

Family Structure, Economic Security and Educational Status of Rural Chakma in CHT of Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of the present study was to prosecute a rigid survey on minor community Chakma in rural Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) area of Bangladesh. Present study consists 200 households of Chakma community. The data were collected from the rural areas of Panchari and Dighinala thanas of Khagrachari district. In the present study demonstrated that the literacy rate of rural Chakma is higher but per head monthly income is lower than that of the national level of Bangladesh. The average family size of Chakma community is consistent to the family size of national level. The dependency rate of Chakma is lower than that of national level. At least one child of 48% rural Chakma's family drooped out from primary education. Also, logistic regression model showed that the socio-economic conditions of Chakma families were significantly (5% level of significance) affect the droop out from education. However, it does not depend on the distance of the nearest educational institution from home.

1. INTRODUCTION

Chakma is the name of the largest tribe found in the hilly area known as the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The CHT comprising Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban hill districts of the south-eastern part of Bangladesh, the ancestral homeland of the Jumma indigenous peoples. The indigenous people of those mountain areas have been managing the resources with their traditional knowledge and customs. The traditional economy of them is called as subsistence economy which is completely need oriented, which means that production aims and therefore the overall level of production are geared to fulfilling the totality of individual and communal needs (Ali and Tsuchiya 2002). Like other indigenous territories in the world, various policies and programs have been implemented from the time of the first colonial power, the British to the present national administration in CHT. Sometimes the policies and programs contributed towards political and economic chaos in the region frequently stained by bloodshed. Because many of these programs were the consistent disregard for the indigenous

people and their value systems and traditional knowledge (Roy 2000). The denial of the land rights of the indigenous people to exist as a separate and distinct people with their own tradition, culture and practices is seriously undermining in the CHT. Also the communication system of rural CHT is very difficult. Maximum of Chakma are residing in this rural area out of ten different ethnic tribal groups and leading strange life style. The systematic studies on the CHT in general, socio-economic aspects in particular, are strikingly limited. Prior to the Peace Accord in 1997 between the government and Jana Sangati Samiti (JSS), a political platform of indigenous people, the CHT had practically remained inaccessible for research and empirical exploration for long three decades. The last few years, however, have been seen something of an upsurge in the literature on the CHT. International aid agencies have commissioned a number of explanatory surveys mainly to assess the local needs and development potential of the indigenous people in the CHT (DANIDA 2000; ADB 2000; AusAid 2000). Gain (2000) provides an introductory overview of the ecology and living conditions in the CHT. Amin (2000) compiled a useful summary of the major public legislation regarding governance of the CHT. The Tribal Cultural Institutes and CHT Hill District Councils published popular literature on varied aspects of ethnic life and culture in the CHT (TCI 1994; Lewin 1998). Van Schendel et al.

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(2000) introduced the life and livelihoods of the people of the CHT. A number of international observers have assessed the political and human rights situation in the CHT such as CHT Commission (1991) and Tebtebba Foundation (2000). Again, a study on minorities has been conducted by ADB (1998) in the CHT areas and the data were collected especially on education and reported that only 65.5% of Chakma are literate. However, 71% Chakma are educated as mentioned by Chakma (2000). Further, BBS (2001) conducted a survey and reported that only 11% Chakma are illiterate. Besides these several authors studied on minorities in the CHT (Chakma 2000; Beseine 1977; Mahinud 2002; UNFPA 2003). Although there are some studies on the CHT, but many of them are in a limited perspective for certain factual and quasi-reasons. Basic, in-depth studies are conspicuous by their absence or very limited presence. But their focus lied on education and some social problems. To best of our knowledge, no study has yet been concentrated on family structure, economic security and education system of Chakma community in the rural area in the CHT.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

It is important that the emerging issues of the CHT should be addressed in a comprehensive manner and an empirical analysis of the policy issues should be necessary. So, the article attempts to perform a rigorous study on family structure, economic security, and educational status leading an appropriate model to find out the most influential factors those affect the drop out from primary education.

2. DATA AND METHODS

There are eight thanas and 43 unions under Khagrachari district, but the selected study area included Panchari and Dighinala thanas. There are 1500 Chakma households in both the thanas. From the mentioned two thanas we have selected two unions only of which Panchari union from Panchari Thana and Babuchara union from Dighinala Thana. These two thanas (Panchari and Dighinala) as well as selected two unions (Panchari and Babuchara) are very old and far from urban amenities. Electricity is not available in the 90% areas of both the unions and the modern facilities are not available. So, our study area will be a representative part of rural CHT in

Bangladesh. Out of 1500 households we have been collected data over 200 Chakma households by simple random sampling technique of which 50% households were from the Panchari union and the remaining 50% households from Babuchara union. Only the head of the households were interviewed on the basis of direct contact. The considered variables are educational qualification, past and present occupations of the head of the family, monthly income, distance of educational institution from home and fall-down from primary education. Furthermore, this study would explore elaborately some basic characteristics of the respondents as well as the Chakma community.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Educational Qualification

Table 1 shows the distribution (Percentage) of Chakma community by educational level. The table exhibits that the rate of literacy is 76% (at least primary level) and this rate is only for the head of the household. Primary and Public Education Department (2001) reported that the rate of literacy in Bangladesh is 65%. Thus the rate of literacy for rural Chakma is significantly higher than that of overall rate in Bangladesh. The present result also, is not in agreement with the findings of BBS (2001), they found that the literacy rate of Chakma community was 89%.

Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondents by educational qualification of rural Chakma in CHT, Bangladesh (n = 200).

| <i>Educational qualification</i> | <i>Number of respondents</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Illiterate | 46 | 23.0 |
| Primary | 106 | 53.0 |
| Secondary | 25 | 12.5 |
| Higher Secondary | 11 | 5.5 |
| Graduate | 12 | 6.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |

3.2. Family Member

The smallest household size found to be a couple consisting a husband and wife. The percentage distributions of family members have been presented in Table 2. This table shows clearly that 58% Chakma families consist of 5 to 6 members and the average household size is 5.34, which is close to the average household size at the national level, 5.5 (BBS 2001).

Table 2: Percentage distribution of family members of rural Chakma in CHT, Bangladesh (n = 200).

| No. of family members | Number of family | Percentage | Average |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------|---------|
| 2 | 2 | 1.0 | 5.34 |
| 3 | 10 | 5.0 | |
| 4 | 37 | 18.5 | |
| 5 | 69 | 34.5 | |
| 6 | 46 | 23.0 | |
| 7 | 29 | 14.5 | |
| 8 | 3 | 1.5 | |
| 9 | 3 | 1.5 | |
| 11 | 1 | 0.5 | |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 | |

3.3. Earning Person and Dependent

The maximum and minimum earning persons in a family are 3 and 1 respectively (Table 3); only 38.5% households have one earner member, 47% households consist of two and 14.5% households possess three earner members. The rate of earning person (REP) can be computed as:

$$\begin{aligned} REP &= \frac{\text{Total earning persons in 200 household}}{\text{Total members in 200 household}} \times 100 \\ &= \frac{352}{1068} \times 100 = 32.96\% \end{aligned}$$

Also, the rate of dependency,

$$\begin{aligned} RD &= \frac{\text{Total dependents in 200 household}}{\text{Total members in 200 household}} \times 100 \\ &= 67.04\% \end{aligned}$$

Thus, every earner person shares his income with other RD/REP=2.034, that is, an earner person has to bear the living expenses of more than other two.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of earning members of rural Chakma in CHT, Bangladesh (n = 200).

| No. of earning person | Number of family | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------|
| 1 | 77 | 38.5 |
| 2 | 94 | 47.0 |
| 3 | 29 | 14.5 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |

3.4. Present and Past Occupation

Present and past occupations of a person are very important characteristics to know about the economic security and the demand of living

status. From the percentage distribution (Table 4), it is seen that 77.5% and 10.5% of rural Chakma depend on agriculture and business respectively. But, in Bangladesh 63.5% and 11.2% people are concerned with agriculture and business respectively (Bangladesh Economic Review 2007). The occupation of respondent as agriculture decreases from 85% to 77.5% whereas business increases from 4% to 10.5%. Thus, it is observing an alarming change of occupation from agriculture to business; that is, rural Chakma are feeling business as an economic safety.

Table 4: Percentage distribution of respondents by their past and present occupations of rural Chakma in CHT, Bangladesh (n = 200).

| Level of Occupations | Past | | Present | |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Agriculture | 170 | 85.0 | 155 | 77.5 |
| Business | 8 | 4.0 | 21 | 10.5 |
| Job | 21 | 10.5 | 19 | 9.5 |
| Agriculture and Business | 1 | 0.5 | 5 | 2.5 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 | 200 | 100.0 |

3.5. Monthly Income

Income is the most important factor for human well being as the living status, health, social and political power. From the percentage distributions shown in Table 5, we observe that 64% family's monthly income lie within Tk. 2000 to Tk. 4000. More than 80% families earn less than Tk. 5000 per month. The computed per head monthly income of rural Chakma is obtained as Tk.709, the ratio of total monthly income by all the 200 households and total members in 200 families. On the contrary, per head monthly income in

Table 5: Percentage distribution for monthly income of rural Chakma in CHT, Bangladesh (n = 200).

| Monthly Income (in Taka) | Number of household | Percentage |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| 1000-2000 | 6 | 3.0 |
| 2000-3000 | 91 | 45.5 |
| 3000-4000 | 39 | 19.5 |
| 4000-5000 | 25 | 12.5 |
| 5000-6000 | 13 | 6.5 |
| 6000-7000 | 9 | 4.5 |
| 7000-8000 | 9 | 4.5 |
| 8000-9000 | 2 | 1.0 |
| 9000-10000 | 6 | 3.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |

overall Bangladesh is Tk.1949.53 (Bangladesh Economic Review 2005). Thus, the monthly income of a rural Chakma is 2.75 times less compared to the national level of Bangladesh.

3.6. Distance of Educational Institution from Home

The distance of educational institutions from home is measured from the nearest one. The minimum, maximum, and mean distance of the nearest institution from home are 100 meters, 1600 meters, and 729.15 meters, respectively are presented in Table 6. Distance of nearest institution varies starting 400 meters to 800 meters for more than 45% households. Distance of the nearest educational institution from home for 19% families is within 400 meters, for 45.5% families is starting 400 meters to 800 meters, for 27.5% families is starting 800 meters to 1200 meters, and for the rest 8% families is from 1200 to 1600 meters (Table 6).

3.7. Monthly Expenditure for Children for Education

Monthly expenditure for education is an important factor for educational status of a student depends on expenditure. The 16.5%, 31.5%, 19.5%, 9.0%, and 3.0% families of Chakma expend between Tk.100 to Tk.500, Tk. 500 to Tk. 1000, Tk. 1000 to Tk. 2000, Tk. 2000 to Tk. 3000 and Tk. 3000 to Tk. 5000 respectively for their children educational purpose. We found that more than 50% of the Chama's families expend between Tk. 500 to Tk. 2000 for their children education purpose (Table 7). However, 20.5% family's expenditure for their children education is zero. In that case, either their children have fall down from education or engaged with a profession after successfully completing their education.

3.8. Drop Out from Primary Education

Drop out from primary education means to leave the school before completing five years study. Rate of drop out from education (RDE) per household can be computed as:

$$= 96/200 = 0.48$$

.Thus, 48% Chakma household in rural area has at least one child dropped-out from education at primary level.

Drop-out from primary education may be a cause of several factors such as economic crisis, unawareness of the head of the family, profession of the family's head, distance of educational institution from home, and so on. We would like to strike out a set of most influential factors those affect the drop out from primary education. Logistic regression model has been used in this recognition. The Table 7 exhibits that no significant effect of distance of educational institutions from home on drop out from education. But, we found significant effects of economic variable and profession of family's head on drop out (Table 7) defined as:

$$Y_i = \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if no child drop out from education} \\ 1, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$X_{1i} = \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if perheadmonthly income of the family} \\ & \text{is less than Tk. 709} \\ 1, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$X_{2i} = \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if the profession of family's head is agriculture} \\ 1, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$X_{3i} = \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if the distance of nearest educational institute} \\ & \text{is less than 7.29.15 meters} \\ 1, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

We see that the economic condition and the occupation of the household's head significantly affect the drop out from education at 5% level of significance (Table 8). If the variable X_{3i} is included in the model then the other two variables (X_{1i} and X_{2i}) become insignificant, that is, the

Table 6: Distance of the nearest educational insti-tute from home for rural Chakma in CHT, Bangladesh (n = 200).

| Distance (in meters) | Frequency | Percentage | Maximum (in meter) | Minimum (in meter) | Mean (in meter) |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| <400 | 38 | 19.0 | 1600 | 100 | 729.15 |
| 400-800 | 91 | 45.5 | | | |
| 800-1200 | 55 | 27.5 | | | |
| 1200-1600 | 16 | 8.0 | | | |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 | | | |

Table 7: Monthly Expenditure behind children for education of rural Chakma in CHT, Bangladesh (n = 200).

| Monthly expenditure for education (in Taka) | Number of family | Percentage |
|---|------------------|------------|
| 0 | 41 | 20.5 |
| 0-1000 | 96 | 48.0 |
| 1000-2000 | 39 | 19.5 |
| 2000-3000 | 18 | 9.0 |
| 3000-4000 | 2 | 1.0 |
| 4000-5000 | 4 | 2.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |

distance of the nearest educational institution is not a factor of causing drop-out. The fitted logistic regression model can be expressed as:

$$P(Y_1) = \frac{e^{0.452-1.072X_{11}-1.181X_{21}}}{1 + e^{0.452-1.072X_{11}-1.181X_{21}}}$$

and the coefficients have been displayed in Table 8.

4. CONCLUSION

In the present study used 200 households of tribal Chakma from rural CHT areas. We found that 77% head of the households have completed their study at least primary level. This rate is much higher than that of overall rate of Bangladesh. The average family size 5.4 of Chakma is consistent with that at the national level. For economic security the occupation of rural Chakma are moving from agriculture to business. Only 33.05% of rural Chakma are engaged in earning and the dependency rate is 66.95%. Per head monthly income of a rural Chakma is Tk.709 only which is 2.75 times less than the per head monthly income at the national level. Average distance of the nearest educational institution from home is 729.15 meters and 50% of the families expend between Tk.500 to Tk.2000 for their children education. But, 48% families in rural areas have at least one child dropped-out from primary education. The dropout from primary education depends on the economic condition of the family

and the profession of the head of the family but does not depend on the distance of educational institutions from home. Also, the dropout from education is sensitive to the group of families having per head monthly income less than Tk.709 and the level of occupation as agriculture. In the current study, the overall findings will be helpful enough to the researcher as well as the policy makers to improve the living status of rural Chakma in CHT of Bangladesh.

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Table 8: Logistic regression model

| Independent Variables | β | S.E. | Valid Statistic | d.f. | Significant | Exp(β) | 95% CI for | |
|-----------------------|---------|-------|-----------------|------|-------------|----------------|------------|-------|
| | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| X_{11} | -1.072 | 0.362 | 7.738 | 1 | 0.03 | 0.343 | 0.168 | 0.697 |
| X_{21} | -1.181 | 0.486 | 5.919 | 1 | 0.015 | 0.307 | 0.118 | 0.795 |
| Constant | 0.452 | 0.180 | 6.289 | 1 | 0.012 | 1.572 | | |

Dependent variable is Y_1 .

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