 2011, p. 80). Such constructions are common in development literature, with Bandyopadhyay and Yuwanond (2018, p. 164) illustrating through a case study of Naga people in India that the Indian Government both commodifies and represents the Naga people as 'colourful' and 'exotic'. Through this construction, the government suggests that ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples are timeless, and that the mainstream Indian people are politically or culturally different from the Nagaland people (Bandyopadhyay & Yuwanond 2018, p. 165). They further argue that the representation of the Nagas as 'exotic', 'colourful', and 'untamed' is related to constructing a dominant discourse that also homogenises mainland Indian nationals as 'united', 'normal' and 'modern'. This is how identity, and more specifically, the 'superiority' of Indian mainland people is established (Bandyopadhyay & Yuwanond 2018, p. 170). Similarly, in the CHT, a number of studies have examined the implications of the construction of the categories of 'tribal' and 'nomad' in relation to development interventions (Nasreen & Togawa 2002, p. 100; Schendel 2011). Notably, these categorisations did not originate with the building of the Kaptai dam. Rather, it was the British colonial rulers who viewed the indigenous people as 'savages' (Nasreen & Togawa 2002, p. 100; Schendel 2011), a notion which persists in post-colonial, independent Bangladesh (Nasreen & Togawa 2002). Through an analysis of the discourse of development programmes of government and donor agencies, Nasreen and Togawa (2002) argue that state-led development in the CHT was justified in political

discourse by constructing the tribal people as ‘backward’. Citing the example of a development programme called ‘Food for Work’, in which project participants were paid for clearing the forest, Nasreen and Togawa (2002) argue that the state has perceived the subsistence practices of the local people as ‘primitive’. They further contend that development in the CHT was, in effect, a vehicle for the state to exercise power over the ethnic communities. The state’s attempt to exercise control over the indigenous people started immediately after the birth of Bangladesh as a nation-state in 1971.

3.3: Bengali, Bangladeshi and Jumma Nationalisms

The state attempt to control indigenous identity was part of a homogenising and assimilationist nation-building approach that the Bangladesh state adopted immediately after its independence in 1971 (Chakma 2010, p. 287). The founder of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, defined Bengali nationalism as constituting Bengali culture, heritage, land, and the sacrifices of the Bengalis (Mohsin 2000, p. 79). This is stated in the Constitution of Bangladesh which declares in Part II, Fundamental Principles of State Policy, that:

> ... the unity and solidarity of [the] Bengalee nation, which, deriving its identity from its language and culture, attained sovereign and independent Bangladesh, through a united and determined struggle in the war of independence, shall be the basis of Bengalee nationalism (Yasmin 2014, p. 123).

The new Bangladesh nation state adopted an ideology of Bengali nationalism underpinned by the concept of a singular nationhood and a homogeneous national identity. Nationalism, in the context of the South Asian countries, was assumed to act as a binding force. However, there is a tension inherent in the concept of the nation-state. The idea of the nation-state combines two competing ideas: a tangible institutional organisation in the form of the state, the basis of which is derived from imaginative and moral justifications of the *idea* of a nation (Kaviraj 1994, p. 115). This political imagining of the nation is rarely an incontestable or totalising idea. In the case of Bangladesh, the nation was imagined

primarily on the basis of the identity and culture of the dominant ethnic group, the Bengalis. Through constitutional recognition of Bengali identity, the national identity in Bangladesh was established as Bengali, constituting the core of Bengali nationalism (Mohsin 2010, p. 122). In keeping with this, Bengali was adopted as the state language, and the citizens of Bangladesh were to be known as Bengalis (Yasmin 2014, p. 123). Alhough nearly 90 percent of Bangladeshis are Bengali Muslims (Bal 2007, p. 444), Bangladesh is also home to about 45 different ethnic communities who have their own languages, cultures and histories (Mohsin 2000, p. 79). The hegemonic imposition of Bengali identity on ethnic minorities who are neither Bengali by ethnicity and culture, nor Muslim by religion, illustrates features of what Brown (1994) terms the 'ethnocratic state'. The ethnocratic state:

> ... employs the cultural attributes and values of the dominant ethnic segment as the core elements for the elaboration of the national ideology, so that the state's depiction of the nation's history, the state's stance on language, religion and moral values, and the state's choice of national symbols all derive primarily from the culture of the ethnic majority (Brown 1994, p. 37).

Consequently, Bengali identity is constituted as the core of Bengali nationalism. However, the concept of Bengali nationalism has also undergone changes in the course of the political history of Bangladesh. After the overthrow of the first government of Bangladesh, the country faced a series of military coups, conspiracies and counter-coups (Ahmed 2009, p. 84). The new state élites forged new alliances and began to gain political legitimacy, and as part of this process, nationality, which had been defined solely in terms of Bengali ethnic, linguistic and cultural identity since independence, was redefined as Bangladeshi (Murshid 1997, p. 14). General Zia, the then President, in an attempt to gain political authority and legitimacy, attempted to build upon public religious sentiment (Ahmed 2009, p. 84). He founded the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and introduced *Bangladeshi* nationalism (Hossain 2012, p. 167). Accordingly, the Constitution was amended. The word 'secularism' was supplanted with 'absolute trust and faith in Almighty

Allah' and the term '*Bismillah-ar-Rahmanar-Rahim'* (In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, and the Merciful) was inserted (Mohsin 2004, p. 475). In 1977 another Constitutional Amendment changed the wording of Article 6 to define the identity of citizens of Bangladesh as 'Bangladeshi' rather than 'Bengali' (Mohsin 2004, p. 475).

The preference for 'Bangladeshi' over 'Bengali' highlights Zia's positioning of the political identity of Bangladeshi Muslims. He introduced the term 'Bangladeshi' as the political identity for Bangladesh Muslims in an effort to differentiate from the term 'Bengali', which also denotes the identity of Bengali speaking people in West Bengal, India (Hossain 2012, p. 173). Thus, Zia's construction of Bangladeshi nationalism asserted a 'religio-political identity over the ethno-cultural' (Murshid 1997, p. 15). From the mid-1980s, with the declaration of Islam as the state religion in 1988 (Ghosh 1994, p. 204), state nationalism tilted towards 'Islamic nationalism' (Ahmed 2009, p. 85). The contours of state nationalism in Bangladesh have changed from Bengali to Bangladeshi and, arguably, towards 'Islamic' nationalism. Thus, in Bangladesh, ethnicity and state nationalism are strongly interrelated (Brown 1994, p. 260). The latest Amendment came in 2011, when Sheikh Hasina's government, in the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution, reverted to Bengali identity as the core of Bangladesh nationhood (Dowlah 2016, p. 163). Hence, this thesis refers to Bangladeshi state nationalism as Bengali nationalism. It is important to note, however, that although the forms of Bangladesh state nationalism have changed for a variety of political reasons, unquestionably, state nationalism has found an easy base in majority ethnicism (Sheth 1989, p. 381).

Brown (1994, p. 260) explains that constructions of national identity result in the state's tilting towards a 'cultural nation' to invoke kinship myths portraying the entire society as a mono-ethnic community. In the context of Bangladesh, it is the Bengali ethnic community that is central to national identity, and the state, in turn, privileges the dominant identity, offering security on the basis of allegiance towards that community. South Asian countries

offer equal citizenship rights to all citizens irrespective of cultural attributes, but they also define the nation in cultural terms so as to give priority to those possessing the attributes, or belonging to, the ethnic community at the centre of cultural nationhood (Brown 1994, p. 261). Within this framework of nationhood, other ethnic communities thus become ‘minorities’ without any claim in the national enterprise unless they can assert themselves politically (Sheth 1989, p. 381). They operate as subordinate groups, ‘having the marginal status of 'second-class citizens', and are designated as minorities ‘in someone else's homeland rather than inhabitants of their own’ (Brown 1994, p. 51). Minority groups are subjected to policies which lead to the impoverishment of their regions, cultures, and communities. Correspondingly, they begin to modify their sense of identity and develop an awareness of their relative deprivation within the state. This becomes the basis for a nascent sense of ethnic solidarity, or minority ethnic consciousness, illustrated by the reclaiming and strengthening of Jumma nationalism. In the CHT, hill people’s counter-nationalism movements have emerged in the post-Independence period, based in the ‘Jumma’ identity that the CHT people of Bangladesh stand to lose in nationalising imperatives, including the imposition of a ‘national’ identity that marginalises or excludes them.

When Bengali nationalism was imposed on the indigenous people of the CHT through the adoption of Bengali nationalism in the Constitution (Mohsin 2000, p. 79), the hill people rejected this hegemonic imposition. Manobendra Narayan Larma, the representative of the Hill people in the national parliament, declined to endorse the Constitution and walked out in protest. He categorically pointed out that the hill people would never accept the imposition of this identity and could never become Bengalis (Mohsin 2000, p. 79):

> You cannot impose your national identity on others. I am a Chakma, not a Bengali. I am a citizen of Bangladesh, Bangladeshi. You are also Bangladeshi but your national identity is Bengali … they [CHT people] can never become Bengali (Parliament Debates 1972, cited in Mohsin 2002, p. 62).

Larma expresses typical threats faced by ethnic groups in the South Asian experience of post-colonialism and independence. These include ‘loss of land, jobs, threats to cultural identity and indigenous practices, fear of being reduced to a demographic minority, the undermining of social and cultural autonomy’, as well as the imposition of official language (Adnan 2007, p. 2). Small ethnic groups face these kinds of threats due to the domination of majority ethnic groups. Additionally, the post-colonial nation-state demands that they integrate into the culture of the dominant ethnic group (Adnan 2007, p. 2). In light of their past experience of domination and marginalisation, manifest in the construction of the Kaptai dam, the indigenous people of the CHT deemed it necessary to have constitutional safeguards for the protection of their community (Mohsin 2002, p. 57). Hence, on 15 February 1972, when the Bangladesh Constitution was being drafted, a delegation headed by MN Larma, leader of the hill people, met with the Prime Minister to demand regional autonomy for the CHT and its own legislature (Chakma 2010, p. 288). However, the Prime Minister rejected these demands, insisting that there could be only one ‘nation’ in Bangladesh, and urging the indigenous people to ‘become’ Bengali (Mohsin 2010, p. 122).

Faced with the threat of political and cultural subjugation posed by state nationalism, ethnic minorities sought to assert new political identities for themselves. To pursue their demands for autonomy, CHT leaders formed a regional political party, the *Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti* (PCJSS), on 7 March 1972 (Chakma 2010, p. 288). However, Larma’s quest for regional autonomy and the rights of the hill people through political means ended when the Prime Minister was assassinated in 1975, which resulted in a military takeover. In the face of this, Larma went underground, and the pursuit of regional autonomy for the CHT took on a guerrilla aspect with the inception of *Shanti Bahini* (armed wing of PCJSS) (Chakma 2010, p. 288; Hazarika 1995, pp. 278-9). Hence, the conflict between the indigenous people of the CHT and the Bangladeshi state was articulated in the form of Jumma nationalism, demands for regional autonomy in the CHT,

and Constitutional recognition of the cultural distinctiveness of the CHT's indigenous peoples and cultures. Indigenous nationalism in the CHT was predicated on 'Jumma' identity. The word Jumma has its origins in Jhum, which has been the traditional mode of cultivation by indigenous people. It has been used pejoratively by Bengalis to construct indigenous people as 'primitive' and 'backward' (Mohsin 2000, p. 78). However, for the CHT people, Jhum constitutes not only a mode of cultivation, but also a way of life which is integral to their religious, social, and cultural practices and values. Hence, the PCJSS invoked Jhum to infuse the hill people with a sense of pride in their history, traditional systems, and values (Mohsin 2000, p. 80). However, the concept of indigenous nationalism among the hill people took root in 1966 when an underground political party known as the Chittagong Hill Tracts Welfare Association (CHTWA) was established. This brought Jumma nationalism to the forefront of indigenous political activism. The CHTWA established an underground student association in 1956, *Pahari Chhatra Samity* (Hill Students Association) (Chowdhury 2008, p. 65). However, this movement did not draw much attention as the conflict between East and West Pakistan dominated the political scenario (Chowdhury 2008, p. 65). The nascent Jumma nationalism in the 1960s took its full form in the post-independence Bangladesh state. Self-assertion and articulation of Jumma identity constituted the most important aspect of Jumma nationalism of the hill people. The PCJSS began advocating Jumma identity immediately after the independence of Bangladesh to counter the efforts of state élites to consolidate Bengali hegemony by employing ethno-nationalist ideology, and assertion of rights to resources and self-rule (Chowdhury 2008, p. 67). In articulating their indigenous identity, the Jumma counter-nationalist movement represents the nation as an imagined community, a group that did not exist, or was not recognised, in the first place, so that its nationhood is articulated through the exercise of agency (Chowdhury 2008, p. 67). In this imagined community, the PCJSS considers the CHT as homelands, illustrated in a 1987 publication:

> The Chittagong Hill Tracts is the homeland of ten linguistically different Jatis (nationalities or communities): the Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Bawm, Lushai, Mru, Pankho, Khumi, Khyang and the Chak. For centuries, these ten linguistically different Jatis have inhabited CHT and maintain their own communities, culture and language. Every nation in the world, either big or small, tries its best to uphold its national identity and solidarity. The ten linguistically different Jumma people of CHT are no exception to this (PCJSS 1987, cited in Chowdhury 2008, p. 42).

The concept of *homeland* introduces a territorial dimension to the construction of Jumma nationalism (Mohsin 2000, p. 81). The possession of this homeland by non-Jummas, or outsiders, and the need to protect the homeland is a key element in the construction of a common identity. Hence, freeing the homeland was one of the political objectives of the PCJSS. Here, Jumma does not refer to a single ethnic group, instead it denotes a collective identity, and the term has been 'appropriated as an alternative to colonial and post-colonial' constructions of the CHT people as 'hill tribes', 'tribes' or '*upojati*' (Chowdhury 2008, p. 66). Accordingly, 'Jumma' identity has both social and political connotations. As a social identity, it separates the hill people from Bengalis, while as a political identity, it claims rights such as autonomy on the basis of this separateness (Chowdhury 2008, p. 66).

The historical development of Bengali or Bangladeshi nationalism and the rise of Jumma ethno-nationalism illustrate how 'nation-building' strategies create conflicts between 'state nationalism' and 'minority nationalism' (Kymlicka & Straehle 1999, p. 66). States have adopted a range of nationalising strategies, with the aim to assimilate the minority into the dominant national identity, but ethnic minorities have resisted by politically mobilising along nationalist lines. The problem remains the essence of the concept of nationalism, which entails establishment of the 'nation-state' through policies and political movements where the state and nation coincide (Kymlicka & Straehle 1999, p. 66).

Jumma nationalism and Bengali nationalism were premised on similar principles. As Mohsin (2002, p. 193) observes, the indigenous people consist of thirteen different groups who do not share a common language, religion or social norms. Despite these differences,

the PCJSS propagated a single identity for the indigenous people of the CHT. While the overwhelming majority of the ethnic groups supported the PCJSS's demand for autonomy, they diverged regarding the issue of identifying themselves as one Jumma nation (Mohsin 2000, p. 83). Many smaller ethnic groups and communities had moved away from the PCJSS's construction of the 'Jumma nation' early on (Wilkinson 2015, p. 183). The Jumma nation-building project was pursued mostly by the élites of the PCJSS, highlighting the dominance of larger indigenous groups in the organisation (Raidang 2010, p. 219). William van Schendel (1992, p. 121) states it is predominantly the Chakmas and Marmas who pushed for recognition of a Jumma Nation, often disregarding the viewpoints of smaller ethnic groups and communities. However, a unified Jumma identity in the CHT had always been countered by many smaller ethnic groups and communities, especially by the Mro, Pangkhua and Khumi groups. These groups favoured retaining their own distinct ethnic identities, different from the Chakma-dominated Jumma identity pressed by the PCJSS (Chowdhury 2008). Therefore, Mohsin (2002, p. 193) contends that the very ideas of a Bengali nation and a Jumma nation are hegemonic constructions: one based on a Bengali ethnic group, the other on the Chakma. Hence, the notion that a singular, monolithic Jumma identity unites the diverse ethnic groups of the CHT is problematic. In invoking the notion of a Jumma nation to liberate the indigenous people from Bengali hegemony, the PCJSS itself has imposed Chakma identity on other smaller ethnic groups in the CHT, which, in itself, replicates the imposition of a dominant identity that the state sought to construct (Mohsin 2000, p. 84).

The domination of Chakma identity is further manifest in the local government bodies in the CHT. For example, the *Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council Act* 1998 stipulates that the Regional Council will be composed of twenty four members, of which twelve must be selected from indigenous ethnic groups. The indigenous representatives are to be chosen according to the size of the population of each ethnic group in the region (Raidang 2010,

p. 205). Accordingly, the Act requires selection of five representatives from the Chakma ethnic group, three from Marma, two from Tripura, one from Mro and Tanchangya, and one from the Lusai, Bawm, Pankho, Khumi, Chak and Khiang ethnic groups. An analysis of the distribution of representatives in the Regional Council reveals the dominance of majority ethnic groups in the CHT. The dominant groups, Chakma, Marma, and Tripura, are allotted ten members, with only two members representing the other eight ethnic groups (*Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council Act* 1998). The smaller communities point out that the Regional Council should rightfully be representative of the different communities in the CHT, not just the strength of their populations (Mohsin 2004, p. 60). This call for inclusion in the political space of the Regional Council, is difficult to be realised, given that domination and control of majority ethnic groups prevail inside indigenous political organisations as well.

In terms of leadership of local indigenous political organisations, the PCJSS is overwhelmingly a Chakma-dominated institution, constituted of members from the educated middle class. Additionally, all current indigenous political parties of the CHT are headed by leaders from the Chakma ethnic group. Although people from other ethnic groups, including the Tripura and Marma communities, are also actively involved in these political organisations, the majority of party members belong to the Chakma ethnic group. The participation of smaller ethnic groups, such as Khumi, Mro, Pankhua in these political organisations is negligible, which has ramifications for indigenous political activism in the CHT. The postcolonial politics of indigenous people to a large extent depend on the image of a united, final, uncompromising political agent (Mohanty 1991). However, the historical and political discourses of indigenous activism have mostly failed to explain the particular kind of politicisation (Banerjee 2006, p. 100) and ethnocisation processes that underpin indigenous politics. This is amplified in the case of CHT. The marginalisation of smaller ethnic groups may have resulted in their disassociation from the post-Accord political

process, in terms of a broader engagement in resistance movements against the Bangladesh state to demand implementation of the Peace Accord. The failure to create a political space to include diverse indigenous peoples and concerns has had an adverse impact on indigenous political activism in the CHT, which is discussed later in this chapter.

3.4: Peace-Building Processes in the CHT: Domination, Resistance, and Negotiation

A number of academic studies (Chakma 2010; Mohsin 1995; Yasmin 2014) consider the ethno-nationalist movement in the CHT as a conflict between the Bangladesh state's nationalist project of state building, and the indigenous peoples' resistance of it through ethno-nationalist mobilisation. These studies argue that Bengali nationalism, predicated on the cultural hegemony of Bengali identity, have resulted in the domination of the CHT's indigenous people by Bengali ethnic majority (Mohsin 2010; Yasmin 2014). In these accounts, the state perceives the demand for autonomy in the CHT as a threat to national integration (Chakma 2010, p. 288) and as a national security issue. Consequently, the state increased its military presence in the CHT to counter the armed insurgency (Mohsin 2002, pp. 166-70). The first post-independence Bangladesh government led by Prime Minister Mujibar Rahman from 1971 to 1975 established three full-fledged army garrisons in the CHT. Militarisation of the region was successively expanded during the military regimes of Ziaur Rahman from 1975 to 1981, and Hossain Mohammad Ershad from 1982 to 1990. During this time, the CHT was turned into a 'military garrison', with one soldier to every five or six indigenous people (Levene 1999, p. 354).

The military is one of the most powerful agents of state machinery, and viewed the demands for autonomy by the Hill people as a threat to the state of Bangladesh. This perception was strengthened when the armed wing of Shanti Bahini attacked a Bangladesh army convoy in 1977 (Mohsin 2002, p. 168). As Mohsin (2002, p. 168)

contends, the political problems in the CHT have actually served the vested interests of the military. In the post-liberation period, the new nation state was deliberating the role of the military in the state, and two schools of thought emerged. One group favoured the retention of a traditional army on the pattern of a regular army, modelled on the British army, while the other was in favour of a 'productive army', exemplified by the Peoples' Liberation Army in China (Mohsin 2002, p. 168). While these debates about the role and structure of the army in the newly-formed nation state were taking place, the military élite felt that the government was not interested in the development of defence forces. This perception was substantiated by declining budget allocations for the military. For example, in the 1973-74 Budget, defence spending was around sixteen percent, but this decreased to fifteen percent the following year, and in the subsequent Budget of 1975-76, defence spending dropped to thirteen percent (Mohsin 2002, p. 169). However, successive governments have since increased expenditure on defence. Mohsin (2002, p. 170) therefore argues that the CHT has provided the military with the grounds to argue for increased defence expenditure. In the latest Budget for the 2018-19 fiscal year, the allocation for armed forces was Tk 290.84 billion (equivalent to $UD 3.46 billion in current term), or 6.3 percent of the total yearly budget ('6.3 percent of budget allocated for defence' 2018). The history of armed conflict in the CHT has been a history of rebellion and armed insurgency suppressed by the state's military, which has used this to pressure governments to maintain and even increase defence spending. This pattern of domination and resistance has played out in the CHT in both the pre-and post-Accord periods. However, the state-ethnic relation is not wholly underpinned by a process of domination, but also as negotiation, where development played a very crucial role.

The state-ethnic relation in Bangladesh is mediated by the issue of access to the resources of the state, namely development. Consequently, it is possible to postulate that the ethno-nationalist movement of the indigenous people of the CHT is a struggle

concerned with articulating policies and conditions for regional development. When the first national Budget of Bangladesh in 1973 made no separate budget allocation for the CHT, the CHT representative for indigenous people, MN Larma, protested in Parliament:

> I come from an economically 'backward' region of Bangladesh … in the new state of Bangladesh we had expected a change in our fate … but to our utter dismay this budget has no provision for our development … I do not see any change in our fate … (Parliament Debates 1973, cited in Mohsin 2002, p. 110).

Larma's words show that struggles over resources play an important role in the state-ethnic relation (Chowdhury 2008, p. 74). The government has used both military and development strategies in an attempt to pacify the insurgency, with the military government of Bangladesh led by Ziaur Rahman from 1975 to 1981 linking the insurgency of the indigenous people of the CHT to economic disparity and underdevelopment. Consequently, the government formed the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB) and the Hill District Councils (HDCs) to oversee development in the CHT.

3.4.1: Peace-Building and the Institution of CHTDB and HDCS

In 1973, the government decided to establish an institution for the development of the CHT (Mohsin 2002, p. 120). Accordingly, the CHTDB was set up in 1976 under a Presidential Ordinance, the *Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board Ordinance 1976* to promote peace and development in the region (Chakma 2014, p. 119). The Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP) is one of its flagship projects. Other development initiatives of the CHTDB include the establishment of schools, colleges, roads, and electricity networks to develop the region (Chakma 2014, p. 121). The CHTDB, additionally, was instituted 'to encourage the local participation and decentralisation of decision-making in the preparation and implementation of development programmes' (ADB report 1978, cited in Mohsin 2002, p. 121). However, the Board's composition is centralised, which does not allow for decentralised decision- making. The Board which runs the CHTDB consists of six members: one Chair, one Vice-Chair and four members (*Chittagong Hill Tracts*

Development Board Act 2014). The law stipulates that all members of the Board must be nominated by government, and except for the Chair, the other three members should comprise high-ranking government officials. There is a provision stating that in selecting the Chair of the Board, the government will give priority to an indigenous person. The law also stipulates the establishment of a 'consultative committee', comprising representatives of local government institutions in the CHT and three Circle Chiefs (*Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board Act 2014*). However, the decisions of this committee are not binding upon the Board, so that, in effect, the CHTDB functions as a centralised institution of government.

There have been criticisms of many CHTDB initiatives. The PCJSS, for example, considered several roads constructed by the CHTDB, from Kharachar to Panchari, Dighinala to Chotomerung, Dighinala to Babuchara and from Dighinala to Marishya, to have been built for the strategic purpose of facilitating the easy movement of security forces to the region (Chakma 2014, p. 121). Similarly, the cooperative farming or 'model village' project has been criticised as a tactic for bringing tribal peoples together into camps, and thereby, interrupting indigenous peoples' relationships to their traditional ways of life and Jhum cultivation practices (Chakma 2014, p. 121). In one study, more than 87 percent of indigenous people agreed that the projects of the CHT Board would not change their lot, but merely facilitate an influx of outsiders (Barua 2001, p. 114). The indigenous people, including the PCJSS, have been suspicious of the intentions of the CHTDB's development projects because they were designed by the state. The Peace Accord, however, has brought about some changes in the political situation in the CHT. In the post-Peace Accord and development context of the CHT, the ICDP project offers an opportunity to examine whether changes in the political situation have led to any real change in terms of broader state-ethnic relations, which are discussed more fully in Chapters Five to Eight. The pilot for the ICDP started as a joint collaboration between the government of

Bangladesh and UNICEF on 11 July, 1980, aiming to improve the socio-economic conditions of the CHT people (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2010, p. 11). As pointed out in Chapter One, the first phase of the ICDP started in 1985.

The initiation of the ICDP project in 1980 was a matter of state policy. The particular timing of the initiation of the project in 1980, and its start in 1985 is underpinned by another state intent, to bring about a demographic shift in the CHT by population transfer programme. In 1979, the government amended Rule 34 of the *CHT Manual 1900*, which restricted settlement of CHT lands by non-residents of the region (Mohsin 2002, p. 112), and decided to settle 30,000 landless Bengali families on government-owned land in the CHT. By the end of 1980, about 25,000 Bengali families had been settled, and each family was given five acres of land and provisions to support them for the first few months (Mohsin 2002, p. 112). A second phase of the population transfer programme began in August 1980, with families being granted 2.5 acres of land, and in July 1982, a third phase of resettlement was launched. According to one estimate, around 400,000 Bengalis were transferred to the CHT by 1984 (Mohsin 2002, pp. 112-3). Critics argue that the real intention of the government behind this project was to bring about a demographic change in the region, and to 'colonise' the CHT (Ali 1993, p. 189). Deploying the concept of governmentality, as explained in Chapter Two, it can be argued that these two projects illustrate two different forms of governance. The population transfer programme highlights the state's use of bio-power, where the sovereign power of the Bangladesh state aimed to assert control over the CHT by transferring the indigenous people's lands to a preferred ethnic group, and thereby diluting the presence of indigenous people in the region. By contrast, the ICDP project illustrates a second mode of governance in operation, a self-regulatory mode of governance which is framed in concern for the wellbeing of the population living in a particular territory. The latter form aims to regulate the conduct of the

CHT people. It is within this framework of governance that this thesis locates the ICDP as a state intent.

The management of the ICDP indicates that it is the Bangladesh government that exercises administrative control over the project. The management of the ICDP reflects the bureaucratic administrative structure of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has a two-tier administrative system. The upper tier consists of national Ministries and Divisions housed at the Central Secretariat in the capital city, Dhaka. The lower tier consists of 'line' departments, or directorates, which are controlled by the Ministries and Divisions (Ahmed 2002, p. 327). These departments implement various government development programmes and offer basic service provisions, such as health, education, agriculture and so on at district or sub-district level. In the first phase of the ICDP, four committees were established to manage the project. Sitting at the top, at the Ministry level, is the Central Co-ordination Committee. The committee is the top policy-making and management body of the ICDP, and is headed by a Secretary, who is the highest-ranking bureaucrat in charge of a Ministry or Division in Bangladesh. The other three committees are represented by three administrative tiers in the district where the project is implemented: the district headquarters level, the upazila level, and the mouza level. The district headquarters level is represented by the Project Advisory Committee, while the Project Coordination Committee is located at the *Thana* (sub-district) level; the Project Implementation Committee is administered at the mouza level (second-lowest administrative tier), and this committee is directly involved with project participants in the project's implementation (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 21). Each committee is headed by the administrative head of a district or sub-district. In the second phase of the project, three co-ordination committees were responsible for the management of the project: an Upazilla Coordination Committee, a District Coordination Committee, and a Central Coordination Committee. As the project shifted from a mouza level service delivery

approach to a *para* (village) level approach in its second phase, the mouza level committee was abandoned. Accordingly, the project implementation committee was replaced with a Para Centre Management Committee (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2010, p. 17).

UNICEF has been directly involved in the implementation of the project at the district and Upazila levels. It is also associated with the project at the top level, in which the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, UNICEF, and ICDP jointly prepare the annual work plan, and conduct six-monthly progress reviews. Although the ICDP is structured as a hybrid project, with involvement by both the government and UNICEF, administrative control of the project largely remains in the hands of government. For example, UNICEF officials and staff are monitored by three monitoring committees, headed by high-ranking government officials. This highlights my previous contention that the project operates as a form of state intent.

During the 1980s, governments continued to use development measures to deal with the CHT 'problem'. For example, the government declared the CHT a 'Special Economic Area' in August 1985, with the goal to integrate indigenous people into mainstream economic activities (Chowdhury 2002, p. 8). It decided to establish cottage industries, provide incentives to entrepreneurs, and develop agriculture in the region. Special incentives included tax relief for small cottage industries, exemption of fees for imported capital machinery, reduction of interest on bank loans, and a tax 'holiday' for twelve years (Mohsin 2002, p. 132). The CHT people, however, did not benefit from these measures because indigenous people lacked the capital and business skills to take advantage of these provisions.

A further effort by government was the establishment of local government institutions in the CHT, the Hill District Councils (HDC) in 1989. Three Local Government Councils were

established in Rangamati, Khagrachari, and Bandarban (Chowdhury 2002, p. 8). The HDCs are local government bodies and function as regional hubs for administration and development activities in the CHT (Chakma 2014, p. 128). They are responsible for running the different government departments transferred to the Councils during the pre- and post-Accord period. Prior to the Peace Accord, a total of nine departments were handed to the HDCs. The Ershad Government transferred three government departments to the councils: Health and Family Planning, Primary Education, and Agriculture Extension (Chakma 2014, p. 127). From 1991 to 1996, several more departments were transferred: the Co-operative and Social Welfare Department; District Sports Office; Public Health and Engineering Department; Social Welfare; Small and Cottage Industries; Tribal Cultural Institute; Livestock and Fisheries: Public Library; and Shilpakala Academy. Under the terms of the Peace Accord, a total of 33 agencies were supposed to be transferred from the Ministries to the HDCs, but by 2012, only 12 departments had been transferred (Chakma 2014, p. 128). Key departments yet to be transferred include the Department of Police, the Department of Forests, and the Department of Land (Tuhin & Olsen 2015, p. 71). Hence, for some critics, the HDCs do not offer an effective system for the administrative devolution of power (Chakma 2014, p. 129). The Councils are dependent on central government funding, as they have little capacity to generate their own revenue (Tuhin & Olsen 2015, p. 71). Further, while some government departments have been transferred, administrative control of the departments lies with the central Ministries in the capital city, Dhaka. Hence, the HDCs have little administrative control over the departments being handed over to them. Additionally, the formation of a local law enforcement force, or local police, which was stipulated in Section 34(c) of the Peace Accord for maintenance of district law and order, is yet to be fulfilled. Departments responsible for land and forest administration and management in the hill districts are also yet to be transferred (Chakma 2014, p. 129). In addition, the three HDCs do not yet

function as autonomous bodies composed of elected representatives as agreed in the Peace Accord. As governments are still appointing the Chairs and representatives of the HDCs according to their political alignment, the Councils work like an extension of government administration units and cannot exercise the autonomy to work for the interests of the indigenous people who they represent (Rahman 2012, pp. 224-5). Hence, the HDCs are not as effective as envisioned in the Peace Accord in terms of their capacity to monitor development projects, and, in turn, to play a key role in the overall development of the region.

In addition to the various development initiatives discussed above, the government has also undertaken a range of political initiatives to solve the CHT problem, one of the most important being the declaration of four general amnesties. As a result, some 2,294 rebels surrendered and 30,390 indigenous people returned from camps across the border (al Sajib & Sohad 2018, p. 263). The government led by Khaleda Zia declared a general amnesty for insurgents, and additionally offered cash reward to surrender their arms. In July 1992, the government appointed a nine-member, multi-party Parliamentary Committee to directly negotiate with the PCJSS. By 1995, as a result of these negotiations an agreement between the government and the PCJSS was almost reached, but two issues posed obstacles: the form that regional autonomy would take in the CHT, and the PCJSS's demand for withdrawal of Bengali settlers. On 30 September 1996, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina appointed an eleven-member National Committee, led by Abul Hasnat Abdullah, the Chief Whip of the Bangladeshi Parliament. The only objective for the Committee was to find a 'permanent political solution within the framework of the state sovereignty of Bangladesh' (al Sajib & Sohad 2018, p. 263). Finally, after two decades of bloody conflict, the PCJSS and the Bangladesh state reached an understanding and

signed the CHT Accord[4] on 2 December, 1997. Although it was hoped that the agreement would bring peace in the CHT, it has not fully met the expectations of indigenous people for self-rule and recognition of their cultures and traditions (al Sajib & Sohad 2018, p. 263).

An analysis of the history of the ethno-nationalist movement of the indigenous people of the CHT and the state's response to it suggests it has taken the form of a dialectic process, characterised by concessions from both the government and the PCJSS leadership. The PCJSS moved from its earlier demand for 'provincial autonomy' to 'regional autonomy', and endeavoured to find a 'permanent political solution within the framework of the state sovereignty of Bangladesh' (Chowdhury 2002, p. 8). Chowdhury (2008, p. 68) offers a useful analysis of this change in the PCJSS's demands. Through an analysis of PCJSS political programmes, he suggests that until the mid-1980s, the PCJSS's main political demand was 'independence' for the CHT (Chowdhury 2008, p. 68). In 1985, the PCJSS had entered into negotiations with the government, and submitted five demands centring on 'provincial autonomy'. However, in 1988 during negotiations with the government, it departed from its earlier demand for 'provincial autonomy' of the CHT and supplanted it with 'regional autonomy', because the government viewed 'provincial autonomy' as secessionist (Chowdhury 2008, p. 68). Although the terms 'provincial autonomy' and 'regional autonomy' may seem similar, the main difference is that agreeing to accept 'regional autonomy' for the PCJSS meant settling for autonomy without a separate legislature. Thus, by modifying this political demand, the PCJSS rearticulated its position and claims to regional autonomy in the CHT (Chowdhury 2008, p. 68). In the Preamble to the Peace Accord, the PCJSS leaders also committed to the 'national integrity' of Bangladesh (Rashiduzzaman 1998, p. 656), agreeing to work within the structures of the state. These processes of dialogue and negotiation between the

[4] *CHT Accord 1997* (popularly known as the Peace Accord) is an agreement between the National Committee Concerning the Chittagong Hill Tracts instituted by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samity, Bangladesh

government and PCJSS leadership eventually led to the signing of the Peace Accord in 1997.

3.5: The Peace Accord of 1997: Hope, Disillusionment and Intra-ethnic Violence

The Peace Accord detailed several provisions for political autonomy in the region, including devolution of power to the HDCs and the creation of Regional Councils and the Ministry of CHT; formation of a land commission to deal with land related conflicts; acknowledgement of the CHT as a 'tribal' area; and withdrawal of military forces from the CHT, except for permanent military establishments (Jamil, Ishtiaq & Panday 2008, p. 471). Some scholars have interpreted these institutional provisions as a move towards indigenous self-government and autonomy in the region (Chakma 2014, p. 126; Rashiduzzaman 1998, p. 656), with the most significant of these provisions being the establishment of the Regional Council. The ethno-nationalist movement led by the PCJSS was, in essence, a demand for self-government of, or political autonomy in, the region. To achieve this, it envisioned merging the three administrative districts of Khagrachari, Rangamati and Bandarban into one administrative unit, and institution of an autonomous Regional Council to administer the region (Mohsin 2004, p. 53). Accordingly, after the Peace Accord was signed, the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council was established under the *Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council Act 1998*. It was envisioned as the apex administrative body, responsible for general administration and development and supervision of the three HDCs (Mohsin 2004, p. 56). Since its establishment, former leader of the PCJSS, Santu Larma, has served in the role of Chair. Although it was formed to operate in the spirit of the Accord, it does not work as mandated in the agreement. For example, the Regional Council was formed to coordinate and supervise matters related to general administration, law and order, and development. However, this 'apex' body has

not been given the authority by government to oversee the HDCs and coordinate their development activities (clause C-9, *CHT Accord 1997*), suggesting it is subordinated to the central government, rather than being genuinely autonomous (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 21; Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs 2015, p. 9). Further, district administration, police, and development authorities have been performing their functions and ignoring the Regional Council's authority (Chowdhury 2002, p. 20). Similarly, under the Peace Accord, the Regional Council was to exercise administrative control over the three HDCs, but in effect, the Council is not autonomous itself. Moreover, these HDCs, with government's implicit support, have opposed or did not cooperate with the Regional Council (Chowdhury 2002, p. 20). Therefore, Adnan and Dastidar (2011, p. 21) assert that the Regional Council has been kept largely ineffective by government, as it is yet to approve necessary amendments to its Rules of Business and other laws (clause A-2) stipulated in the *CHT Accord 1997* (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 21). In addition, the government did not consult with the Regional Council when ratifying laws for the CHT, despite this being a requirement of the Accord (clause C-13, *CHT Accord 1997*). Exemplifying this, prior to the enactment of the law for establishing the CHT Land Commission in 2001, the very Awami League government that signed the Accord did not consult with the Regional Council (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 22). Similarly, the CHTDB, the main government agency established to oversee development in the CHT, was to discharge its duties under the 'general and overall supervision' of the Regional Council (Chowdhury 2002, p. 20). However, the CHTDB remains under the full control of the government (*Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board Act 2014)*. The Regional Council also lacks the authority to monitor the activities of the CHTDB because the government did not formalise the necessary administrative orders (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 22). Essentially, the Regional Council of the CHT has been left 'stranded' by the government. For this reason, it is unable to work as mandated in the Peace Accord or to fulfil the expectations of the

indigenous people it was formed to represent (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 22). Accordingly, local autonomy, or more precisely, indigenous autonomy in the CHT, remains unfulfilled by the Accord as a result of the government's subsequent failure to implement in full the very terms that underpin it.

3.5.1: Land Commission: Further Disillusionment

Another key provision of the Peace Accord was the establishment of a Land Commission to settle land disputes in the CHT, which is the main source of conflict between indigenous and non-indigenous people (Mohsin 2010, p. 125). The expectation was that the Commission would be able to provide resolution of land disputes relating to land (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 23). To institute a Land Commission, the government enacted the *Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Dispute Settlement Commission Act 2001*. The Act provides for a five-member Land Commission, headed by a retired Justice of the Supreme Court. Other members of the Commission include the Chair of the Regional Council or a nominated representative, Chairs of each HDC, a Circle Chief[5] from the relevant Circle, and the Divisional Commissioner of the Chittagong Division[6], or nominated representative (*Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Dispute Settlement Commission Act 2001*). There have been criticisms that the Act differs significantly from the original provisions of Land Commission specified in clause D-4 to D-6 of the *CHT Accord 1997* (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 23). As per the provisions of the Act, of the five members of the Commission, three members must be indigenous. The Act (clause 7-5, *CHT Accord 1997*) gives the Chair unilateral power to make decisions on behalf of the entire Land Commission in the event that its members cannot reach an agreement. This enables exercise of power by the Chair, while suppressing the voices and rights of other members of the Commission, particularly

[5] According to *CHT Regulation 1900*, the CHT is divided into three circles, and each circle was placed under the jurisdiction of a community Chief also called 'Circle Chef' who was responsible for collecting revenues and managing social order (Chakma 2010, p. 284).

[6] For administrative purposes, Bangladesh is divided into seven divisions. A Division constitutes several administrative districts. The Divisional Commissioner is the highest-ranked administrative official in a Division.

indigenous representatives (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 113). In recognition of this problem, the Regional Council proposed a list of 23 amendments to the Act (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 24). Despite various inter-ministerial meetings on this issue and reports that the government had reached an agreement, it delayed legislating the Regional Council's proposed amendments in 2001 (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 113). Then, the government lost the election, and the subsequent government failed to address these concerns. In 2009, when Awami League returned to power, it reactivated the Commission (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 24), appointing Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury as Commission Chair on July 19 (Chakma & Roy 2011). Disagreements between the Chair and indigenous leaders arose when Khademul proposed to carry out a land survey of the CHT. Indigenous leaders contended that the existing land disputes needed to be resolved before the land survey took place, as it would make determining land ownership difficult (Chakma & Roy 2011). There have been further criticisms that Khademul, a Bengali, has avoided working with the indigenous members of the Land Commission, causing resentment among the hill people (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 24). All sections of the indigenous population severely opposed and criticised the activities of the Chair of Land Commission. Consequently, the government was forced to suspend all activities of the Land Commission in December 2010 until the Act had been duly rectified (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 20). After delays of many years, the government finally passed The *Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Dispute Resolution Commission (Amendment) Act* 2016 (Mamun 2016). The new law requires the Chair to make decisions on the basis of a majority vote cast by Commission members in its meetings (Mamun 2016). Despite these amendments, the Land Commission is still ineffective. In practice, it is not functioning due to the absence of a set of rules needed in accordance with the amendments to the Act in 2016. The government is yet to appoint a new Chair of the Commission, and this situation

has been in place since September 6, 2017 (Alamgir 2017). As the PCJSS president Santu Larma, a member of the Commission, commented:

> We do not see any initiative to appoint a new chairman ... the government is yet to frame the rules under the amended act although the Commission submitted draft rules on January 1 … the Commission is yet to start hearing the land disputes in absence of the rules (Alamgir 2017).

The role of the Land Commission is pivotal to resolve the legal, economic, and political conflicts in the CHT, which primarily arises from dispute over land rights (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 23). However, due to many deadlocks and disagreements, the Land Commission is unable to resolve the land issues in the CHT.

3.5.2: Aftermath of the Peace Accord: Conflict among Indigenous People

As the most significant and substantive clauses of the Peace Accord remain unimplemented twenty years after its signing, frustration and disillusionment has increased among the indigenous peoples (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 20). The Accord has been successful to the extent that it ended more than two decades of armed insurgency in the CHT, but it has failed to bring peace and provide justice to the hill people (Mohsin 2010, p. 123). There has been scholarly examination of the Peace Accord and the reasons for this impasse. Nasir Uddin (2012, p. 200), for example, argues that the basic failure of the Accord, despite its stress on conflict management and peace-building, has been that it did not involve the indigenous masses, only included dominant political élites from the Chakma, Marma and Tripura communities. As a result, other indigenous groups gradually began to recognise that the Accord did not bring peace for them, but instead, had resulted in the gaining of power and position for a few leaders of the Chakma, Marma and Tripura ethnic groups, namely the Chair and members of the HDCs. In this regard, al Sajib and Sohad (2018, p. 271) argue that the state did not include common people in the peace-building process, and beyond its dealings with these local political élites. In essence, the Accord took the form of a ‘bilateral contract between dominant ethnic groups and the

state', which excluded a large number of ethnic groups in the CHT. Consequently, it has not been representative of the indigenous people irrespective of their ethnicity (al Sajib & Sohad 2018, p. 271). Similarly, Devasish Roy (2012, p. 98) asserts that a lack of transparency and democracy in the negotiation process has resulted in the current impasse. In the case of the CHT peace process, concerns were raised that the process of negotiation between the PCJSS and the government, which was secretive and non-inclusive. Some indigenous communities with relatively small populations have complained that the PCJSS did not consult them in a substantive manner, nor consider their wishes, as regards their representation in the CHT self-government system. They feel that this is reflected in non-representation and underrepresentation of their groups in the District and Regional Councils (Roy 2012, p. 98). A section of indigenous society living in the urban areas and peri-urban settlements of the CHT has also raised similar concerns. Conversely, on the side of the government, there have been complaints that the issue was not adequately debated in the national Parliament nor discussed in wider civil society. Roy suggests a more inclusive process of consultation by the PCJSS may well have led to wider support for the 1997 Accord among the indigenous people (Roy 2012, p. 98). In light of these criticisms, the CHT Peace Accord reflects an 'élitist' and 'top-down' implementation process driven by the political party in power from the state capital, Dhaka (Jamil & Panday 2012, p. 481). The entire process of negotiation with the PCJSS leading to the Peace Accord was shrouded in secrecy, and it was not brought under public scrutiny. The process made no scope to accommodate different opinions and arguments. Consequently, there was no consensus regarding the Accord among political parties at the national level, and also in the CHT, it failed to build trust among the factional groups (Jamil & Panday 2012, p. 481). Additionally, the Accord was not well accepted by the Bengali settlers in the CHT, who sided with the major political party, the Bangladesh National Party (Jamil & Panday 2012, p. 482). Non-implementation of the Accord has created frustration

among indigenous people, resulting in factions within the parties, disunity and a resurgence of conflict that led to the brutal killing of each other's members. This has created a pessimistic atmosphere regarding prospects for peace in the CHT. According to Amena Mohsin (2003, p. 59), '[f]rustration, resentment, anger, and to a certain extent, feelings of helplessness and entrapment are pervasive among the hill people in the post-Accord CHT'.

Currently, there are four political parties representing indigenous people in the CHT: the PCJSS, the PCJSS (MN Larma), the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) and the UPDF (Democratic Party). During the pre-Accord period, the PCJSS, led by Santu Larma, was the only political party representing the indigenous people of the CHT. The PCJSS is now divided into a few smaller political groups (al Sajib & Sohad 2018, p. 270). With regard to the Peace Accord, the political parties are divided into two camps: pro-Peace Accordists and anti-Peace Accordists. These groupings emerged during the process of peace negotiations. While the government mainly negotiated with the PCJSS, a section of the PCJSS opposed the process on the grounds that the Accord did not provide constitutional safeguards, and nor would it force repatriation of government-sponsored Bengali settlers back to the plains (Roy 2012, p. 71).

After the Accord's signing, breakaway sections of the PCJSS, Shanti Bahini, and women's and student associations also opposed the Accord (Adnan & Dastidar 2011, p. 13), forming the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) in 1998. Due to frustrations resulting from the non-implementation of the Accord and a lack of democratic practices within the two main political parties, PCJSS and UPDF, there has been growing dissatisfaction among party members. The younger generation of indigenous people have begun to question about the indigenous leaders' role in the 'negotiation and signing' of the Accord. They have accused the PCJSS leaders of 'selling out' the Hill Tracts and the spirit of 'indigenous nationhood' in place of the so-called Peace Accord, which actually has not

brought peace or justice to indigenous people (al Sajib & Sohad 2018, p. 271). This resentment and frustration has resulted in the forming of new political parties. In 2010, the PCJSS again split, and two of its prominent leaders, Rupayan Dewan and Sudha Sindhu Khisa, formed a new political party, named PCJSS (MN Larma). This party continues to support the Accord. The newest political party was formed on November 2017, calling itself UPDF (Democratic), which is a faction of UPDF (Saha 2018).

This intra-indigenous conflict weakens the indigenous people's cause in a number of ways. Illegal 'toll' payments are collected from businesses, locals and employees by the regional political groups (Acharjee 2017). Intra-indigenous violence and extortion have not only increased the suffering of indigenous people of the CHT, but more importantly, have weakened their negotiating power with the Bangladesh Government for full-implementation of the terms of the Accord. The latest incident of violence occurred on 3 May 2018, when Shaktiman Chakma, the leader of PCJSS (Larma) was gunned down on his way to work (Dhar 2018). In an immediate reaction, his party accused the rival political platform, the UPDF, of his assassination. Just a day after the killing of Shaktiman Chakma, another five political activists were shot dead in the hill districts as they were headed to Shaktiman's funeral (Chakma, Barua & Dewan 2018).

As Kapoor observes, the state plays a crucial role in Third World politics (Kapoor 2008, p. 116). Bangladesh, despite three and a half decades of independence, has a fragile democracy and continues to be plagued by weak institutions, lack of political accountability, and more recently, authoritarian rule (Kukreja 2008, p. 105). Since gaining power in 2008, the current government of Bangladesh has gradually veered towards authoritarian rule. For example, faced with political opposition, it took various authoritarian measures to silence its opposition and critics. These measures include imposition of numerous restrictions on media, pressing of charges of terrorism to targeting its political opponents (Landry 2016). The current disarray in the political parties of the CHT points to

the dangers of positing a stable subject whose intentions and moral consciousness are translated into a transparent political strategy to deal with an oppressor (Kapoor 2008, pp. 124, 145). The implications of this conflict among indigenous leaders in the CHT, and the capacity of indigenous peoples to exercise agency, is detailed in Chapter Eight.

3.6: Conclusion

This chapter has traced the shifts in the relationship between the Bangladesh state and indigenous people of the CHT, drawing on the political and development history of the region. It highlights the alterations and variations in the relationship as a result of changes in the broader political structure, to show how they are mutually imbricated. An analysis of pre-Accord relations has illustrated that the period was primarily marked by efforts to consolidate nationalism, on the parts of both the Bangladesh state and indigenous people. The indigenous peoples' political movement, as articulated in Jumma nationalism, was the result of the government's state-building aspirations, its concerns about territorial integrity, and its efforts to consolidate itself as a new nation state. Similarly, indigenous peoples' mobilisation is illustrative of counter-nationalism. Jumma nationalism was premised on an imagined collective identity for the indigenous people of the CHT, and concerned with achieving indigenous autonomy for the CHT region. In essence, CHT leaders also articulated their political aspirations in nationalist and statist terms. Therefore, both Bengali nationalism and Jumma nationalism are mirror-images of each other. However, within these apparently oppositional stances, there have been negotiations and accommodations by both the Bangladesh state, and the PCJSS, the political party representing indigenous peoples' political aspirations. A key aspect of the negotiations has been contention over state resources and access to development. Indigenous peoples' demand for autonomy was also concerned with making a claim on the state for a share of its resources. As this chapter has shown, the Regional Council was established as the apex administrative body

of the CHT in response to indigenous demands, with control over the local government bodies, the HDCs, to oversee development activities in the CHT. The state has therefore used development, through the formation of the CHTDB and HDCs, to pacify the ethno-nationalist movement. Development is an important arena in the struggle for recognition of indigenous rights and indigenous identity in the CHT.

The region saw the end of armed conflict with the signing of the Peace Accord in 1997. In agreeing to the Accord, the PCJSS moved from its initial secessionist demands to assert its right to self-determination in the form of regional autonomy within the structures of Bangladesh state sovereignty. This highlights that indigenous peoples' resistance needs to be understood not only in terms of opposition to the state, but also as a process of reworking within, and of, state structures. This understanding of indigenous resistance is discussed in detail in Chapter Eight. The post-Accord phase marks another shift in the state-society relation. The pre-Accord conflict between the Bangladesh state and the indigenous people have changed to take the form of internal conflicts among indigenous peoples themselves in the post-Accord phase. The lack of implementation of the Peace Accord has resulted in the splintering of the main indigenous peoples' political party into multiple parties. This has placed the Bangladesh state in an advantageous position, as this disunity weakens indigenous people's bargaining power. With the consolidation of power by the Bangladesh state, the future does not hold much promise for the indigenous people in terms of forcing the state to implement the Peace Accord in full. The broader political situation remains dismal for the indigenous people, as manifest in the bypassing of the Regional Council, and political manipulation of HDCs by the government. However, the stalemate over the Land Commission resulting in the government acceding to the demands of the PCJSS illustrates that the state still has to take into account the concerns expressed by the indigenous political parties of the CHT. From a postcolonial perspective, the current disarray in indigenous political activism necessitates a closer analysis of the

state-ethnic relation, and in particular, of indigenous political movements. In this endeavour, this chapter has offered a nuanced understanding of the relations between the Bangladesh state and indigenous people, and of indigenous political activism in the region. I will return to these concerns in Chapter Eight, to offer a critical examination of the concept of indigenous agency. Before this, is it necessary to discuss the theoretical grounding that underpins my examination of indigenous political activism as a means to rework the state-ethnic relation and to explore the shift in relations between the Bangladesh state and indigenous people. Chapter Four provides the theoretical and methodological underpinnings for this discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1: Introduction

This chapter provides details of the theoretical and methodological framework of the present research. Methodology, understood as a theoretically informed approach to construct data, cannot be separated from theoretical assumptions (Stanley 2004, p. 69). The epistemological viewpoint about an enquiry, the theoretical approach and the subsequent choice of strategies, define the overarching framework of a study design in a research. This chapter provides the rationale for employing the postcolonial theoretical lens, discussed in chapter two, to study the state-ethnic relation in Bangladesh, and also how this theoretical framework has informed the selection of methods, subsequent data gathering and analysis in the present study.

4.2: Social Constructionism and a Postcolonial Approach

This research project proceeds within the social constructionist paradigm as a qualitative study of a development project and its impacts on indigenous people, and therefore uses critical theory as a framework for analysis (Kincheloe & McLaren 2000, p. 279). The constructionist paradigm considers both the social and historical contexts as well as race, class, religion and other dynamics to argue that their operations and intersections constitute a particular social structure and experience (Kincheloe & McLaren 2000, pp. 280-1). The starting point for this type of critical interrogation is the ordinary, day-to-day lives of the people (Kirkham & Anderson 2002, p. 11). In line with this approach, my project is concerned with the indigenous peoples' everyday experience in the context of the ICDP.

In seeking to understand indigenous peoples' experience, the study does not seek to explain this by means of a 'singular, objective, empirically valid, universal truth' (Taylor & Ussher 2001, p. 295). Rather, this thesis discards the notion that a complex phenomenon such as the impact of the ICDP on the indigenous people of the CHT may be explained by outlining to 'a unitary … and rational underlying pattern' (Taylor & Ussher 2001, p. 295) that structures the processes that operate in the CHT. Instead, this thesis aims to emphasise the multiple, interrelated, subjective, and even oppositional understandings (Ussher 2000) that construct the reality of life for indigenous people. The understanding that reality is constructed (Berger & Luckmann 1991, p. 30) and that truth is multiple and subjective (Taylor & Ussher 2001, p. 295) constitutes the core epistemological foundation of this thesis.

This research aims to analyse how the state-ethnic relation in Bangladesh structures development, examining development interventions by the government to assess their ability to enhance indigenous people's capacity to change or transform these relations. I offer a critical reading of the ICDP based in a postcolonial perspective. Postcolonialism is concerned with the cultural, political and material effects of colonialism (McEwan 2009, p. 251), so that raising questions about the political relationship between peoples who have experienced modernity through such programmes is a central concern (McEwan 2009, p. 255). Further, I engage with the problem of the state-ethnic relation not by considering the 'big' events, such as ethnic conflict or the assessment of a Peace Accord in the CHT, but through an analysis of lesser but more immediate material concerns created by the impacts of the development project on the everyday lives of indigenous people. In so doing, I note the key critique of postcolonialism: that it neglects important material concerns such as poverty and health (Kapoor 2008, p. 17). This research is focussed on the institutional practices of the government of Bangladesh which were aimed at achieving better lives and development for the indigenous people of the CHT.

Research is ideologically motivated and no research is free of bias (Holliday 2007, p. 53). As Collins asserts, being explicit about one's epistemological assumptions is not sufficient; rather, 'the process by which we arrive at truth' deserves scrutiny (Collins 2000, p. 18). Being upfront about one's subjectivity, to identify one's 'personal, professional, and structural locations' (Shope 2006, p. 163) is the first step for others to see how we reach an understanding of a particular phenomenon. As Gayatri Spivak (1993, p. 60) puts it, one cannot act from 'outside' since we are always already embedded within structures such as discourse and institutions. Therefore, I acknowledge that the themes that I revisit reflect my own social location as a Southern middle class researcher, and as a person of indigenous origin with academic training in Development Studies.

Further, I am alert to the fact that the language I use to write is not an impartial research tool, but rather a vehicle of 'representation that reinscribes power relations' (Shope 2006, p. 167). Speaking of language, Heugh (2000, p. 25) writes, in relation to post-apartheid South Africa, '[t]he languages of our thoughts and dreams are for the most part, languages other than English. Yet if we wish to have our own thoughts heard and noticed, inevitably we have to convert them into English — if we can'. The likelihood of hearing about indigenous people of the CHT outside Bangladesh in a language other than English is remote. I hope my project will contribute to circulating the accounts of the CHT people. I have aimed to accommodate the multiple and varied perspectives of the indigenous people of the CHT, and this aim is reflected in the design of my project, discussed later in the chapter. From the selection of sites for data collection to the choice of research methods and application, I have tried to accommodate multiple viewpoints. Their perspectives are essential to challenge the dominant narrative of indigenous people as 'authentic', 'heroic', and possessing a single consciousness (Kapoor 2004, p. 638) or shared experience of colonialism (Kirkham & Anderson 2002, p. 6).

While acknowledging my indigenous and Southern background, I do not claim to be a 'native informant' of the CHT, because belonging to an ethnic minority or postcolonial identity does not necessarily qualify me as a subaltern (Spivak 1999, p. 310). Referring to class difference, Spivak points out that 'there is an internal line of cultural difference within the "same culture"' (Kapoor 2004, p. 630; Sharpe & Spivak 2003, p. 618). The native informant might be a qualified investigator, but she or he can wear 'ethnicity as a badge' (Spivak 1993, p. 9). The danger is to essentialise one's ethnic identity yielding to a reverse ethnocentrism. However, through her 'unremitting exposure of complicity', Spivak has been criticised for 'paralysing' the academic (Varadharajan 1995, p. 89). Spivak defends her position by affirming that she 'question[s] the authority of the investigating subject without paralysing him', while the deconstruction and reflexivity she advocates aim to inform better research practice (Spivak 1987, p. 201). In agreement with Spivak, I take the position that being reflexive about the research process keeps us authentic about our claims and the limits of our knowing. However, reflexivity does not eliminate the issue of unequal power in the researcher-participant relationship, which is inherent in the research process.

I recognise that power differentials exist between me and my research participants. I further accept that my encounters with, and representations of, the indigenous people of the CHT are framed by the analytic lens of postcolonialism and by the highly stylised academic conventions of a PhD research project. Further, as a researcher, it is I who hold the final interpretive authority, and this places me in a position of unequal power. Scholars may now call our participants 'research partners', but this does not by itself disrupt the unequal power relation (Kapoor 2004, p. 629). As Kapoor (2004, p. 629) points out, 'good intentions or semantics' cannot change this relation, and this knowledge-power dilemma cannot be eluded by simply invoking reflexivity (Wasserfall 1997). Related to this dilemma is the issue of 'theoretical imposition'.

Postcolonial scholarship is marked by a robust 'research-theory dialectic' (Kirkham & Anderson 2002, p. 15), in which the postcolonial approach scrutinises 'the context in which each life is situated, and explores how race, class, gender and "historical positioning" intersect to organize/construct social experience' (Kirkham & Anderson 2002, p. 15). There is a caveat here. Since postcolonial theory takes race and power as pre-existing meta-themes, there is a risk of theoretical imposition (Kirkham & Anderson 2002, p. 10). The question is how to mediate between the everyday, local nature of reality of the people and postcolonial theory's overt political understanding of structural conditions that shape a specific social experience (Kirkham & Anderson 2002, p. 10). It is important to note that these quandaries are not new; there is a rich literature on the dilemmas of fieldwork (Armstead 1995; Behar & Gordon 1995; Wolfe 1996). The pertinent question is how we respond to these dilemmas. Lather (1991, p. 62) proposes the need to allow the data to produce 'propositions in a dialectical manner that permits use of a priori theoretical frameworks, but which keeps a particular framework from becoming the container into which the data must be poured'. Additionally, taking my cue from Kirkham and Anderson (2002, p. 10), I suggest that a solution lies in questioning the presumed assumptions and practices in the researcher/researched relation by keeping a 'tentativeness in our interpretations, allowing … tensions to remain between the interpretations of participants and researchers' (Kirkham & Anderson 2002, p. 11). In the end, the researcher needs to adopt a reflexive stance in probing the particular tension between theory and research (Kirkham & Anderson 2002, p. 11). It is through adopting these postcolonial considerations that, this research project was conducted.

4.3: Qualitative Research Design

What is significant about a postcolonial approach is that there are no specific methods or techniques for data collection or data analysis as such in a postcolonial perspective. Depending on the focus of the inquiry, various techniques can be used (Kirkham &

Anderson 2002, p. 14). In studying the experience of postcolonialism, qualitative methods have been used (Sherry 2008, pp. 654-5). Concurrently, in this study, I employ a qualitative approach as it offers an 'insight into how people make sense of their experiences' (Liamputtong 2013, p. xi), which is pertinent because this study explores indigenous people's experience of accessing the education and health services provided by the ICDP project. Thus, a qualitative research approach is best suited to collect information on how they make sense of their experience of the ICDP development programme. As Berg (2001, pp. 6-7) explains:

> Qualitative research properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings. Qualitative researchers, then, are more interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings.

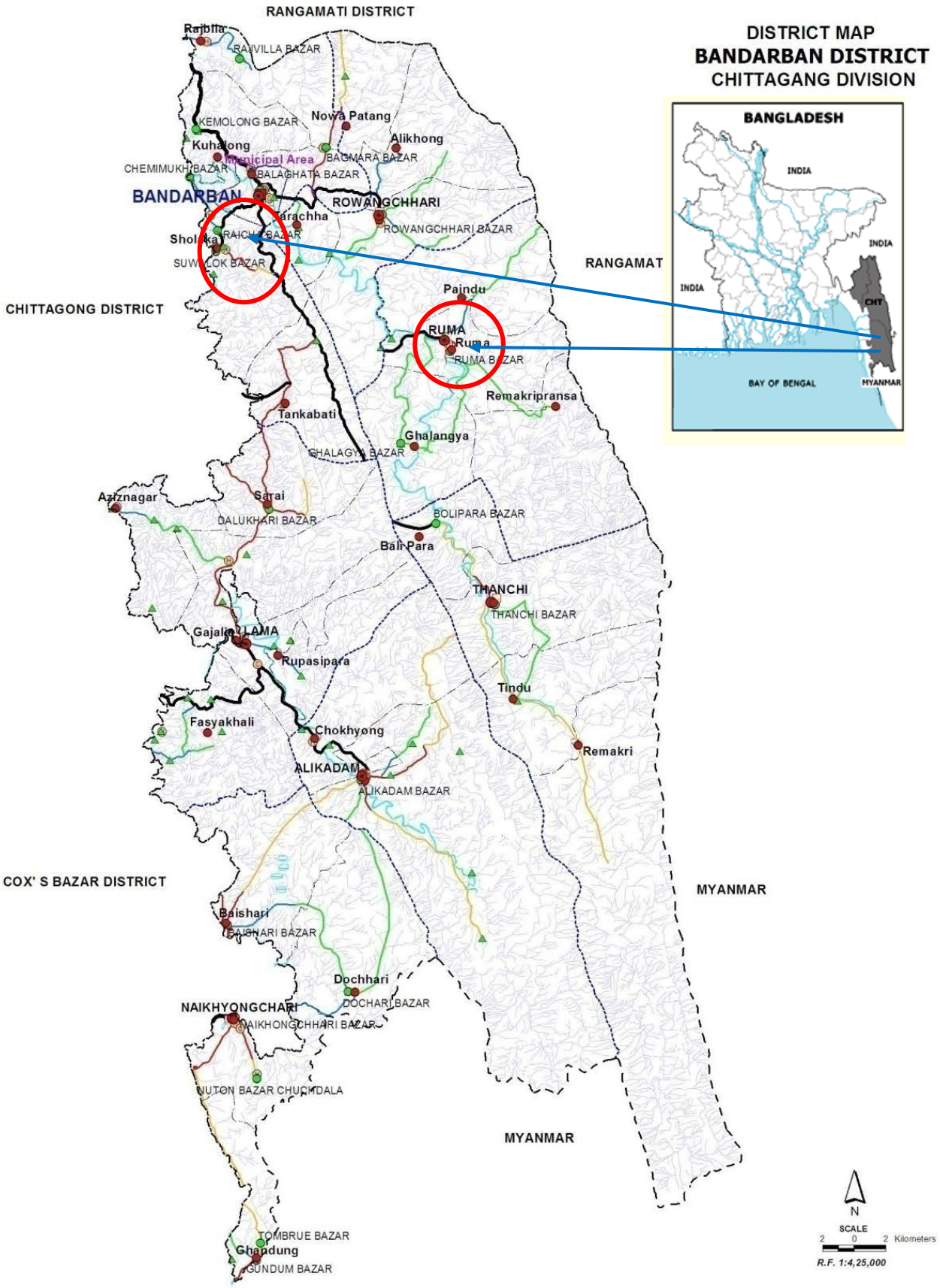
The qualitative study design of the present research consisted of data gathering methods of document analysis, in-depth interview and focus group discussion. In this regard, it is important to point out that this research does not seek to combine document analysis, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions for the purpose of confirmation, which may unintentionally lead to an 'erroneous hierarchy of evidence, where one method is judged to yield more ''accurate'' findings than the other' (Barbour 1998), or is expected to corroborate the findings of other methods (Lambert & Loiselle 2008, p. 230). Further, combination of data collection methods for confirmation assumes that there is a 'reality on which it is possible to converge' (Sandelowski 1995, p. 572), a premise that the qualitative paradigm challenges (Lambert & Loiselle 2008, p. 231). The use of various methods, supplementary materials, and perspectives adds both rigour and richness to the results (Denzin & Lincoln 2008, p. 7). At the very least, 'the researcher needs a deep understanding of the context within which members of a group or site experience their lives and generate meanings for the reader to feel confident that the interpretation of results is appropriate' (Rakow 2011, p. 421). In this study, three qualitative methods were

used to achieve richness in data analysis. On the basis of this qualitative design, the field research of the study was carried out in Bandarban district, CHT.

4.3.1: Location of the Study: Bandarban

The ICDP is being implemented in three hill districts of the CHT: Khagrachari, Rangamati and Bandarban. I chose Bandarban as the main site for data collection because it is the only district of the CHT where all eleven ethnic groups live. These are the Marma, Murong, Tripura, Bawm, Tanchangya, Chakma, Chak, Khyang, Khumi, Lushei and Pankho people (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2012). As I note above, I take the position that because ethnic groups of the CHT are not homogeneous, nor are their experiences of development through the ICDP. Hence, in an attempt to listen to the perspectives of various ethnic groups of the CHT, I have located my study in the Bandarban district. I gathered data at two locations in the district: Bandarban district headquarters and Ruma Upazila, located on the periphery of the district. I collected data from two locations to examine whether the location of the project had any effect on the indigenous peoples' experiences of accessing the services of the ICDP. In developing countries like Bangladesh, most projects tend to be located in central towns where communication, transportation and other facilities are available. Usually, the further away the location of a project, the poorer its services. Therefore, it was important to collect and compare data from both sites.

Figure 4.1: Map of Bandarban District (the red circle indicates the location of the study)



Source: Adapted from Adnan and Dastidar (2011, p. xli).

Geographically, the Bandarban district is the most remote area of Bangladesh (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics & Unicef 2010), as its hills and streams create inaccessibility. Mobility is challenging as very few areas have road networks or transport facilities. Even in the Bandarban district headquarters, the transport system is not well developed. People use three main forms types of transport in the district headquarters: *Tomtoms* (a battery operated three-wheeler vehicle), *Mohendras* (four-wheel-drive vehicles) and *Lainer gari* (buses). Each form of transport covers only a restricted area of the district due to the terrain and distance. The *Tomtom,* a vehicle capable of carrying eight people, is the most commonly used transport for short distances in the Bandarban district headquarters. It cannot climb hills and operates only on flat terrain. The four-wheel-drive vehicles mostly carry tourists, who come to Bandarban from the capital city, Dhaka*,* to visit various attractions in the district. The third form of transport is buses, locally known as *'Lainer gari'*, which frequently stop to pick up and drop off people and goods. People use buses to travel to other Upazilas and distant parts of the district. As none of these systems cover all areas of the district, people who live on the outskirts, such as the Mro ethnic group, need to use at least two types of transport to get to the district headquarters. Hence, travel is very time-consuming and expensive in Bandarban.

The other data collection site was Ruma Upazila, which also has problems of inaccessibility. Although there is an asphalt road that connects Ruma Upazila headquarters to the Bandarban district headquarters, there is no public transport within the Ruma Upazila as there are no paved roads within the sub-district. At the time of my fieldwork in March 2016, the asphalt road connecting Ruma Upazila headquarters to the Southern part of the Upazila, Boga Lake, was in the process of being constructed. People mostly walk and a few men ride motorbikes in Ruma Upazila. The absence of a paved

road network makes it difficult for people in other parts of the sub-district to access services in the central town of Ruma Upazila.

4.3.2: Research Participants

My research data constitute ICDP documents, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with three categories of participants: participants of the ICDP, non-ICDP participants, and officials. Focus group discussions were held with both ICDP and non-ICDP participants. ICDP participants were those who chose to access the education and health services of the ICDP through the para (village) centre. By contrast, non-ICDP participants either did not have an ICDP para centre in their village or near their locality, or chose not to access the services of the ICDP para centre. The ICDP project did not have a fixed target group, and its services were open to both indigenous and non-indigenous people. However, 70 percent of project participants were indigenous (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2011). As this thesis examines the relations between the state and indigenous people in the context of development, and specifically the role of the ICDP in assisting indigenous people to (re)negotiate these relations, both the interviews and focus group data were collected only from indigenous ICDP participants.

Further, all semi-structured interviews were conducted in the Bandarban district headquarters. I conducted eight semi-structured interviews with ICDP participants and eight with non-ICDP participants. I also conducted five focus group discussions in total: three with ICDP participants, and two with non-ICDP participants. All focus group discussions were conducted in Ruma Upazila. The ICDP focus group discussions were conducted in Ruma district headquarters, and non-ICDP focus group discussions were located in the *Ruma-Bazaar* district headquarters and *Kamala-Bazaar.* This study was conducted as per the guidelines of ethics approval obtained from the Social and

Behavioural Research Ethics Committee of Flinders University (see Appendix One). The guidelines stipulate that the research participants' anonymity and confidentiality are to be guaranteed. To maintain the confidentiality of research participants, the thesis has used pseudonyms in reporting the findings of this research. Additionally, prior to conducting focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, the information sheet and consent form were explained to research participants, and signatures on the consent forms were duly obtained.

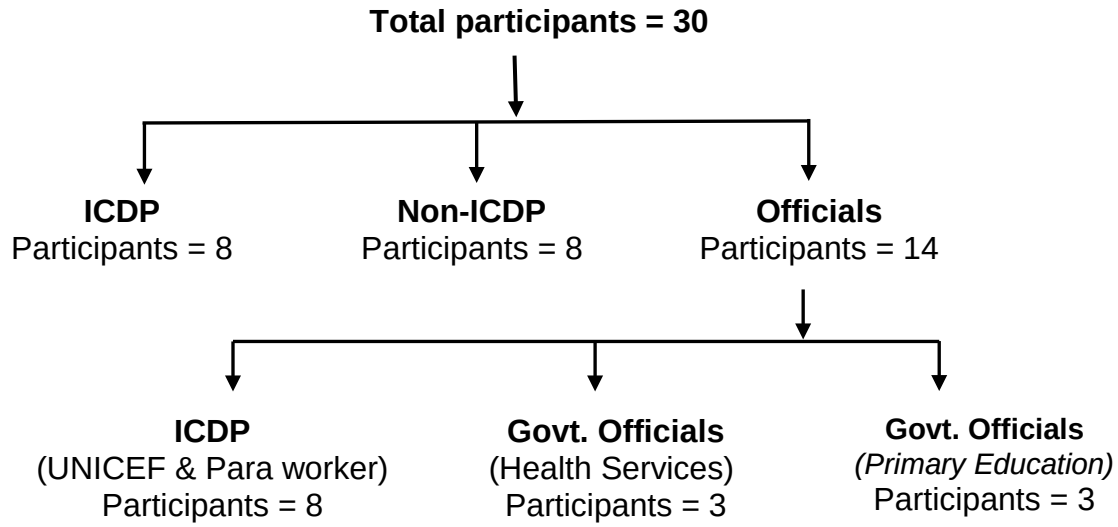
4.3.3: Semi-Structured Interview

The semi-structured interviews were used as the primary means of data collection in this research. An in-depth interview method was selected for this study because it enables the researcher to understand the meanings that people make of their experiences with the ICDP (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005, p. 71). As Michael Patton states:

> [T]he purpose of qualitative interviewing is to understand how the participants see the world, to capture the complexities of their individual perceptions and experiences and enable participants to "express their own understanding in their own terms" (Patton 1990, p. 290).

Further, in keeping with the postcolonial approach, this research project has sought to elicit diverse perspectives on the impacts of the ICDP. Consequently, using a purposive sampling technique, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three categories of participants: ICDP participants, non-ICDP participants, and ICDP officials. The details of the interview participants are elaborated in the flow chart.

Figure 4.2: Semi-structured interview participants



The project participants and ICDP officials were selected for the semi-structured interview because they were directly connected to the project. The ICDP offers two services to project participants, namely education and health services. These are basic service provisions which the government also offers to the people of Bangladesh. Therefore, to get a contrasting perspective, non-ICDP participants were also interviewed about their experiences. The semi-structured interviews with the non-ICDP participants enabled understanding their experience of accessing services through government means. These contrasting perspectives of the ICDP and non-ICDP participants allowed me to assess the impact of the ICDP project on the indigenous people of the CHT. Further, while selecting interview participants, I aimed to accommodate the viewpoints of various ethnic groups of the CHT. Their perspectives were essential to contest the dominant narrative of indigenous people as ‘authentic’, ‘heroic’ or shared experience of both colonialism and development (Kirkham & Anderson 2002, p. 6).

The interviews took place at a mutually agreed place and lasted between one and two hours. The interviews took time to conduct because most could not be recorded. I had to

take notes and write down the responses to my questions. Project officials were not willing to give permission to record the interviews. As for the ICDP participants and non-ICDP participants, the multilingual context of Bandarban district posed a problem for recording. Each ethnic group has its own language and some participants are not fluent in Bengali, the state language. I had to seek help from interpreters to conduct interviews with some ICDP participants and non-ICDP participants. In the CHT, it is not always possible to find an experienced or professional interpreter who can transcribe recorded interviews. For example, to conduct an interview with an ICDP project participant who belonged to the Tripura ethnic group, I had to find somebody who is both conversant in Bengali and who could translate the interviewee's responses in Bengali. I found a college student who was willing to work with me. Under these circumstances, I felt that writing down the responses of the interview participants and taking notes of the interviews was the best option.

Further, not all interviews that I conducted were one-on-one interviews in the strict sense of the term. The semi-structured interview guidelines in research methodology texts (Liamputtong 2013; Rubin & Rubin 2011) emphasise the need for privacy and confidentiality in the interview process. These guidelines were maintained while interviewing the ICDP officials, as interviews were conducted at their offices. Interviews with the ICDP participants and non-ICDP participants were conducted mostly at their homes, with some held at tea stalls. While conducting semi-structured interviews with the interview participants, I realised that the guidelines of privacy and confidentiality could not be strictly maintained. These were developed from the perspective of a Western research paradigm, and do not neatly correspond to the socio-cultural context of the CHT. In the Bandarban district headquarters, I conducted an interview with an ICDP participant, Tuly Mro (pseudonym) of the Mro ethnic group. When my interpreter and I entered the house, we found a young boy, two young girls, and other children in the house. The house is a traditional bamboo structure Mro house built on the slope of a hill. The house comprised

one large room, and another small room adjacent the main room. The main room is where members of the household sit, eat, and sleep at night. At one corner of this main room there is a *matir chula* (earthen cooker), used as a sort of kitchen. Adjoining the main room, there was a verandah where utensils and tools were kept. When we enquired as to the whereabouts of his mother, the boy informed us that she had gone to the *Jhiri* (creek) to bathe and fetch water. The mother came and agreed to be interviewed. Upon entering the house, I realised that there was no separate room where I could conduct the interview. I soon realised that such a request would be totally outside of the social norms. While we were doing the interview, children from neighbouring households also came. Inhabitants of the village live like a large extended family, and anyone can come or go to another's house at any time. These experiences of interviewing enabled me to get a glimpse of the world that the interview participants live in, which provides the context for their behaviour in the local CHT cultural context. As Rubin & Rubin (1995, pp. 38-9) assert, the goal of qualitative research is to understand how and why things happen in specific circumstances, and consequently, the knowledge in qualitative interviewing is always situational and conditional.

4.3.4: Focus Group Discussions

My research aims to explore the collective experiences of indigenous people in relation to the ICDP project. In a focus group, it is 'through what participants tell themselves and each other that the multiple meanings and richness of their social world emerge' (Ryan et al. 2014, p. 331). This interaction provides the context for, and glimpse into, the social process in which people collectively make sense of the phenomena that structure their lives (Belzile & Öberg 2012, pp. 463-4). In exploring indigenous peoples' experience and opinions of the ICDP project, I considered focus group discussions with the ICDP and non-ICDP participants a useful strategy.

Further, in keeping with the postcolonial approach, this study takes the position that indigenous peoples' experience of the ICDP development is not homogeneous. Consequently, I sought to understand the experience of the ICDP project from the viewpoints of various ethnic groups. In recognition of this, while designing the focus groups, my main concern was the necessity of language matching to conduct focus group discussions, as each ethnic group of the CHT has a separate language (Culley, Hudson & Rapport 2007, p. 106). In some cases where villages have a mixed ethnic group population, inhabitants speak and understand each other's languages, but generally, indigenous people only speak the language of their ethnic origin. Therefore, I had to recruit participants who could either communicate in the state language, Bengali, or in another ethnic language. A colleague suggested Ruma Upazila would suit my purposes because firstly, almost all ethnic groups live there, constituting the majority of the population of the Upazila. Secondly, all ethnic groups can communicate in the Marma ethnic language. This has become kind of a common language since the Marma ethnic group is the dominant population of Ruma Upazila. For these reasons, Ruma Upazila offered an excellent location for focus group discussions. Discussions took place in a variety of venues, including a coffee stall, the basement of a building under construction, and a backyard. Focus group discussions lasted between one and one-and-a-half hours, guided by a facilitator. All discussions were recorded, and the facilitator transcribed the discussions. Each focus group consisted of seven to nine participants. Some focus group participants knew each other. In the CHT, villages consist of ten to twenty families, and inhabitants know one another. This may have contributed to the openness of the discussions (Culley, Hudson & Rapport 2007, p. 108), as participants were already acquainted through living, working or socialising together (Kitzinger & Barbour 1999, p. 8). Being mindful that indigenous groups of the CHT are not homogeneous, I conducted focus group discussions with a mix of participants from different ethnic groups. The participants for the focus

groups were selected not to represent the viewpoints of each ethnic group within the population (Culley, Hudson & Rapport 2007, p. 104) but, rather, to offer an understanding into the various ways development is experienced by different ethnic groups in the CHT. In selecting participants from different ethnic groups, I tried to pay attention to issues of ethnicity and gender. I sought to accommodate participants from smaller ethnic groups such as Khumi and Lusai, as well as the bigger ethnic groups such as the Marma, Mro, and Tripura groups. A total of 41 participants were recruited for the focus group discussions. Details of the groups are provided in Table 1:

Table 4.1: Locations and ethnic compositions of focus group discussions.

	Group-1	**Group-2**	**Group-3**
ICDP participants	**Site:** Profumukh Para **Participants:** 8 **Ethnicity:** Tripura, Mro and Khumi	**Site:** Barua Para **Participants:** 7 **Ethnicity:** Marma, Bawm and Lusai	**Site:** Zayon Para **Participants:** 9 **Ethnicity:** Marma, Bawm and Tripura
Non-ICDP participants	**Site:** Ruma Bazaar **Participant:** 8 **Ethnicity:** Khumi, Mro and Tripura	**Site:** Kamala Bazaar **Participant:** 9 **Ethnicity:** Marma, Bawm and Tripura	

In relation to the composition of focus groups, research guidelines tend to overemphasise the extent to which a researcher can control the characteristics of participants (Kitzinger & Barbour 1999, p. 8). In my case, the precise composition of groups was determined by the issue of access to the participants. I recruited participants through the help of a research assistant who also works at local non-governmental organisation. Since he was a local inhabitant of Ruma Upazila, he knew the area, and because of his work, he was acquainted with other development workers. The recruitment of the ICDP participants was done at the Ruma Upazila headquarters. As the ICDP has a number of para centres, which are located in close proximity to the headquarters, the recruitment of the participants was not very complicated. However, recruiting the non-ICDP participants for focus group

discussions was more difficult, as the locations where the ICDP does not have any ICDP para centres were remote and difficult to access. The absence of paved roads and public transport also posed problems in gathering participants together for focus group discussions. Another problem was that the villages were sparsely located, did not have any direct road connections, and were usually inhabited by one ethnic group. Given this situation, the problem for me was to choose a location where people of different ethnic backgrounds could gather for a group discussion. Some local acquaintances suggested one of the options could be to wait for the *bazaar* (market) day, when people from all parts of Ruma Upazila come to sell their produce at the market located in the Ruma Upazila headquarters. The market takes place in the morning, and in the afternoon, people are usually free. Taking up this suggestion, the research assistant and I approached people to explain my research and the topic of the focus group discussion. Most agreed to participate, and the group discussion was conducted in the afternoon. I had to choose a location which was close to the market, which is why one of the focus group discussions was conducted in the basement of a building under construction. Another focus group discussion with non-ICDP participants was conducted at *Kamala bazaar,* Ruma, located in the southern part of the Upazila. In addition to interviews and focus group discussions, various ICDP project documents constituted my third source of data.

4.3.5: ICDP Documents

Postcolonial theory concerns itself with the way in which development and its discourse exercise power to represent other cultures, societies and people (McEwan 2009, p. 120). Postcolonial theorists often contend that development discourse draws its power from hegemonic representations where ‘the poor’, the ‘backward’ and the ‘underdeveloped’ become universal, homogeneous categories (Escobar 1995; Mohanty 1991). Therefore, a postcolonial analysis entails a critical examination of these constructions. This theoretical approach necessitates raising questions about how indigenous people are constructed

and represented in the ICDP documents, to uncover what ICDP development entails for them. To do this, I offer a document analysis of the ICDP project documents, discussed in detail in Chapter Five. Before turning to this, critical discourse analysis framework that I have used to assess the project documentation are discussed, as the merits of their application to the ICDP documents warrant consideration. This discussion is located in Sections 4.4 to 4.4.2 below, but before turning to this, it is necessary to briefly discuss the project documentation that forms the basis of this analytical approach

This research project focusses on the second phase of the ICDP project. However, to gain background information about the project and analyse changes in the project in terms of its goals, objectives, and services from the first phase to the second phase, I needed access to the ICDP's first phase-related documents. However, I was only able to obtain the evaluation report of its first phase entitled 'An evaluation of the UNICEF-Assisted Integrated Community Development Programme-1985-1995'. This report was commissioned by the CHTDB, and written by Md Abdul Quddus, Tofail Ahmed and Md. Easin Ali of the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development. I also collected ICDP's second phase-related documents, which include the project proposal, annual reports, monitoring and evaluation reports, and impact assessment reports. These reports are written in English and prepared for various government departments and Ministries, and the UNICEF. These are available in Appendix B. The next section discusses the process of analysis.

4.4: Data Analysis

Two types of analysis structure my interpretation of the data. The analysis of the ICDP documents was achieved using Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework, while the interviews and focus group discussions were analysed using thematic analysis processes adapted from Rubin and Rubin (2011, p. 190) and Braun and Clarke (2006, p.

249). To analyse the interview and focus group data, a CDA approach could not be applied, because, as mentioned earlier, most of the interviews were not recorded. Therefore, these data could not be treated as 'texts'. Fairclough's CDA model necessitates analysis of the intricate details of the text to link it with the wider social context. Hence, thematic analysis was chosen to analyse the semi-structured interview and focus group data.

Text books offer a 'sanitised' and 'reconstructed' account of research (Marshall 2002, p. 57), where data analysis seems to be a straightforward process of sorting material into categories that can then be reconceptualised into other categories to develop or test 'a beautiful theory' (Harris 2006, p. 176). However, analysing the data was not entirely straightforward. When I started analysing the ICDP documents using Fairclough's CDA framework, I realised that the process of data analysis is complex. The discourse analysis method requires paying attention to the intricate details of the text and its production, as well as tracing the wider social, political and economic contexts in which the text circulates. To achieve this required frequently revisiting the data, constant writing and rewriting, and rearranging of themes to report the findings. I gaily embarked on this study with the hope that it would deliver a rich understanding of state-ethnic relation from thick data comprising document analysis, semi-structured interview and focus group discussion, only to realise that qualitative data are so often voluminous and complex (Marshall 2002, p. 57). The next section provides details of the CDA and thematic analysis process.

4.4.1: CDA: Discourse as Text, Discursive Practice and Social Practice

Fairclough (1992, p. 62) developed a three-dimensional framework to analyse discourse. The premise of his analytical model is that language, which he calls discourse, is a social practice (Kettle 2005, p. 5). He identifies three ways in which language operates as discourse: as text, as interaction, and as social context (Fairclough 1989, p. 108). These

three elements of discourse are mutually constitutive, rather than exclusive. Further, Fairclough maintains that CDA, rather than being a step-by-step 'method' (Fairclough 2000), is an *approach* to determine the connection between the text, wider discursive practices, and the social contexts in which these practices operate (Fallon 2006, p. 187). CDA is a useful method for analysing the ICDP documents, because my research aims to explore state-ethnic relations in the context of development, and representations are central to the study of these relations. In the practice of representation, identity gets constructed 'as a relational positioning between the 'us' and the 'other' (Chatterjee 1986, pp. 14-5; Mengibar 2015, p. 44). This construction serves 'as a means of power of the self over the other' (Chatterjee 1986, pp. 14-5; Mengibar 2015, p. 44). To examine the constructions of indigenous people in the ICDP documents, discourse analysis offers a means to critically interrogate how these constructions occur in a text, and how they serve to reinforce particular political or discursive practices.

The first dimension of Fairclough's framework is discourse as text. Fairclough (1995, p. 135) defines 'text' as 'the written or spoken language produced in a discursive event'. I consider the ICDP reports as text (Smith 2007, p. 62). Analysis at the textual level is concerned with analysis of the linguistic features of a text such as its vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and so on (Dremel & Matić 2014, p. 158), with the objective to uncover how certain vocabularies or style is used to produce meaning (Smith 2007, p. 62). In analysing the ICDP texts, I have paid attention to the descriptions of the indigenous people of CHT, their conditions of (under)development, and the project's interventions, which rest in the formation of pre-cooperative groups and the need to instil leadership qualities among project participants. I have also looked for 'overwording'—the use of too many words which are near synonyms in the project description. Overwording indicates 'preoccupation with some aspect of reality' (Fairclough 2001, p. 96). For example, the review report for the first phase of the project was replete with terms such as 'backward',

‘unproductive’, ‘develop’, and ‘cultivate’ (discussed in more detail in Chapter Five) which convey a particular representation of the indigenous people of the CHT. Textual analysis can be conducted at the semantic level, or at a more thematic level, depending on the aims of the research (Kamler 1997, pp. 437-8). I have conducted discourse analysis of the text at a thematic level since the objective of this thesis is not to focus on the intricacies of the language used in the ICDP reports, but to explicate themes recurring within the reports that construct indigenous people in ways that reinforce the need for state intervention. Further, textual analysis can only be understood together with an examination of the socio-cultural context and discursive practices, as these ‘give meaning to the content’ of the text (Fairclough 2003, pp. 15-6).

The second dimension of Fairclough’s discourse analysis model is to consider discourse as a discursive practice. Tracing the production, circulation and consumption of texts, (Fairclough 1992, p. 71) offers a way to reveal and explain the connections between the way texts are produced, distributed and consumed, and their relation to social practices and social structures (Fairclough 1992, p. 71). One of the ways to trace these links is to focus upon the intertexuality of the text (Fairclough 1992, p. 71). Intertextuality means looking at a text’s interaction with other texts which may be explicitly demarcated from the text in question, or explicitly related to it. In terms of production, intertextuality stresses the historicity of texts, how the text consists of and refers to prior texts. In terms of distribution, an understanding of intertextuality helps to explore the networks along which a text moves, and transformations from one text type to another (Fairclough 1992, p. 84). In terms of consumption, a focus on intertextuality stresses the reception of the text among readers, listeners and interpreters. Most importantly, the concept of intertextuality points to the productivity of texts, the ways that texts ‘produce’ the dominant meanings attached to them (Fairclough 1992, p. 102). This productivity is not available to all people, as it is ‘socially

limited and constrained, and conditional upon relations of power' (Fairclough 1992, p. 103).

The third dimension of the model requires understanding discourse as a social practice, to uncover the 'ideological effects and hegemonic processes' in which discourse takes part (Dremel & Matić 2014, p. 158). This form of analysis requires an examination of the social context within which a text is produced. An understanding of this context enables the researcher to evaluate a text within the setting in which it is produced, and thereby 'link the language used within the text to the particular operations of power and ideology taking place at a broader social level'. This type of analysis seeks to investigate the forms of power and ideologies that dictate a social and cultural context (Smith 2007, p. 62). To recognise the role of context in the creation of the text is critical because it reveals the connections between language, power, and social practice (Fallon 2006, p. 187), and illustrates how language legitimises existing relations of power (Wodak & Meyer 2009a, pp. 9-10). As Chapter Five shows, the ICDP texts produce the indigenous people of the CHT as 'backward', 'primitive', 'nomads', 'lacking' in 'qualities' such as leadership and education; hence, they require 'improvement' and 'development'. These constructions justify and legitimise the development interventions of the ICDP, as they portray the indigenous people as the 'other'. As discussed in Chapter Two, this 'othering' is premised on how a perceived 'lack' of particular cultural attributes functions to mediate entry into the polity of the Bangladesh state. Analysis of the ICDP documents illustrates how language legitimises the relations of power between the Bangladesh state and the indigenous people of the CHT (Wodak & Meyer 2009a, pp. 9-10).

4.4.2: Thematic Analysis: Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

Thematic analysis is a method to identify, analyse and report themes within the data (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 79). The thematic analysis of the interviews and focus group data

are framed in a social constructionist approach, where patterns are identified as socially produced (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 81). Taking up the constructionist paradigm, I conduct a thematic analysis at the latent level to examine the underlying notions, assumptions, conceptualisations and ideologies that shape or inform the data (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 84). While focussing on themes in relation to the experiences of research participants in accessing health and education services provided by the ICDP, I sought to 'theorise the socio-cultural contexts and structural conditions that enable both individual and group accounts' (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 85). Further, I adopt the following steps from Rubin and Rubin (2011, p. 190) to structure this thematic analysis. First, all the focus group data were transcribed. In the case of interview data, I consulted the responses of the interview participants that I had noted while interviewing, and my field notes. Second, I read and re-read the transcribed data. In the case of interview data, I summarised the key points and themes related to my research question. With the focus group data, I also did the same. Third, I marked in the text words, phrases and excerpts that I felt were related to my research questions. Fourth, I used Microsoft Word to sort these words, phrases, and excerpts into different subgroups. Then I combined these groups so as to identify major themes within the data.

While conducting the analysis, I found it difficult to synthesise the themes of an entire data set and report it. For example, while analysing indigenous peoples' experience of the ICDP education service, my data set included interviews with officials, with project participants, and with non-ICDP participants, as well as focus group discussions with ICDP and non-ICDP participants. I first wrote about the themes that emerged from the interviews with project officials, then those that emerged from interviews with ICDP project participants' interviews, non-project participants' interviews, and finally, from the focus group discussions. Once I started writing, I was better able to synthesise the themes of the entire data set. In this process, I realised that writing and re-writing is an essential part of

analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 86). I also realised that the analysis involved continual moving backwards and forwards between the data, the extracts of the data that I was analysing, and the analysis that I was producing. Further, paying attention to the constructionist paradigm, while reporting the findings of my analysis, I have attempted to situate the comments of the participants within the context in which they were said. Instead of using quotations from a single participant, I have provided larger extracts from the interview and focus group data to illustrate how the discussion was generated (Robinson 2009, p. 267).

4.5: Conclusion

This chapter has provided an explication of the research approach, research process and the context for the present research. I have explained how the epistemological underpinnings of social constructivism and postcolonial theoretical approaches have led to the qualitative research design for this study of indigenous people's experiences of development in the CHT. Further, I have elaborated as to how and why this overarching methodological framework employs three qualitative data gathering methods: document analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. I have also provided details of the data collection and analysis process, and the challenges that I faced in this endeavour. My intention in presenting these challenges is to counter the notion that there are no 'false starts, no confusion, quandary, infatuations, or terror' (Charmaz & Mitchell 1997, p. 212), and that only a coherent, well-planned research strategy exists. Additionally, I have been upfront about my subjectivity so that the reader knows the way knowledge about the ICDP is produced in this study, because writing explicitly about the research process is a major way through which rigour can be maintained in qualitative research (Holliday 2007, p. 47). In the chapters that follow, I report the findings of my research. Chapter Five begins with a discourse analysis of the ICDP documents.

CHAPTER FIVE

REPRESENTATION AND DISCOURSE: STATE CONSTRUCTIONS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

5.1: Introduction

State-led development often constructs ethnic peoples as needing to adopt a form of 'perceived modernity' that requires complete transformation of their life (Sengupta 2014, p. 324). The state often uses its discursive power to establish the idea that indigenous people share a common desire for material prosperity to be attained through a homogeneous development approach called modernisation (Sengupta 2014, p. 318), which, in turn, requires complete overhaul of indigenous people's traditional ways of living. Development project documents play a very important role in justifying development intervention, creation of ethnic categories, and thereby in the production and reinforcement of state power. Using a postcolonial lens to read the Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP) documents, this chapter illustrates how state-led development (re)creates a colonial categorisation of indigenous people of the CHT as 'primitive', 'backward' and 'underdeveloped'. This construction both produces and reinforces state power. Further, I argue that this politics of representation is predicated on the imperative to construct and reinforce the nation-state in Bangladesh.

The ICDP documents deserve analysis because they embody a form of policy context through which concepts, notions about subjects and citizens are constructed (Das 2004, p. 16). Documents therefore have the 'structural effect of producing people'. In this connection, Emma Tarlo (2003, p. 9) argues documents not only contain background information, but also are 'paper truths' through which official documents come to have an 'aura of irrefutability'. Further, these documents serve the purpose of producing the apparent solidity of the state (Mitchell 1991b, p. 78). For Philip Abrams (1988, p. 81), the

idea of ‘the state’ is ‘at most a message of domination—an ideological attributing unity’, which emphasizes its separation from the society (Mitchell 1991b, p. 78). Hence, Mitchell recommends that we scrutinize the practices ‘through which the uncertain yet powerful distinction between state and society is produced’ (Mitchell 1991b, p. 78). In this connection, Escobar (1995), Ferguson (1990) and Li (2007b) have examined the role of development in producing the apparent autonomy, authority and power of the state. Wolfgang Sachs (2010, p. XVI) contends, ‘development is much more than just a socio-economic endeavour; it is a perception which models reality, a myth which comforts societies, and a fantasy which unleashes passions’. These ‘models’, ‘myths’, and ‘passions’ are sustained by development’s ‘buzzwords’ (Cornwall 2007, p. 471), which structure development discourse.

Conceptualising development in terms of discourse enables to highlight the process through which social reality gets constructed (Escobar 1995, p. 39). Discourse analysis exposes how dominant discourses define social phenomena, such as poverty and underdevelopment, and at the same time puts forward desired-solution frameworks that tend to support existing institutional relationships (Carant 2017, p. 17). As Escobar (1995 pp. 39, 47) argues, development discourse and its link with wider political and economic institutions is not explicit, it is perceived as ‘a detached centre of rationality’. Development planning has become a day-to-day state affair through which the state machinery conveys itself as serving a ‘national interest’, that is seemingly beyond politics (Li 1999, pp. 296-7). However, ‘discourses and institutional practices are co-constitutive, as they are both delineated by and delineate the boundaries of a specific discourse’, delimiting the theories they adopt as well as the strategies and attitudes that drive development project (Carant 2017, p. 18).

Development discourse draws its power from the privilege of representation, by which it constructs knowledge about the poor and 'underdeveloped' as universal and pre-constituted subjects (Escobar 1995, p. 9). The production of discourse occurs under conditions of unequal power, which constructs the Third World subject in a manner that enable the discourse to exercise power over it (Escobar 1995, p. 8). In the absence of analysis, these representations remain unchallenged. Hence, from a postcolonial political standpoint, it is important to examine these practices and their effects so as to disrupt and contest the discursive practices of development. Employing Fairclough's critical discourse analysis method, this chapter offers a critical analysis of the ICDP documents to show how state power is produced and reinforced as a 'structural effect'.

5.2: Modernising Traditional CHT Society: 'To Fix Them in one Place'

The ICDP was initiated in 1985 with the specific goal of attaining the social and economic development of the 'tribal people' of the CHT (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, pp. 1, 12)[7]. To achieve this, the project participants were organised into various groups which the project termed '(pre)-cooperative groups'. The rationale for this is explained below:

> Organising the tribal people under any formal group is a very difficult task. But without organisation it is very difficult to bring positive changes in their socio-economic condition. Therefore, the first thrust was to organise the tribal people into pre-cooperative functional groups in the selected mouzas (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 39).

The ICDP attributes the 'problem' of organising indigenous people into groups to their 'tribal culture', which, in turn, is associated with their traditional subsistence practices of Jhum (swidden cultivation) and their physical mobility as 'nomad' peoples. Hence, the objective of the ICDP co-operative groups was to 'fix' the indigenous people into a permanent place. The project reported its success in this regard:

> ... keeping membership for a long time in one organisation is not at all common in the tribal culture, [b]ecause many of them do not live in one place permanently. They move

[7] This thesis examines one report in relation to the first phase of the ICDP as the researcher could obtain only this document, discussed in Chapter Four.

> from one place to another with their shifting cultivation [Jhum]. The project has shown remarkable success to fix them in one place for [a] long period, and sown the seeds of a new society in the CHT (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 80).

In the context of Southeast Asia, Scott (2009, p. 100) has shown how people who live in the hills and mountains are often viewed as 'backward' and 'uncivilised'. Due to their physical mobility and dispersal, mountain-dwellers are regarded as nomadic people. Hence, Scott contends the concept of civilisation in Southeast Asia was in large measure an 'agro-ecological code'. People who apparently did not have any fixed abode, moved constantly and practised hunting and gathering as well as shifting cultivation were 'irretrievably barbaric' (Scott 2009, p. 101). Quddus, Ahmed and Ali (1995) assert that the ICDP 'sowed the seeds of a new society in the CHT'. The indigenous society of the CHT is 'traditional', 'backward' and 'non-modern', and the project was engaged in a magnanimous effort to bring 'backward' and 'uncouth' peoples into the fold of 'civilisation'. Development places tradition and modernity in a dichotomous relationship. The ICDP development programme thus promotes an ideological representation of indigenous society through an implied scale of social progress. Progress and modernity become the categories against which indigenous society is measured and found 'lacking' (Pigg 1993, p. 53). The ICDP's categorisation of indigenous people as 'tribal', which acts as code for 'backward' and 'non-modern', provides the justification for organising indigenous people into pre-cooperative groups, so as to inhibit them from nomadic subsistence practices.

The ICDP used the co-operative model for collectivisation with the objective to increase the income of project participants in its first phase. Their approach relates to the Comilla Cooperative Model, an approach to village development pioneered by the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (Bangladesh Rural Development Academy (BARD) 2015). However, the ICDP did not fully adopt the Comilla approach, and there are significant differences in these approaches. The main difference is that the Comilla approach involved a two-tier (village and Thana level) cooperative system. By contrast, the

ICDP pre-cooperative model had only a single tier co-operative system at the mouza level in the district. Further, there was a difference in the way the groups operated in the two cooperative models. In the ICDP pre-cooperative model, group members were required to attend meetings once or twice a month, whereas in the Comilla cooperative system, the provision was for weekly meetings (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 39). Further, the difference between the two approaches is also manifested in the use of the term 'pre-cooperative'. The Comilla cooperative is organised around 'co-operative groups' (Khan 1979, p. 397), but in the case of the ICDP, it is the 'pre-cooperative group'. The reason for the modified adoption of the term lies in the 'problem' of organising the tribal people, and this reflects indigenous people's 'lack' of capacity. This becomes clearer when the project review expresses doubts regarding indigenous people's capacity to maintain a full-fledged cooperative group:

> [T]he hill men and women are not familiar with the habit of depositing regular savings. In the early stage of the project it was very difficult for the project personnel to make people cultivate the habit of regular savings. Gradually, the members learnt the system (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 39).

The project sought to change this 'undesirable' trait by instilling the habit of saving among the project participants, explicit in the need for them to 'gradually' 'learn' this. As Escobar contends, the main premise of development during the 1950s was belief in modernisation, which could destroy archaic relations and ways of life, no matter what the social, cultural, or political costs (Escobar 1995, p. 39). The process of modernisation involved capital formation, as well as improvements in technology, resources, agricultural development, commerce and trade, so as to achieve productivity and economic development.

5.3: Pre-Cooperative Groups: Fostering Economic Development

The pre-cooperative groups were formed to run the micro-credit programme of the ICDP. This was a savings and credit programme for poor, chiefly indigenous, people. Group members were required to deposit savings of Tk 5 (equivalent to $US 6 cents at current

rate) at regular monthly meetings, and to build up their capital so that they could invest in income-generating activities, such as sewing, carpentry, poultry and mushroom production and so on (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 63). The pre-cooperative groups were formed with two objectives: to 'cultivate' the 'habit' of 'regular savings', and 'build capital' (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 60). The project also provided pre-cooperative group members a fund of Tk 1200 (equivalent to $US 14 at current rates), termed a 'starter fund' to encourage participants to invest in 'economically gainful activities' (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 60). Group members were also provided 'needs-based training' and 'income-generating activities', which are interconnected. The members were first provided with training, and then with funding, so that with their newly acquired skills and capital, they could invest in 'economically gainful activities'. There is an implicit assumption here that indigenous people lack the capacity to use the money properly, which the varied categories of training provided to the participants clearly illustrates. From the list of the training opportunities offered by the project, three categories can be distinguished: occupational training such as carpentry or masonry skills; leadership training, and training in nutrition education (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, pp. 62-3). From the categories and objectives of the training, it is evident that the project deemed an overhaul of the traditional way of life of the indigenous people necessary, starting with the intent to change tribal people's traditional occupations through occupational training, through to changing their food habits through nutrition education.

In the ICDP's vision of development, traces of the modernisation theory of the 1950s and onwards can be found. Modernisation, especially the idea that progress and development means replicating the Western model of development and economic growth, lies beneath most development theories, including current neoliberal economic policy (Peet & Hartwick 2009, p. 131). In this view, development is equated to increased productivity and living standards (Schech & Haggis 2002, pp. 9-10). Additionally, it diagnoses underdevelopment

in a country's internal characteristics, producing notions such as ‘traditional economies’, problematic psychological and cultural traits, and traditional institutions (Lerner 1958). Therefore, the solution proposed by modernisation involved change throughout the entire society. A society with ‘traditional values’ needed to be replaced by ‘modern values’, enabling those societies to pursue the path of capitalist development (Inglehart & Baker 2000, p. 20). In the modernisation model, ‘personal traits’ are also deemed part of the ‘problem’ that development seeks to ‘solve’ (Shah 2011, p. 8). Growth and development call for enterprise and leadership (Peet & Hartwick 2009, p. 135). Therefore, development entails changing personalities and attitudes toward Westernisation, education, and productivity. Concurrently, the ICDP found that the leadership ‘qualities’ required to modernise the traditional society of the CHT were ‘lacking’ among project participants:

> [It] was observed in most of the cases that the groups were dependent on group organisers to maintain their official records, account-keeping and even for conducting meetings. The members of the group remained passive in managing group activities. Lack of formal and non-formal education may be responsible for this lack (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 39).

The report observes that groups were dependent on project personnel and group organisers for the day-to-day running of the pre-cooperative groups. The ICDP measures the competency and capability of the group members in terms of the managerial skills of an office employee emphasising the need to ‘maintain … official records’, ‘account-keeping’ and ‘conducting meetings’. It is notable how leadership is conceptualised by the project through these words. The group members are found to be ‘passive’ with regards to group activities. The use of the word ‘even’ infers that the indigenous people are so incapable that they cannot even perform the ‘petty’ task of conducting a meeting. The inability on the part of project participants to carry out these tasks is equated to either ‘having’ or ‘lacking’ the requisite leadership qualities.

5.4: Changing the Traditional Practice of Jhum

The ICDP imperative to inculcate leadership in the people of the 'traditional' CHT society was aimed at facilitating the process of economic development, and indigenous people's traditional practice of swidden cultivation is seen an impediment in this regard. The ICDP provides the rationale for its goal of social and economic development in terms of the poverty and illiteracy of the indigenous people, which, in turn, is associated with indigenous people's traditional practice of Jhum cultivation:

> A majority of the tribal population of the CHT region, especially those living in the rural areas is very poor. Cultivable paddy land is very scarce. People are mostly illiterate and unskilled. A majority of them are shifting cultivators (Jhumias) who earn their livelihood through a process of hill cultivation known as 'Joom', and their per capita income is much less than the national average (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 15).

In the last sentence, the word 'Joom' is placed with the phrase, 'their per capita income is much less than the national average', thereby implying that the practice of Jhum is the cause of the poverty of the indigenous people. In addition, they 'lack' formal education and skills. As previously mentioned, the ICDP seeks to address this by seeking to change the traditional lifestyles of the indigenous people to 'income-generating' or 'productive' activities. Further, the ICDP associates Jhum only with low incomes. However, Jhum is embedded in a communal ownership system, based on different kinds of exchange and sharing that permeate social and religious life (Tripura 2008, p. 40). This method of cultivation entails great labour and is usually done by multiple groups working together (Mohsin 1997, p. 82). Thus, Jhum encompasses deep social and cultural values, rather than merely "economic" values (Tripura 2008, p. 40).

The attempt to change the traditional practice of Jhum cultivation goes back to the British colonial period. Jhum was exclusively practised by the hill people until 1860 (Sopher 1963, p. 339), when the Chittagong Hill Tracts was declared a district by Act XXII of 1860 (Hutchinson 1909, p. 92). During the colonial period, the government made several

attempts to change swidden cultivation in the hills with plough cultivation, because this was anticipated to increase state revenue and to be less 'wasteful of timber resources and land' (van Schendel 1992, p. 112). For example, in January 1869, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal sanctioned a sum of Rs. 38,000 (equivalent to $US 563 in current values) as advances to families willing to commence plough cultivation (Hutchinson 1909, p. 92). Almost a century later, in 1960 when the CHT was part of Pakistan, the 'Jhum Control Division' was established under the Forest Department with the objective to control swidden cultivation, and encourage indigenous people to turn to rubber plantations or fruit plantations instead (Dutta 2000, p. 21; Tripura & Harun 2003, p. 32). Accordingly, a master-plan was adopted in 1968-69 to rehabilitate 11,000 indigenous families on 66,000 acres of land (Dutta 2000, p. 21). The Bangladesh government has also pursued a similar strategy. The CHTDB, the implementing agency of the ICDP, has undertaken several projects with the aim to resettle the swidden cultivators. The CHTDB initiated the *Joutha Khamar* (collective farming) project in 1978 to settle landless swidden cultivators into a settled from of land use (Mohsin 2002, p. 124). Under the project, five acres of hilly land and Tk. 1500 (equivalent to $US 18 in current values) were provided to project participants to buy saplings and seeds, to grow fruit and other crops on the land. However, after two years, the CHTDB had to abandon the programme as it was not successful (Dutta 2000, p. 21). Despite the failure of the project, the CHTDB started another project, the 'Upland Settlement Project', in the early 1980s. The project also sought to settle landless Jhumias and develop upland areas with horticulture, agroforestry, and rubber plantations (Nath & Inoue 2009, p. 395). In the first phase from 1985 to 1993, it aimed to create 1620 hectares of homestead agroforestry and 3240 hectares (around 8000 acres) of rubber plantations in 39 project villages, and thereby settle 2000 indigenous families in one place (Nath & Inoue 2009, p. 395). Then, in the second phase from 1993 to 2007, it intended to settle 1000 landless indigenous people in 20 project villages in Bandarban and Khagrachari districts.

These were all state-initiated development projects to resettle Jhum cultivators. So, from the perspective of the state, Jhum cultivation is not only 'unproductive', but also, because it is traditional, Jhum is a symbol of a 'backward' society. This notion of backwardness is not only related to the practice of Jhum, but also to lack of formal education.

5.5: Education for the 'Backward' Tribes

The ICDP project has offered two education services to project participants: non-formal and formal education, implemented in the form of pre-primary schooling and residential schooling (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, pp. 17, 67). The objective behind the provision of education services was 'to motivate the parents of out-of-school children to enrol their children into the primary schools to enhance literacy rates and educational levels of the tribal people'. The ICDP presents this as an issue of motivation, rather than of access. This has the effect of blaming parents for their 'lack' of motivation, rather than acknowledging the lack of schools in close proximity. Expansion of literacy is a key part of the modernisation process (Huntington 1971, p. 309), and is intrinsically linked to the aim to change a traditional society. This approach to modernisation is behaviourally oriented (Huntington 1971, p. 309). For the ICDP, the 'problem' with regard to education is the 'lack' of motivation of the parents who do not send children to school. However, in the context of the residential schools, it acknowledges that some tribal children are economically disadvantaged. Hence the project offers to pay educational expenses for them. The report provides the rationale:

> The project had a provision for residential schools for the least advantaged tribal children. The students were selected from those tribes who were economically, socially and educationally disadvantaged and backward among the tribes. The project provided educational and living expenses of the students (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 17).

The students of the first residential school, established in 1980, were from the Mro ethnic group, who are among the smaller ethnic groups of the CHT. That the school is especially built for them is evident from the name of the school, 'Mro Residential School', established

in 1980, as opposed to other residential schools which are named according to the name of the location, such as the Alikadam Residential School and Ruma Residential School (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 68). Alikadam and Ruma are names of Upazilas. The ICDP rationale for establishing the residential schools for the Mro people cues the process of the creation of ethnic categorisation by the state. The ICDP, as an instrument of the state, represents the ethnic groups in the CHT in general as 'backward'. However, among the ethnic groups, the Mro group is considered *more* backward, manifest in the sentence: '[these schools are for] those tribes who were economically, socially and educationally 'disadvantaged' and 'backward' in compared with the tribes'. While explaining the success of the residential schools, one project official currently working in the project commented: 'The Mro could not have come this far without the establishment of the Mro school by the ICDP. This backward community has now got graduates who studied at the school.' Thus, according to this official, the Mro ethnic group was initiated into the process of modernisation as a result of the establishment of the school.

However, development objectives are not the only driver. The provision of a special school only for the Mro ethnic group is motivated by the Bangladesh state's desire to secure political gain by exploiting inter-ethnic conflicts. During the 1980s, the Mro deserted Shanti Bahini, the armed wing of the PCJSS which led the political indigenous resistance movement against the state. The Mro formed the Mro Bahini and engaged in fighting with the Shanti Bahini. The desertion of the Mro was widely seen as the result of excessive taxation of their villages and disrespectful treatment of the Mro by Shanti Bahini (Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission 2000, p. 28). The military seized the opportunity of escalating inter-ethnic conflict by providing weapons, training and funding for the Mro Bahini. The Mro led the army to PCJSS Shanti Bahini hideouts (Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission 2000, p. 28). One of the retired indigenous officials who worked on the ICDP project from 1980 commented during an interview that the Mro Residential School was

part of the government's plan to create division among the ethnic groups who were fighting the state under the banner of the Shanti Bahini. In this view, the school was established with the political objective of creating, and exploiting, rifts among ethnic groups.

5.6: Health Service: Awareness and Education

The driving cognitive mechanism for the modernisation process is 'empathy', 'the capacity to see oneself in the other fellow's situation ... which is an indispensable skill for people moving out of traditional settings' (Lerner 1958, p. 50). According to Lerner, 'high empathic' refers to capacities of a person, which include 'industrial, urban, literate'. An empathetic person has a higher capacity for change and an aspiration to experience the conditions of the modern world (Lerner 1958; Shah 2011, p. 4). An attempt to instil this aspiration can be gleaned from one of the health services of the ICDP, the social awareness-raising programme. This component constitutes one of the preventive health services of the ICDP and the objective of this programme is to create attitudinal changes among project participants (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 68). The ICDP elaborates:

> Under the consciousness raising programme, effective motivational work was also carried out by the trained change agents like CHWs [community health workers], TBAs [trained birth attendants], group organisers, and project personnel. Due to this motivational work, a rise in social awareness about population control, health care practices, standard of living and a positive attitudinal change to accept the development message from outside was clearly visible in the project area (Quddus, Ahmed & Ali 1995, p. 51).

The core idea of modernisation theory is that residents in the postcolonial world have the capacity to change their mind-sets (Shah 2011, p. 126), and in this regard, an agent of change is considered crucial in the adoption of development programmes (Bah 2008, p. 797). It is noteworthy that service providers of the ICDP such as community health workers and trained birth attendants are called 'change agents', whose task is to instil 'a positive attitudinal change to [ensure participants] accept the development message from outside'. The ICDP sees it as a positive sign when people accept development ideas from outside,

which is a passive stance, rather than being their own idea about what constitutes 'development' or 'wellbeing'. Change is the buzzword throughout the ICDP documents: change in occupations, attitudes and behaviours. These comprise a radical transformation of indigenous ways of life, a leaving behind of indigeneity in order to take up a position within the development process.

5.7: Second Phase of ICDP: the Persistence of Backwardness

The second phase of the ICDP began in 1996, almost coinciding with the signing of the Peace Accord in 1997, which had brought an official end to twenty years of state-ethnic conflict. The change in the state-ethnic relation provided the context for the ICDP to (re)examine perceptions and ideas of the first phase in relation to indigenous people. However, the same construction of indigenous people as 'backward' underpins the second phase of the ICDP. This can be seen in the second phase of the project, outlined below:

> The hilly nature of the topography and the presence of 14 different tribal groups make the Hill Tracts different in many ways from the rest of the country. The population density of this region is very low compared to the other areas of Bangladesh. The people of this area used to live in clusters spread over the area. As a result, easy access to the services provided by the government is not possible; the student enrolment rate in the primary schools in this region is apparently satisfactory, but due to inaccessibility, the dropout rate is higher than any other areas of National Average. For half of the population of this region scattered across the hills, schools are not available. To many children, the nearest school can be more than 4/5 miles of hilly track from home. As a result, it is not possible for these children to attend school. Mothers and children of this area suffer from malnutrition due to lack of knowledge (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 1996, pp. 1-2).

The first sentence specifically mentions '14 different tribal groups[8]' inhabiting the region. The description of population density and the problem of access that follows associate remoteness and inaccessibility with indigenous people's ways of living. For example, the sentence: 'The people of this area used to live in clusters spread over the area' specifically suggests that indigenous people choose to live this way, moving frequently, while all over the CHT, Bengali inhabitants in the CHT live in selected and relatively well-served areas in terms of CHT infrastructure. The ICDP clarifies that the indigenous people constitute half

[8] The report mentions 14 tribal groups inhabiting in the CHT. However, most literatures acknowledged that CHT is the home to 11 ethnic groups.

of the population only at the end of the paragraph, where it states: 'For half of the population of this region scattered across the hills, schools are not available'. In the first phase of the ICDP, only indigenous people participated, but both indigenous and non-indigenous people were incorporated in its second phase. However, the justification for the second phase of the project is made only in the name of indigenous people. The ICDP does not provide the rationale for the inclusion of non-indigenous people in its second phase. One ICDP official commented that decisions about the project are made at the Ministerial level in the capital; therefore they did not know the exact reasons for this rationale. However, he suggested that the inclusion of Bengali residents might be due to changes in the service delivery method of the project. In its second phase, in an effort to bring its services closer to the people, the ICDP aimed to build one para centre in every village in the CHT. Since there are Bengali-inhabited paras, these were included in the project. However, only the indigenous people and their traditional cultivation practice of Jhum remain as a 'problem' for the ICDP. The traditional way of life of the indigenous people, manifest in the cultivation of Jhum, is implicated as the cause of their poverty. The report states:

> The majority of the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts is widely spread over the region, preventing easy access to the services by the Government. Because of the geo-physical characteristics of this area, there is scarcity of cultivable land. On the other hand, the increased population has brought pressure upon the land resulting in the scarcity of cultivable land; this has affected the income of the people. The poor section of the population is still adopting Jhum cultivation as their livelihood. Naturally the basic problems of the poor have tended to deteriorate and the wellbeing of the majority of the children in these areas did not improve (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 1996, p. 11).

The ICDP acknowledges that because of the geophysical nature of the area, there is a scarcity of cultivable land, which is compounded by the increase in the population. However, it does not elaborate on the reasons for the increase in the population in the CHT, the principal reason being the state-sponsored resettlement programme of Bengali speaking people in the CHT between 1980 and 1985 (Amnesty International 2013, p. 16),

which precedes the first phase of the project. It finds that the people's persistence to maintain their traditional, 'unproductive' occupation of Jhum exacerbates the problem of poverty, evident in the word 'still' in the sentence '[t]he poor section of the people are *still* adopting Jhum cultivation as their livelihood'. That Jhum is responsible for the problems of the poor is further reinforced in the conclusion drawn in the sentence beginning with the word 'naturally': 'Naturally, the basic problems of the poor have tended to deteriorate and the wellbeing of the majority of the children in these areas did not improve'. By attributing the causes of poverty to Jhum cultivation, the project document presents it as a natural traditional livelihood and downplays other factors, such as displacement and resource pressures. Therefore, indigenous people are constructed as being partly responsible for their poverty, and despite various efforts to modernise them through shifting their attitudes and behaviours, still cling to their traditional occupation, a manifestation of their 'primitiveness' that the development project seeks to solve.

5.7.1: Education for the most Backward

The rationale for the provision of education services in the second phase, and in particular, the need for a residential school, is also underpinned by the construction of backwardness:

> A great disparity is prevailing in providing education among different ethnic groups. Some backward communities are not aware of availing themselves of the educational facilities. It is mainly due to hardship in finding the means for their livelihood. In this context, initiatives have been taken for rendering education facilities to the most backward communities living in the remotest area of the CHT region. Four residential schools are being managed under the project … Mro residential school of Bandarban district is catering for the needs of the Mro and Khumi communities who are considered to be the most backward in CHT region (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 1996, p. 19).

In addition to the theme of backwardness, the familiar theme of lack of capacity and lack of awareness runs through the second phase of the project, illustrated by statements such as 'some backward communities are not aware of availing themselves of the educational facilities'. There is a tension between the assumption that the communities lack awareness of facilities, and the question of how they can avail themselves of these facilities, which the

document earlier admits are scarce. The latter links this to poverty, as people spend most of their time looking for food, rather than working out how they can send their children to school. This is an example of the lack of analytical clarity in the document which results in indigenous people being produced by it as 'backward'. This lack of clarity also recurs in the various terms that the project documents use to refer to indigenous participants.

5.8: From 'Tribal' to 'Indigenous' to 'Small Ethnic Minorities': the Politics of Representation

In the first phase, only indigenous people were project participants of the ICDP, and were referred to exclusively as 'tribal'. In the project documents of the second phase, indigenous people are variously referred to as 'tribal', 'indigenous' and as 'small ethnic minorities'. The use of these terms has a chronological sequence. In the early documents of the second phase, such as the project proposal in 1996, the indigenous people are referred to as 'tribal' (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 1996, p. 1). They are referred to as 'indigenous people' in a project document in 2010 (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2010, p. 5). Then the project documents of 2013 use the terms 'small ethnic groups' (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2013, p. 5), or 'ethnic population' (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2015, p. 5). Changes in the use of language from 'tribal' to 'indigenous' to 'small ethnic minorities' in defining indigenous people reflect the process and power of representation that is being played out in the context of development.

The ascription of indigenous peoples' identity of the CHT as 'tribal' dates back to the British colonial government (Hutchinson 1909). The post-colonial governments, the Pakistan and Bangladesh governments respectively, from 1947 onwards derogatorily referred to indigenous people as 'tribes', or *'upajati*' (sub-nation) (Uddin 2016, p. 322). Indigenous people resist this representation. As discussed in Chapter Three, the political party of the indigenous people, the PCJSS, endorsed a shared identity as Jumma for the

indigenous groups, based on their common practice of Jhum. Jumma is an umbrella term that highlights their cultural separateness from Bengalis, and their shared possession of a Jumma homeland (Jumma land), as well as their shared history of oppression and marginalisation (Uddin 2016, p. 323). With the signing of the Peace Accord, the previously militant outfit of indigenous activism manifest in the protracted armed conflict with the Bangladesh government has transformed into a more civilian organisation. The PCJSS has formed alliances with indigenous plain-lands *adivasi* (Bengali term, meaning indigenous) organisations such as the 'Bangladesh Indigenous People's Forum' to ensure the rights of indigenous people, particularly indigenous rights, are preserved by the state of Bangladesh (Gerharz 2014, p. 555). The formation of the indigenous movement at the national level in Bangladesh is the result of the adaptation and translation of the global language of indigeneity to the local context (Gerharz 2014, p. 565).

The declaration of two successive United Nations Decades of Indigenous Peoples has resulted in the strengthening of a global movement of indigenous activism. According to the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the groups recognised as indigenous deserve a special status and protection (Gerharz 2014, p. 557). In an influential article, Gerharz (2014, p. 557) argues the international discourse on indigeneity, in particular within the United Nations, has become an important instrument for the indigenous activism in Bangladesh. Since the late 1990s Bangladeshi advocates have gradually become associated with the global indigenous activists' networks (Gerharz 2014, p. 553). They started to use the term 'indigenous people' when expressing their claim in transnational contexts. Similarly, Middleton (2015, p. 175) shows how people in Darjeeling, India demand to be recognised as 'tribal'. This is related to accessing special provisions and development resources from the government allotted to people who qualify as the tribal, 'Scheduled Cast'. In their quest for claiming the 'Scheduled Cast' status, they represent their identity and difference in an ethnological way, such as their cultural distinctiveness

and backwardness (p. 84). Hence, Middleton (2015, p. 175) argues these self-representations, be it tribal or indigenous, entail a fair degree of strategic essentialism.

Returning to Bangladesh, in 2011,there was a discussion about a Constitutional amendment in Bangladesh, which gave impetus for changes to Article 29 that stipulates special provisions for supposed ‘backward’ segments of the population. A Parliamentary Committee comprising members of the indigenous groups and their allies from the leftist political parties called for the incorporation of the category ‘indigenous people’ into the Constitution so that it could lay the basis for special provisions endorsed in the Declaration. The activists, moreover, pushed for the ratification of International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169, as it is one of the most significant international agreements for the protection of the rights of indigenous people. Bangladesh has not ratified this (Gerharz 2014, p. 557). As one of the prominent indigenous activists in the CHT explains:

> Constitutional recognition of the indigenous status of the excluded, marginalised and disadvantaged 1.2 percent of Bangladesh's population will provide a firm platform and legal basis to address the marginality of the members of these populations. It will not provide any privileged status to these groups or to their members (Roy 2011).

The Parliamentary Committee for the amendment of the Constitution rejected indigenous people’s demands, instead, recommended the use of the term ‘small ethnic minorities’ in March 2011 (Gerharz 2014, p. 558). In July 2011, the Foreign Minister endorsing the concept which delineates indigenous people as ‘original inhabitants’, stated that the people of the CHT were not indigenous, ‘they came here as asylum seekers and economic migrants’ (Roy 2011). The original inhabitants of Bangladesh are the ethnic Bengalis (Yasmin 2014, pp. 127-8), and people of other religions and languages are ‘small ethnic minorities’ (Gerharz 2014, p. 558). The government approved a Bill in 2011 affirming that ‘there are no indigenous people in Bangladesh, only minorities’, and declared them ‘small ethnic groups’ (Uddin 2016, p. 323). As Ala Uddin points out, the *‘Small Ethnic Groups*

Cultural Institution Act 2010' used the term *Khudro Nrigoshthhi* (small ethnic groups) to refer to the indigenous people of Bangladesh. Since then the official position of the Bangladesh government is that, the indigenous people of the CHT are 'small ethnic groups'.

This process illustrates how indigenous identity is constructed in a national discursive frame, and how this is reflected in the ICDP project documents. As Timothy Mitchell (1991a, p. 19) contends, 'objects of analysis do not occur as natural phenomena, but are partly constructed by the discourse that describes them'. The discursive construction of indigenous identity in Bangladesh illustrates that 'discourses define the limits of what can be said, the truths that can be known, and the way in which matters are understood' (Carant 2017, p. 18). The Foreign Minister expressly prohibited development organisations from using the term 'indigenous' to refer to the people of the CHT. Changes in the usage of the terms in the ICDP documents to define indigenous people of the CHT correspond to this directive. These discursive practices establish privileged positions for certain theories and paradigms, and thus maintain and legitimise sources of power (Carant 2017, p. 18). This case also illustrates the mutual relationship between discourses and institutional practices, including the practices of the ICDP project. In this context, the political demand to be recognised as indigenous operates as a counter-hegemonic discourse.

5.8.1: Representation and State Building: the first Phase of the ICDP

The production of discourse under conditions of unequal power is what postcolonial scholars refer to as 'the colonialist move' (Escobar 1995, p. 8). This move entails 'specific constructions of the colonial/Third World subject in/through discourse in ways that allow the exercise of power over it' (Escobar 1995, p. 8). The ICDP's development discourse is governed by this same principle. In creating knowledge about the CHT, it exercises power over it. The development discourse of the ICDP draws its power through a hegemonic

form of representation: the construction of the poor and underdeveloped as universal, pre-constituted subjects, while the privilege of the re-presenters is unacknowledged (Escobar 1995, p. 9). This entails erasure of the complexity and diversity of indigenous peoples, so that all indigenous people become ‘poor’, ‘underdeveloped’ and ‘backward’. It is through discursive homogenisation that power is exercised (Mohanty 1991, p. 54), and this provides the rationale for development intervention. The discourse generated by the ICDP creates knowledge about the CHT and its people that makes the case for development self-evident (Ferguson 1990). This is an example of the politics of representation at work in the CHT.

This politics of representation is hinged on the nation-building imperative of the Bangladesh state. The first phase of the ICDP project was implemented during the armed insurgency in the CHT. As Islam (1981, p. 1212) explains, for the Bangladesh state, this insurgency was a problem for national integration and nation-building. For the new Bangladesh state, nation-building was to be achieved firstly through the creation of a unified national identity and, secondly, the need to raise living standards through economic development (Islam 1981, p. 1212). The CHT was not only important, but a problem on both counts. First, the CHT’s ‘traditional’ society is comprised of many religions and languages, and its ‘primordial sentiment’, which prioritises loyalty to the group rather than loyalty to the state, stands in the way of national ‘integration’ (Islam 1981, p. 1212). The manifestation of this lay in indigenous rejection of the imposition of Bengali identity, criticised both by the lone member of parliament from the CHT, Manabendra Narayan Larma and the separatist movement of the PCJSS (Islam 1981, p. 1212). In terms of economic development, the CHT boasts abundant natural resources, such as electricity, timber, and horticultural produce, making the region important for the nation's economic development (Islam 1981, p. 1221). In this regard, Islam (1981, p. 1221) argues that Bangladesh, already overburdened by many socio-economic problems, cannot afford the

luxury of keeping the CHT economically unintegrated from the rest of Bangladesh. Transforming group loyalty to the nation state is ‘extremely difficult but not impossible’ (Islam 1981, p. 1221). The government of Bangladesh has also primarily viewed the CHT ‘problem’ as a problem of national integration, with development deemed a solution to this problem. Consequently, to enhance tribal people's economic development and also to increase local participation in development activities, the government created the Chittagong Hill Tract Development Board (CHTDB) in 1976 (Islam 1981, p. 1218) as the implementing agency of the ICDP. The intention was to show the people that developmental activities are taking place in the tribal areas (Islam 1981, p. 1218).

5.8.2: Second Phase of the ICDP: Peace Accord, Nation Building and the Economic Development Imperative

The second phase of the ICDP project began just before the Peace Accord in 1997, which provided a measure of political stability in the region. Despite the change in the political scenario, there was no change in the nation-building and economic development imperatives of the Bangladesh state. As Caf Dowlah (2013, p. 784) contends, while Bangladesh faces much less severe national integration problems than its close neighbours, the CHT still remains a problem for national integration. According to Dowlah, the initiatives of the government, including its establishment of the CHTDB and Regional Council, and putting a halt to any fresh influx of Bengali settlers, have so far achieved very little in terms of assimilating the Jummas into mainstream Bangladeshi nationhood. He explains this as a result of the Jummas’ ‘primordial’ ethnic identity, which tends to powerfully resist malleability (Dowlah 2013, p. 784). Dowlah’s position is shared by political parties that opposed the Peace agreement. Both the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, led by Khaleda Zia, and the Jatiyo Party, led by Hussain Muhammad Ershad, opposed the Accord, arguing that the country’s Constitution did not provide for any special area in a unitary state and that, rather than consolidating national integrity, the Accord may

pave ‘a road to Chakma Raj’ over the resource-rich CHT territory (Dowlah 2013, p. 777). Turning to the issue of the resources of the CHT, in particular concerning land, there is a perception among policy-makers and analysts that the CHT is an empty region compared to the over-populated plains of Bangladesh. In this regard, Amena Mohsin (2002, p. 114) argues that the emptiness of the CHT and its land is a myth. As discussed in Chapter Three, the construction of Kaptai dam submerged 54,000 acres of arable lands, comprising about 40 percent of the cultivable land in the region (Dutta 2000, p. 15). It is to be noted that the Kaptai dam-affected people could not be properly rehabilitated or compensated due to the shortage of arable land in its wake. The government has been unable to keep its promise to compensate for the lost arable land, because adequate agricultural land is not available. Each family was given a maximum of ten acres of land, much less than what they had owned when they lived and worked in the area lost to the dam (Parveen & Faisal 2002, p. 202).

In 1964, in the aftermath of the Kaptai Dam, the Pakistan Government commissioned a Canadian company, Forestal Forestry and Engineering International Limited, to study the soil and topography of the CHT. A 16-member team of experts composed of geologists, biologists, foresters, and economists, studied the terrain for two years. The principal objective was that this study would serve as the basis for adopting development measures to ensure proper utilisation of land in the CHT (Roy 2000, pp. 102-3). The study revealed that the high incidence of steep slopes makes the soil condition of the region poor, making it inadequate as a resource base for its inhabitants. Only 3.2 percent of the land of the CHT is suitable for any type of agriculture, while 2.9 percent is suitable only for terraced agriculture, with a further 15 percent is suitable for horticulture and afforestation, and the remaining 77 percent is suitable only for afforestation (Roy 2000, pp. 102-3). Therefore, the actual land available to sustain the livelihoods of people is very meagre in the CHT. However, it is through the notion of the ‘emptiness’ of the CHT that about 400 000

Bengalis were resettled by the government in the 1980s in the region (Mohsin 2002, pp. 114-5). Given the large number of Bengali settlers brought into the CHT by the transmigration (population transfer) programme, a huge amount of land was needed to fulfil the promise of 'free' land granted by the state to each settler family. The government claims that the Bengalis have been settled on *Khas* lands (government land). However, there are differences of opinion about what constitutes Khas land between the indigenous people and government. What the government considers Khas land, the indigenous people consider as their common property, which belongs to and is used by the community (Mohsin 2004, p. 49). The government disregarded the traditional customary rights of the indigenous people, to settle Bengali people on lands that indigenous people claim as their own. The transmigration programme has not only created land disputes, resulting in litigation and conflict between the indigenous people and the Bengali settlers in the region, but also impacted the broader relation between the indigenous people and the Bangladesh state. Land issues remain the crux of the CHT problems. The Peace Accord of 1997 envisioned settling the land disputes through the establishment of the Land Commission in the CHT, discussed in Chapter Three. However, as the Commission remains ineffective, the land problems remain unresolved.

Many analysts overlook the land issues in the CHT, seeing the region as vital for achieving the economic development of Bangladesh. For example, for Dowlah (2013, p. 777), the CHT region is vital for national economic development. Hence, it is critical that the government exert influence over the region. He points to the geographical significance of the CHT. The country's flagship hydro-electric project, which generates power for the country's main port city, Chittagong Port, and its adjoining areas, and the national satellite station, are located in the CHT. In recent years, huge gas and oil reserves have been discovered in the region (Dowlah 2013, p. 778). Therefore, despite the change in the political climate in the CHT introduced by the signing of the Peace Accord, the area

continues to serve the nation-building and development imperatives of the state above the interests of the people of the CHT.

5.9: Conclusion

This chapter illustrates how the indigenous people of the CHT are represented as 'backward', 'poor' and 'primitive' in the ICDP documents. By constructing the CHT and its indigenous population as 'underdeveloped', 'traditional', and 'non-modern', the discursive constructions of the ICDP documents make the case for development intervention in the CHT obvious. Further, the ICDP's development intervention is premised on an ideology of modernisation. Hence, the ICDP has sought a complete overhaul of traditional CHT society by changing their occupations, behaviours and attitudes. The need for this transformation is predicated on the nation-building and economic development imperatives of the Bangladesh state, which also serve as the basis for state control of ethnic identity through the politics of representation. Further, these representations occur under conditions of unequal power, which is illustrated in the process of representing indigenous people firstly as 'tribal', then as 'indigenous' and lastly, as small 'ethnic groups'. Through these representational moves, CHT villagers, swidden cultivators, national politics, and national development are discursively connected. Hence, the categories of 'tribal' and 'development' stretch beyond the local boundaries of the CHT. Thus, the analysis of the ICDP documents shows that discourse and institutions are mutually imbricated, and thereby sustain exiting power relations. This power of representation helps to maintain the boundaries between the state and society by positing a solid image of the unifying structure of the state. However, maintaining such clearly demarcated boundaries is often not possible (Migdal 2001). Bureaucratic schemes for classifying populations may be secure on paper, but they are fragile in practice (Li 1999, p. 298). Turning now to the question of how the ICDP's development programme works on the ground, I offer a critical examination of its education services in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER SIX

PRIMARY EDUCATION: EXPERIENCES OF CHT INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

6.1: Introduction

This chapter explores state-society relations in the context of everyday encounters in the pre-school education service of the Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP). I examine state objectives in establishing the pre-school service, and juxtapose this against the perspectives of officials and indigenous people, so as to analyse how the plan for educational development is translated in the field. By tracing state-society relations within the context of the everyday and mundane (Mohsini 2011; Shah 2010; Sharma 2008) in ICDP pre-school education settings in two locations of Bandarban district, I aim to explore how the Bangladesh state is lived, experienced and articulated by indigenous people of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in their everyday lives. This approach to state and society allows for an analysis of citizenship as lived experience, which entails a process oriented understanding of citizenship with an emphasis on norms and practices as well as on meanings of actual citizenship practices, rather than on legal rights (Isin & Turner 2002, p. 4).

My analysis of the actual practices of citizenship starts with an examination of the scope of the pre-school component of the ICDP project with particular reference to language. With regard to exerting citizenship rights, the issue of language is particularly important in the context of the CHT. It is the most significant barrier that indigenous children face in accessing education at the primary level. The formal education system requires competency in the state language, Bengali, but ethnic groups speak their own languages. Hence, indigenous children start school from a disadvantaged position. I seek to analyse the scope of the ICDP pre-school service so as to understand the state's intent. This has

necessitated examining the views of the officials who constitute the system that provides education services to indigenous people. Officials' perspectives were juxtaposed against the 'lived citizenship' of ICDP and non-ICDP participants, which refers to 'the meaning that citizenship actually has in people's lives and the ways in which people's social and cultural backgrounds and material circumstances affect their lives as citizens' (Hall & Williamson 1999, p. 2). This chapter provides an analysis of the ICDP pre-school service drawing on focus group and interview data drawn from officials, ICDP and non-ICDP participants. Through this analysis, I seek to understand the extent to which the ICDP education service has broadened or narrowed the capacity of indigenous people to exert their citizenship rights in the context of primary education.

6.2: The Policy Context of the ICDP Pre-School Service

The main component of the second phase of the ICDP was its pre-school service, which took the form of two programmes: a one-year pre-school programme (1997 to 2002), and a two-year pre-school programme from 2003 onwards. The introduction of the pre-school service of the ICDP can be traced to the government's Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) in 1997 (Directorate of Primary Education 2015, p. 1). Under the framework of the PEDP, referred to as PEDP-I, UNICEF along with other donors, supported the government to improve primary education. One of the main projects of the PEDP was an 'Intensive District Approach to Education for All', implemented from 1996 to 2004 (UNICEF 2004). An important objective of the project was facilitation of a 'child-friendly' school environment and to achieve, the 'Multiple Ways of Teaching and Learning' approach was introduced (UNICEF 2004). It is within the wider context of development initiatives to improve primary education in Bangladesh that the pre-school service of the ICDP project was initiated. The ICDP documents do not mention the exact timeframe of the one year pre-school programme; however, one of its evaluation reports states that the two year pre-school programme was introduced in 2003 (Mitra & Associates 2005, p. 1).

Hence, it can be deducted that from 1997 to 2002, the ICDP offered a one year pre-school programme.

The two-year pre-school programme was introduced in 2003 in 885 para centres in nine Upazilas of the three CHT districts (Mitra & Associates 2005, p. 1). The change in the duration of the pre-school programme from one year to two years occurred as a result of the launch of the Early Childhood Development project. The project was an attempt by UNICEF to establish the Women's and Children's Affairs Ministry as the focal institution for early childhood services. In Bangladesh, both government and non-government organisations (NGOs) are involved in the pre-primary sector. NGOs take a leading role in the pre-primary education sector, and a large number of pre-schools were run by NGOs such as BRAC, Save the Children, Plan International, Care, Action Aid, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, CARITAS, members of the Campaign for Popular Education, and the Bangladesh Early Childhood Development Network (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education 2013, p. 8). Meanwhile, the government also began implementing early childhood programmes through its Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Ministry of Social Welfare. However, each Ministry developed its own training, curriculum and learning materials (Jahan 2002, p. 13), and there was no national mechanism to coordinate the different sectors involved in early childhood programmes (UNESCO 2006). Against this backdrop, the Early Childhood Development project was launched. From the very beginning, the Early Childhood Development, and later, the Early Learning and Childhood Development project provided both technical and funding assistance to the ICDP (UNICEF 2009, p. 6). These early childhood development programmes aim to prepare children for primary school.

Accordingly, the ICDP pre-school component sought to enhance indigenous children's transition to primary school where language of instruction is Bengali (UNICEF 2009, p. 18). According to the ICDP, a unique characteristic of this programme is the development of

teaching and learning materials in accordance with the cultural context of the CHT (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2010). The teaching materials are printed in the Bengali language, but the language of instruction is the language of the local community. The pre-school service of the ICDP is delivered by para (village) workers in para centres. The para worker is recruited from the local community, and is required to have at least a year eight qualification. The pre-school worker conducts sessions in the local ethnic language so as to make children comfortable during these sessions. Language barriers comprise one of main reasons for the low enrolment rate of indigenous children in the CHT (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2010). At primary school, both the curricula and the medium of instruction are in Bengali (Tripura 2016, p. 3). However, most indigenous children grow up in villages where ethnic languages are spoken, and those who live in the least accessible locations often cannot speak or understand Bengali, the national language of instruction in Bangladesh. Consequently, they face language barriers in accessing education (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2010; Rahman 2010; Tripura 2016). The ICDP has sought to address this by adopting the local ethnic language as the medium of instruction to facilitate children's transition to the primary school instructed in Bengali. The primacy of Bengali language as the medium of instruction in the formal education system is linked to the monolingual education policy of Bangladesh. The next section offers an analysis of the policy with a view to finding out the imperatives for the adoption of this policy.

6.2.1: A Monolingual Education Policy? Bengali Linguistic Identity, Nation-Building and Citizenship

Article 3 of the Constitution of Bangladesh declares Bengali is the 'state language' of the country (Rahman 2010, p. 346). The overt language policy in Bangladesh, as represented in the country's Constitution, is monolingual as it does not acknowledge the need to protect any language other than the national language (Rahman 2010, p. 346). Will

Kymlicka (2001, p. 80) contends states use national language as an instrument to create a national identity, a key element of nation building. This nation building imperative is clearly illustrated in the first education policy of Bangladesh. The first National Education Policy of Bangladesh came in 2000 after five post-independence committees and commissions[9] (Unterhalter, Ross & Alam 2003, p. 92). For the first time, pre-school education as the first component of primary education was endorsed in this policy (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education 2013, p. 8). The policy contends that pre-school education is about 'preparation for going to school' (Unterhalter, Ross & Alam 2003, p. 92), and includes the objective 'to inspire the child [to] develop patriotism and encourage him [sic] to nation building activities by arousing consciousness about the Liberation War' (Ministry of Education 2000, p. 4). Education, therefore, is directed explicitly towards national identity building, which in turn is closely linked to linguistic identity, the history of martyrdom and political struggle, a powerful unifying factor in Bangladesh.

Bengali identity was buttressed in previous education commission reports. Prior to the first education policy, three education commission reports constituted the policy framework for the education sector in Bangladesh. The first education commission in 1974 recommended that Bengali, representing the Bangladeshi nation and Bengali culture, be the medium of instruction in all schools with English as the 'language of higher education' (Hossain & Tollefson 2007, p. 249). In considering Bengali as the mother tongue of all children in Bangladesh, the Report constructed its significant role in the development of 'natural intelligence', 'original thinking', and 'imagination' among students (Hossain & Tollefson 2007, p. 250). Later education commission reports issued in 1988, 1997, and 2000 reiterated the 1974 Report's emphasis on Bengaliness and recommended that Bengali should be the 'sole' medium of instruction (Hossain & Tollefson 2007, p. 250). In doing so, Bangladesh has 'adopted' and 'pursued' a single language policy. Bengali is

[9]Qudrat-e-Khuda education commission, 1974; Interim Education Policy, 1978; Mafiz Uddin Ahmed education commission, 1988; M. Shamsul Haque education committee, 1997; and National Education Policy 2000.

‘designated as the official, representative language of the nation’ and ‘mandated for use within formal domains’ (Rahman 2010, p. 347). These policies envision an education system predicated on establishing Bengali identity as the sole identity and Bengali as the sole language adopted by Bangladesh citizens.

The establishment of a monolingual education system is linked to citizenship education. It is one of the ‘ordering goals’ that shapes the entire curriculum, including what subjects are taught and how they are taught (Kymlicka 2001, p. 293). The state attaches much importance to a citizen acquiring certain qualities, such as a sense of identity and shared membership of a community, because the stability of a modern democracy depends upon it (Kymlicka 2001, pp. 293-4). This serves as a key reason for establishing a public school system and making education mandatory. Therefore, every state has attempted to create a single, national identity amongst its citizens at one time or another (Kymlicka 2001, p. 80). Similarly, the Bangladesh state has adopted a monolingual education policy to forge a Bengali identity among its citizens, and this remains the overarching goal of it education policy. As a consequence, indigenous people have had to wait for almost two decades to gain the right to mother tongue based primary education, which was first acknowledged in the Peace Accord of 1997.

6.2.2: Mother-Tongue Based Education and the ICDP’s Pre-School Service

For the first time since independence in 1971, the government of Bangladesh pledged to provide mother-tongue based primary education for indigenous communities in the National Education Policy 2010, the second national education policy (Rahman 2010, p. 347). The policy contains provisions to ensure indigenous teachers and texts in the mother-tongue are made available so that indigenous children can learn their own language (Plant & Chakma 2011, p. 15). The policy shift came after a decade of initiatives on the part of the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, three Hill District Councils

(HDCs), international development organisations, national NGOs and local community based organisations (Ninnes, Rahman & Dewan 2015, p. 9; UNDP 2014). The foundation for mother-tongue-based multilingual education initiatives was provided in Article 33b of the Peace Accord of 1997, in which the Bangladesh government agreed to mother-tongue-based primary education for the indigenous children of the CHT (Durnnian 2007, p. 6).

Just after the Peace Accord of 1997, national and international organisations came forward to provide technical support to multilingual initiatives, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, UNESCO, and various NGOs (Tripura 2016, pp. 8, 10). These organisations mobilised communities, and conducted research and advocacy work with political representatives and government departments (Tripura 2016, p. 10). The Ministry of Chitttagong Hill Tracts Affairs played an important role, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Department of Primary Education, and three HDCs to introduce mother-tongue-based multilingual education in the CHT (Jacob 2016, p. 10). One of the key initiatives is 'Education Phase-I: Strengthening Basic Education in the Chittagong Hill project' of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility, supported by the UNDP (UNDP 2014, p. 10). In this project, four NGOs, namely, Save the Children UK, SIL International, Grontmij and Ashika provided technical assistance to develop pre-school multilingual education materials, including teachers' guides in seven indigenous languages. They also developed teaching materials such as charts containing songs, fables and poems in indigenous languages to supplement the national curriculum in the first year of primary school (Ninnes, Rahman & Dewan 2015, p. 9). Strengthening Basic Education in the CHT continued under a second phase in December 2009 and finished in February 2015[10] (UNDP 2014, p. 10).

[10] In 2015, the UNICEF, in the third phase of the ICDP project, started trialling some of the multilingual materials developed as part of the 'Strengthening Basic Education in the Chittagong Hill Tracts' project (Ninnes, Rahman & Dewan 2015, p. 9).

However, the problem with these multilingual education initiatives is the presence of multiple actors and the lack of co-ordination between them. The actors include international, national and local organisations and various line departments of the government which include the Ministry of Primary Education, the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs and the HDCs. The District Primary Education Officer, Bandarban, commented on this lack of coordination:

> We provide books to the para centre of the UNICEF and other NGOS, because the government instructed us to provide free books to all NGOs who are running pre-primary curricula. Some of them are also running their own programmes like multi-lingual programmes which I do not know much about. We do not visit them. We are only concerned about government primary schools. (Primary Education Official, Bandarban)

In addition to lack of coordination, slow progress in the development of multilingual curricula is proving as a hindrance to mother-tongue-based primary education initiatives in the CHT. In 2006, during second phase of the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-II), the Ministry of Mass and Primary Education issued a Primary Education Situational Analysis, Strategies and Action Plan for Mainstreaming Tribal Children (Plant & Chakma 2011, p. 16). The government contends this is a comprehensive plan to address indigenous education (Plant & Chakma 2011, p. 16), and the assessment report of the PEDP-II claims that measures taken for the improvement of quality of teaching have led to an increase in indigenous students' enrolment in the CHT (Ninnes, Rahman & Dewan 2015, p. 7). However, it did not discuss the need to review the curriculum with regard to indigenous ethnic groups (Ninnes, Rahman & Dewan 2015, p. 7).

Building on PEDP-II, the third Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-III), aimed to establish an inclusive and equitable primary education system to deliver effective and child-friendly learning to all children from pre-primary to year five (Ninnes, Rahman & Dewan 2015, p. 7). The PEDP-III revised programme document does not stipulate the role of the HDCs, which have the legal mandate to manage education in the CHT. However, the PEDP-III is a step forward, as it states that the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

will approve any policy for multi-lingual education in the mother-tongue. Its objective is to make transition to the national language easier, and for indigenous children to achieve full competency in both ethnic and state languages by the end of year five (Ninnes, Rahman & Dewan 2015, p. 8). According to the revised programme document, the 'approved pre-primary education curriculum has multi-lingual provisions, and textbooks in five [ethnic] languages are being prepared' (Ninnes, Rahman & Dewan 2015, p. 8). These five languages include the three most common indigenous languages in the CHT, Chakma, Marma, and Tripura, as well as Garo and Sadri, two ethnic groups who live outside the CHT (Ninnes, Rahman & Dewan 2015, p. 8). Thus, the development of curricula for the mother-tongue-based education is still in the process of being developed, and covers only three ethnic groups of the CHT.

Thus, mother-tongue-based primary education for the majority of indigenous children who belong to various ethnic groups, is still a far from reality. As for the scope of mother-tongue-based education in UNICEF's pre-school component in the second phase, it has been used only as a medium of instruction in the para centre to communicate with children. All the teaching materials in the second phase of the ICDP were printed in Bengali. This strategy to foster school enrolment is likely to have limited benefits in terms of attracting children to attend pre-school and later enrol in primary school. However, it falls short of strengthening indigenous children's capacity to remain and succeed at school, as government primary schools require them to become competent primarily in Bengali. Further, Kymlicka (2001, p. 79) contends that mother-tongue-based education at the elementary level is clearly insufficient, if all jobs require education at higher levels conducted in the majority language. This is the result of the official language policy. Indigenous children's predicament highlights the result of an official language policy, as this official language becomes the language of government, bureaucracy and the economy, forcing citizens to adopt it (Kymlicka 2001, p. 79). The resultant effect is the

eventual assimilation of minority groups into the dominant identity. A language cannot survive for long unless used in the public domain. Consequently, government decisions about state language in effect determine 'which languages will thrive and … [which will] die out' (Kymlicka 2001, p. 79). In this regard, the pre-primary education component of the ICDP holds little promise. It is within these limits that the ICDP offers pre-school education to project participants.

6.3: Official Perspectives on the ICDP Pre-school Service: Success in Delivering Education to Indigenous People?

The ICDP's pre-primary education component is delivered and monitored by three categories of officials: para workers, ICDP project officials, and government officials. The para worker does not fall within the category of official, but directly provides the pre-school service at the para centre. These para centres are monitored by the ICDP officials both at the district and Upazila levels. Additionally, although there is no official linkage between the ICDP and government in relation to pre-school service delivery, two government institutions are indirectly involved: the Office of the District Primary Education Officer (ODPEO), and government primary schools. The ODPEO provides free books to all NGOs involved in the primary education sector. The ICDP also gets free books for its para centres. Additionally, the ODPEO, as the administrative and monitoring body for primary education at the field level in Bangladesh, oversees the performance of both government and non-government primary schools and pre-school in the district. As for government primary schools, they are related to the ICDP project as providers of formal education for children of the ICDP para centres. The ICDP para workers admit children who have completed the pre-school programme into a nearby primary school, which is, in most cases, a government primary school. Interviews with ICDP officials, an official from the ODPEO, and a teacher of a government primary school frame the discussion of this in the next section.

The ICDP regards its pre-school education service as the foundation of the entire project. Mr Chowdhury (pseudonym), aged 45, is an ICDP official who has worked in the project in various capacities since its first phase. While describing the pre-primary education service of the project, he comments:

> This is the pillar of the whole ICDP project. We have been able to sustain it for this long primarily because of this. People accepted the [pre-school] programme. A child is going to learn something in the para centre. S/he can sing a song, recite a poem, learns to write, count. The local people have accepted the programme very positively. (Chowdhury[11], ICDP official)

During my fieldwork, I found the pre-school service to be the most visible component of the ICDP project. Every para centre has a sign stating the opening and closing times of the pre-school, and upon entering, one can see various charts used in pre-school education. A further sign of acceptance of the project is that the villagers and the local people call the service the 'UNICEF school'. The para centre is the venue for the ICDP pre-school; it is a bamboo structure, built on 0.10 acre of land donated by the inhabitants of the village, who are termed 'beneficiaries' in the project documents (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 1996, p. 6). The ICDP official ascribes the success of pre-school education to project participants, expressed in the comments, '[p]eople accepted the [pre-school] programme'; and again in the last sentence; 'local people have accepted the programme very positively'. This comment also reflects an acknowledgement that the majority of development projects are initiated by outsiders and rarely conceived by the community itself (Botes & Van Rensburg 2000, p. 42). It further points to the participation process of the project. Participation processes often begin only after projects have already been designed, and the process, which in most cases constitutes community consultation, is to gain acceptance for an already assembled package (Botes & Van Rensburg 2000, p. 43). Further, the official attributes the success of the programme to the uniqueness of the pre-school education service delivery:

[11] All research participants' names are pseudonyms

> We realised that our children [in the CHT] face a great challenge when they start the primary school … [their] language is not Bengali but they are required to study in Bengali. That the parents would help them is not possible as in the plains [in Bangladesh]. So, we had to come up with a plan to prepare them for school through their own language, the language that they understand. Hence, it is termed as the school preparedness programme. The primary focus is to orient them to the Bengali language through their own language … we started this many years prior to the government. The government started this in 2003/2004. We have been working [in the primary education sector] since 1997 and we have done it very successfully. (Chowdhury, ICDP Official)

Here, the ICDP official speaks of the project initiative to orient indigenous children to Bengali language through para centres. He claims pioneer status for the ICDP as it started pre-schooling in 1997. Indeed, as mentioned earlier the non-government organisations had been leading the pre-school sector and the government of Bangladesh's initiative to start pre-school in government primary schools came much later. In this way, the ICDP's pre-school programme be considered a success. However, it is also possible to glean some limitations of the pre-school component. The ICDP's focus is more on the capacities of the children, than on the practices through which the issue of language has *become* a problem for them (Chhotray 2011, p. xx).

In my earlier analysis of the pre-school service, I described its links to the monolingual education policy of Bangladesh, in which citizenship education is tied to Bengali identity building. However, these structural and interrelated matters are excluded from the ICDP's intervention in, and discourse of, pre-school education, and a technical solution is offered. The depoliticisation discourse in manifested in the official's words, such as 'plan', 'prepare' and 'orient', in measures designed to foster transition from their mother-tongue to the Bengali language. Therefore, in the ICDP's solution to the 'problem' of language experienced by the children of the CHT, James Ferguson's (1990) famous metaphor for development as an 'anti-politics machine' is visible. While an analysis of the ICDP's pre-school component indicates that its development interventions have been apolitical, it is also possible to see the ICDP's pre-school education service as a development entitlement that ethnic groups want to access (McDuie-Ra 2011, p. 80; Sharma 2011).

Further, it is in delivering the entitlement of education to project participants that the ICDP claims it is a success.

6.3.1: A 'Good Initiative … [but] Some Para Centres are Functioning Well, Others Not'

Satya, aged 35, teaches at a government primary school in the Bandarban district headquarter where the children of the para centre are enrolled. He reflects on ICDP pre-school education:

> It is a good initiative. Children get an orientation to school, regularity, a bit of learning. But in my school, the students that I get from the UNICEF school [para centre] do not know much. They have difficulty in understanding Bengali, most do not have numeracy or other skills taught at the para centre … I guess that depends on the para centre and the para worker… some para centres are functioning well, others are not. My daughter goes to a UNICEF school near my home. The para worker is very efficient … my daughter learnt the basics from there. (Satya, school teacher)

The teacher of the government school refers to two para centres, the first, near his workplace, and the second, near his home. In the case of the first para centre, he deemed the students' skills in terms of Bengali language and other basic abilities not very satisfactory, but according to him, the para centre which his daughter attends is well run. That some centres are delivering and others are not came up in the focus group discussions as well. This issue is related to monitoring of the project, which I observed during my field visit. The centres that are well connected with road and transport facilities are visited by monitoring officials, but those centres which are only accessible by foot or motorcycle or require a range of modes of transport are not visited by officials, and it is these centres that do not function effectively. When I asked a para centre worker whether high-ranking officials of the ICDP such as the district manager or assistant managers visited the centre, she replied that only when the district manager comes to the area to do Headmanship-related work on rare occasions, does he visit the centre. The district manager is an indigenous person who, as well as holding the post of ICDP district manager is also headman, a post created by the British colonial government to collect land

taxes, which was subsequently retained by the Pakistan and Bangladesh states. His role as headman includes settling disputes in village land-related matters, providing certification of ownership of land, and so on. Therefore, these tasks take precedence over monitoring the para centre. Hence, the ICDP's claim of delivering the right to education has some fissures, a perspective held by a government official of the District Primary Education Department.

> **Researcher[12]: Do you have any official link with the ICDP/UNICEF school?**
>
> Participant: No. Only that, like any other NGO they get free books from us.
>
> **Researcher: How does your office decide on the requirement for free books for the NGOs?**
>
> Participant: Each year any organisation willing to receive books lodges a requisition for free books with our office. Accordingly, we provide books to them.
>
> **Researcher: You have been working in the ODPEO for a long time. As in my research project I am examining the pre-primary component of the ICDP/UNICEF school, I would like to know your opinion about it.**
>
> Participant: In 2016, we got requisitions for books for 786 students in total from 176 ICDP centres in *Bandarban Sadar*[13] (district headquarter). You divide the number of students with the ICDP centres. You do the calculation and you will get an idea of how things are going. (Akhter, Official of the ODPEO)

The official points out that there are no official links with the ICDP and the government primary education Department. The ICDP and other non-government organisations collect free books from the primary education department. Further, referring to the meagre number of requisitions for the ICDP, 786 books against 176 para centres, the official expresses his doubt about the number of children who attend the ICDP para centres. Speaking of the ICDP and other NGOs in the primary education sector, he acknowledges the limitations of his own department and government schools to deliver primary education.

> … [All] the NGO [non-government] schools [ICDP included] are mushrooming because of the negligence of government schools. We are unable to keep teachers in other

[12] I use the term 'Researcher' to refer to myself and use 'Facilitator' to refer to the research assistant who conducted the focus group discussions.
[13] Sadar, hub or headquarter has been used interchangeably.

> Upazilas [subdistrict]. All are coming to Bandarban sadar [district headquarter] in attachment. How will the schools run if there is no teacher? (Akhter, Official of the ODPEO)

Akhter attributes the rise of non-government schools, including the ICDP, to failure on the part of government schools to deliver education. NGO schools provide primary education to indigenous children across Bangladesh (World Bank 2003, p. 2). In the CHT, NGOs have often taken the initiative to develop materials and indigenous scripts for pilot programmes in education (Plant & Chakma 2011, p. 12). In acknowledging the failure of the state to provide primary education services, Akhter refers to formal education in Bengali instructed government schools, but does not mention the failure to offer primary education in the mother tongue, with a curriculum reflecting the culture and history of the indigenous people. The official further relates the problem of education service delivery to the problem of *attachment*, a government system that allows an employee to be posted at one school but work at another school. It is a problem related to the management of government school staff. A government school teacher, for example, may be posted to a school in Ruma Upazila, but attached to a school in the Bandarban district headquarters. The system allows the teacher to work from an office in the school located in Bandarban district, rather than Ruma Upazila. Even though the teachers are operating within government regulations, the system leaves many schools in remote parts of Bandarban district and other areas under-staffed. The problem of attachment brings into sharp focus the role of the HDCs, the local government body, in education service provision.

The Department of Primary Education is one of twenty one government departments transferred to the HDCs after the Peace Accord in 1997 (Plant & Chakma 2011, p. 20). As discussed in Chapter Three, this local government body is responsible for the overall monitoring of development activities in a district, including primary education. With regards to education, the councils do not have authority over matters related to the training of teachers, curriculum or textbooks, which are managed at the national level, but they have

authority over recruitment, staff, and school management (Plant & Chakma 2011, p. 20). In the case of Bandarban HDC, the local government body is composed of thirty one members, of whom nineteen members are from various ethnic groups, and eleven are of Bengali ethnic origin (Office of the Deputy Commissioner Bandarban 2017). The Council is headed by an indigenous person. The problem of attachment points to the ineffective role of the CHT specific local government institutions, which are responsible for development in the region, yet their very actions impede development, including the delivery of primary education.

When I enquired about the monitoring of the primary education sector in general, and whether, in his capacity as a monitoring official, he ever visited the ICDP para centres, the official commented:

> There is official instruction to visit non-government schools. But we are busy with our own [government] schools. Unless they [non-government school] invite us to events such as an annual sports day or any other occasions, we do not go there. (Akhter, Official of the ODPEO)

An analysis of the officials' viewpoints with regard to ICDP pre-school service offers a mixed picture. While the ICDP official claimed success with regard to delivering the right to education through ICDP para centres, the government school teacher expressed reservations about education services provided by para centres. Similarly, the education department official expressed doubts about the role of the ICDP and the non-government schools in general, but also acknowledged the failure of the state to provide primary education for all. This acknowledgement by the department official illustrates that even though the state's citizenship agenda of building Bengali identity through its schools seems sound on paper, its implementation was only partial in practice. Hence, the concept of development as governmentality offers a useful theorisation of the power exercised by the state on its populations (Li 2005a, p. 388). However, like all critical concepts, it must be judged by its yield and there are limits to intervention. The claims and counter-claims of

officials provide the context for the gaps in primary education delivery. The next section presents indigenous people's experience and articulation of citizenship in relation to pre-school service.

6.4: Indigenous People's Experience of the ICDP Pre-School: Taking up Bengali

This section offers the perspectives of both ICDP and non-ICDP participants about the ICDP pre-school service. A recurrent theme that emerged from the focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews conducted with the ICDP participants was that the people perceived the para pre-school centre as a positive initiative, because it prepares children for formal education and facilitates their learning of the language of education, Bengali. The focus group participants are parents of children who attend the ICDP para centre located at the hub of Ruma Upazila (sub-district). The following transcript from the ICDP focus group discussion one highlights project participants' positive view about the para centre, locally known as the UNICEF school:

Facilitator: Why are you sending your children to the UNICEF school?

As per my thinking. Say a boy is aged 3, 4 or 5 years. If we send them to the para centre of UNICEF, from there they [children] are taught rhymes, Bengali letters. After studying at the para centre they could go to primary school. For this reason, we send them to the para centre (Male participant 1).

Facilitator: Yes, you, sister, you want to say something

[para centres are] Teaching [Bengali] letters, spelling. What to say. [They are] Teaching rhymes, song. That is why, UNICEF school is better (Female participant 1).

We go to work. We drop our child at the para centre, request the teacher [para worker] to give lesson. [They] sing, dance. The centre closes during lunch. We return home and pick the children up (Female participant 2).

We send children to the para centre of our own accord so that the child develops the habit of going to school … is able to recognise the letters of Bengali language (Male Participant 2).

Very good initiative (Male participant 2)

Teach through dolls (Male participant 4)

> Now they give them biscuits. Kids are very happy (Female participant 1)
>
> When the they hear the para centre school bell, they want to go to school to get the biscuits (Female participant 3)
>
> [ICDP focus group discussion 1, Profumukh Para, Ruma Sadar]

In this discussion project participants reflected on their experiences with the ICDP para centre. For most participants (1, 2 and 4), the para centre offered an opportunity for the children to learn Bengali language. Participant 2 talked about the role of the para centre in terms of forming the habit of regular school attendance. The discussion then moves to the teaching methods which make attending the para centre an enjoyable experience for the children.

Similar views were expressed by the ICDP interview participants as well. One of the interview participants was Tinu (pseudonym), a 30 year old female ICDP participant and member of the Mro ethnic group. She was a Jhum cultivator and mother of three children. Her youngest daughter attended the para centre located in her village. For her, it offered an opportunity for education:

> I think my children should study. We did not get the opportunity to study but we want our children to study. (Tinu, a Mro ICDP participant)

A difference in the perception of pre-school services offered by the para centre can be discerned here between Tinu and the focus group participants. While the ICDP focus group participants described the pre-school more in terms of school preparedness, Tinu describes the para centre as a venue that provides an opportunity for learning for her child. This difference might stem from her particular experience of not having access to education as a swidden cultivator who goes to the fields early in the morning and returns home after dusk. In contrast, focus group participants were educated, and were engaged in occupations such as teaching, working in NGOs, and small business. Although Tinu might not know the details of pre-school services, for her, education is a means of social mobility, and provides a better chance to be employed. This kind of claim-making from

below by rural subjects has been termed ‘rightful resistance’ by Kevin O’Brien, who describes it as a ‘within-system form of contention in the reform, not revolution, paradigm’ (O'Brien 2013, p. 1058). Resistance as Chandra argues can be understood as negotiation, discussed in Chapter Two. From this conceptualisation, rightful registers do not seek to negate, but rather, to negotiate with, the political authority represented by the modern state (Chandra 2015a, p. 566). For other ICDP participants, education is equally important, they equate it in terms of acquiring competency in the Bengali language. The following is an excerpt from ICDP Focus Group Discussion Two:

> **Facilitator: Why did you choose to send the children to the UNICEF school instead of the government school?**
>
> Participant 1: Can I say?
>
> Participant 2: I want to say something
>
> **Facilitator: Can we please talk in turns?**
>
> Participant 1: If you put them into the primary school … my son is 5 years old now. So to speak, he does not understand much, does not understand Bengali. So if he goes here [pre-school in the government school]. If teachers. There are not only two to three students. [There are] more than 100 students. If you consider UNICEF school, they run with 20 to 30 students.
>
> Participant 2: Too many students. Difficult to understand language in this situation.
>
> [ICDP focus group discussion 2, Barua Para, Ruma Sadar]

These focus group participants reiterate the importance of para centre to offer the opportunity to learn Bengali. The theme of learning Bengali also comes out in interviews. Santimoni (pseudonym), aged 30 years, has three children, and has education up to 5th grade. Her youngest child, aged three years goes to the para centre. She explains her decision to send her children to the ICDP para centre:

> I have sent them for their benefit. They do not understand Bengali, para centre teaches them letters. In the nearby school the teacher is Bengali. It is difficult to understand Bengali. I have sent him to the para centre so that he does not face difficulty in school. (Santimoni, an ICDP participant)

For both focus group participants and interview participants, one of the main motivations for sending children to the ICDP pre-school is to enable them to acquire competency in the

Bengali language. Focus group participant 1 illustrates the importance of pre-school with reference to the large number of students in the government school and the difficulty the students face when enrolled in the school. The interview participant also refers to the problem of language barriers. Both the focus group participants and the interview participant connect learning Bengali to accessing citizenship rights in the context of education. In the context of Bangladesh, the language of government, bureaucracy and schools is Bengali, and without competency in the Bengali language, it is not possible to exert citizenship rights. So, ICDP participants equate the para centre as a platform for children to acquire competency in the Bengali language, as it is the vehicle that facilitates inclusion into the formal education system.

Both the ICDP documents and the Education Policy of Bangladesh (2000), pledge to remove obstacles to indigenous children's inclusion in mainstream education. However, what these documents fail to acknowledge is that exclusion from educational services is multidimensional resulting from an array of factors (Govinda & Bandyopadhyay 2010, p. 341), including how structures such as class, gender and other inequities in society articulate with each other (Sayed & Soudien 2003, p. 10) and give rise to exclusion. The result is that inclusive policies and programmes such as the ICDP pre-school service create new forms of exclusion (Sayed & Soudien 2003, p. 10). Further, welfare schemes render the state as present to the marginalised, but access to these schemes may have been obtained only by a select few (Chopra, Williams & Vira 2011, p. 245). This has been the experience of the non-ICDP participants who live in the interior parts of Ruma Upazila.

6.4.1: Remoteness and the Question of Access

An important reason for not accessing the pre-school service of the ICDP is the absence of a local ICDP para centre. For the people located in the interior of Ruma Upazila, there is no pre-school education service, and their children do not get the opportunity to learn the

language of education, Bengali. The only way they can access education is through the government primary school. The following excerpt reveals non-ICDP focus group participants' experience of accessing government provided education:

Facilitator: Do you have any para centre school?

No, we don't. (Participant 1)

No. Again, the location of our residence is two days' walk from the other para centre schools. (Participant 2)

Yes, their locality is very far from ours. (Participant 4)

Most of the schools are near the Ruma Sadar, and it takes one or two days' walk from our locality. We live near the border. (Participant 1)

Others: Yes, they live very far away from our [school]. (Participant 3)

It takes half a day to reach Myanmar from their area but takes two days of tracking to Ruma [sadar]. (Participant 4)

Facilitator to the other participants): Do you have a government primary school or any other schools in your para or nearby?

Yes, we have a primary school in Prang Sa Rowah [name of a place]. (Participant 5)

Facilitator: So, where is this school located?

At Boga Mukh and Poli Prang Sa, they have two primary schools. (Participant 1)

Facilitator: Do you send your children to the government school?

Yes. (Participant 1)

Facilitator. Do you have an ICDP school nearby?

We do not have one exactly close to us but quite close. [It is] still difficult for the children to walk to the para centre. (Participant 6)

We usually enrol children in the government school because you will have to go there anyway [the uptake of the pre-school service is optional whereas one is required to enrol into year one in primary school to start formal education]. But during rainy season is it very tough for children. (Participant 5)

[Non-ICDP focus group discussion 1, Ruma Bazaar, Ruma Sadar]

This focus group consisted of two categories of participants: a few participants live near the Myanmar border, while others live close to the Kamala Bazaar (market) area in the Ruma Upazila. In this discussion, remoteness and access emerged as the problems in relation to accessing education in Ruma. As participant 1 and 2 live near the Burma

border, they cannot access the UNICEF school which is a two-day walk from participant 2's residence. Another participant, 4, adds that it is half a day's walk to the Myanmar border and two days' walk to the Ruma Sadar, where most of the government primary schools and the Higher Secondary School are located. In contrast to participant 1 and 2, other participants (3, 4 and 5) live in villages located a bit closer to the semi-urban hub, in the Kamala Bazaar area. For the remote communities, as indicated by participants 5 and 6, access to education is difficult. They have an ICDP para centre near their village but to access it requires walking a long distance. Hence, they prefer to send children to the government primary school but even that is tough for children during rainy season.

In the absence of the most basic infrastructure such as roads, discussed in Chapter Four, the geographical location of these participants poses a challenge to their access to education. The non-ICDP participants live near the Boga Lake area, which is situated quite deep in the interior of Ruma Upazila. The only public transport that is available there for the people is the *Chander gari* (very old four wheel drive), which runs from morning to night carrying tourists from Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, with a few stops along the way, and it does not venture beyond Boga Lake. The road on which the *Chander gari* runs has brick paving in some parts, but other parts are just compacted dirt. Because of the conditions of the track, the *Chander gari* can operate only in the dry season. During the wet season, which lasts for about four months, this region is cut off from the other parts of Ruma Upazila. At these times, people travel to Ruma Sadar only in situations of medical emergency or to fill upon stocks of food and medicine. It is this problem of inaccessibility that participant 5 was referring to. Laoo (1998), therefore, contends that places that are well located in relation to economic, health and educational amenities play a central role in citizenship rights. Places that lack these facilities, negatively affect access to citizenship rights including health and education services.

The lack of road connectivity is acknowledged by both the government and its development partners in a range of reports as the main impediment to development in the CHT (Asian Development Bank 2017; Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division 2011, p. 26). In the CHT, 83 percent of the planned rural road networks are unpaved (Asian Development Bank 2011, p. 2). In the rest of Bangladesh, rural infrastructure has improved since 1984 when the government launched its rural development strategy, focusing on the development of physical infrastructure such as roads and markets (Asian Development Bank 2017, p. 1). However, the CHT has remained largely inaccessible due to the long period of insurgency lasting more than twenty years, which ended only in 1997 (Asian Development Bank 2017, p. 1). Just two years after the signing of the CHT Peace Accord in 1997, the Asian Development Bank started a project entitled the Chittagong Hill Tracts Rural Development Project (2000-2010) at a cost of $US 30 million (Asian Development Bank 2010). The main objective of the project was to develop basic physical infrastructure. However, four months after the project's approval, in February 2001, expatriate engineers of the Danish International Development Agency were abducted in the CHT (Asian Development Bank 2010, p. 1). Their release was reportedly obtained after payment of a ransom (Mohsin 2003, p. 84).

This incident highlights the unstable political situation in the CHT. The Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS), the political party with which the government signed the peace treaty in 1997, blamed a rival indigenous political party, the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) for the abduction. In turn, the UPDF claimed the government and the military had staged the kidnapping to justify their continued military presence in the region. Following the incident, military patrols increased in the region (Mohsin 2003, p. 84). Partly because of the incident, Danish International Development Agency unilaterally cancelled its commitment of $15 million to co-finance the rural access component in Khagrachari district (Asian Development Bank 2010, p. 1). Again, in

February 2010, when the project completion review mission was to be conducted, violent clashes between ethnic groups in the Khagrachari district resulted in two deaths and hundreds injured. The United Nations Department of Safety and Security advised against development partner missions to the CHT for around two months after that (Asian Development Bank 2010, p. 1). In addition to the challenging political environment of the CHT, road infrastructure improvements are hampered due to high investment costs given the topography of the region, its remote and scattered communities, the lack of technical skills and capacity of HDCs and lack of funds (Asian Development Bank 2017, p. 1). Rural infrastructure in the CHT therefore remains significantly underdeveloped. The inadequate road network and the concurrent problem of accessing education highlight the limitations of development initiatives such as the pre-school component of the ICDP.

6.4.2: Quality of Education Services: Uneven Development

ICDP's school preparedness programme and children's subsequent transition to the government primary school is aimed at providing equality of opportunity to education for all. Equality of opportunity-in the sense that everyone starts school more or less at the same time is in turn related to providing equal opportunity to each citizen (Craig 2007, p. 95). Ruth Lister's critique of equality measures, such as the pre-primary component of the ICDP project, is quite relevant here. She contends:

> [What] is not yet acknowledged is that genuine equality of opportunity and recognition of 'the equal worth of all our citizens' is incompatible with the savagely unequal society… Equality of opportunity in the context of economic and social structures that remain profoundly unequal is likely to remain a contradiction in terms (Lister 2001, p. 438).

Unfortunately, this is the case with the non-ICDP participants living in remote parts of Ruma Upazila who speak of other exclusions as well:

> **Facilitator: When you send your children to the [government] school, do your children face any difficulty, like not wanting to go to school or lack of understanding of Bengali language?**

They do not understand while they are in school, which is why we sent them to the tutors. (Participant 1)

In our Prang Sa Union school we have some other difficulties. The Prang Sa School is very far from the neighbourhood, thus there are too many students but only three teachers. The problem is only one teacher takes classes for the entire school. Other teachers are absent most of the time. Again, the parents are very poor, as most of them works as subsistence farmers. They cannot afford a private teacher for their children. (Participant 3)

Facilitator: Can you please clarify that only one teacher is taking the classes of the entire school? What about the students?

If the school is open, they continue; if it is closed they come back. (Participant 2)

Facilitator: You mean teachers are not taking classes every day?

Teachers do not stay in the locality, so they attend at their convenience. (Participant 5)

They are government appointed teachers, but they do not [always attend]. They only attend twice or three times a week. (Participant 4)

[Non-ICDP focus group discussion 2, Kamala Bazaar, Ruma Sadar]

The participants speak to the multiplicity of exclusions that they face in accessing primary education, and also how the state is involved in their everyday lives (Painter 2006). Participant 1 talks of children's difficulty with Bengali language in school. Participant 3 refers to the inadequate education the facilities, the distance of the school, and the large number of students attending school. He further points to twofold problems in this regard: the poverty of the local inhabitants, and the necessity of engaging a private tutor because of irregular classes in school. These multiple exclusions make government education inaccessible to the poor. Through this practice of exclusion, participants are, in effect, referring to the failure of the state to provide services to its citizens. They hold the state accountable for schooling, rather than UNICEF. It is interesting to note that in relation to the delivery of primary education, for non-ICDP participants, the state constitutes government primary school teachers who are appointed by the government to serve the people. In the dominant narratives of 'state' and 'tribe', indigenous people came to be seen as inherently opposed to the state (Chandra 2015b, p. 124). However, in the context of the interior of Ruma, the boundary between the state and society is fluid (Nilsen 2011, p. 108). This is illustrated in the following discussion about teacher absenteeism in Ruma Upazila:

Facilitator: Are the teachers Bengali or indigenous?

They have mixed group teachers; they can be indigenous and also Bengali. In our place, the teachers are Tongsa (indigenous people from hills). We hardly have any Bengali teachers; most of them are Languay (Bawm) or Marma. All of them are Tongsa teachers. (Participant 2)

All the teachers in our locality is Tongsa (indigenous peoples from hills). One of them is Mrung (referring to Tripura), the other one is Langey (Bawm), and there are two Marma teachers. (Participant 1)

Facilitator: Do these teachers' live near the school?

No these teachers live in different places. Most of them come from very far. Sometimes they come, but most of the time they do not come. So, in the end a few teachers continue teaching with too many students. As this is the only school in our locality that is why there is a huge number of students. The ratio of teachers to students is very uneven. In primary school there is only 1 teacher for 70 students. (Participant 3)

[Non-ICDP focus group discussion 2, Kamala Bazaar, Ruma]

As the school is located quite far from Ruma Sadar and is mostly an indigenous inhabited area, I asked whether absentee teachers are indigenous or non-indigenous. The discussion led to the issue of teacher absenteeism, which is also acknowledged by the government. Naba Bikram Tripura (2016, p. 146) acknowledges that a great number of vacancies and 'chronic absenteeism' impede education service delivery in the CHT. Hence, teacher absenteeism is used by the state to justify its failure to provide services to its citizens. The participants in this discussion refer to the teachers as *Tongsa*. This is a Marma word which has two parts: *Tong* means hill and *Sa* means people. Hence, *Tongsa* means hill people. While referring to absentee teachers, the participants identify themselves as *Tongsa*, thereby calling upon the collective identity of the hill people. Even though the participants identify the absentee teachers as one of them – the hill people – they belong to the middle class and are part of the state machinery, as government employees employed to serve government schools. By contrast, the focus group participants are mostly subsistence farmers, who are not educated and live in poverty. Differences in class, problems of inaccessibility in the region of Ruma Upazila, remoteness, irregular classes in government schools: these specific social divisions have

constructed a grid of power relations which position the members of the focus group as subordinate (Yuval-Davis 2006, p. 201), and which affect their ability to claim citizenship rights in the context of education. Another problem related to the delivery of education is corruption, which the focus group participants also brought up during the discussion.

6.4.3: Uneven Citizenship, Uneven Access to Education

In the context of a discussion relating to absentee teachers in the government school, I asked how students are faring in the Primary School Certificate examinations in the situation of irregular classes at the school. I asked this question because the government takes measures such as withholding the salaries of teachers in those schools who do not perform well in the Primary School Certificate examination. In this context, the participants brought up the issue of corruption:

> **Researcher: What about the results of the students in these schools? Do they pass?**
>
> Participant 1: Yes, they pass somehow. At that time [during examination] the teachers in the examination hall help the students to pass, the teachers allow plagiarism. So, this is how the students and teachers are in a win-win situation.
>
> Other participants: Laugh
>
> **Researcher: What is your opinion on the issue of teachers helping students to pass?**
>
> Participant 4: We are not happy, because, previously we used to live depending on the produce in the field. Nowadays, every child needs to be educated otherwise they will not survive. There used to be huge land for Jhum cultivation or for farming; now there is a shortage of land for political reasons. A piece of land needs to be shared among three families. So, survival is difficult, we cannot produce the amount that can buy us basic necessities, then education comes at a huge cost, and for us this is very expensive.
>
> Participant 3: I want my child to be educated because there is not enough land for Jhum cultivation or any other way to survive. If they are educated, they can have a better life than us. They probably won't need to struggle the way I did.
>
> [Non-ICDP participants focus group discussion 1, Ruma Bazaar, Ruma Sadar]

The focus group participants, most of whom had no formal education, are conscious of the situation regarding primary education that prevails in the remotest part of the Ruma Upazila. All participants laughed when the first participant talked about cheating by

students and teachers in the Year Five final examination. Laughter is shared that is usually an act of 'social solidarity' (Robinson 2009, pp. 264-5). For non-ICDP participants, it provides the space to reflect upon their position, their threatened livelihoods, the role of education, the hardships they face. As participant 4 points out, they are not happy with the situation. They know the scarcity of land for Jhum cultivation; the increased population is making survival difficult for them, and this may no longer be an option for their children. Hence, they want their children to be educated so that they do not face the same hardships as they did. In sharp contrast, the ICDP participants who live near the central town in Ruma Sadar*,* experience and express different forms of citizenship entitlement (Jones & Gaventa 2002, p. 18). They are able to access their entitlement to education both through the ICDP para centre and the government school, which are both located within walking distance of nearby villages. The varied processes that create this unevenness result in the creation of 'multi-local and polyvalent' forms of citizenship (Ehrkamp & Leitner 2003, pp. 129-32). Multi-local refers to the spatality of citizenship, the intricate local and district connections, differences in the oportunity of accessing education service that shape indigenous people's practices of citizenship (p. 144). This complexity, differences in the practice of citizenship point that citizenship is not constructed through a standard set of legal frameworks, norms and practices. Rather, it is an amalgammation of all these elements. Hence, citizenship is always polyvalent (Staeheli et al. 2012, p. 639), which is acknowledged by the ICDP participants below:

Facilitator: Do you have a government school near your village?

Participant 1: Yes, Ruma Bazaar Government Primary School.

Facilitator: Does the school offer any pre-school education? The class before starting class 1?

Participant 3: Yes

Facilitator: Then why did you choose the UNICEF school rather than the government school?

Participant 2: The government school has started the pre-primary recently. There are many students in the school.

Facilitator: What about the classes in the government school? Are the classes held on a regular basis in the school?

Participant 2: Yes.

Participant 3: Regular classes are held but students

Participant 2: Too many students

Participant 3: Many students but few teachers. In one class there are at least 130 to 160 students.

Participant 5: Too many students but not enough teachers and lack of space.

Participant 6: Actually, it is not only a primary school. It is Junior High school from class 1 to 8. Hence, there are many students.

Facilitator: So, you have these problems, but are classes held regularly?

Participant 5: Yes.

[ICDP focus group discussion 3, Zayon Para, Ruma Sadar]

The ICDP focus group participants talked of the ICDP para centre in terms of its ability to offer better facilities. For them, it offers greater environment in relation to the teacher-student ratio, and provides conducive learning environment for their children. They refer to the problem of the large number of students in the government school. In contrast to the non-ICDP focus group participants discussed earlier, these participants have a choice, and prefer to send their children to the ICDP para centre, as it offers better preparation for school.

These contrasting experiences of education point to the efficacy of the ICDP pre-school programme. The ICDP does not elaborate on the scope of its school readiness programme. Its pre-school service components include (a) readying children and (b) readying parents, with a focus mainly on mothers as caregivers, putting emphasis on changing their attitudes and involving them in their children's early learning and development and transition to school. One of the limitations of the pre-school service of the ICDP is that it encompasses children and parents, but excludes the crucial element –

the primary school where the children will be enrolled after completing of pre-school in the para centre. Admittedly, the ICDP does not have authority over government school, as government schools are administered through the Directorate of Primary Education and regional, district, and sub-district education authorities (Sommers 2013, p. 9). If the students have to enrol in schools where classes are not held regularly, then one might question the efficacy of the ICDP pre-school programme as an integration tool to transition indigenous children to primary schools instructed in Bengali.

6.4.4: The ICDP Residential Schools: the Need to Send Children for Study Purposes

The ICDP also established four residential schools in the CHT to facilitate indigenous children's formal education. It offers formal education from years three to ten free of charge to indigenous students. In its rationale for the residential school, indigenous people are represented as 'backward' and 'ignorant' (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 2010, p. 21). The ICDP acknowledges that disparity exists among ethnic groups in accessing education. However, in overlooking structural factors contributing to this disparity such as inadequate education infrastructure, and the difficulty of walking through hilly terrain to get to school, the ICDP places the blame on 'backward', 'ignorant' indigenous people who fail to use the facilities provided. Directly opposing the ICDP officials' essentialised representation of ethnic people as 'ignorant', focus group participants reveal an acute awareness of the obstacles they face in accessing education for their children.

> **Researcher: What about the Ruma Abasik [residential school established by the ICDP]?**
>
> Participant 1: One of my children studies there.
>
> Participant 2: One has to get the opportunity to study there. There might be vacancy for twenty students, but then hundreds lodge application. They are very selective.
>
> **Researcher: Earlier you were talking about the problem of communication. Do you send your children to the Ruma Bazaar Model**

School [government school] at Ruma Sadar? Who are getting enrolled there? Are the children of nearby villages studying in this school?

Participant 2: Those living far away study here.

Participant 4: I would like to explain a bit. Mostly students from nearby paras study at the Primary section of the Ruma Bazaar Model School. Those who live in the interior, they rent accommodation and sent children to the Ruma Bazaar school. There is a Buddhist Ashram (religious hostel). Another hostel is for students from class three to five.

Participant 5: People from the hill, people who rent accommodation.

Participant 7: For many people renting is not possible, too costly.

Participant 6: Hmm (agreeing).

Participant 1: If they get the opportunity, they send their kids to Ruma Abasik.

Participant 5: When they are sent far from home, they tend to become attentive to studies. Otherwise, at home, they do not value education.

Participant 6: Children play more.

Participant 7: Even if they know their studies, they do not acquire language skill.

Participant 1: Do not know the Kola [Bengali language].

[Non-ICDP focus group discussion 2, Kamala Bazaar, Ruma Sadar]

These conversations refer to indigenous people's predicament in regards to education. As the focus group participants can only access government primary schools with their problems of teacher absenteeism and corruption, and the ICDP residential school offering only a very limited intake, I wanted to know about the options these parents had to access education. Therefore, I asked whether they sent their children to the central town in Ruma Sadar for study. The discussion started with participant 1, who referred to the limited vacancies in the Ruma Abasik (residential) School. Participant 4 and other participants (5, 6 and 7) talked of private accommodation arrangements available in Ruma Upazila headquarters, with people having to rent for their children to attend the school. Towards the end of the discussion, the imperative for sending children to a residential school is revealed. Sending children away from home is a way of inculcating the importance of education in children. For others, it is a useful way of learning the Bengali language. As

they are non-ICDP participants, their children do not benefit from the ICDP and the pre-school service induction to Bengali. Moreover, they do not have access to a government school that offers quality education. Hence, parents respond by sending them to a residential school at a cost. This illustrates that indigenous people use their everyday understandings of the state to make strategic use of the system as best as they can, rather than resisting the state (Fuller & Harriss 2001, p. 25).

6.5: Conclusion

This chapter has provided an analysis of state-society encounters in the context of ICDP pre-school education, paying attention to the narratives of both officials and indigenous people living and working in the region. An analysis of the officials' discourse conveys a contrasting perspective in relation to education service delivery. While ICDP officials claim that ICDP's pre-school is a success in delivering education to indigenous children, government official suggested that the government primary schools were unable to deliver this entitlement. These fissures set the backdrop against which indigenous people express their (in)ability to claim their citizenship rights to education. The officials' narratives further illustrate that the state is not the overarching entity envisioned by the governmentality theorists. Rather, in the context of ICDP pre-school education, the state comprises para workers, school teachers and officials that indigenous people encounter in their everyday life.

The 'lived citizenship', as embedded in the experience of the ICDP pre-school service varies across locations (Ehrkamp & Jacobsen 2017). ICDP participants of both Bandarban Sadar and Ruma Sadar are able to exert their citizenship rights to access the services of the ICDP pre-school and the government funded primary school. Non-ICDP participants, in contrast, in the interior of the Ruma Upazila are restricted by multiple forms of exclusion, which include the non-availability of the ICDP pre-school service, a questionable primary

education service in the government primary schools, and absence of basic infrastructure. In seeking education for their children, the ICDP participants look to the para pre-school programme as a way for their children to acquire Bengali so that they are in a position to learn when they go to the government school. For those unable to access the ICDP para pre-schools, mainly because they are too far away, have to send their children to government schools without preschool education. Geographical remoteness and the absence of road infrastructure play an important role in determining people's access to the ICDP programme as well as to government schools. Contrary to stereotypical assumption of indigenous people being unaware of the value of education, they deem education crucial for their survival and hold the state responsible for providing this entitlement. The way they engaged with the state indicate a relational conception of the dynamics of processes of domination, manifested in the state imposition of acquiring Bengali language competency, and resistance, as negotiation and engagement (Nilsen 2011, p. 110). A crucial aspect of this negotiation is the way indigenous people tend to appropriate aspects of institutions and discourses that constitute the pillars of hegemony and put these to use that reflect their interest and experiences (Nilsen 2011, p. 110). This chapter has also shown that development is not just a determining force that controls the lives of indigenous people. Rather, indigenous people have sought to use development strategies by the ICDP pre-school service to claim their citizenship rights, and thereby to rework the discursive practices of the state by accessing entitlements that should be available to all. Even in the absence of state provision, their citizenship practices emerge out of everyday livelihood struggles which result in the adoption of practical strategies, such as sending children away from home to gain access to education. Therefore, indigenous peoples' everyday citizenship practices point to a politics of 'contingency and contestation' (Moore 1999, p. 675). This is further discussed in Chapter Eight.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EMBEDDED IN STATE STRUCTURES: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' EXPERIENCE OF HEALTH

7.1: Introduction

This chapter extends the analysis of indigenous people's 'lived citizenship' to the context of health. It considers the extent to which the Integrated Community Development Project's (ICDP's) health programmes enhance indigenous people's capacity to claim basic health services from state-run health care facilities. In contrast to the education service of the ICDP, which has a specific service provision in the form of pre-school services, the ICDP does not offer any specific health services. Instead, it supports the government in the delivery of preventive and primary health services through its para centres (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 1996, p. 13). These services include routine immunisation programmes, post-natal vitamin-A supplementation, and awareness raising of health and nutrition in communities (Org-Quest Research Limited 2012, p. 9). The vitamin A supplementation programme is a periodic programme (Semba et al. 2010, p. 144). To examine the ICDP's role in extending indigenous people's citizenship rights in relation to health, only its Extended Programme on Immunisation (EPI) and health education programme are considered.

This chapter reports on how health services are experienced from two contrasting perspectives: officials and indigenous people, who include both ICDP and non-ICDP participants. The chapter firstly outlines the findings of my analysis of interview data collected from ICDP and government officials; both ICDP and government officials are involved in the delivery of government health services. It discusses two broad themes in

health service delivery: government and non-governmental organisation (NGO) partnerships and associated problems in the delivery of health services, and how local people's access to health services is hindered by remoteness indicating inequitable access and lack of awareness. These findings shed further light on the internal dynamics and relationships between public organisations, and how this stretches across state-society and citizenship relations. Then, this chapter discusses how indigenous citizenship is exercised in everyday, local interactions to access government health provision, drawing on semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The analysis shows a differential experience of health services in Bandarban Sadar and Ruma Upazila, and these differing health experiences are predicated upon an intertwining of geographic and political factors.

7. 2: Collaboration between the Government and NGOs in Health Service Delivery in the Bandarban District

In contrast to the almost non-existent collaboration between the government and the ICDP in the primary education sector, discussed in the previous chapter, there has been a strong partnership between them in health service delivery (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2015, p. 16). This partnership, not only with the ICDP, but also with NGOs in general, was formed in recognition by government that it is unable to meet the health care needs of its people alone, primarily because of shortages in the health workforce (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2015, pp. 16, 19). Bangladesh has a severe shortage of health workers in the public sector, with approximately one worker per 2000 people, against World Health Organisation recommendations of more than two health workers per 1000 people (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2015, p. 19). To overcome this problem, the government and NGOs have employed several community-based models to deliver health care services (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2015, p. 19). The ICDP

is not technically an NGO, as discussed in Chapter Two, but rather a non-state entity. In the government documents, the categories of NGO and non-state entities are not clearly demarcated. Any organisation that is not a government agency is loosely understood as an NGO. This chapter employs the term GO-NGO to highlight this broad understanding. The ICDP is among a range of non-government institutions, including NGOs and various national and international development organisations, that support the government to deliver its health care services. To highlight this, I interviewed Dr Mong (pseudonym), a middle aged-government doctor and the administrative head of the Upazila Health Complex (sub-district level government hospital) to understand his views of the role of ICDP in the government health service delivery:

> **Researcher: Can you briefly tell me how is your department and the ICDP linked? What do you think of this partnership?**
>
> The Upazila Health Complex, better known as the Upazila hospital, is the institution which provides government health services to the people. It has a hospital which delivers clinical/medical services to the people. We also have a field section which is mainly aimed at providing primary health care services at the grass roots level, such as immunisation, de-worming and creating awareness among people. To implement these programmes, the non-government organisations help us and ICDP is one such organisation. I think these organisations are helping us. For example, the success of the EPI programme [government vaccination programme] to a great extent depends on the data regarding the number of pregnant women. On the basis of the number of the pregnant women, we requisition for vaccines at our Head office in Dhaka. We collect the data in consultation with the Family Welfare Assistant of the Department of Family Planning, Health Assistant and para workers of the UNICEF. We also run the immunisation programmes with the help of these organisations. (Dr Mong, Government Official)

The government doctor speaks positively about the role of the ICDP in facilitating government health service delivery. He uses the words ‘help’, ‘consultation’, and ‘provide’ to refer to the collaboration between government and non-government organisations. Similarly, an ICDP official also highlighted its role in the delivery of government health care services. He spoke of the ICDP’s vision about the role of the para centre in health service delivery. He explained that the para centre aims to nurture children, keeping in mind that these children will grow up to contribute to the community and society. The ICDP

specifically targets two groups: pregnant women and adolescent girls aged 15-19, who, as future mothers, the project aims to help them in accessing the government health service:

> There is no need to offer a separate service. Government has got health services, programmes. But the problem is people are unable to access it. Because the service is far away from them. Here, remoteness is a problem, there is a language barrier, insecurity. That is why we want to bring the health service … we want to be a common platform. At least, all [service providers] come to the para centre. We tell them at least come to the para centre. It is our responsibility to bring people. (Pru, ICDP Official)

Both the government doctor and the ICDP manager refer to the mutual partnerships between the government and NGOs, who work together based on common objectives and roles (Arifeen et al. 2013, p. 2020). The government doctor, Dr Mong, specifically talked about the partnership in the EPI programme. In the national EPI and tuberculosis programmes in Bangladesh, partner NGOs have been involved at three levels: a national EPI office to provide technical assistance on training, monitoring, and community mobilisation; Upazila level to offer programme management and monitoring support; and at community level to promote community mobilisation to seek services from the EPI outreach sites (Arifeen et al. 2013, p. 2020). The ICDP works at the community level. This community-based service delivery approach has been recognised as contributing to Bangladesh's considerable improvements in several health indicators: improved immunisation coverage, decline in fertility, and decline in maternal and child mortality. Bangladesh has made improvements in the context of deficient health infrastructure, resource constraints and weak governance (Arifeen et al. 2013, p. 2012). Notwithstanding these constraints, the high coverage of selected health interventions such as immunisation, distribution of Vitamin-A capsules, and family planning services, particularly in rural regions through its community-based service delivery approach (Arifeen et al. 2013, p. 2012), has resulted in positive health outcomes for Bangladesh. These point to the importance of government and NGO collaboration in the health sector.

7.2.1: Co-ordination Problems between the ICDP and Government Departments

While there is a partnership between the government and NGOs, it is not well established in all ICDP intervention areas, namely the three hill districts of the CHT. The ICDP official refers to a lack of co-ordination between the ICDP and government departments, which requires the ICDP to request government service providers to come to the para centre. In the context of the immunisation programme, two government departments are involved in delivering the service: the Directorate-General of Health Services and the Directorate-General of Family Planning. In the absence of any formal agreement between the ICDP and these government departments, co-operation or the lack of it depends on the personal responses of government department officials, who need to be individually approached to come to the para centre. This lack of coordination results in lack of cooperation in some cases, thereby limiting the role of the ICDP in stretching the reach of government services into the remotest parts of the CHT. The Project Manager for planning of the ICDP also brought up this problem of lack of co-operation on the part of the health department in some hill districts:

> We have told the health department, brother, bring your vaccination here [to our para centre]. The department says why should we go to the centre? The government did not give any instruction. This department might have an EPI outreach centre, which might be at a home of a Headman [customary revenue collector in the CHT], at a tea shop. We have told them we have got a structure [para centre], you come here. We will make arrangements so that you can have a place to sit and work. And we will bring your clients. Where the health officials are positive … they are acknowledging that this is very good. This is a readymade thing. There are some others … no, the government did not tell me to go there. (Chowdhury, an ICDP official)

Given this issue of lack of co-ordination, I asked him whether they have any formal agreement with the government health department.

> Very locally. The civil surgeon of Bandarban is very positive – he gives instructions to his people, so things are happening in Bandarban. But things did not happen in Khagrachari till very recently. There was a civil surgeon [administrative head of the government hospital at the district level] in Khagrachari some time back. He said who asked you to do this [health service]? This is our job. I will see whether my people [common people] will get vaccination or not. This is *my* mandate. You do not have to think about it. (ICDP Project Manager)

The lack of cooperation on the part of some government officials indicates the problems of the government–NGO relationship at one level. At another level, it reflects the

underpinnings of a broader governance problem that exists in the CHT. The Hill District Council (HDC), the local government organisation, is mandated to deliver health services to all Upazilas in the CHT (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility 2012a, p. 7). The 1997 CHT Peace Accord stipulates transfer of 33 'subjects', which includes health and family planning to the HDCs (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility 2012a, p. 7). Each HDC, one for each CHT district, is responsible for supervising more than 300 doctors, nurses and 800 community health workers working at more than 235 health facilities at district, upazilla, union (lowest administrative unit) and community level through the Office of the Civil Surgeon and the Deputy Directors of Family Planning (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2011a, p. 10). However, the HDCs have limited capacity and resources to manage health services (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility 2012a, p. 7). In most cases, supervision and management are limited to Development Co-ordination Meetings held every month at the district level and headed by the Chair of the respective HDC. At these meetings, the Civil Surgeon, the administrative head of the district government hospital, reports to the Chair about his department. Although the Civil Surgeon is required to report to the HDC, the appointment, transfer and posting of doctors is controlled by the Directorate of Health Services, which comes under the Ministry of Health and Family Planning in the capital, Dhaka. In effect, administrative control in terms of resourcing is largely exercised by the central Ministries in the capital. Hence, local HDCs in the CHT have little or no control over these matters (Chakma 2014, p. 129). As the ICDP Manager notes:

> We are working with the HDC, since health, primary and pre-primary all are transferred after the Peace Accord. It is not yet fully streamlined. They do not have much control. But there is one advantage. The little collaboration that we are getting is because of the involvement of the HDC. The Chairman of HDC is the Chairman of our district committee. (Rahman, ICDP Official).

Hence, for critics, the HDCs do not offer an effective system for the administrative devolution of power, and nor do they grant any real autonomy for the hill people (Roy

2004, p. 126). This issue is further complicated by the government's delay in implementing the Peace Accord. The HDCs are directly subjected to the authority of the regional council, whose jurisdiction encompasses elected local government bodies, implying HDCs, and 'general administration' of the CHT (Roy 2004, p. 126). The Regional Council, however, has less authority over the HDCs than provisioned in the 1997 Accord. Bypassing the Regional Council, they are given far more authority and control. This is partly due to the lack of political commitment to fully implement the CHT Peace Accord (Jamil, Ishtiaq & Panday 2008, p. 482), as well as an absence of supplementary regulations (Roy 2004, p. 126). In this administrative quagmire, development projects and programmes are being implemented in the CHT, but the very objectives and efficacy of some development projects can be questioned.

7.2.2: Duplication of Development Efforts: Lack of Capacity of the HDCs

The lack of co-ordination mentioned earlier is not only limited to government departments but also extends to the UN institutions, such as UNICEF and the UNDP, which carry out major development programmes in the CHT. This underscores the issue of the lack of capacity of the HDCs in relation to their mandate to oversee development activities in the CHT. To address the HDCs' limited capacity and resources to manage health services, the UNDP, through the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility and in partnership with the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, conducted a project in 2008-2012 which aimed primarily to provide immediate health care in remote areas and guide health management (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility 2012a, p. 7). One key component of the project was to provide support to the government's immunisation programme through provision of technical, human resources, and transport inputs into routine EPI sessions and other national immunisation campaigns (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility 2012a, p. 10). Accordingly, EPI sessions were conducted in satellite clinics established by the project in coordination with field workers of the Ministry of Health and Family Planning.

Further, to bring eligible children and women to the nearest immunisation sessions, community workers were engaged to increase awareness among the community's people of the need for routine immunisation. The UNDP started this project in 2008, whereas the ICDP has been working with the same kind of service delivery model since 1996. Hence, the ICDP manager contends:

> Our health programme has been hampered by the UNDP programme. We are working here for a long time. UNDP came. They brought some parallel programmes. For their health programme, they have employed some health workers with high pay. They have done para development centre. Then they have done parallel development centre. They have formed committees and started providing cash of four lakh taka [$US 4740 in current term]. This is a huge amount of money. People go where they get better facilities. In this way, our programmes were hampered. (ICDP Manager)

The UNICEF and UNDP's duplication of service provision in the immunisation points to the HDC's lack of administrative capacity and control over government and non-government departments and agencies. Both the UN agencies were implementing development projects that duplicate ICDP programme components, but the HDCs could not do anything to address this. In addition, the HDCs were unable to adequately monitor existing health programmes, such as the immunisation programme. The ICDP manager contends that due to lack of proper monitoring, the government department has made false claims of 100 percent vaccination coverage. He elaborates:

> There is also a discrepancy. We request them [government department] to give us the EPI [vaccination] schedule. You know, they have to do an EPI session every month. If we are to bring people to the EPI centre [vaccination centres], we have to tell people. We know who needs the vaccine … but if I have to tell people, I have to know the schedule. If I say that the health worker will give vaccine on a particular day and you do not turn up on that day... It will not work like that. Maybe people will come one day, on the third occasion they will not come. Even if I call them, they will not come. There is a gap. They cannot maintain the EPI schedule. There are some lazy people [the workers]. They show that they have 100 percent coverage. In reality, he does not go everywhere. He does not get out of the Upazila. If they are linked with us, they have to be regular. Otherwise, we will report it. And we have done this. We have told at the Upazila co-ordination meeting that in such and such places the EPI worker has not visited. Then there was a hue and cry. The UNHPO [the head of the government hospital at the sub-district level] got angry. He said: why you were saying this in an open meeting? (ICDP Manager)

The ICDP official is here referring to the discrepancy that exists in the government department's claims about its blanket immunisation coverage, which has also been

identified in the literature (Karim, Rafi & Begum 2005, p. 743). For example, significant differences exist in the immunisation coverage rates for various ethnic minorities within the CHT, ranging from a low of nine percent for the Mros to 18 percent for the Tripuras (Chowdhury, Nath & Choudhury 2003, p. 199). A study carried out in the capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka in 2005, reveals that 31 percent of planned sessions of the EPI were not held (Uddin et al. 2010, p. 55). Similarly, Chakma and Marma mothers reported not being able to fully immunise their children as the service providers did not turn up (Karim, Rafi & Begum 2005, p. 745). Despite this failure on the part of the government departments to provide scheduled health services, it is the indigenous people who are blamed for their lack of awareness, leading to their inequitable health outcome. This replicates the constructions of indigenous people in the project documents, discussed in Chapter Five.

7.2.3: Lack of Awareness or Lack of Access?

I asked the ICDP district manager in Bandarban about the role of the ICDP's community mobilisation programmes to access government health services.

> **Researcher: What does the ICDP do in terms of community mobilisation for the EPI programme of the government?**
>
> We create awareness through our courtyard meetings. Lack of awareness is a problem … people do not accept that. They think: what is the point of immunisation? Nobody had a shot in 14 generations of my family. Why the need for immunisation now? Did we not grow up? Why do my children need immunisation now? From there, we 'mould' them. No, they need it. The areas which we cover, the progress is very good, especially with regards to immunisation and birth registration: we have reached 90 percent coverage. There are other smaller things, such as boiling water, washing hands, intake of iodised salt that we focus on during courtyard meetings. (Alam, ICDP Official).

The use of words and also the manner they are used reflect a relation of power (Schram 1993; van Dijk 1997). The sentences '… we 'mould' them. No, they need it' reflect a condescending attitude towards project participants. The development of 'ignorant', and 'marginal' indigenous people is the objective of many NGOs in Bangladesh (Sharmeen 2013, p. 1059). The ICDP does not fall into the category of a NGO, but rather, is a project

of joint collaboration between UNICEF and the Bangladesh government. However, it is not immune to these discursive constructions of indigenous people, analysed in detail in Chapter Five. These discursive constructions of indigenous people enable justifications of development interventions from 'outside' (Sharmeen 2013, p. 1060). Further, in the context of Bangladesh, the project participants are poor, while the officials are usually middle class. The stark class differences that permeate Bangladesh society is reflected in these sentences. The project official deems the project participants somewhat subordinate, in that they lack awareness about what is good for them; hence, they need to be 'moulded'. The project official's view is underpinned by ethnocentricity, which means to consider one's own standard as the yardstick, through an unquestioned notion of superiority (Bulhan 1985, p. 119). This further reflects how language of the project and its actors serves to justify the ICDP's health interventions. For this ICDP official, the project participants' personal lack of awareness is tied to their inequitable health outcomes. However, it is important to note that this view is not held by all project officials.

7.2.4: Distance to Access Public Health Care Services

Another project official regards inequitable access to health services as a problem for indigenous people. Mohamed (pseudonym), an Upazila ICDP official in his mid-40s, has been working in Bandarban for about ten years. I asked him why the people in general, and the project participants specifically, are not able to access the government health services. He responds:

> People are unable to access it [the government health service]. Because firstly, the service is far away from them. They cannot travel that far. If people want to access the health service, they have to come all the way to the Upazila Sadar [sub–district headquarters]. That is not possible. On the other hand, these people [government health sector] do not have the *lokobol* [human resources] to reach the people. This man does not get out of the Upazila – The health worker of the health department – it is not possible for him. He does not have the logistics, he does not have vehicle, and there are no roads. Hence, he will not go. (Mohamed, ICDP Official)

Mohamed speaks of the constraints that indigenous people in the remote areas of the Bandarban district face to access the government health facility. Lack of infrastructure such as roads and transport pose obstacles to access for the people in the CHT. For example, a patient on average has to travel more than five kilometres to reach a district hospital, more than three kilometres to the Upazila Health Complex, and more than one kilometre to the union health and family welfare centre (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2011a, p. 12). In the CHT, people have to walk long distances. The people living in remote villages have to cover long distances and rugged terrain in the absence of transport facilities to reach major healthcare facilities such as government hospitals, doctors' private practices, and the clinics situated around the Upazila and district headquarters (Uddin et al. 2013, p. 383). It often takes between two to five hours to reach the Upazila headquarters from the scattered villages. Transport to and from the healthcare centres is also irregular and costly. These physical barriers, coupled with financial vulnerability, mean many indigenous people can not avail themselves of existing health services located in the Upazila headquarters (Uddin et al. 2013, p. 383). Consequently, the usage of public health services is quite low in the CHT: only 7.56 percent of people reported using public facilities when they were ill (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2011a, p. 11). Cost, time, physical accessibility and service quality are the main reasons for low usage of government health services (Uddin et al. 2013, p. 383). The experiences of ICDP and non-ICDP participants in accessing government health services are detailed in the following section.

7.3: Accessing Basic Health Service in Bandarban Sadar

Providing support to the EPI programme through its para centres is one of the ICDP's key health initiatives. The government of Bangladesh provides routine vaccination services to children below one year of age (UNICEF 2015, p. 10). ICDP support entails providing a

venue for immunisation and health promotion and education as a community mobilisation strategy through courtyard meetings and home visits by the ICDP para worker. A common theme that has emerged from the analysis of the interviews and focus group discussions with the ICDP participants is that geographical location determines indigenous people's access to health facilities in the Bandarban district. With regard to the Bandarban Sadar (district headquarter), there is relatively good communication, and people can get vaccinated near their locality, either from EPI outreach sites, which include schools, roadside tea stalls or ICDP para centres, or at the community clinics. As there is no formal agreement between the ICDP and the government health department to use the ICDP para centre as the site for vaccination clinics, the use of para centres largely depends on location and communication. In the event that the para centre is located on a road with good communication facilities, the government field workers use it as a venue. However, only 30 percent of total immunisation sites in the CHT are located at para centres (UNICEF 2014, p. 16). Remoi Bawm (Pseudonym), an ICDP participant, was able to access the EPI vaccination service from the para centre. She is aged 40 years, owns a small business and the para centre of her village is a venue for vaccination. Here is an excerpt of the conversation with her:

Researcher: Do you have children?

Yes, four children. Two daughters and two sons.

Researcher: Did you take any vaccine while you were pregnant?

Yes. In the UNICEF school, (para centre is commonly known as the UNICEF school in the CHT), the government people come. They gave me vaccines during pregnancy.

Researcher: What about your children? Did you take them for to the centre for vaccination?

Yes. My children are grown up now. When they were young, they had vaccines.

Another ICDP participant is Tum Lock Mro, aged 30 years, who has three children and works as a swidden cultivator. The para centre in her village is not a venue for vaccination. She accesses the EPI service from the community clinic which is located on the roadside.

Here is a snapshot of the conversation with her, exploring the issue of access to EPI services from a community clinic:

Researcher: Do you go to the community clinic?

Yes.

Researcher: What are the services that you get from the community clinic?

Iron tablet, medicine for fever, diarrhoea, malaria and vaccination of children.

Researcher: Did all of your children get vaccine?

Yes. The people of the community clinic come to this para. They tell us about vaccination. That we need to take vaccine during pregnancy. When my children were young, I took them to the clinic.

The EPI constitutes one of the core components of the essential health package of the government in Bangladesh (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2016a, p. 5). At the district level, this package is provided at six sites: home, satellite clinics and EPI outreach centres, community clinics, government health facilities at the union level namely Union Health and Family Welfare Centres, and Union Health Sub-Centres, Upazila Health Complexes and district hospitals (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2016a, p. 9). Although the ICDP para centre is not a venue for vaccination, this ICDP participants can access the government service at the community clinics, which are located near a place called '12 mile' in the Bandarban district. Moreover, the community clinic is located near a bus stop, easily accessible from the main road, and frequently visited by health department officials; consequently, it is well run. In the case of Bandarban Sadar, only a few para centres are being used as venues for EPI vaccination programme. In the main, people, ICDP or non-ICDP participants, are able to access vaccination service through government EPI sites.

7.3.1: Accessing Health Services in Ruma Upazila

In the case of Ruma Upazila, the vaccination service is provided from only one site, the Upazila Health Complex, which is the main government hospital in Ruma Upazila. However, at the sub-district level, the vaccination programme was to be provided from three sites: the community clinic, the Union Health and Family Welfare Centre and Upazila

Health Complex (Chowdhury & Osmani 2010, p. 220). Moreover, no ICDP para centres are used as venues for the vaccination programme in Ruma Upazila. Hence, the ICDP para centre does not play a direct role in providing EPI services. The ICDP participants who live in the Ruma Sadar (sub-district headquarters) are able to easily access vaccines as the Upazila Health Complex is located at Ruma Sadar Upazila. An excerpt from the focus group discussion reveals this:

> **Researcher: Brother, your children are grown up now. Were your children vaccinated when they were young?**
>
> Yes (Male participant 1).
>
> **Researcher: Where did you go for your children's vaccination?**
>
> At the Ruma… [pause] (Male participant 1).
>
> At the Ruma Hospital (Others).
>
> **Researcher: Did your wife get vaccinations and check-ups when she was pregnant?**
>
> Yes (Male participant 1).
>
> **Researcher: What about other participants? Were you able to get vaccinations for your children?**
>
> Yes, I took my children to the hospital when they were young (Female participant 1).
>
> We live near Ruma Bazaar. Therefore, we can easily get to the hospital for vaccination (Female participant 2).
>
> **Researcher: Were you able to get vaccinations and check-ups done during pregnancy?**
>
> Yes (Female participant 2 and 3).
>
> **Researcher: So, all of you could avail the government service. Did you get any information from anyone regarding vaccination?**
>
> You know it is bazaar area. People are aware here, so they would take their children to the hospital (Male participant 2).
>
> There are NGO workers who visit paras. The ICDP para worker also tells about vaccination (Male participant 3).
>
> [ICDP focus group discussion 3- Zayon para, Ruma Sadar]

These ICDP participants talk about the proximity of the government hospital. One participant (male participant 2) explains this further by pointing out that because it is

bazaar area, people are more conscious of the need for health care. In the context of the Ruma Upazila, the bazaar is the business and administrative hub of Ruma Upazila. It is the most developed area in terms of basic amenities as it has electricity, food, medicine, a hospital, dispensary [pharmacy] and transportation. However, not all local people were able to access this service in Ruma Upazila. For indigenous people, geographic location determines whether they can access the government health service. The following focus group discussion with the non-ICDP participants explores this issue of accessibility:

Facilitator: Do you live near Boga-lake?

Yes (Male participant 1).

Facilitator: It is quite far away from here.

Yes (Male participant 1).

Facilitator: Do you have any para centre nearby?

The para centre is quite far from us (Female participant 2).

Facilitator: How far is the community clinic from your locality?

It is about 6 miles (about 8 kilometres). The people … they do not give vaccines over there. They [government health worker] came quite a while ago (Male participant 2).

Facilitator: Where do you go for vaccines?

We go to Ruma Bazaar (Female participant 2).

Facilitator: Let me get it right. Why do you have to travel all the way to the Ruma Bazaar from the Boga-lake to get vaccine?

The people came once. Thereafter, they did not come (Female participant 2).

Facilitator: When was the last time they came?

Quite a while ago. That is why people are forced to come to the bazaar [market place] (Male participant 2).

Facilitator: Do the people go to Ruma for vaccines?

Those who are aware, they go. But for the people who live on distant hill tops, it is not possible to go to Ruma for vaccination (Male participant 2).

[Non-ICDP focus group discussion 1- Ruma Bazaar]

This discussion highlights the barriers that people face to access government services in Ruma Upazila. The key theme that arises from the discussion is the spatial aspect of

marginality, which concerns remoteness of location, isolation from development centres, and lack of connectedness to services (Williams, Vira & Chopra 2011, p. 15). The participants were residents of sparsely located villages near Boga Lake, which is about 18 kilometres from Ruma Sadar. No regular transport service exists from Ruma Sadar to the villages located near Boga-lake. The spatial experience of marginality is experienced by the people in the context of irregular EPI service provision by the government department, as referred to by female participant 2 in this discussion. To access the free vaccination service of the government requires indigenous people spending a considerable amount of time and money. Male participant 2 speaks of the poorest people who live on the remote hilltops; for these people vaccination is not even a possibility. The participants also talk about the sheer absence of even the most basic health facility. Paradoxically, health communication in the form of health education, another key component of ICDP's health programme, is premised on the assumption that it is due to their lack of awareness that the indigenous people do not access the government health facility.

7.3.2: Health Education through the ICDP

Awareness raising in communities on health and nutrition is a key component of the ICDP's health programme. The ICDP seeks to change the health-seeking behaviour of project participants through health education. The para workers of the ICDP serve as health promoters for the community through dissemination of health education (UNICEF 2014, p. 14). They are required to disseminate the 'behaviour change message' to the mothers and parents of children in the area (UNICEF 2014, pp. 15, 27). Although the term 'parents' is used alongside the word 'mother', in the course of conducting the semi-structured interviews and the focus group discussions, I learnt that courtyard meetings do not incorporate men.

In Bangladesh the ‘essential service package’ constitutes the cornerstone of primary health care services (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2016a, p. 5), and the behaviour change programme is one of the main components of this package. It includes reproductive health, child health, communicable diseases, limited curative care and lastly, ‘behaviour change communication’ to influence people’s behaviour and health care seeking practices across all the components of the essential service package (Ensor et al. 2002, p. 249). Some international development partners such as UNICEF, UNDP, World Health Organisation and the European Union, and NGOs provide either hospital or community-based services, or both, to supplement the essential service package of the government (Nasreen et al. 2007, pp. xi-xii). A range of stakeholders undertake behaviour change communication programmes in Bangladesh (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2016b, p. 16) and the ICDP is one of them (Talukder 2014). However, the ICDP’s rhetoric of behaviour change through health communication does not match implementation in the field.

Hla Ma (pseudonym), aged 18, an ICDP participant of Bandarban Sadar, has just had a baby. I asked her whether the ICDP para worker visited her home to talk about health or if she had attended any courtyard meetings conducted by the para worker.

> No. The para worker only teaches at the UNICEF school. She does not come to my house.
>
> **Researcher: Did the para worker organise courtyard meetings in your village?**
>
> No.
>
> **Researcher: Then where did you get the information that you need to get vaccine for yourself and the child?**
>
> I know because my husband is educated. He told me to go the health clinic for vaccination.

Similar experiences are expressed in focus group discussions conducted in the Ruma Upazila.

Facilitator: Do the para workers of the ICDP conduct the courtyard meetings or any other events regarding health awareness?

No, no. no such thing (Male participant 1).

We do awareness regarding hygiene (Female participant 1).

Facilitator: I understand you are doing it with Green Hill [an NGO]. But does the para worker sit with the people?

No, no. No meeting (Female participant 2).

Facilitator: That means others [NGOs] are doing awareness raising programmes. But do the para workers sit with you since you are a mother? [To verify I asked the question again]

No, no (Female participant 2).

Facilitator: Sister, [to other participants] you tell me, do the para workers sit with you? [these participants live in villages close to para worker's residence]

We sit here (Female participant 3).

They will arrange a meeting here (Male participant 2).

They sit twice with us (Female participant 3).

Since this is the para worker's village, she conducts meetings here (Male participant 2).

Facilitator: What do you discuss in the meeting?

About pregnant women, lactating mothers (Female participant 3).

[ICDP participants focus group discussion 3, Zayon Para, Ruma Sadar]

The discussion of ICDP's health education provides the context for participants to talk about the effectiveness of the government health department with regard to health promotion:

As for the para visits by the health workers… the government [health worker] does not go at all. Not at all. But the non-government NGOs do go. I know it. There are field workers of the department of Family Planning. I saw them going with a box, sometimes. There are some indigenous girls who go to paras (Male participant 1).

Even if they cannot go further (Male participant 2).

Facilitator: So they mostly cover nearby paras.

The health workers are supposed to visit paras. They are to be sent from the Upazila Health Complex, either monthly, fortnightly or weekly. Nobody visits the paras. I have observed that throughout the year no health worker, nobody from the department of agriculture, health, any government department … nobody visits there ... no meetings, no visits ever. How can the people be aware? (Male participant 2).

[ICDP participants focus group discussion 1, Profumukh Para, Ruma Sadar]

This failure to provide home visits and community awareness training on the part of government health department staff emerged as the main theme of this discussion. In the context of Ruma Upazila, geographic accessibility is a critical factor both for the service providers and service seekers. However, even those para centres located in close proximity fail to deliver services. Male participant 2 refers to Niyongkhipng para, located near Ruma Sadar, with road infrastructure, yet government health department staff do not go there. According to the Health, Nutrition and Population Strategic Investment Plan 2016-2021, the essential health service package should be provided by staff at each level of the government health facility (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2016a, p. 5). Health assistants, family welfare assistants and other community based health workers are to conduct home visits to identify people in need of health care, such as children requiring immunisation, family planning services, and also to deliver behaviour change communication (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2016a, p. 37). This raises questions about the efficacy of government and NGO collaboration to deliver the behaviour change communication component of the essential service package, also known as the 'social and behavioural communication strategy' (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2016b, p. 3). Marginalised people are usually the subjects of health interventions through measures that try to modify individual behaviours (Dutta-Bergman 2004, p. 238). For the government, the impetus for health education, communication, comes from the possibility of improved health outcomes for its people, and this is to be achieved by promoting behaviour changes in individuals through dissemination of information about health, nutrition, and population (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2016b, p. 3). However, it does not concede the crucial role that broader infrastructure, such as road networks or the availability and quality of government service, play in determining the health practices of the individual or the target community (Dutta-Bergman 2004, p. 240). As the ICDP does not provide a specific

health service, and the people have to access health care mainly through government means, ICDP participants brought up the issue of government health service provision while detailing their experiences of ICDP health initiatives.

7.4: No Health Service for the People in the Interior of Ruma Upazila

Ruma Upazila is a sub-district where primary health care is provided by the government from three facilities. Both ICDP and non-ICDP participants of Ruma Upazila headquarters expressed their experience of accessing health services through these facilities. However, non-ICDP participants who live in the interior of the Ruma Upazila do not have any health care service points. The following excerpt highlights their predicament:

> **Facilitator: Do you have a health facility near your para or in the locality other than the Ruma Health Complex?**
>
> We don't have any medical facility nearby. If there is an emergency, we take them to Sadar [Ruma Upazila headquarters] hospital on foot with the help of neighbours. Sometimes they die on the way. There is no medicine or community clinic nearby. We have to buy medicines from the Ruma Bazaar. We usually use traditional medicines and herbs rather than medicines (Female participant 1).
>
> Sometimes the people do not take vaccines because they feel feverish. If they want to take vaccine then they come down to the Ruma Sadar and take vaccines. We don't know the name of the medicines, we just ask the shopkeeper and they give us medicine (Male participant 1).
>
> **Facilitator: Is there any market or bazaar near your locality?**
>
> Yes, there is. But there is no medicine shop. So, when we come down from the hill, we buy from Ruma bazaar (Male participant 2).
>
> **Facilitator: What about pregnant women? Do they take vaccine?**
>
> They do not take any vaccines as they live on the hill top. But when the baby is about 3 months old, they come down from the hill to take vaccines [from Ruma Hospital] (Female participant 2).
>
> [Non-ICDP participants, focus group discussion-1, Ruma Bazaar, Ruma Sadar]

These participants live near the Burma border, from where it takes two days to reach the Ruma Bazaar. The participants emphasise the constraints of the structures within which health decisions are made. Both the first and second participants refer to indigenous people's reliance on traditional medicines and herbs over modern medicine. The second

participant points to the reluctance of some indigenous persons to take vaccines as they get a fever afterwards. The inhabitants do not have a pharmacy in their locality. Even to get over-the-counter medicines like Panadol, they have to travel two days to reach Ruma Bazaar. Further, they do not know the names of the medicines, so they rely on the shopkeeper to give them the right medicine. These discussions highlight how the lack of health facilities shapes these people's health-seeking behaviours and health decisions. In discussing health, the locally situated meanings highlight the confines of structures that work against global health campaigns aimed at changing individual beliefs, attitudes and behaviours, which overlook the role of structures in the focus on the 'individual' (Dutta & Basu 2008, p. 565). Further, the constraints of structure, such as the absence of roads, transport and medical facilities, serves as the backdrop for indigenous people's continued reliance on familial networks of responsibility and interdependence (Dutta & Basu 2008, p. 567). As female participant 1 comments, 'If there is an emergency, we take them to Sadar (Ruma Upazila headquarter) hospital on foot with the help of neighbours'. In the absence of a road network, indigenous people depend on the help of their neighbours to get to the only hospital in Ruma. The research participants thus posit health care access as a collective responsibility in contrast to Eurocentric notions of health, as something located in the realm of the individual (Dutta & Basu 2008, p. 567). For people who live closer to the Ruma hub, some have access to the community clinics, the lowest tier of the government health facility. However, the community clinic does not offer them any substantial health services.

7.4.1: Dysfunctional Community Clinics

The community clinic is the first tier one-stop service centre providing primary health care for the people in remote and hard to reach areas (Directorate General of Health Services 2011). They offer health facilities such as vaccination, family planning services and counselling, health promotion, treatment for minor illness and referral linkages to higher

level facilities such as the Upazila Health Complex in the event of emergencies and complicated cases (Directorate General of Health Services 2011). The focus group participants of Ruma, however, talk of dysfunctional community clinics which do not provide any significant health service:

> There is a community clinic at the Chiragraw Para [near the Niyong Khiong Para]. That operates two days a week: Tuesday and Saturday (Male participant 1).
>
> **Facilitator: How long is it open?**
>
> From 9 am in the morning to 2 to 3 pm (Male participant 3).
>
> **Facilitator: Where is the community clinic?**
>
> At the Chairagraw para (Male participant 1).
>
> **Facilitator: How long does it take for you to travel from Niyongkhiong para to the community clinic?**
>
> About one and a half hours (Male participant 3).
>
> [Non-ICDP participants, focus group discussion-1, Ruma Sadar]

From the marginal location of the Ruma Upazila that the indigenous people inhabit, the state is experienced as inadequate or absent (Williams 2011, p. 273). This is implicitly recognised by a government project called ‘Revitalization of Community Health Care Initiatives in Bangladesh’ from 2009 to 2014 (Directorate General of Health Services 2011). However, the community clinics established to provide basic primary health care services at the grass-roots level do not facilitate indigenous people’s access to health, in particular in the Ruma Upazila. Firstly, in the context of non-existent road infrastructure access to the clinics is a problem. Secondly, these clinics are at best partly operational: one was reported closed, another operated only two days a week of six working days. A recent study of the World Bank also reports the closure of community clinics on working days (Saha et al. 2015, p. 49). Last but not least, the clinics do not provide the services for which they were established. For example, vaccination, one of the key services of these clinics, is offered from only one site in the whole of Ruma Upazila, Upazila Health

Complex. Similarly, health promotion services to create awareness and demand for health care, nutrition and family planning services, are supposed to be delivered by health assistants and family welfare assistants from the clinics. They are required to attend community clinics three days a week to reach the households in their areas (Saha et al. 2015, p. 37). The focus group participants, (in the discussion of health education by the ICDP earlier in this chapter) reported almost no visits by government health department workers to the paras. Hence, for the people of Ruma, the Upazila Health Complex is the only place to access government health services.

7.5: No doctors, no X-rays at the only Government Hospital in the Ruma Upazila

Earlier, it was discussed that people of Ruma Sadar could access immunisation services through the government facility. Hence, people were able to access their citizenship rights from the state. However, while seeking other health services through government means, the same people found the state to be simultaneously present and absent (Mohsini 2011, p. 283). An excerpt of the discussion on the service delivery of the only government hospital illustrates this:

> Talking about health, the very root is bad (Male participant 1).
>
> Laughing (Other participants).
>
> The very structure of health is bad. You go to Upazila [sub-district] Health Complex … In this hospital several, government doctors are posted. But only one doctor provides services (Male participant 1).
>
> Sometimes the doctor is not available when we go to the hospital (Female Participant 2).
>
> The doctor is not present in the hospital (Male participant 2).
>
> **Facilitator: Does the doctor not stay in Ruma?**
>
> He stays most of the time but he cannot be found on some occasions (Male participant 2).
>
> There is a new doctor, a Chakma doctor (Male participant 3).

He is not a doctor; he is a health worker (Male participant 2).

Can I elaborate it a bit? (Male participant 1).

[Facilitator, yes, sure].

The administrative head of this hospital is Dr Mong. He is available most of the time. It is not that he does not stay in the hospital. But on occasions, he is not available. Any doctor needs to be present in the hospital round the clock. On occasions, if a patient goes to the hospital, the ward boy treats him. A number of nurses work here, but you cannot find them when you need them. When the situation of the patient is really critical, you expect the nurse to be present all the time. The nurse goes home. The nurse needs to be fetched from home. This is the situation here. This health complex is bad. No X-ray machine, no doctor (Male participant 1).

Facilitator: So you cannot get X-rays done in the Ruma hospital?

No (Male participant 1).

Facilitator: Then where do you have to go for X-rays?

Bandarban Sadar (Male participant 1).

[ICDP participants, focus group discussion 2, Barua Para, Ruma Sadar]

It is through very real and everyday encounters (Fuller & Harriss 2001) that people come to 'see the state' in context-specific ways (Corbridge et al. 2005). In the context of health service delivery by Ruma Upazila Complex Hospital, the experience of the state is one of absenteeism or lack of service providers and medical equipment. As a result, the experience is of deplorable service provision. One participant (male participant 1) elaborates how in the absence of medical doctors, patients taken to the Ruma Hospital are often attended by a hospital employee, a 'ward boy' who has no medical training to deal with patients. The primary duties of a ward boy (orderly) are pushing patient trolleys to and from the operating theatre, preparing patients for surgery, and so on. The participant further highlights the lack of nurses, who are not present in the hospital a round the clock. A report by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare acknowledged that non-availability of service providers coupled with weak monitoring and supervision systems impede access to health services in the CHT (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2011b, p. 2).

The picture is similar elsewhere in Bangladesh. The lack of medical officers in Upazila health complexes is a concern for Bangladesh (Saha et al. 2015, p. 38). Medical officers

often manage to avoid being located at the Upazila level through arranging alternative postings or training, usually in the capital, Dhaka. Therefore, in this context of non-availability and understaffing the only doctor posted in the Ruma Upazila is unable to provide adequate services to the people. Further, the people of Ruma Upazila have to go to Bandarban Sadar, a three hour journey by bus, to get X-Rays done. This gives sense of the deplorable situation of health service delivery in Ruma Upazila. The HDC, which is the monitoring body for the health department in the CHT, observed that many communities in the CHT tend not to use government health facilities due to poor road conditions and the costs of transport (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2011b, p. 11). It further noted that in addition to the problem of accessibility, lack of basic utilities and non-availability of staff in government hospitals limit people's access to health. ICDP participants air grievances that hold the state accountable for their conditions of deprivation (Williams 2011, p. 277), and acknowledge their inability to claim citizenship rights that should be available to all citizens. This grievance talk, however, is juxtaposed against notions of the state as an entity that should provide help and support (Mohsini 2011, p. 294). As the male participant 1 in the focus group discussion points out, 'Any doctor needs to be present in the hospital round the clock' and again 'when the situation of the patient is really critical, you expect the nurse to be present all the time. The nurse goes home*'.* Despite an acute awareness about the lack of health services in Ruma Hospital, there were nonetheless expectations that the state should, and could, alleviate these conditions (Williams 2011, p. 268).

7.6: Experience with the Government Health Service Delivery in Bandarban Sadar

In contrast to Ruma Upazila, both ICDP and non-ICDP participants of Bandarban Sadar are able to claim their citizenship right to health through a process of engagement with the state (Chopra, Williams & Vira 2011, p. 244). For these participants, the state is something tangible that the people encounter on a daily basis (Mohsini 2011, p. 294). This is

expressed by an ICDP participant, Tum Lock Mro. She describes her experience of accessing health services from the government hospital in Bandarban Sadar:

> **Researcher: Did you have to go to the District hospital for anything?**
>
> Once my husband had Typhoid. The people of the community clinic suggested we take him to the Sadar (headquarter) hospital.
>
> **Researcher: Did you face any problems when you took him to the hospital, like transportation or problems in communicating with the doctor?**
>
> Not really. Usually if anything urgent arises, the students [Mro students who study at various educational institutions at the Bandarban Sadar] accompany us. If we face any problems, they help us to talk with the doctor.

A similar feeling is expressed by Hla Me Seing (pseudonym), a non-ICDP participant who was able to access services from the community clinic in Bandarban Sadar:

> **Researcher: Do you have a child?**
>
> Yes.
>
> **Researcher: Did you take a vaccine during pregnancy?**
>
> Yes.
>
> **Researcher: Where did you go to take the vaccine?**
>
> We have a community clinic nearby. I will go to the clinic for my child's vaccination on 15th of this month [February, 2016].
>
> **Researcher: Do you get regular services from the community clinic?**
>
> Yes. The government department people come here. They give injections, medicine. Besides, there is a person on duty at the community clinic every day.

Both interview participants were able to access health services through government means, which illustrates that citizenship is 'located' or 'mapped' at different sites (Staeheli et al. 2012, p. 641). In the case of Bandarban Sadar, both the government health facilities were providing services to the people, which is in sharp contrast to the experience of the state by the indigenous people of Ruma, whether ICDP or non-ICDP participants. Therefore, the ways in which citizenship is experienced is intimately tied with the geographical location of the communities, and the accompanying disparities and opportunities that this location engenders (Staeheli et al. 2012, p. 641). For the people of

Bandarban Sadar, citizenship rights are structured around the availability and access to government health services.

7.7: Socio-Political Culture and Structures Shaping the Varied Experience of Citizenship

The sites of Bandarban Sadar and Ruma Upazila, offering contrasting experience of citizenship, do not exist in isolation. Hence, Staeheli et al. (2012, p. 641) contend that the 'spatiality of citizenship' needs to be interrogated by an analysis of the relations that connect different sites. The ICDP focus group participants point to the socio-political culture and structures that connect two sites of government health services, and which can be attributed to differential citizenship experiences. The lack of road infrastructure in Ruma as a lack of service was a recurrent theme throughout the data analysis. The participants interpreted the state's absence and inaccessibility, at least in part, as the inevitable local manifestation of national and local politics (Williams 2011, p. 277). The participants discussed the role of the local government body, the HDC, in relation to the problem of road communication.

> At this point in time, the tarmac road of Ruma consists of the road starting from Bandarban district to Ruma bus terminal. It was completed by the army. The road from the Ruma bus terminal, located at the entrance of the sub-district, to the hospital … the LGED [local government engineering department] has claimed it to be their jurisdiction. Hence, it is not completed. It is a government department job … the processing will take another three years. (Male participant 1)
>
> **Facilitator: What about the Boga road?**
>
> It is only brick soling and many parts of that roads are broken. As far as I know, it is the LGED which is responsible for its maintenance (Male participant 3).
>
> Listen sister, what is to say? Three water pipelines were to be built. In Niyongkhiong para, almost the plains plain, about 135 or 140 families live there (Male participant 2).
>
> Might be more than that (Female participant).
>
> [Male participant 2 continues] Yes. I know that the bill for the water pipe line has been claimed. The villagers have not seen a drop of water (Male participant 2).
>
> **Facilitator: Is it there water pipeline?**

> This is a pipeline to use water from the creek and supply it to the water tank in the village. The water tank is broken now. No water. This is done by the Zila parishad [Hill District Council, local government body] (Male participant 2).
>
> [ICDP participants, focus group discussion 2, Barua Para, Ruma Sadar]

It is in the context of the everyday struggle to access health services that the participants talk of the lack of basic road infrastructure. They further point to corruption that essentially inhibits the government system from providing services to the poor (Dutta & Basu 2008, p. 568). Male participant 2 refers to corruption in the construction of the water pipes being commissioned by the Bandarban HDC, the local government body. The council is mandated to conduct development work in its jurisdiction with its own funds or fund received from the government (section 42, *Bandarban Hill District Council Act 1989*) These funds have been claimed, but the work is not complete. It is within the context of the existing political structures, and the ways that public funds allocated for the poor feed the politicians, that the participants tie their experiences of health and overall development with:

> Sheer negligence. The whole CHT is being neglected, especially Bandarban district. Rangamati is the most developed among the CHT districts and there is political unity among political leaders. As for Bandarban, no unity among the political leaders … [political leaders] have not sat together once. They talk about development. Where is development? Is it development if it consists of construction of a Buddhist temple? … No roads, no money. The present Member of Parliament and deputy Minister for CHT Affairs is Bir Bahadur. He has been a Member of Parliament four or five times now. He could have wrapped the district in gold. Instead, he has personally accumulated millions of taka [Bangladesh currency]. (Male participant 1 of ICDP focus group discussion 1, Profumukh Para, Ruma Sadar).

It is within this rural setting that the narratives of lack of development and lack of access to resources are told. This lack of access, in turn, leads to expressions of frustration with the prevailing socio-political system (Basu & Dutta 2007, p. 191). The poor understand their conditions within a broader socio-political structure, and indigenous people of Ruma perceive the state's failure to provide infrastructure and services as a form of neglect (Williams 2011, p. 268), evident in the male participant's 1 comment '*Sheer negligence. The whole CHT is being neglected, especially Bandarban district*' with the emphasis on the

word ‘neglect’. The lack of state facilities in Ruma is perceived as a result of their marginalised position as indigenous people who are less ‘deserving’ of government support. Ruma Upazila is mostly an indigenous inhabited area and feelings of neglect are articulated as a relational experience (Williams 2011, pp. 268-9); differential treatment by the state in relation to the dominant Bangladeshi (Bengali) population. However, they also posit that their predicament is tied to the local political structure and culture.

In the context of Bandarban district, the HDC is the local government body responsible for monitoring the overall development in the district. The first and last election of the HDC was held in 1989 (Office of the Deputy Commissioner Bandarban 2017). Thereafter and until now, the HDC has been constituted not through election, but through nominations of the ruling party (Barua & Mahmud 2018). The Chairman of the Bandarban HDC, Kwaw Shawe Hla, in 2018 is a member of the Awami League, the ruling party in Bangladesh. Further, he is the brother-in-law of the current Member of Parliament and Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bir Bahadur Ushswe Sing (Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs 2016). Hence, both these Awami League party men are at the helm of two very important portfolios: the HDC, and the Ministry of CHT Affairs. Given this political scenario, the alleged corruption in the construction of the waterpipe line is likely to fall on deaf ears. Additionally, the Upazila Parishad Chairman of Ruma is elected from the PCJSS, a rival political party of the ruling party in Bangladesh. Because of this political rivalry, one of the focus group participants suggested that the Member of Parliament and the Minister for CHT affairs are not very keen to heed the demands of the Chairman of Ruma Upazila Parishad. Ruud (1999, p. 237) contends that the ‘micro-foundations of political culture’ constituting political behaviour, contacts and networks, and people’s expectations of returns from involvement in politics, set the boundaries in terms of the kind of development efforts that can be carried out.

7.8: Conclusion

An analysis of the experiences of accessing and providing government health services by officials and ICDP and non-ICDP participants points to local practices of citizenship, to show that citizenship is actually operationalised in everyday interactions between the state and society (Chopra, Williams & Vira 2011, p. 246). The ICDP's health programme is primarily aimed at facilitating project participants' access to government service provision. According to the analysis presented here, it did not have any significant impact in assisting the indigenous people to claim their citizenship right to health. The ICDP provides support to the government vaccination programme in terms of providing the para centre as a venue for EPI clinics. However, in Bandarban Sadar, only a handful of para centres are being utilized as venues for the vaccination, and in the case of Ruma Upazila, no ICDP para centre is used. As for its health education programme, its implementation is, at best, sporadic, and no difference between Bandarban Sadar and Ruma Upazila was observed. Courtyard meetings are conducted in some para centres, while most ICDP participants report no such activities. Since the ICDP's health programme, namely the EPI vaccination, was delivered through government authorities, the issue of government health service provision came up in focus groups and interviews. The analysis shows that people's experiences of the state differ widely between Bandarban Sadar and Ruma Sadar. In the differential experience of citizenship rights, officials' highlight issues such as remoteness and inadequate road access that have affected the ICDP, as well government health service delivery, resulting in uneven health experiences and outcomes for indigenous people, in particular in Ruma Upazila. The analysis of the officials' perspectives further points to the informal relationships that operate within and between institutions stretching to the state-society relation (Eyben & Ladbury 2006, p. 7). In the absence of a formal agreement between the ICDP and the government health department, informal relationships, in the form of co-operation between the civil surgeon of Bandarban and

Khagrachari district has affected the delivery of the health component of the ICDP. However, there is a disconnection between the officials' narrative of a lack of awareness of indigenous people being responsible for failing to access the government health facilities, and indigenous peoples' implicating inadequate government health service provisions. Further, while they contend their health deprivation largely to the failure of the government, they also blame the local political culture of corruption and favouritism for their condition.

These narratives point to a key observation regarding the concepts of membership and citizenship in the modern state that underpins this chapter. In bringing up issues of the failure of the government health services, the research participants highlighted that whether ICDP programmes are available or not, what is more important is the perception of presence or absence of government health provision. These narratives suggest that the national state remains the primary site for the provision of rights, privileges and services to its citizens. Most people live and interact in specific localities. This Chapter has shed light on the dynamics that underpin the indigenous health experience in the local Bandarban district. The next chapter examines the extent to which the indigenous people are able to exert agency within the constraints of state structure.

CHAPTER EIGHT

INDIGENOUS AGENCY BEYOND RESISTANCE

8.1: Introduction

The previous two chapters have implicitly discussed the agency of indigenous people in terms of their practical engagement with the state to access education and health services. In this chapter, the explicit focus on agency serves the purpose of deepening the discussion of agency as arising from indigenous people's everyday engagement with the structures of the state, to contradict the Integrated Community Development Project's (ICDP's) portrayal of indigenous people as passive, waiting, and incapable of acting without prompting, discussed in Chapter Five. In the scholarship on subaltern agency, resistance has been typically romanticised as acts that pose radical challenges to the state and societal structures of power (Abu-Lughod 1990; Scott 1985). In contrast, Chapters Five and Six clearly show that indigenous people pragmatically engage with the state, rather than simply resist or oppose it, in an attempt to improve their material reality (Chatterjee 2004, pp. 57-8). Therefore, this chapter takes the position that subaltern agency does not simply comprise acts of resistance in the classic tradition, which, in most cases, are not transformative in either intent or realisation (Williams, Vira & Chopra 2011, p. 16). By taking up this position, this chapter takes a critical departure from those readings of the state-society relation in the CHT that locate the agency of indigenous people only in resistance (Mohsin 2003, 2010). Rather, it argues that agency encompasses practices of resilience and reworking that are primarily predicated on securing a daily existence. This chapter also shows the interrelationship among resilience, reworking and resistance by highlighting the case of Ranglai Mro which illustrates how the everyday agency as expressed in the form of resilience and reworking can be important

precursors of open, oppositional politics, namely resistance. Further, I contend that Cindy Katz's (2004) framework of agency as resilience, reworking and resistance, is useful in capturing the myriad ways that agency is articulated by both ICDP and non-ICDP participants in the context of the ICDP's provision of education and health services. While drawing on Katz's framework, introduced in Chapter Two, I reinterpret it to diverge from a dichotomous understanding of agency and power towards a more relational conceptualisation. In employing this framework, I have aimed to trace the various articulations of agency of indigenous people to illustrate that these articulations are imbricated in entangled relations of power linking the state and society. This also points to the complex and sometimes contradictory processes through which the state-society boundary gets reworked, reconstituted and reinforced.

8.2: Indigenous People and Agency as Resilience

Almost all the research participants, both the ICDP or non-ICDP participants, talked of the importance of education and of expanding the opportunities for schooling for their children (Katz 2004, p. 237). It is in this connection that small acts of resilience, underpinned by ways to get by each day, can be traced.

T M Mro, aged 30 years, with three children, is an ICDP participant. The ICDP para centre is located in her village. Her youngest daughter goes to the centre and her other two children study at the government high school. Both she and her husband are swidden cultivators with a monthly income of approximately $USD 90. She and her husband endure hardships every day so that their children can avail themselves of the opportunity of education. She narrates her daily routine:

> I leave my house to work in the Jhum field around 6 or 7 am and return home around 6 pm …This year I am going to the Swalok hill for Jhum (which takes about 2 hours to reach on foot from her home). My husband and I work 6 days a week in the field, except on Sundays.

TM Mro works about eleven to twelve hours every day. Her home is near the main road, where there is a makeshift bus stop under a banyan tree. The buses take passengers mainly to two sub-districts of Bandarban. She does not take the bus, but instead she walks the distance from her home to the hill. Again, in the evening, she returns home on foot. This endurance and hardship captures the actual space of TM Mro's life in the everyday. To probe further into her daily life, I enquired who takes care of her children when they work in the Jhum field:

> The child goes to the [para] centre in the morning and returns home by herself when school finishes. My other two children also come home by themselves. Nobody stays at home. Previously, my father-in-law used to stay at home, but he is [living] no more. There are some elderly people who stay in the village when we go to the Jhum field. They kind of keep an eye on the para (village). If some unknown person enters the para, they would know (TM Mro, ICDP participant).

She refers here to the Mro community's familial and kinship networks of responsibility and interdependence community which enable her to work on the hill. This connects to William Sewell's (1992, p. 21) argument that agency is profoundly social or collective because it is always an act of communication with others. It necessitates 'coordinating one's actions with others and against others, to form collective projects, to persuade, and to monitor the simultaneous effects of one's own and others' activities' (Sewell 1992, p. 21). Care, protection and mutualism serve as invaluable resources in the structurally constrained lives of the indigenous people (Dutta & Basu 2008, p. 567), and in the case of TM Mro, they sustain her survival. Resilience therefore requires multiple forms of adaptation and agency on the part of the individual, households and the community.

One of the strategies that the respondents most commonly adopt to negotiate the structural limitations shaping their daily lives, in this case, the lack of access to education, is to send children away from home for education. They extend the compasses of their lives through the extension of the geographic locations that bound their lives (Katz 2004, p. 245) in order to deal with the effects of their disenfranchisement. Both ICDP and non-ICDP

participants adopt this strategy. For instance, Sa Thui, a non-ICDP participant, did not send his son to the ICDP para centre because it was not well-run. Here is a snap shot of a conversation with him, exploring why he felt the need to send his son away for education:

Researcher: Why did you decide to send your son away?

You know in the nearby school, classes are not held regularly. Neither my wife nor I are literate. We work all day in the field. We see him going to class one day, the next day he is not going. When we ask, he replies that teachers do not hold regular classes.

Researcher: Where does he study now?

At a school in Gazipur [a district near the capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka]. It has a hostel.

Researcher: How did you get to know of that school, as it is quite far from here?

From one of the neighbours in our village. His son studies there. You know when a boy grows up, reaches teenage [years], he spends time with friends. Our village is very close to the town. We do not stay at home all day. He is our only son. We thought it would be good for him if we sent him away.

Researcher: Does your son only come home during school holidays?

Yes.

Researcher: Do you go to Gazipur to visit/see your son?

Not very often. It is quite far from Bandarban. The neighbour whose son studies there visits his son regularly. I have been there only a couple of times. I get to know about my son from my neighbour. I also talk with my son on the mobile phone.

This narrative gives a glimpse into how Sa Thui relies on the kinship network of interdependence to negotiate inadequate access to education. These accounts clearly point to the vigour with which the indigenous people of Bandarban engage with development. Development, in the context of the ICDP education, was not simply washing over them but represents a set of material social practices to engage with it in specific ways (Katz 2004, p. 235). Yet, these strategies also illuminate the constraints of the structures of development and the state, which necessitate multiple and nuanced forms of adaptation to the wider conditioning order (DeVerteuil & Golubchikov 2016, p. 148). For the people who live in the interior of Ruma Upazila, this wider conditioning order is manifest in the sheer absence of basic infrastructure such as roads, transport systems, an ICDP para centre, and a school. The following excerpt brings to the surface the issue of

geographic location in determining who has access to education, and how indigenous people respond to this situation:

> **Facilitator: Do you have a school in your area?**
>
> Participant 1: In our area, we only have one school. Everybody goes there.
>
> Participant 2: Our village is far from that school. All my children are grown up now. Usually we keep our children with us while they are very young. [Then] we usually send them away. And this is how they continue their study.
>
> Participant 4: In some localities, there is a government school where children can complete the primary level. But to complete the secondary level, we send them away, usually to Ruma Sadar High School.
>
> **Facilitator: I understand most of the participants of this discussion work as subsistence farmers. Sending children away from home entails a lot of cost like accommodation, food and fees for school. Your children's education clearly is very important for you. Why is it so?**
>
> Participant 2: We did not go to school. Nobody told us to go. We work in the field. It is a hard life. I want my child to study. No matter how much sacrifice I have to make for that, I do not want to pass on the limitations of my life.
>
> Participant 3: I also want to see them be in a better position than us. We are about to expire and we do not need that much. However, they have to live and they need to survive. Education can give them access to a better future.
>
> Participant 5: There is not enough land for Jhum cultivation or any other way to survive. I want my child to be educated. If they are educated, they can have a better life than us. They probably would not have to struggle the way I did.
>
> Participant 1: In Poli Prangsa, they have problems, but in our Boga Mukh para, we do not have such problems. Rather, some of the students have attained higher education in this country and abroad. This is how development will occur, it is a slow process.
>
> [Non-ICDP focus group discussion -1, Ruma Bazaar, Ruma Sadar]

These narratives demonstrate how the indigenous people in the interior of Ruma have sought different ways to secure their children's access to education. They deal with their disenfranchisement by seeking an alternative space of hope, embedded in the education of their children (Dutta-Bergman 2004, p. 257). The focus group participants give a sense of heightened attention to education. Participant-2, for example, remarks that he is willing to undergo even more hardship to provide an education for his son. Other participants share similar feelings. The stress on education is underpinned by an awareness of the changing social landscape. That times are changing reverberates throughout the

discussion. Female participant 3 comments, ‘we are about to expire and we do not need that much. However, they have to live and they need to survive’. Male participant 4 echoes this sentiment by pointing to the fact that the future generation will not be able to survive on Jhum cultivation. These participants are located in what (Basu & Dutta 2007, p. 193) term the ‘twilight zone’: between modernity, manifest in terms of awareness of, and increased access to, education, health, and better material conditions on one hand, and reliance on the customary occupation of swidden cultivation that cannot meet their basic needs (Thapa & Rasul 2006, p. 450). Jhum can no longer be sustained due to low yields, which, in turn, is associated with an increased population, shortening of fallow periods, and a consequent shortened cycle for shifting cultivation (Thapa & Rasul 2006, p. 450). These research participants are in the process of negotiating this gradual shift from traditional livelihoods and associated change in their society and an understanding of this process is critical to the scholarship on agency of the indigenous people of the CHT and how political agency arises out of their ordinary, everyday life. It also allows an appreciation of the nature of the everyday politics of the indigenous people which involve people embracing, complying with, adjusting to the existing norms and rules, and doing so in a quiet, mundane, and subtle manner (Kerkvliet 2009, p. 232).

Further, the strategies adopted by the indigenous people of Bandarban are private decisions made in the household. These ‘ordinary citizens’ are supposedly detached individuals, not involved in collective action, and thereby non-political (Neveu 2015, p. 142). In this connection, Kerkvliet (2009, p. 232) states a key distinction between everyday politics and formal or advocacy politics is that everyday politics does not involve any organisation, usually is low profile and private behaviour. However, the myriad efforts of indigenous people, ranging from enduring hardships to reliance on kinship networks in order to access education for their children, enable a shifting perspective of the social world they inhabit. From a world where people merely exist to a realm over which one can

exert some control, and a society that is amenable to change (Collins 2000, p. 121). Consequently, it is necessary to reclaim the political in ordinary situations and ordinariness, and to maintain a critical distance from approaches that consider politics as an abstract or specialised sphere disconnected from the social, which can only be grasped in a pre-defined moment and through specific types of practices (Neveu 2015, p. 148). In contrast, working through the lens of the ordinary enables paying attention to the passages, thresholds, changes, challenges and transformations in social life (Neveu 2015, p. 149). This is a more useful approach towards 'the political', as people's own experiences and practices of citizenship are not marked by clear breaks and clear-cut tipping points. Therefore, both forms of political, the ordinary and more formal notions of politics are important, as the next section illustrates this by offering a case study that show more vocal, public acts of citizenship.

8.3: Reworking through the Mro Social Council

Ranglai Mro is an ex-student of an ICDP residential school called Mro Residential School. Located in the Sualok *Upazila* (sub-district) of Bandarban district, the school is exclusively designated for the students of the Mro and Khumi indigenous groups, who are considered to be the most 'backward' of the ethnic groups in the CHT (Kamal 2014). Many students of the ICDP residential schools now work in government offices, non-government organisations and other institutions. In 1991, Ranglai Mro established Mro Chet, also known as Mro Social Council, a CHT-based NGO that works to achieve social and economic development, and to preserve the culture and heritage of the Mro ethnic community. One of Mro Chet's key areas of intervention has been indigenous education.

Mro Chet has been especially involved with development projects that support mother-tongue based primary education in the CHT (Tripura 2016, p. 8). In 2000, Mro Chet became a partner of Care Bangladesh, a national NGO, which initiated a pilot project

covering 25 schools across two districts of the CHT (GroundWork Inc 2002, p. 34). The project aimed to facilitate the involvement of the local community in school activities, by helping communities to create school management committees, form mothers' groups, and encourage them to use local resources (GroundWork Inc 2002, p. 34). Mro-Chet has also worked to develop primary education materials in the Mro language. In the period 2003 to 2009, Mro- Chet, in cooperation with Ganaswasthya Kendra, a national NGO, implemented education programmes in the Mro language (Tripura et al. 2014, p. 68). It has developed and published education materials and now runs schools in the mother-tongue with the support of another national NGO, Manusher Jonno Foundation (Tripura et al. 2014, p. 68). Mro Social Council, therefore, has been a platform for the Mro community to make claims on the state. The state of Bangladesh, through the ICDP, has categorised the Mro ethnic group as 'backward', and on the basis of this assessment provided a separate residential school for them. However, Ranglai Mro has used this same categorisation of Mro 'backwardness' to make claims on the Bangladesh state. As some scholars argue, the use of such essentialised claims based in indigenous or minority cultures are made by social movements in an attempt by these marginalised groups to demand redress and to remake citizenship on their terms (Staeheli 2011, p. 9). Similarly, Eilenberg (2016, p. 1347) illustrates how the marginal communities in Indonesia's borderlands make claims to resources by mimicking the state rhetoric of citizenship and sovereignty. The PPKPU, the autonomy movement in the Kapuas Hula district, West Kalimantan, nurtured goodwill and support of the central government by appealing to the rhetoric of state sovereignty. They presented the necessity for the creation of a new border state as an effort to maintain the unitary state of Indonesia. Similarly, faced with the problem of illegal, cross border timber trade, they argued for increased involvement of the local community in the economic activities and development because claims to citizenship and resource claims go hand in hand.

Citizenship studies invoking Foucault's notion of governmentality as 'the conduct of conduct' have explored the state's mechanisms in establishing normative values and beliefs with the goal of shaping 'good' national citizens (De Koning, Jaffe & Koster 2015, p. 122). Education, curricula, and schools, they claim, serve as important mechanisms of governmentality (Kymlicka 2001). Interpreted in this way, the ICDP schools can also be considered tools to inculcate Bengali ideology and hegemony in the indigenous people of the CHT, with the overarching goal of regulating their political membership of the Bangladesh state. For this to occur, 'particular subjects are framed as deficient, as undesirables who must change their norms, values, and behaviour to meet the criteria of good citizenship' (De Koning, Jaffe & Koster 2015, p. 122). However, as a leader of Mro Social Council, Ranglai Mro's efforts of reworking demonstrates that rather than there being simply one unified national citizenship agenda, many competing citizenship agendas are advanced by various actors at multiple locations (De Koning, Jaffe & Koster 2015, p. 123). This further points to competing processes at work in citizenship-making, beyond a simple top-down or bottom-up dichotomy (Lazar & Nuijten 2013, p. 4).

In addition, the ICDP's residential schools represent how the dialectic between the state and indigenous people is played out in the arena of development. Despite the state's efforts to render development an anti-politics machine, it has created a political arena, a space for reworking that enables articulation of competing meanings and demands (Subramanian 2009, p. 253). Rather than producing docile subjects, the state system actually opens up, quite unintentionally, new spaces for the articulation of subaltern rights. This suggests the need to understand categories of 'the state' and 'the community' as mutually implicated, and to consider postcolonial citizenship not solely in terms of cultural subjectivity, but as a dynamic, locally constituted process through which marginal groups (re)negotiate their relationships with the state (Williams, Vira & Chopra 2011, p. 14). Ranglai Mro's efforts at reworking through the Mro Social Council is a clear articulation of

his agency. However, agency combines both opportunity and constraint as Dunn and Cons (2014, p. 100) elucidate in their analysis of people who live in a conclave on the India-Bangladesh border. They show that residents of sensitive space are sometimes forced to make compromised choices about how and in what capacity they can engage with the project of rule. This is because these spaces are characterised by competing modes of sovereignity, as both the governments of Bangladesh and India exercise sovereign power over the conclave. Therefore, these studies suggest that a citizen is not merely the autonomous subject presumed in liberal theories of citizenship, participating in a 'distinct public sphere' governed by a sovereign entity. Indeed, the case of Ranglai Mro also highlights the 'complex interrelationships that structure the field in which the subject-citizen operates' (Staeheli 2011, p. 9). As the following section illustrates, the exercise of citizenship is embedded within a complex web of power, domination and resistance.

8.4: Indigenous Resistance and Domination

Ranglai Mro neatly fits the category of an active citizen in the traditional conceptualisation, as he engages in prescribed forms of public activity (Neveu 2014, p. 87). In addition to his role in the Mro Social Council, he has several other public portfolios. He is an elected Chair of *Suolak Union Parishad*, a local government body, and is also district leader of the Bangladesh Awami League, the ruling political party in Bangladesh in 2018, and the Bandarban unit president of the Land Rights Protection Committee (The United Nations Human Rights Council 2008, p. 15). Ranglai was arrested on the morning of 23 March 2007 by the Joint Forces, the law enforcement agency. His arrest following a protest against the eviction of people from their villages illuminates the extent to which citizenship can be exercised in the context of CHT and Bangladesh. The law enforcement agency lodged a case against him for unauthorized possession of arms and ammunitions under the *Arms Act* (The United Nations Human Rights Council 2008, p. 16). Later, he was

charged, convicted, and sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment (Roy 2009). While in police custody, Ranglai was tortured so severely that he could hardly stand when he was brought before the court. The torture caused internal bleeding so severe that it blocked two of his arteries. Ranglai barely survived in a senseless state for three days at the coronary care unit of Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

He was arrested for his role in the protest against the eviction of people from their villages by the army in 2007. Between September and November 2006, some 200 to 275 families in the area of Renikkhong, Sualok and Tonkaboti mouzas (administrative units) of Bandarban were forced to relocate, some to the steep slopes of Chimbuk Hill to the west, and others to the plains to the east of the local firing range (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs 2012, p. 31). Many villagers reported:

> [T]he army arrived suddenly on their doorstep and evicted them at gunpoint, without giving them the chance to collect their belongings or livestock. No alternative shelter or land was provided, except some government land along the road where fifteen families were permitted to stay temporarily (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs 2012, p. 31).

In an interview, Mro said, 'I protested that incident and I believe it was the reason for my arrest'. Ranglai Mro had been demanding that the evictees be given prior notice and be properly compensated (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs 2012, p. 31).

The army compulsorily acquired 11,445 acres of land in the Renikkhong, Sualok and Tonkaboti mouzas (administrative units) of Bandarban district during the period of 1991-92 to establish an artillery firing range (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs 2012, p. 31). However, the 11,500 acres of land had not been legally demarcated at that time (Roy 2009). Some people had to move due to land acquision by the army, but others were allowed to stay and work at their lands for a lease fee of Tk. 500,000 (equivalent to $US 6,000 in current term) per year, negotiated between the Union Council Chairman, Ranglai Mro, and the military (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs 2012, p. 31).

However, in 2006, the army summarily increased the lease to Tk. 5 million (equivalent to $US 60,000 in current term) per year. Ranglai protested as the villagers were incapable to pay this amount, but to no avail. Then, the forced evictions occurred. As Ranglai comments:

> Now after sixteen years, they again tell us to move from our village[14] without arranging any rehabilitation … it was just ahead of the harvest. They just drove away all the villagers who ended up under the open sky during winter (Roy 2009).

8.4.1: Ranglai Mro's Arrest and State of Emergency in Bangladesh

Ranglai Mro's arrest and subsequent torture are evidence of a vulgar display of power by the state. More specifically, this incident illustrates the ability of dominant groups, in this context the army, to access certain forms of state power, and to put it to efficient use (Nilsen 2012b, p. 276). Ranglai Mro's arrest occurred during a time of political turmoil in Bangladesh. In December 2006, the country faced deep political crisis over allegations of fraudulent election preparations (Human Rights Watch 2008, p. 240). In January 2007, a state of emergency was declared and a military-backed caretaker government was installed. Immediately upon taking over the political power, the caretaker government issued Emergency Power Rules and the constitutional protections for basic rights were suspended. Many people were arrested during the emergency in 2007 including eminent persons. For example, Sigma Huda, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, was convicted and sentenced to three years' imprisonment on extortion charges (Human Rights Watch 2008, p. 242).

Notwithstanding the issue of the state of emergency during Mro's arrest and the army controlling state power in Bangladesh, the presence of the army and its role in the CHT is widely debated (Adnan & Dastidar 2011; Chakma 2010; Mohsin 1995). As mentioned in

[14]More than 200 indigenous and Bengali families have had to leave their villages (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs 2012, p. 30). The villages include Devapara, Goyalpara, Bhaggyakul, Muslim para, Hindu para, Hati Dera, Pora Para, Dewai Headman para, Chini para, Kasabtali, Chhing-chhong para, Ramri para, Sankhai para, Baitya para and Udar Bonya para in Renikkhong, Tongabodi and Sowalok unions under Bandarban Sadar upazila.

Chapter Three, the armed conflict between the Bangladesh Army and Shanti Bahini, the military wing of the PCJSS, came to a formal end with the signing of the Peace Accord on 2 December 1997 (Chakma 2010, p. 295). However, there are allegations that the army continued to use violence against the hill people through its support of Bengali settlers in the CHT (Chakma 2010, p. 295). The army remains one of the most powerful forces of the state, both in Bangladesh more broadly, and in the CHT. Ranglai Mro's treatment shows how the articulation of agency is embedded in a complex web of power relations, as the next section illustrates (Williams, Vira & Chopra 2011, pp. 244-5). Accordingly, it is possible to interpret this by locating indigenous resistance as a process of negotiating the state and its powers (Chandra 2013, p. 52). Ranglai's demands for proper demarcation of land and compensation for the evicted villagers symbolises a form of indigenous struggle that stops short of confrontation and violence (Haynes & Prakash 1992, p. 3). Further, casting a shadow on the figure of the autonomous subject favoured in liberal theory, his arrest illustrates the ways that subaltern subjectivity is constrained and conditioned by these unequal power relations (Haynes & Prakash 1992, pp. 2, 9). Therefore, such episodes of resistance do not point to complete escape from domination, and neither are they completely autonomous. As discussed in Chapter Two, following Foucault's theory of power as productive, it is clear that resistance and domination are entangled, operating as effects of power. The following section illustrates this by offering an analysis of the broader context of state power, manifest in the army's continuing presence in the CHT.

8.4.2: Entangled Relations of Power: Internal Conflicts in Indigenous Political Parties

Ironically, it is the internal strife between the indigenous political parties, each claiming to uphold the rights of the indigenous people, which serves as a justification for the presence of the army in the CHT (Ahmed 2014). While negotiating with the government prior to the Peace Accord, the PCJSS demanded the withdrawal of all security forces from the CHT,

except the Bangladesh Rifles. However, the government did not agree on this issue, and instead offered to withdraw only temporary army camps (Amnesty International 2013, p. 23). The government claims that 200 camps have so far been withdrawn since the Accord was signed. However, the PCJSS estimates that only around 74 of a total of 500 camps have been withdrawn (Amnesty International 2013, p. 23). As for the withdrawal of the remaining temporary camps, the government contends many camps could not be withdrawn because of the law and order situation, which erupts into sporadic armed encounters between the indigenous political parties. Therefore, some scholars argue that the post-Accord conflict has provided the pretext for the continued presence of the army in the CHT (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs 2012, p. 14; Mohsin 2003, p. 69).

The roots of the internal strife go back to the time when the process of negotiation of the Peace Accord began, as discussed in Chapter Three. Just one year after the signing of the Peace Accord, a new political party called UPDF was formed on December 26, 1998, to oppose the Accord (Zaman 2005). Since then, delays in the implementation of the Peace Accord, and frustrations over this, coupled with the lack of democratic practices within the political parties have resulted in the splintering of these parties. Now, four political parties claim to represent the indigenous people of the CHT. These groups have been engaged in a bitter turf war, resulting in brutal killings, and a rise in extortion in the region.

According to police and army sources, more than 2,000 militants from both original groups were killed, and many remain missing following sporadic eruptions of armed conflict in remote areas of the CHT (Ahmed 2014). One senior Bangladeshi official said it would be too dangerous to withdraw troops from the CHT, as, in the absence of the army, both groups might establish control over a greater patch of the CHT. In June 2005, following an impending conflict between the two rival factions, the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts

Affairs[15], headed by an indigenous Deputy Minister, submitted a report to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on CHT Affairs on law and order in the three hill districts. This report recommended that the police, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), paramilitary, and the army be alerted to prevent any possibility of violence in the region ('Ministry dreads mayhem in CHT: UPDF, PCJSS rivalry getting stronger' 2005). In addition to ideological differences between the rival indigenous groups, the desire to establish control over CHT areas for extortion is considered to be a key reason for the conflict (Zaman 2005). On January 21, 2011, at least five people were killed in a gunfight between the two rival factions in remote Fakirachhara Bastipara area of the Juraichhari Upazila of Khagrachari district, one of the three hill districts of the CHT (Zaman 2005). Four were PCJSS activists, Kalachan Chakma, Santosh Kumar Chakma, Niranjan Chakma and Jiban Tangchangya (Zaman 2005), and the other deceased, Lulongkar Chakma, was a UPDF activist. The publicity secretary of the PCJSS claimed that their members had been murdered by UPDF terrorists. In denying the allegations of extortion and toll collection, he claimed that: 'Ours is a democratic party and we do not extort from the people' (Zaman 2005). However, analysts point to the fact that if the PCJSS activists had been unarmed as they claimed, how was one of their rivals killed in a gunfight?

Extortion, the other post-Accord phenomenon, is not new in the CHT. Previously, ethnic groups almost exclusively paid taxes and tribute to Shanti Bahini (peace force), the armed wing of the PCJSS (Wilkinson 2015, p. 186). However, in the post-Accord period, there have been serious consequences for human security for the people in the CHT. Extortion has become a pervasive issue in the CHT, affecting business and trade, jobs, and the everyday lives of people (Wilkinson 2015, p. 185). For example, one of the smaller ethnic groups of the CHT, the Pangkhua, reported that before the Accord, they used to pay tax to only one group, the PCJSS, and could negotiate the terms of payment. However, in the

[15]Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs: established after the Peace Accord and since its establishment the portfolio of Minister has had been held by an indigenous person.

post-Accord phase, with the emergence of new political groups, the Pangkhua ethnic group is now forced to pay tax to several groups (Wilkinson 2015, p. 186).

One of the Heads of local administration claims that they have heard of extortionists illegally collecting tax from the local people:

> [T]he locals do not file complaints with the law enforcement agencies as they fear reprisals, including killings, by the extortionists … we have requested the local people to file complaints with the local administration … we will be able to punish the extortionists only after we get proper complaints against them (Acharjee 2017).

It is within this politics of violence that the indigenous peoples' everyday lives are embedded. Therefore, Ranglai Mro's arrest by the army needs to be analysed in the broader context of the internal frictions among the indigenous groups as well. The current disarray among the political parties illustrates the problem of the valourisation of indigenous politics, that is, the idea that they possess a pure subaltern consciousness (Lal 2001, p. 281; Nilsen & Roy 2015, p. 8). Lal (2001, p. 281) contends this essentialist notion does not pay adequate attention to the internal hierarchies, and forms of oppression that exist within these groups (Lal 2001, p. 281). The present phase of indigenous political activism represents 'minor' reversals within resistance practices, manifest in the creation of internal hierarchies, the silencing of dissent, and violence (Sharp et al. 2000, p. 23). As the government primarily views this as a law and order situation, it provides the justification for the army's continued presence in the CHT. This raises questions about the role of the army, given its looming presence in the region. It also illuminates the paradoxical quality of the state (Migdal 2001, p. 9). The army manifests a powerful image of the state, a clearly bounded, unified organisation, acting in an integrated manner (Migdal 2001, p. 22). However, the control of extortionists over at least some areas of the CHT indicates that the army or the state does not have full control over the territory, thereby reflecting a counter-view of the state as fragmented, with loosely connected parts (Migdal 2001, p. 22). The processes of interaction of social groups are dynamic, which changes the 'groupings themselves, as well as their goals, and, ultimately, the rules they are promoting' (Migdal

2001, p. 23). One of the outcomes of this process for state-ethnic relations in the CHT has been the reproduction or extension of the dominating power, rather than challenging it (Sharp et al. 2000, p. 23). Referring to the issue of extortion, one analyst points out that there is a feeling among the security forces that internal strife between indigenous people is beneficial for them (Zaman 2005). This further problematises the agency of indigenous political subjects (Sharp et al. 2000, pp. 23-4). Resistance in one place, therefore, is complicit with domination in another, showing the entangled nature of power and domination (Sharp et al. 2000, p. 24).

8.5: Conclusion

What these narratives of indigenous agency tell us is that there exists an emerging form of politics which is not limited to visible and explicit events. For the ICDP and non-ICDP participants, agency entails resilience in everyday life, commitment to children's schooling, and through this, pursuing a future hope for the reformulation of their lives in the face of great challenges. One of the noticeable aspects of indigenous agency is that indigenous people envision a better future upon accessing and attaining education. While they invest a lot of their time and money towards attaining access to education, this was not as noticeable in relation to health. However, this focus on education rather than on health does not trivialise indigenous people's rich patterns of negotiation, interaction and resistance in the context of their daily lives. Resistance entails different meanings and forms for different people. For Ranglai Mro, indigenous citizenship as resistance constituted reworking of everyday life through making claims on the state by means of indigenous organisations, such as the Mro Social Council, and through overtly protesting against the eviction of people from their villages. The case of Ranglai Mro illustrates that the terrain of political claim-making is contested by agents and institutions that may have rather different goals. In this connection, the ICDP residential school has provided a space

for Ranglai to express and enact a goal of social change. However, his attempts at reworking also reveal that the subjectivity of the subaltern does not lie in some pure, autonomous space outside of power relations, but is constituted through these. Hence, subaltern resistance in the context of CHT, Bangladesh is best understood as the negotiation, rather than negation, of modern state power. In documenting the multiple forms of agency and citizenship that structure indigenous people's lives, this chapter posits that one form of agency is not more significant than the other. Rather, these narratives in this chapter call for appreciating the complex and in some cases, contradictory ways, that indigenous subjects negotiate their subjectivity in relation to the state of Bangladesh. These contradictions are highly visible in the internal frictions between indigenous political groups. Further, these contradictions are explored with a commitment to a postcolonial politics of emancipation. Following this, I contend that it is important to commend indigenous struggles, and to recognise their myriad articulations of agency, but it is equally important to analyse which struggle 'enables or disables resistance' and 'to inquire into conditions under which struggles are conceived, mounted and contained' (Haynes & Prakash 1992, p. 20). In the context of the CHT, the political struggle of indigenous people is far from over.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to understand the state-ethnic relation between the indigenous people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and the Bangladesh state from the ground though analysing a state-led flagship development project, the Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP). My purpose, broadly speaking, has been to delineate the conditions through which the state has pursued the ICDP project and to understand the outcomes of such projects for the indigenous people of the CHT. In this study, development is understood as intervention; this research therefore has sought to understand the intent behind the ICDP's development interventions. Chapter Five discusses that the ICDP's intention is to mould the behaviour of the project participants to produce aware and active subject-citizens who are able to be enterprising and responsible by participating in 'productive' activities. This in turn is linked to the project of rule, namely governmentality, discussed in Chapters Two and Three. Governmentality is understood as a modality of government that works by creating mechanisms, which function 'all by themselves' to produce governmental results by transferring risk onto the 'enterprise', or onto the individual through the 'responsibilisation' of subjects who are increasingly 'empowered' to discipline themselves (Barry, Osborne & Rose 2013; Burchell 1996; Rose 1996). In this regard, this thesis argues that both the Bangladesh state's and UNICEF's use of governmentality take place through a common frame (Ferguson & Gupta 2002, p. 994) and the ICDP expresses the will of the Bangladesh state.

While acknowledging that the ICDP operates to express state intent, this thesis also accepts the limits of governmentality theory. As Tania Li (2007a, pp. 276-7) asserts, governmental intervention seldom gets implemented as planned, and produces effects that

are both contradictory and unplanned. This occurs because the implementation of development projects reverberates with local meanings, articulations and negotiations in particular locations, thereby produce complex and uneven results (Sharma 2008, p. 42). Hence, development does not predetermine any particular outcome (Chhotray 2011; Li 2005b), which points to the tentativeness between theory and practice. It is with this tentativeness in mind that this thesis has sought to analyse state-led development, through the case of the ICDP project.

This critical interrogation of the ICDP started with a critical discourse analysis of the project documents. I sought to understand what the ICDP aimed to achieve through its development intervention and how it envisioned achieving these goals. Chapter Five discusses that the ICDP sought to achieve social and economic development for the CHT indigenous people through a process of modernisation. For this reason, indigenous people's livelihood practices, cultural distinctiveness, and ancient ties to the places they inhabit are presented in the project documents as 'problems' for the state, and as 'problems' for indigenous people themselves, who are responsible for their own 'backwardness'. These representations have positioned the traditional society of the CHT as opposed to modernisation through development, and served as the basis for the ICDP's development intervention.

Further, the ICDP's development intervention was predicated on the modernising goal of fostering economic development and productivity. In order to achieve this, it has sought to change the traditional practice of Jhum, the 'passive' behaviours, health practices and lack of formal education of the 'traditional', and 'backward' people of the CHT. These representations and the transformations of indigenous people's lives were predicated on the state intent to control indigenous identity, which in turn hinges on the nation-building imperatives of the Bangladesh state. Chapter Five has offered an analysis of these processes by which the state constructs indigenous people of the CHT as backward and

primitive, examining the role of language in these constructions. By so doing, it also highlighted the power of discourse in enacting the politics of representation, by considering the interrelationship between institutions and discourse, and the ways that these relationships maintain the existing unequal power relations between the state and its ethnic minorities in Bangladesh. Hence, it has been necessary to pay attention to the particular meanings of development as articulated in the documents, to uncover its implications for the indigenous people. This critical interrogation of the government's plan and an analysis of state intentions offered in Chapter Five is contrasted with an analysis in Chapters Six and Seven of the indigenous people's lived and everyday experiences of state through the operations of the ICDP project at two sites in the Bandarban district.

9.1: Iterative Relationship between State-Society

Chapter Six examines indigenous peoples' experience of accessing the ICDP pre-school service. Indigenous people have viewed the opportunity to access the entitlements of development, including the pre-school service, very positively. In seeking education for their children, the ICDP participants look to the pre-school programme as a way for their children to acquire Bengali, so that they are in a position to learn when they go to the government school. However, their 'lived citizenship', as embedded in the experience of the ICDP pre-primary component, varied across the two locations of Bandarban district. The ICDP participants of both Bandarban district headquarters and Ruma Sadar were able to exert their citizenship right to education by accessing the ICDP pre-school and government primary school. In contrast, the non-ICDP participants, located in the more remote interior of Ruma Upazila, experienced multiple dimensions of educational exclusion, including the lack of availability of the ICDP pre-primary service, the poor quality of primary education in the government primary schools, and absence of basic infrastructure. Those unable to access the ICDP pre-schools, because they live too far

away, have to send their children to government schools without the benefits of pre-school education. Both the ICDP and non-ICDP participants equate access to education to claiming citizenship rights. In Bangladesh, the language of government, bureaucracy, education, employment, and the economy is Bengali, and without competency, it is not possible to exert citizenship rights. Therefore, education has a material importance in the lives of the people in the CHT and people connect access to education to claiming their citizenship rights. However, Chapter Six has shown that indigenous people's claim to citizenship is articulated from a position of inequality because accessing the entitlement of education depends on competency in the Bengali language. Since the ethnic groups in the CHT have their own languages, many indigenous children cannot understand or communicate in Bengali. This poses a great challenge, both in terms of access to formal education, and for completion and attainment.

An analysis of the indigenous people's experience in Chapter Seven of access to health services highlight that it was geographic location, rather than their status as ICDP project participants, that determined indigenous people's experience of health. Since the ICDP did not offer any specific services to project participants, they had had to access healthcare services from government healthcare centres and hospitals. In this regard, two locations in Bandarban district offered divergent experiences of access to health for indigenous people. Both ICDP and non-ICDP participants in Bandarban district headquarters were able to access the health service due to good road networks and availability of services. In contrast, lack of infrastructure such as road, vehicle posed as a hindrance for the people in Ruma upazila to access the government health facility. The government hospital located in the central town of Ruma Upazila offers only limited health services, and for most other services, the people had to travel three hours on foot to get to the hospital in the Bandarban district headquarters. As for the people who live in the interior of the Ruma Upazila, there is no access to any health service at all.

Indigenous people are not passive as the ICDP project documents represent them. They have actively sought to engage with the state to rework their condition of disenfranchisement by claiming their entitlements in the context of health and education. In relation to education, they have attempted to use the opportunity of the ICDP pre-school service. They have send their children to the *para* centre to learn the language of education, Bengali, to rework the discursive practice of the Bangladesh state and their condition of marginalisation. In the absence of state provision they have sought to access the education service by sending their children away from home to the central town in the Ruma Upazila, Bandarban district headquarter and even to the capital city.

In contrast to the education service, the government health service is more centralised. Therefore, mostly the indigenous people in Bandarban district headquarter could access the health service. In this connection, the indigenous people have emphasized the constraints of structure, such as non-existence of any health service, medicine, doctor within which they make their health decisions. However, they have sought to rework their disenfranchisement by depending on kinship and family networks as well as friends and neighbours to get to the district hospital in Bandarban Sadar in cases of emergency. These narratives highlight that indigenous people have actively sought to claim their entitlement of development which contradicts the ICDP documents' representation of indigenous people as passive who lack awareness regarding government services. A key argument in this thesis is that the state-society relation needs to be understood within the context of the everyday. Therefore, there is a need to understand the everyday state's intimate and dynamic exchange with indigenous society that focuses on the practices of both the state and social actors.

Further, in the context of health and education service provision, for the indigenous people, the state is manifest through ICDP officials, para workers, and health and education service providers. As discussed in Chapter Six, the absentee teachers in the

interior of Ruma Upazila were all indigenous. The district project manager of the ICDP in Bandarban district headquarter, the ICDP project manager in Ruma Upazila, and most of the para workers were indigenous people. Further, in Chapter Seven, accounts of corruption in the Hill District Councils in relation to development work highlight the localised structures of the state and problems in the system of rule. Local structures of authority in Bandarban district are enmeshed with the formal state structures. The narratives of health and education services officials shed light on the actual practices of the state, illustrating how formal and institutional structures intersect with the daily lives of the people. This further demonstrates the iterative relationship between state authority and everyday agency of indigenous people.

9.2: Engagement with the State Through Development: Politics of Contingency and Contestation

While charting indigenous people's experience, this thesis has highlighted that the indigenous people experience the state and development not always through resistance but also through negotiation and engagement with the state (Chandra 2015; Mohsini 2011; Sharma 2011). The myriad experiences of the indigenous people represent how the people sought to interact with the state through development provisions. These provisions, thus, render the state present to the marginalised. Therefore, this study has sought to analyse the role of the ICDP project in facilitating the process of enhancing the opportunity for the indigenous people to claim their citizenship right.

With regard to the pre-primary education service of the ICDP, it has had a positive impact in broadening the capacity of the project participants to claim their citizenship right in relation to education. Though an analysis of the scope of the ICDP pre-school component indicates that it is predicated on facilitating indigenous children's enrolment in Bengali instructed primary school, thereby feeding into the discursive state practice of building Bengali linguistic identity, its *para* centre based pre-education offered the project

participants an opportunity to acquire competency in Bengali language. Both the ICDP and non-ICDP participants connected acquiring competency in Bengali language to claiming citizenship right in education. This acquiescence of the indigenous people might be interpreted as conforming to the intent of Bangladesh state.

However, as Akhil Gupta (1995, p. 394) contends, we must not deride the politics of opportunism because these strategies are 'alive to the conjectural possibilities', as the case of Ranglai Mro in Chapter Eight illustrates. He was a student of one of the ICDP residential schools who later went on to become a prominent leader of the Mro ethnic group in Bandarban, CHT and established the 'Mro Chet' NGO, which works for the social and economic development of the Mro ethnic group. Employing the lens of governmentality, even if ICDP's education programme is considered as grounded in the intent to mould indigenous children, the ICDP school and the formal Bengali medium schools diverged in the means through which they have sought to mould the citizens. The ICDP school sought to facilitate indigenous children's enrolment into the formal Bengali medium school through the use of mother tongue. In contrast, the state school system does not offer this provision.

The broader effect of the ICDP's mother tongue instructed pre-school programme is yet to be examined, which requires further research. However, as for its residential school, the project outcome as manifested in the Rangali Mro's protest over acquisition of land in Bandarban is not what the ICDP envisioned. Therefore, Akhil Gupta (1995, p. 394) suggests the differences, contradictions in the policies and programmes allows people to create possibilities for political action and activism. Given that the research participants viewed the opportunity of ICPD pre-school very positively and as an opportunity to access formal education, it can be argued that it has offered the indigenous people a space from which they could claim an aspect of their citizenship right.

With regard to the health services of the ICDP, it was primarily aimed at facilitating project participants' access to government health service provision and did not offer any specific health service. It basically supported the government in the delivery of preventive and promotive health services (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board 1996, p. 13) through its *para* centres. In the Bandarban Sadar, only a few *para* centres are being utilized as the venue for the EPI vaccination and in the case of Ruma Upazila, no ICDP *para* centre was used. Since there is no formal agreement between the ICDP and the government health department, using the para centre as the venue for vaccination mostly depends on the will of the administrative head of the health department in a district. The health department took the decision to carry out the immunisation programme in Ruma from the Upazila hospital considering the absence of road network and transport. As for its health education programme, the implementation of the programme was sporadic and no difference between Bandarban district headquarter and Ruma Upazila was observed. Therefore, the ICDP did not have significant impact in enhancing indigenous people's capacity to access their entitlement of health. The ICDP development functioned as a key axis around which the indigenous people at one hand could claim their entitlement of education services, but on the other hand were unable to claim their entitlement to health services. Instead, they have put their claims back on the state.

9.3: Agency as Engagement with the State and Negotiation of State Power

This thesis has argued for an understanding of political agency embedded in everyday life, which necessitated finding politics in the agency that indigenous people exercise in their experienced and practiced worlds, in this context accessing the education and health services. An analysis of the everyday practices of the ICDP and non-ICDP participants in relation to accessing these services illustrates that these practices were underpinned by

many forms of politics. Indigenous people have attempted to improve their material condition (Chatterjee 2004, pp. 57-8) by seeking improved health, education, employment, and better futures for their sons and daughters. To access these benefits, as discussed earlier, the indigenous people have pragmatically engaged with the state rather than resisting it.

On the basis of these empirical findings, this thesis takes a departure from the scholarship on the state-society relation in the CHT that locates agency of the indigenous people only in resistance (Mohsin 2003, 2010). Rather, agency for the indigenous people of the CHT entailed everyday practice of resilience and reworking, which primarily aimed at securing a daily existence. Further, due to differences in geographical location, gender, ethnicity, class and other variables, the indigenous people's experience of the ICDP development project has not been homogeneous. These varied experiences of development have resulted in myriad articulations of agency which necessitated a framework that captures the nuances of multiple forms of indigenous people's agency. As discussed in Chapter Two, drawing from Cindy Katz (2004) but also departing from her conceptualisation of power and resistance as dichotomous, this thesis has highlighted indigenous people's agency as resilience, reworking and resistance.

The articulation of agency as resilience is mostly demonstrated in the everyday struggle of the indigenous people to access the entitlement of education. Almost all research participants, ICDP and non-ICDP, talked of the importance of education and expanding the opportunities of schooling for their children. It is in this connection small acts of resilience, aimed at getting by each day, were traced. Resilience, as discussed in Chapter Eight, entailed enduring hardship in the field, putting in long hours at work, depending on familial networks, and carrying agricultural produce on foot to sell in the market in the Ruma bazar in the absence of any transport facilities.

The narratives in Chapter Eight highlight the importance of context in understanding indigenous people's political agency embedded in their everyday life. Most of the research participants, particularly in Ruma Upazila, live in villages which are located in the more mountainous parts of the region. These hilly terrains are not suitable for plough cultivation, hence Jhum (swidden cultivation) has been the traditional cultivation practice in this region. However, reduced availability of land for Jhum has resulted in lesser yield from Jhum cultivation and difficulty in earning a livelihood. So, there is a great perception of a changed life. Consequently, indigenous people are adopting multiple strategies of resilience, primarily predicated on accessing education to negotiate the changes that they are facing. Both the ICDP and non-ICDP participants' strategies of resilience have emerged out of private decisions made at home and in consideration of the context of their situated life. This highlights the importance of recognising the political in ordinary situations, and, furthermore, recognising that what constitutes political in indigenous people's lives depends on the context. The indigenous people in this study are not docile subjects as theorised in the governmentality theory, and most of them are not claim-making citizen in the radical understanding of agency either. However, the case study of Ranglai Mro in Chapter Eight shows how ICDP development has produced claim-making citizen as well, demonstrating that the impacts of development interventions such as the ICDP are not always predictable.

The ICDP residential schools were established with a view to facilitating indigenous children's access to formal Bengali medium school. As discussed in Chapter Six, this is linked with building a homogeneous Bengali identity. However, the case of the 'Mro Social Council', founded by Ranglai Mro highlighted that rather than strengthening the Bengali identity, the ICDP schools have resulted in reinforcing the Mro ethnic identity. Further, through the Mro Social Council, Ranglai Mro has attempted to facilitate mother tongue based education for the Mro ethnic group. He appropriated the ethnic categorisation of the

Bangladesh state to make claims on the state, to rework the conditions of disenfranchisement of the Mro ethnic group. His articulation of citizenship demonstrated in the public arena is another example of being political and demonstrates that postcolonial citizenship is a dynamic, locally constituted process (Subramanian 2009, p. 254) through which indigenous people (re)negotiate their relationships with the state (Williams, Vira & Chopra 2011, p. 14). Rangla Mro's case shows that despite the state's effort to render development as an anti-politics machine, it has created a space for reworking, enabling articulation of competing meanings and demands (Subramanian 2009, p. 253). Development through the ICDP actually opened up, albeit unintentionally, new spaces for the articulation of indigenous people's rights.

The discussion in Chapter Eight on Ranglai Mro's protest and his subsequent arrest illustrate two very significant aspects of indigenous people's agency. Firstly, his demands for proper demarcation of land and rehabilitation demonstrate that he was not resisting the state in the conventional conceptualisation of resistance that negate or oppose state power. Rather, his demands were grounded on negotiating the state power to claim rehabilitation from the state. Secondly, the incident of his arrest highlights that rather than an autonomous subject, a citizen who participates in a distinct public sphere, the exercise of citizenship is embedded within a complex web of power. This incident also highlights that episodes of resistance rarely mark a pure form of escape from domination or a truly autonomous action. Therefore, this thesis argues for locating indigenous people's resistance as a process of negotiating with the state and its power (Chandra 2013 p. 52). As explained in Chapter Eight, indigenous people's political agency has taken the form of acts of compliance, staking of claims from the state and also instances of opposition. All of these forms are underpinned by a process of negotiation of state as a structure and its power.

9.4: Original Contribution: Theory-Praxis

In this research, I have been confronted with the gaps in the practical applicability of the theoretical premise of both governmentality theory and agency theory to interpret my field experience of indigenous people's everyday life and struggle. As discussed earlier, the indigenous people of the CHT are facing a rapidly changing society. To cope with these changes they have actively sought to access their entitlement through the government. Even those people who could not access these entitlements such as people living in the interior of Ruma Upazila demanded more government provisions. As Sunder Rajan (2003, p. 91) has suggested in the context of subaltern women in India, '[these people] are desperately in need of the services ... that only the state can provide .... and at the cost that can answer to such a massive demand'.

Governmentality theorists contend that development is a tool of governing to exert control over people. My concern was that in the context of basic service provisions such as, health and education, can the indigenous people afford not to engage with the state? Sharma (2008, p. 196) has suggested one productive way to approach this knotty issue is to inquire about the result of engagement with state-led development. Do such development interventions produce active political subjects, or regulated, subordinated, and disciplined state subjects? My analysis of the ICDP project contributes empirical evidence to arguments that governmental programmes do not simply create passive, docile subjects. The indigenous people in the CHT are active subjects who have their own agendas for engaging with the state. Hence, governmentality theory does not adequately explain the articulation of the indigenous people's agency, despite the constraints of structure in the CHT.

In this regard, my thesis draws on the literature on the indigenous people and state development, which includes critical citizenship literature, in particular in the context of

South Asia (Corbridge et al. 2005; Sharma 2008; Subramanian 2009). Focussed on the post-colonial contexts of development interventions, they argue that such interventions have produced political subjects and provided ground for political mobilisation. These studies have emphasized the agency of claim-making subjects who are visible on the public sphere and contend that governmentalisation does not depoliticize so much that it prevents any opening for a subaltern politics of citizenship that may take unexpected forms (Sharma 2008, p. 196). This study partially subscribes to this position and uses it to explain the reworking practices of Ranglai Mro. However, the agency literature does not sufficiently address the role of the state and its power in the articulation of indigenous people's agency. The theoretical contribution of this study lies in synthesising two frameworks, Cindy Katz (2004)'s framework of agency, and Haynes and Prakash (1992) and Chandra (2015)'s work on the entanglement of power and agency. This offers a conceptual framework of agency that is more able to capture the multiple meanings and articulations of indigenous agency in the CHT.

Cindy Katz's (2004) framework of agency does offer nuanced understanding of agency; agency as resilience, reworking and resistance. However, her framework posits a dichotomous understanding of power and agency. In this regard, Haynes and Prakash (1992) have usefully argued for an understanding of agency and power as relational not dichotomous, and which corresponds with the analysis of the internal conflict of the UPDF and PCJSS in Chapter Eight. Therefore, to capture the myriad articulations of agency of the indigenous people of the CHT within the constraints of structure and also from the theoretical position of state-society relation as entangled, I have reinterpreted Katz (2004)'s framework of agency drawing on Chandra (2015) and Haynes and Prakash (1992) to posit state-society relation in Bangladesh takes the form of entangled—and dynamic—relations of power.

This rethinking of citizenship and agency provides an original contribution to the scholarship on indigenous people and development, by examining the relationships between indigenous people of the CHT and the state of Bangladesh in the context of development. It situates the state-ethnic relation within the context of everyday development encounters, thereby offering a reading of the state-society relation as both very real, and mundane, exemplified in the perspectives of the ordinary indigenous people.

Secondly, by focusing on development provisions of health and education, this study offers a different view of state-led development in the CHT, contributing a much-needed analysis of the ICDP. Despite state-led development being a tool for the Bangladesh state to exert and maintain power and control over the people of the CHT, indigenous people have actively sought to access development entitlements to improve their material conditions.

Thirdly, this study has offered a nuanced understanding of indigenous people's politics and agency as embedded in their everyday lives, and shaped by their everyday encounters with the state. By analysing indigenous people's varied articulations of agency, this study has also sought to reveal the impacts of development in facilitating processes of political mobilisation designed to achieve the emancipation of indigenous people. The articulation of indigenous people's agency manifest in Ranglai Mro's reworking and resistance practices shows that development may have created moments of opportunity, but that there are no guarantees (Li 2000, p. 174). The current context of disunity, and at times, violent conflict among indigenous political parties in the CHT can lead to calls for caution about becoming too sympathetic or too hopeful about the potential results of indigenous political activism. However, this rather pessimistic view relies on an understanding of the state-society relation as static, which this thesis has argued is not tenable. Therefore, this thesis upholds the postcolonial hope for emancipation of the indigenous people of the CHT. It has highlighted the dangers of contentious politics for indigenous people's collective agency and the need for vigilance while engaging in the politics of emancipation.

Any future study on the nature, form, articulations and intersections of this counterproductive politics could build on the present research, which might help better inform future indigenous political activism in the CHT.

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