Forced Migration and Land: An Expulsion in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh

UK Mong Marma

Abstract:

Forced-migration emerges as crucial crisis in global-south. However, it hardly connects with socio-economic and political dimensions of forced migration. Consequently, forced migration has been perpetuated in different parts of global south alike Bangladesh. This research project intends to examine how forced migration of Indigenous Peoples is embedded in local context of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in relation wider context. Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), geographically hilly, ethnically diversified, politically volatile region in southeastern Bangladesh. The socio-economic and politics have been transformed since colonial period in CHT. These changes are more visible in demographic alteration of Indigenous and non-Indigenous, insurgent movement, and emerging middle class and continuously land loss. In-migration, forced-migration and transmigration (settlement) are the three migratory processes in CHT. In particular, two major Indigenous Peoples exodus were take place in 1960s and 1980s and they were become either refugees in India or Internal Displaced People (IDPs) in CHT. Nevertheless, in recent days, Indigenous Peoples are migrating to neighbour countries or within region, while every day form of land loss has been proliferated for the projects of privatization, development and securitization in CHT. It has been exacerbated and perpetuated for the contested notion over land entitlement: state and private land vs common or customary land. In such context, this empirical research with historical perspective aim to explore what are the endogenous and exogenous factors of forced migration in CHT; what are the forced migratory pattern in CHT; and how displace peoples coping in changing socio-economic transformation?. These research questions will examine intersecting forced migration with land alienation and politics of land, ethnicity, conflict, development and state formation and nation building of Bangladesh. A qualitative ethnographic method will apply in data collection.