



## Background Note on Chattogram

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### Contents

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>1. Division Overview</b> .....      | 2 |
| <b>2. Outlook</b> .....                | 2 |
| 2.1 Achievements .....                 | 2 |
| 2.2 Challenges .....                   | 3 |
| <b>3. COVID Management</b> .....       | 3 |
| <b>4. LNOB Perspective</b> .....       | 3 |
| 4.1 Geographic Challenges .....        | 3 |
| 4.2 Youth & Employment .....           | 4 |
| 4.3 Women.....                         | 5 |
| 4.4 Children .....                     | 5 |
| <b>5. Other Local Challenges</b> ..... | 6 |
| 5.1 Environmental Challenges .....     | 6 |
| 5.2 Discrimination in CHT .....        | 6 |
| 5.4 Rohingya Issue.....                | 7 |



## 1. Division Overview

Chattogram is situated in the south-eastern region of Bangladesh. In Chattogram there are 11 districts and 14 Upazilas. The districts are Bandarban, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur, Chattogram, Cumilla, Cox's Bazar, Feni, Khagrachari, Lakshimpur, Noakhali and Rangamati. Total 76,16,352 people live in Chattogram district. Three major rivers in Chattogram division are Karnafuli, Halda, and Sangu. There are lots of famous tourists place in the Chattogram division such as Foy's Lake, Potenga Sea Beach, Chattogram Zoo, and Chattogram University. The economy of Chattogram districts depends on agricultural activities including different farms. The division also has marine fishery resources from the Bay of Bengal.

## 2. Outlook

### 2.1 Achievements

**The poverty rate in Chattogram districts, measured by the upper poverty line was 18.40 per cent in 2016, which is less than what it was in 2010 (26.20 per cent) and 2005 (34.00 per cent).**

The overall decrease in the poverty rate was driven by a substantial decrease in both rural and urban poverty rates. In 2016, the Chattogram division had a significantly lower poverty rate than the national average (24.3 per cent).

**According to the MIC report 2019, the Chattogram division had the highest number of households with the internet at home (49.20 per cent).** The proportion was even higher than the national average (37.60 per cent).

**Chattogram division had a lower proportion of unemployment rate aged 15 or older (3.50 per cent) in 2017.** The percentage was also lower than the national average (4.20 per cent). Only Dhaka had a lower unemployment rate (3.40 per cent) than the Chattogram district.

**The total croppable area of Chattogram division has significantly increased in eight years.** In 2012, the total croppable area was almost 4000 million acres whereas it was over 8000 million acres in 2020. Among eight districts of Bangladesh, Chattogram was in the third position according to the total croppable area. The other three divisions with high croppable area were Dhaka (385 million acres) Rajshahi (392 million), and Rangpur (350 million).



## 2.2 Challenges

**The daily average wage of agricultural labour without food (male) lower was the third lowest among other divisions in 2020.** Bandarban district had the lowest wage of agricultural labour in the Chattogram division (390 Taka). The amount was lower than the national average (422 Taka).

**Chattogram division had the highest under-5 mortality rate (52 per cent) in Bangladesh in 2010.** It had the highest male under-5 mortality rate (59.00 per cent). However, female mortality of Chattogram is the same (44 per cent) as Barishal and Dhaka division & lower than Sylhet division.

**Chattogram division is the third lowest among other divisions according to the use of improved drinking water (97.20 per cent) in 2010.** The percentage was lower than the national average (98.50 per cent). Bandarban district in the Chattogram had the lowest proportion (56.80 per cent) of the use of improved drinking water.

**Chattogram division had a lower proportion of improved sanitation facilities (79.90 per cent) in 2019.** The ratio was lower than the national average (84.60 per cent). Bandarban district had the fourth lowest proportion of improved sanitation facilities in districts in Bangladesh (43.80 per cent). The only districts that had a lower percentage of improved sanitation facilities were Pirojpur, Barguna, and Bagerhat.

## 3. COVID Management

The Chattogram division had the highest number of available oxygen concentrators (almost 2.5 million) during the COVID-19 pandemic. 74.70 per cent of people have taken the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in Chattogram which is the second highest in Bangladesh. Another division that has a higher percentage in the completion of first dose vaccine is Dhaka. 7.20 per cent of people have taken the third dose of vaccination in Chattogram division which is lower than Dhaka (11.90 per cent), Khulna (10.30 per cent), Rangpur (9.00 per cent), and Sylhet division (7.80 per cent).

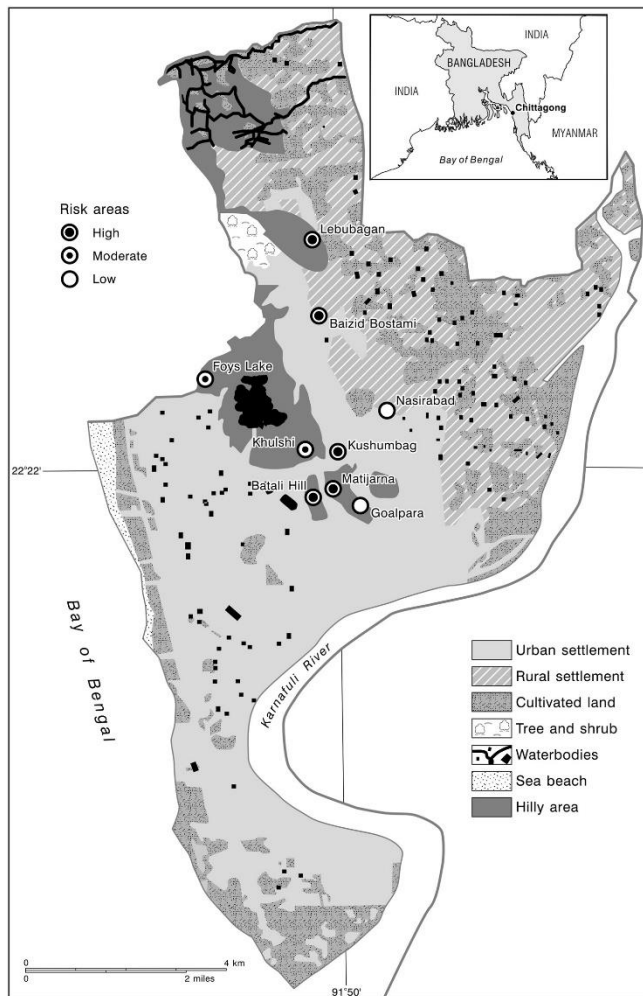
## 4. LNOB Perspective

### 4.1 Geographic Challenges

Chattogram is the second largest metropolitan city in Bangladesh. Due to rapid urbanisation and other environmental issues, the Chattogram division is going through some geographic challenges. Landslide is one of the big challenges of Chattogram division. According to a report of Dhaka Tribune,



300 inhabitants of Chattogram city have evacuated due to the worry of landslides. Hilly districts of the Chattogram division are also at a high risk of landslides.



**Figure 1: Landslide-risk areas of Chattogram City**

Heavy rainfall throughout the Chattogram division is making the landslide situation worse. In 2021, a massive flood occurred in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban district of Chattogram district. The heavy flow of floodwater wiped away local houses and massive croplands.

#### 4.2 Youth & Employment

In 2016, the Chattogram division had the second largest labour force (age 15-29 years). 11,70,000 youths were engaged. It also had the second highest youth employment rate. However, other districts in the Chattogram division have lower youth employment rates. As an example, in 2016, the labour force (age 15-29 years) of Rangamati district was 1,98,000 which was the second lowest number in the Chattogram division and the third lowest all over Bangladesh.



However, delinquency among youths of Chattogram is increasing due to disadvantaged socio-economic status. According to a report in Dhaka Tribune, six young boys were arrested for involving in mugging from Chattogram city's station road. Youths living in slum areas are more prone to engage in crimes due to the lack of employment.

#### *4.3 Women*

Chattogram division has the highest number (57.00 per cent) of school-going girl students. The number of college-going girl students is the second highest in Chattogram and Barishal division. The only district that has a higher ratio of school-going girl students than these two districts was Dhaka (52.00 per cent).

Districts of the Chattogram division have a lower average wage for agricultural labour (female). Rangamati district is the lowest (240 Taka) in Bangladesh average wage for women involved in agricultural labour.

Women of Chattogram are living in a vulnerable status. According to a report in Daily Star, a female student of Chattogram University was raped by one of her university mates. In 2022, Daily Star also published a report about the sexual assault of two female students of Chattogram University. In January month of 2022, a female student of Chattogram University was raped on shuttle train in the morning. Other districts of the Chattogram division are also prone to rape cases. In 2021, a female tourist was raped in Cox's Bazar district. In March 2022, a 45-year-old indigenous woman was raped and murdered by a rapist in the Bandarban district.

#### *4.4 Children*

Chattogram division had the highest infant mortality rate (39.30 per cent) in 2020. This rate is higher than the national average (34.78 per cent). The availability of children's books in Chattogram division is the third lowest (4.70 per cent). This proportion is lower than the national average (6.10 per cent). In 2019, the primary school completion rate in the Chattogram division is the third lowest (80.20 per cent). The other two divisions with lower primary school completion rates were Mymensingh (76.00 per cent) and Sylhet (78.40 per cent). Cox's Bazar district has the lowest primary school completion rate in Chattogram (73.40 per cent).

#### *4.5 Adivasi and Minority Community*

Chattogram division has a diverse range of Adivasi and minority communities. Chattogram Hill Tracts includes three different districts, Khagrachari, Bandarban and Rangamati, which are home to



significant indigenous population. Eleven types of tribes live in the Chattogram division which include Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Tanchangya, Lushai, Pankho, Bawm, Mro, Khyang, Khumi and Chak. They have a distinct culture from Bengali people which make them unique from others. However, these communities are living in a vulnerable status. Frequent human rights deprivation such as land rights violation, gender-based violation etc. are making their life hard for many years.

## 5. Other Local Challenges

### 5.1 Environmental Challenges

Chattogram division is currently going through environmental degradation as evidenced by the large scale of deforestation. Jhum cultivation is one of the major causes of deforestation in the Rangamati district. Rapid illegal lodging in the Chattogram Hill Tract (CHT) area is another reason for deforestation. The evidence of forest land grabbing can be noticed on the roadsides of Rangamati town. Most of the reserved forests are covered by fruit orchards, hotels, resorts, and other private monuments. The residents of Rangamati who has the actual ownership of the forests are unfortunately used as a workforce for creating orchard garden. In Cox's Bazar district, wildlife is facing degradation due to the settlement of a large number of Rohingya refugees. After the entrance of the Rohingya people, waste management has lost control. As a result, the town is facing problems with sewerage and water supply. In the Bandarban district, illegal deforestation is constantly happening threatening both biodiversity and the life of indigenous people. Reserved forests of Bandarban district are also used for illegal lodgings.

### 5.2 Discrimination in CHT

Discrimination against the people of Chattogram is rising at an alarming rate. They are excluded from their basic human rights by facing violence against them such as killing, torture, kidnapping etc. Military presence is a serious concern for citizens of CHT. In October 2020, five local people of CHT were arrested by the military for the false acquisition. In the same month, two Jumma students were tortured physically for wanting their land rights. Recently, two women in the Khagrachari district has sexually harassed by military force. On 6<sup>th</sup> August, a military force broke into the indigenous political organisation of CHT in Khagrachari named Chattogram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) and destroyed their assets. The indigenous women of CHT are also deprived of their rights. They are facing sexual harassment and domestic violence.



### *5.3 Land Right of CHT people*

Land revenue is one of the major income sources of indigenous communities in CHT. They used to earn from cultivating these lands. However, the land of indigenous people was not registered. Currently, most of the lands of CHT people have been taken over by the Bengali settlers. According to a Daily Star report, 2,00,000 to 4,50,000 Bengali settlers migrated to CHT. A recent report in Daily Star has illustrated that the land ownership of CHT people has decreased by 51%. Non-indigenous people are leasing or buying lands with fake documents and building resorts, restaurants, and hotels on their land. As a result, original land owners are evicted from their houses. Recently, many people of Rangamati have evicted from their house for the sake of rubber cultivation in their land. Some people are also cultivating tobacco in CHT and grabbing land of locals. The existing 'Chattogram Hill Tracts Peace Accord' that was signed by the government of Bangladesh back in 1997 is not getting enough attention from the government.

### *5.4 Rohingya Issue*

In 2017, 6 million Rohingya refugees entered Cox's Bazar Bangladesh. The number of Rohingya refugees has been significantly increasing since that time. This issue has created a big challenge for the local people of Cox's Bazar in the Chattogram division. Another alarming issue is internal conflict between Rohingya people in Cox's Bazar which is threatening the peace of the local area. Since the entrance of Rohingya people, frequent violence has been occurring in Rohingya camps as well as in Cox's Bazar district which is hampering the local stability. According to a report in the Daily Star, almost fifty-five Rohingya were arrested for the acquisition of murder between 2017-2019. Drug trafficking is also a major source of concern. Alongside this, there have been reports of human trafficking. The major problem that has been created due to the Rohingya entrance is environmental degradation. 4,300 acres of hills and forests were cut for providing shelter to Rohingya people which is creating deforestation in Cox's Bazar district.