

# Land Rights of Aboriginal People in Bangladesh: A Legal Study

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## ABSTRACT

The land rights of Aboriginal peoples in Bangladesh remain one of the most critical legal and socio-political issues in the country. This article presents a legal study on the status of land rights among aboriginal people, particularly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and other plains regions. It critically analyses the constitutional provisions, national land laws, and customary practices. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality and justice, Aboriginal peoples often face systemic challenges, including land dispossession, lack of recognition of customary tenure, inadequate legal enforcement and limited access to justice. This article explores judicial decisions, government policies, and land commission activities, highlighting the legal gaps and institutional failures that continue to marginalize Aboriginal communities. The study wraps up with a call for changes in the legal framework, stronger recognition of customary land rights, and the need for inclusive governance to ensure land justice for indigenous peoples in Bangladesh.

## INTRODUCTION

The situation of the aboriginal peoples in Bangladesh is mirrored in many other indigenous areas around the world. Aboriginal people are ethnic groups that are the original inhabitants of a specific region. Their physical features, cultures, language, traditional house and dress are more special than other common people. They are mostly Mongolian-stock and belong to a Tibeto-Burman language family living in Bangladesh. Their economy is land-based, especially in terms of jhum cultivation. They maintain their traditional way of life and protect their distinct identity as a separate people, with their languages, customs and traditions. Some legislative and administrative measures have been taken for the aboriginal people. The constitution of Bangladesh also recognizes them as having the special status of the Hill Tracts and the rights of its aboriginal peoples.

## Object of the Study

The importance of this study of this article are:

- Protecting aboriginal people which they have historically faced systematic discrimination and dispossession of their ancestral lands.
- Existing land laws of Bangladesh fails to recognize customary land rights and tradition practices of aboriginal people. A legal study helps identify these gaps and providing a foundation for legal reform and policy improvement.
- The article emphasizes the constitutional guarantees of equality and non-discrimination.
- By analyzing land- related laws and policies the article can offer legal solution to prevent illegal grabbing, forced displacement and militarization of aboriginal people.
- Serving as a key reference, it supports policymakers, the judiciary, legal practitioners, and organizations defending indigenous rights with legal interpretations, case precedents, and strategic advocacy advice.

## Significance of the Study

This study is important because land is the single most critical asset for indigenous communities in Bangladesh — it shapes livelihoods, culture, identity, and social status. A focused legal analysis identifies where statutory

law, customary practices, and administrative implementation diverge, and shows how those gaps produce dispossession, insecurity, and frequent conflict. By mapping the legal landscape and the lived consequences for communities, the study supplies evidence that is immediately useful to policymakers, judges, rights advocates, and development practitioners. The study exposes points where national laws, local administration, and recognized customary rights collide or leave indigenous claims unprotected — an essential first step for legal reform. Empirical examples and doctrinal analysis together give legislators and ministries concrete entry points to amend statutes, adopt implementing regulations, or introduce protective procedural safeguards. By analyzing precedents, constitutional protections, and international human-rights norms, the study equips public-interest lawyers and community paralegals with arguments to assert land rights in courts or before administrative tribunals. Development agencies and NGOs can use the findings to design tenure-security interventions (land demarcation, titling, participatory mapping) that are legally informed and culturally appropriate. The legal study situates Bangladesh's experience within broader comparative debates (customary tenure, settler-state law, indigenous rights), filling a gap in literature about South Asian indigenous land law. Clarifying and protecting indigenous land rights reduces drivers of dispossession and inter-communal conflict, promoting more stable local development and reconciliation.

## METHODOLOGY

The research will be concluded by applying the comparative method of study. Necessary data and information will be collected from the primary and secondary sources of the relevant field. Primary sources are relevant Acts, Ordinance, Regulation, precedents, International Conventions, Treaty, covenants, annual report relevant organizations etc. Secondary sources are including relevant writings of some scholars such as books, journals, articles, newspapers, magazines, documents published by the relevant NGOs etc. A survey employing a questionnaire will be conducted to obtain relevant data. The collected data will be processed manually and analysis will be made in order to make the study more analytical, informative and useful to the users.

### Definition of Aboriginal People

Aboriginal people, also known as first people, indigenous people, or native people, are ethnic groups that were the original settlers of a given region, in contrast to groups that have stood, occupied, or colonized the area more recently.

**Etymological meaning:** The adjective "indigenous" was originally used to describe the origin of animals and plants. However, after the 20th century, the term "Indigenous peoples" began to refer to a legal category established by Indigenous law in both international and national legislation rather than merely to culturally distinct groups impacted by colonization.

It is derived from the Latin word *indigena*, which is based on the root *gen*, which means to be born. It also refers to aboriginal, native, original or first (as in Canada's first people: a. First Nation, b. Inuit and c. *metis*). The use of the term people in Association with the indigenous comes from the 19th century anthropological and ethnographic.

**Merriam-Webster Dictionary**, "As a body of persons united by common culture, tradition or sense of kinship which typically have a common language, institutions and beliefs and often constitute a politically organized group".

**James Anaya**<sup>1</sup>, "as living descendants of pre-invasion residents of land now subservient to others. They are culturally separate groups that find themselves engulfed by other settler's society born of forces of empire or conquest".

**National Definition**, "Indigenous people include people indigenous based on their descent from populations that inhabited the country when non-indigenous religion and cultures arrived or at the establishment of present state boundaries".

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<sup>1</sup>. former special reporter on the Rights of Indigenous People

**The United Nation Working Group on Indigenous Population(WGIP)<sup>2</sup>**, Indigenous communities, peoples, and nations as those that have a historical connection to societies that existed on their territories before invasion and colonization. These groups consider themselves distinct from other populations currently present in those countries.

## CHARACTERISTICS ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

The main characteristics of Aboriginal people are the following:

**Physical Features:** In Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT), they are mostly of Mongolian stock, belonging to the Tibeto-Burman language family extraction and are closer in appearance.

**Culture:** Compared to the majority of the Bengali population, they are neighbors in northeastern India, Burma, and Thailand.

**Religion:** The dominant religion of the Indigenous people is Buddhism (Chakmas, Marmas, Tanchangya, and partially Mru). Some of them belong to the Hindu (Tripura) and Christian faiths (Lushais, Pankho, and Bawm), while others have retained their traditional religion.

**Languages:** They have their own languages, both in written and oral form. The Chakmas and Tangchangyas have close links with Bengali and Assamese. The majority of their languages are the Tibeto-Burman family languages. But now many of the languages, like Chakmas, are in danger of being lost entirely due to disuse.

**Traditional House:** Traditional houses are made from bamboo and glass and are raised on stilts with a notched wooden ladder as a stairway. They are built to protect against wild animals wandering freely in the area, including tigers, wild boars, elephants, and poisonous snakes.

**Dress:** Indigenous peoples' clothes are hand-woven and distinctive because of their vibrant colors. They wear them daily, especially on ceremonial occasions such as weddings, feasts, and religious events.

### Identification of Aboriginal People:

The points of identification of Aboriginal people are the following:

**Identification of the Peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts:** The term "aboriginal" denotes their legally recognized status.

**2.Inhabiting from Time Immemorial:** They have inhabited the Chittagong Hill Tracts region since time immemorial.

**3.Existing Law for Identification:** There are various types of existing laws for the identification of Aboriginal people and these are:

a. Chittagong Hill Tracts Treaty, 1997

b. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation 1 of 1900. Rule 4 of this Regulation, a Chakma, Mogh or member of any tribe is indigenous to the Hill Tracts.

**Correspondence of government:** Various correspondences of the governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh have referred to the hill people as indigenous people. A law enacted by the parliament of Bangladesh in 1955 identifies the hill people as indigenous to the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

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<sup>2</sup> 1982

**International Institution:** There are some international covenants and institutions for the Aboriginal people in the world, and these are:

- a. The United Nations Working Group in Indigenous People.
- b. The Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous People.
- c. According to Article 1(2) of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) of the International Labour Organization, self-identification as tribal or Indigenous is recognized as a fundamental criterion for determining the communities covered by the Convention's provisions.

Besides, **Mr. Martinez Cobo**,<sup>3</sup> says that Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those that have a historical succession with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies. This historical continuity may consist of the following:

- a. Occupation of ancestral lands or at least part of them.
- b. Common ancestry with the original resident of these lands.
- c. Culture in general or specific manifestation, i.e. religion, dress, means of livelihood and lifestyle
- d. Language is used as the primary means of communication at home, as a mother tongue, or as the preferred language within the family.
- e. Residence in certain parts of the country or specific regions of the world.
- f. Other relevant factors.

### **Socio-Economic Perspective of Aboriginal People:**

At present, the socio-economic perspective of the aboriginal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts is the following:

**1. Land-Based Economy:** The economy of the Aboriginal people is land-based.

**2. Jhum Cultivation:** All the Hill people are engaged in subsistence Sweden cultivation, known locally as jhum. It is also referred to as Slash and burn or shifting cultivation. About 109360 Chittagong Hill Tracts population existed entirely by jhuming<sup>4</sup>.

**3. Self-Sufficient in Food:** The Chittagong Hill Tracts is largely self-sufficient in food, with imports from the plains markets limited to salt, dried fish, kerosene, iron, clay tools and utensils.

**4. Sustainable Plough Cultivation than Jhum:** The plough was introduced in the first quarter of the 19th century in the Hill Tract. Plough cultivation is restricted to the valleys, while the hill continues to be cultivated using the jhum method, the most sustainable system.

**5. Increase Revenue and Simplify Administration:** Plough cultivation is encouraged as a two-pronged approach to increasing revenue and simplifying administration by concentrating the people in permanent and, hence, more easily administrated settlements.

**5. Restrict Migration to Protect the Economy:** As the population of Chittagong Hill Tracts increases, it is felt necessary to restrict the migration of plain people to protect the region's economy. At the same time, jhum land

<sup>3</sup> **Special Reporter of the Sub-commission on Prevention of the Discrimination and Protection of Minorities:** Study of the problem of discrimination against indigenous population, UN Document

<sup>4</sup> According to an estimate 1901

may not be cultivated twice in succession without a fallow period for the soil to recuperate, which should be at least five years and ideally ten years or longer.

**6. Legislative Measures to Protect the Land and Economy:** For Chittagong Hill Tracts, there are three fundamental reasons for taking effective legislative measures, and they are the following:

- a. To ensure it remained an Indigenous area,
- b. To protect the Indigenous people from the influences of rapacious entrepreneurs and,
- c. To prevent its transition to a market economy.

**7. Declaration as Reserve Forest:** The British government initiated a process of declaring several areas all over the Chittagong Hill Tracts reserved forests with a total ban on hunting within their confines. In some of the areas, the government cleared huge tracts of virgin forest to create teak plantations as raw materials for commercial purposes.

**8. Casual and Seasonal Laborers:** When they have no work in the plains or hills, they live as casual and seasonal laborers.

### Common Land

Common land is owned collectively by a number of people or by one person, but over which other people have certain traditional rights, such as allowing their livestock to graze upon it, collecting wood, or cutting turf for fuel. A person who has a right in or over common land with another or others is named a commoner. In medieval England, the common was an essential part of the manor<sup>5</sup>. The manor lord owned this land through a feudal grant from the crown or a higher-ranking peer who held land from the crown, as the crown owned all land. Based on feudalism, the manorial system granted different classes various rights to use the land. These rights were known as appurtenant rights, which pertained to the ownership and use of specific plots of land within a manor. A commoner was a person temporarily occupying a particular plot of land. Many rights granted to manorial tenants include the following:

- a. The right to graze cattle, horses, sheep, or other livestock on common land.. The most widespread right.
- b. Rights to fish
- c. Rights to take sods of turf for fuel.
- d. The right to extract minerals like sand, gravel, marble, building stone, and lime from communal land.
- e. Rights to turn out pigs for a period in autumn to eat meat
- f. Commoners have the right to gather sufficient wood for their house or holding, generally restricted to smaller trees, bushes, and fallen branches.

However, there is a misconception that the general public owns common land and everyone has unrestricted access rights. All common land is private property, whether the owner is an individual or a corporation. Many commons today are owned by local authorities, the National Trust, and other organizations for the public benefit. However, not all commons provide unrestricted access to everyone. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act<sup>6</sup>, there is a new right to public access to open country and registered common land, although this access is subject to certain defined restrictions.

### Types of Common Land of Indigenous People

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<sup>5</sup> an estate in land

<sup>6</sup> 2000

The following are the common land of Indigenous people:

1. **Common Ownership:** The common lands belong to the indigenous community and have shared access rights. The Indigenous community has shared rights of access. The indigenous people have a right to these lands and resources by virtue of their shared ownership of these areas.
2. **Traditional Economic Activities:** Traditional economic activities, such as fishing, hunting, and gathering, are practiced in these areas. Jhum landfalls are in this category, as are the lands used for orchards, grassing, forest, and sun grass.
3. **Equal Rights of Access and Use:** These are the common property of the Indigenous community, with equal rights of access, use, and extraction.
4. **No Tax levied:** Traditionally, no taxes were levied for the use of these lands.

### National Legislation for Recognition

The following are the recognition:

- a. **Formally not recognized:** The government does not formally recognize the rights of indigenous people to the common land as a collective right. It regards state-owned land.
- b. **Unclassed state forest:** They are also known as khas land, but the forest department categorizes this land as Unclassed State Forest (USFs)<sup>7</sup>.

Initially, in consultation with the chief and headman, the district administration divided unclassified state forests into mauzas units. The Indigenous people have qualified on the following:

- a. Rights to homestead land
- b. The extraction of sun grass<sup>8</sup>: The Deputy Commissioner may allow Hillmen free of royalty, sun grass for home consumption.
- c. Levy of grassing tax<sup>9</sup>
- d. The rights to jhum<sup>10</sup>

### Jhum Land

Jhum cultivation, or Slash-and-Burn agriculture, is a farming method where land is cleared by cutting down trees and vegetation, and the cleared material is burned. The ash left behind enriches the soil with potash, boosting its nutrients for crop growth.

From wordnik, a system of cultivation used in India, especially on the eastern frontier of Bengal, in which a tract of forest or jungle is cleared by fire, cultivated for a year or two and then abandoned for a new tract.

According to Wikipedia, Jhum cultivation is also known as slash-and-burn agriculture. Slash and burn agriculture, also known as fire-fallow cultivation, is a farming method that involves cutting and burning plants in a forest to create a field called a swidden. It is often used in shifting cultivation. A farming method involves cutting and burning plants in a fire or woodland to create a field called a Sweden. The method begins by cutting

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<sup>7</sup>Unclassed State Forest: The land not demarcated as reserved and protected forest which are not settled or leased out in the name of private individual or corporate body are regarded as unclassified state forest by the national administration for the purposes of forest extraction and export

<sup>8</sup> Rule 45A of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, 1900

<sup>9</sup> Rule 45A of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, 1900

<sup>10</sup> Rule 34,41,42,45 and 50 of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, 1900



down trees and timbered plants in a designated area. The downed vegetation, called "slash," is left to dry, typically just before the rainiest part of the year. After drying, the biomass is burned, creating a nutrient-rich ash layer that improves soil fertility and temporarily eliminates weeds and pests. However, after about three to five years, the plot's productivity declines due to nutrient depletion and the re-invasion of weeds and pests. As a result, farmers often abandon the field and move on to a new area. The time it takes for a forest in Sweden to regenerate varies by location, ranging from as little as five years to more than twenty years. After this regeneration period, the area can be cleared and burned again, allowing the cycle to repeat. In Bangladesh and India, this practice is known as jhum.

## Homestead Land

Homestead land refers to a dwelling and the land and buildings the owner occupies. It is protected by homestead laws, which exempt it from being seized or sold to pay off debts. This includes any dwelling where a family resides.

**The free dictionary:** Homestead is a house and adjoining land entitled by the owner as his fixed residence.

## Rights to Homestead land of Aboriginal People

Aboriginal peoples exercise the following rights:

**1. Rights to Sufficient Land for Residence:** According to customary law, every indigenous family has the right to sufficient land for residential purposes.

**2. Owned by the Entire Community:** Most Indigenous people own and build their houses, often with the entire community's help, and renting is rare.

**3. Inherent and Inalienable Rights:** Every Indigenous person has the inherent and inalienable right to adequate land for a house, outbuildings, and surrounding area to grow vegetables, etc., for daily needs.

**4. Responsibility of Allocation:** The village authorities, the darbari, or the headman allocate enough land to build a house. This decision relies on specific criteria, including land availability, prior claims to the area, regional characteristics, and family or kinship ties.

**5. Formalities:** No formal lease or deed is required. Notification and registration in the Indigenous land administration serve as documentary evidence of title, and revenue is paid to the talukdar of the tauzi and later on to the mauza headman.

**6. Present Phenomenon:** Currently, customary rights to land for house building have been restricted to rural areas. The high population in urban areas makes it impossible to find unoccupied land. In the market areas, commercial plots are already affixed in the names of their owners, generally plains traders and merchants.

## Statutory Provision

Rule 50 of Regulation: Occupation of Non-urban land for Homestead and resumption of land for public purpose:

1. A Hillman may occupy non-urban khas land up to a maximum area of 00.30 acres for his Homestead with the permission of the headman of the mauza concerned without obtaining any formal settlement from the Deputy Commissioner. The headman shall maintain a register of such lands allotted by him to the local families for their Homestead.

## Paddy Land

Paddy land is a flooded piece of land used for growing rice. In other words, the land used exclusively to grow wet rice is known locally as paddy land and is mainly found in the valleys and low-lying areas. Traditionally, the majority of Indigenous people were jhum farmers; however, during the reign of Raja Dharam Bux Khan,

when the headquarters of the Chakmas was still located in Rajanagar, Rangunia, at the foothills of Chittagong, they learned how to use the plough. This knowledge came from farm laborers from the plains, who were brought in specifically for this purpose by the Raja. Gradually, the use of the plough expanded, becoming the preferred method of cultivation in the valleys and low-lying areas of the Hill Tracts<sup>11</sup>. This was achieved mainly due to the concerted efforts of the national administration and the cooperation of the Rajas and other leaders. However, 1960, after the Kaptai Dam was built, many ploughed lands in the Hill Tracts were submerged, and over 100,000 people were displaced. Only a tiny amount of land remains suitable for plough cultivation in the Hill Tracts, and the district that once produced a surplus of food grains is now nearly barren in this regard.

### **Plough Lands**

Land that is ploughed for growing crops. Paddy cultivation should not be confused with cultivating deep-water rice grown in flooded water with water over 50cm deep for at least a month. They can require a lot of labor and materials to create and require large quantities of water for irrigation. The Indigenous authorities maintained strict records regarding the details of all plough lands, including the owner's name, boundaries, and other relevant information. This was all duly noted in the village register by the talukdar or Raja, later headman, and in the taluka recording data. By 1891, there were about 1250 settlements of paddy lands in the three rounds as noted by a British administrator. With the regulation of 1900, the British administration formed the mauzas. The main objective is to regularize the land settlement in the Hill Tracts, particularly the plough lands. A specified rent was payable for the plough land, and details of each plot were included in the rent roll or jamabandi. The rent was paid to the headman of the mauza under the supervision of the chief.

### **Fringe Lands**

The land below the high-water marks of the Kaptai Lake is also being cultivated. In addition to the valleys and low-lying areas, these are known as fringe lands as they are on the circumference of the lake and due to the fluidity of the lake level, they are out of the water for a period of time every year. Fringe lands are suitable for wet rice cultivation and may produce one crop, depending on the water level. The rise and fall of the lake's water level is haphazard and does not follow a set schedule or pattern. No formal settlement is required for the fringe lands. In practice, the farmers obtain an informal one-year lease from the headman to cultivate these lands, which are automatically renewed. A certain amount of Tax is payable to the headman for these lands.

### **Grove Lands**

The land used for fruit farming and forestry is called grove land.

With the construction of the Kaptai Dam and the submission of 40% of the agricultural land, the Indigenous people had to seek alternative avenues for economic self-sufficiency. The government made coupled efforts to introduce fruit farming in the Hill Tracts instead of rice cultivation, which was the main crop, in addition to pulses and vegetables.

Bangladesh (East Pakistan) Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC)<sup>12</sup> was established to assist the indigenous people in fruit farming as follow-up to the forest report.

In the case of a large garden, leases are registered with the Headman and the Upazilla land Records. However, no records of land registration exist, and the lack of ownership titles poses a significant problem for indigenous farmers. This absence of documentation hinders their ability to access credit and market facilities and provide evidence of their rights to the land.

### **Suggestion of Land Rights of Aboriginal People**

The following are the land rights of Indigenous people:

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<sup>11</sup> the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century

<sup>12</sup> 1962



1. **Land Rights Based on Person not Land:** The British government regarded the concept of Indigenous land rights in the Hill Tracts, and according to this concept, the land rights of Indigenous peoples are based on the person and not on the land. This is perhaps a reference to the capitation or poll tax, which is another term for jhum tax and was levied on the Indigenous farmers by the traditional authorities like the chief and their headmen.
2. **Payable to the State:** This Tax is a tribute payable to the state; it in no way partakes of the nature of rent or bears any connection to the land cultivated.
3. **Claim by Colonists where Nobody Belonged to this Land:** The land belonged to nobody before the advent of the colonists, and therefore, the colonists could rightfully claim the land as theirs.
4. **Claim by Colonists where Nobody Belonged to this Land:** The land belonged to nobody before the advent of the colonists, and therefore, the colonists could rightfully claim the land as theirs.
5. **Ignorance of Aboriginal People's Rights:** The rights of Aboriginal people over land that they had occupied for centuries are totally ignored. Although the British highlighted the clan and tribal jurisdiction of the chiefs to justify their claim to total sovereignty over land, they did not hesitate to reverse their policy where it suited them.
6. **Aware of Territorial Boundaries:** With the rapid increase in the total population, most of the Chakma and other hill peoples were well aware of the territorial boundaries of the villagers, mauzas, and Hill Tracts.
7. **Identification of Territorial Limits:** The territorial limitation of the traditional indigenous authorities, demarcated by specific boundaries wherein they exercised paramount authority. The collection of jhum tax among others is also restricted to the territorial limits of each Raja.
8. **Land Rights are Linked to the Land Itself.** The land rights of the Indigenous peoples are inextricably linked to land rights, i.e., the jhum Tax is assessed on the jhum field, not on the household.

## Survey of the Research

1. Respondent identity
  - Indigenous person (n=35, 70%)
  - Non-indigenous ally/neighbor (n=15, 30%)
2. Gender
  - Male (26, 52%) • Female (22, 44%) • Other/prefer not (2, 4%)
3. Primary residence
  - Chittagong Hill Tracts—CHT (30, 60%) • Plainland indigenous areas (20, 40%)
4. Awareness of legal protections for indigenous land (constitutional/statutory)?
  - Yes (23, 46%) • Somewhat (14, 28%) • No (13, 26%)
5. Experienced a land dispute in last 5 years?
  - Yes (29, 58%) • No (21, 42%)
6. If yes (n=29): Status of that dispute

- Resolved formally (court/admin) (8, 27.6%) • Resolved informally (community/ADR) (7, 24.1%) • Ongoing/unresolved (14, 48.3%)
- 7. Effectiveness of land administration/commissions
  - Effective (9, 18%) • Partly effective (18, 36%) • Not effective (23, 46%)
- 8. Biggest barrier to securing land rights (pick one)
  - Lack of documents/records (15, 30%) • Encroachment by powerful actors (14, 28%) • Complex procedures/bureaucracy (9, 18%) • Corruption/rent-seeking (7, 14%) • Language/awareness/other (5, 10%)
- 9. Strengthen legal recognition of customary/communal tenure
  - Strongly agree (28, 56%) • Agree (15, 30%) • Neutral: 5 respondents (10%) • Disagree: 2 respondents (4%) • Strongly Disagree: 0 respondents (0%)
- 10. Access to legal aid
  - Used & helpful (6, 12%) • Used & not helpful (5, 10%) • Aware but not used (15, 30%) • Not aware (24, 48%)
- 11. Top legal/policy reform priority (pick one)
  - Protect against land grabbing (14, 28%) • Fast-track tribunals/commission (13, 26%) • Digitize land records (11, 22%) • Community consultation/FPIC (7, 14%) • Expand legal aid (5, 10%)
- 12. Trust in local administration to protect indigenous land
  - High (5, 10%) • Medium (18, 36%) • Low (27, 54%)

## CONCLUSION

There are various types of land belonging to aboriginal people. Common land is owned collectively by a number of persons or by one person. There is a special category of common land belonging to the Aboriginal people. Also, there are jhum land, homestead land, paddy land, plough land, fringe land and grove land. Jhum land or jhum cultivation (also known as Slash and burn cultivation) is the process of thriving crops by first clearing the land of trees and vegetation and burning them. Thereafter, the burned soil contains potash, which increases the nutrient content of the soil. Aboriginal people in Bangladesh depend on jhum cultivation. Once jhum land is cultivated, it falls for nearly ten years. For this reason, they depend on plough cultivation and jhum cultivation. Jhum tax is levied on such jhum cultivation. These aboriginal people are now conscious of their land rights and are owners' generation by generation.

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