

# FRATERNAL RELATIVE DEPRIVATION OF A TRIBAL POPULATION IN CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS, BANGLADESH

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**Abstract:** The study investigated fraternal relative deprivation of a tribal population (Chakma) in connection with their education, residence and gender difference in the socio-political and economic conditions in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bangladesh. The study used a sample composed of 240 respondents. The Fraternal Relative Deprivation Scale (FRDS) was used for data collection. A 2x2x2 factorial design involving two levels of education (graduate vs. undergraduate), two levels of residence (urban vs. rural) and two levels of gender (male vs. female) was utilized. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used for the analysis of data. Results show that undergraduate respondents expressed significantly higher intensity in perceived fraternal relative deprivation as compared to their graduate counterparts. Similarly, male respondents felt more relative deprivation as compared to the female respondents.

**Key words:** Fraternal relative deprivation, tribal population, Chakma, egoistic relative deprivation, social identity

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### Introduction

Fraternal relative deprivation is related with group action. Egoistic relative deprivation, on the other hand, is related with individual's efforts. Runciman (1966) distinguished between egoistic relative deprivation and fraternal relative deprivation. In the fraternal relative deprivation, the comparison is made between the members of the in-group to an out-group and the conclusion is that the in-group is deprived. In egoistic relative deprivation, the individual compares himself with other individuals of his own-group and feels deprived in relation to them. A large number of studies (Stauffer et al. 1949; Street and Legget 1961; Pettigrew 1964, 1967) have shown that fraternal relative deprivation is followed by revolution, political unrest, industrial tension and ethnic conflict. For example, Caplan and Paige (1968) conducted a study on white-black relationship on the basis of Detroit and New York riots. They reported that prolonged exclusion of Negroes from American economic, political and social life was the causes for violent reaction of Negroes towards White. Whites were powerful out-groups and they were blamed for being racial discrimination as barrier to Negro progress, Negroes blamed the Whites for racial discrimination and reacted violently to improve their conditions.

Similar arguments may be advanced in case of Chakma tribal people in Bangladesh. Maloney (1984) observed that the Chakma are distinguished from Bengali

population in respect of physiological structure, language, religion and social habits. These characteristics together with some socio-culture markers constitute the social identity of Chakma. The negative social identity may be regarded to be emerged from fraternal relative deprivation. Cook et al. (1977) reviewed a large number of empirical studies on relative deprivation. They found that egoistic relative deprivation was originated and directed for self-improvement. Taylor (1980, 1982) found fraternal relative deprivation causing competitive racism. Smith (1981) conducted a study using Black participants in Britain. The results of this study showed that economic deprivation was greater among the Blacks in Britain. In the perspectives of the development of negative social identity and consequential effect of fraternal relative deprivation in the Chakma population residing in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), this empirical research was designed to assess the fraternal relative deprivation of the tribe as related to their education, residence and gender difference in the socio-political and economic conditions of Bangladesh.

### Methods and Procedures

**Sample:** The study used a stratified random sample collected from Chakma tribal population. The sample was composed of 240 respondents, 120 male and the remaining female students from University, University colleges and Degree colleges situated in Chittagong, Rangamati and Khagrachhari Districts. The respondents

were contacted through Chakma agents. Each category of males and females was equally divided into graduates and undergraduates according to their levels of education. The respondents were equally divided into urban and rural inhabitants depending on their residential background. Thus the study involved a 2×2×2 factorial design.

**Instrument:** Fraternal Relative Deprivation Scale (FRDS) was used for data collection (Hossain, 2001). The scale contained 20 items which were selected on the basis of open-end questionnaires. Each item contained a hypothetical situation. These situations reflected certain social, economic and political privileges. The subjects were asked to give their opinions about the possibility of getting these privileges for their own-groups as well as relevant out-groups. Thus out of two possibilities, one possibility was favouring the own-groups whereas the other possibility was favouring the out-groups. The out-groups were measured in terms of percentage. Accordingly a discrepancy score was found for each item. A discrepancy score was worked out by subtracting out-group possibility from own-group possibility. A score with minus (-) sign was taken as deprivation score that was a difference between Chakma possibility and Bengali possibility. But a score with plus (+) sign was taken as gratification score. A high discrepancy score indicated discrimination in terms of own-group favouritism. Zero (0) discrepancy score indicated norm of justice and equity. It conveyed equal treatment in inter-group relations. The scores presented here were confined to their evaluated judgment only. For the analysis of results "d" scores were subjected to a 2×2×2 factorial ANOVA involving two levels of residential background (urban vs. rural), two levels of education (graduate vs. undergraduate), and two levels of gender (male vs. female). A constant 100 was added to eliminate minus (-) sign.

**Design of the study:** The study used a factorial design involving two levels of education (graduate vs. undergraduate), two levels of residence (urban vs. rural) and two levels of gender (male vs. female). The scale items described 20 hypothetical situations relating to social, economic and political privileges. Each respondent was required to give his opinion about the possibilities of getting the privileges of his own-group as well as out-group in terms of percentage.

## Results and Discussion

**Validity of FRDS by judging correlation coefficient:** Using split-half reliability method by equal-length Spearman-Brown formula, the correlation coefficient was

calculated that ranged from 0.67 to 0.80. The FRDS was confirmed by validation at several stages. This indicated the construct validity of the test. Since the scrutiny of each item was done by the judges, the procedure provided face validity for the test. Inter-item and item-total correlations established homogeneity of this scale, indicating the content validity of FRDS. In order to achieve concurrent validity of the test, inter-dimensional correlation was estimated that yielded correlation coefficient of 0.62 between social and economic areas, 0.57 between social and political areas and 0.65 between economic and political areas. The inter-item correlation of FRDS ranged from -0.1 to +0.68. The item-total correlation ranged from 0.27 to +0.72. The correlation coefficient values indicated high validity of the FRDS.

**Effects of education, residential background and gender:** Data of the present investigation reveal that both education ( $F_{1,232} = 7.54$ ;  $P < 0.01$ ) and gender ( $F_{1,232} = 19.94$ ;  $P < 0.01$ ) had significant effect on the FRDS (Table-1) while the residential background ( $F_{1,232} = 0.97$ ) failed to produce any appreciable effect. Moreover, a two-way interaction between education and gender was also found statistically significant ( $F_{1,232} = 8.62$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ).

**Table 1.** ANOVA table showing educational level, residential background and gender on the scores of Fraternal Relative Deprivation Scale (FRDS).

Sources of variance	Sum of squares (SS)	Df	Mean squares (MS)	F-values
Educational Level (A)	5811.51	1	5811.51	7.54**
Residential Background (B)	752.61	1	752.61	0.97ns
Gender (C)	15376.01	1	15376.01	19.94**
A×B	222.33	1	222.33	0.29ns
A×C	6646.53	1	6646.53	8.62**
B×C	1368.03	1	1368.03	1.77ns
A×B×C	624.05	1	624.05	0.81ns
Within Cells (Error)	178904.43	232	771.14	
Total	209705.50	239		

Ns= not significant; \*\*  $P < 0.01$

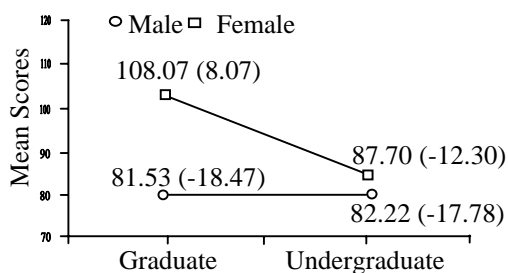
**Table 2.** Overall mean scores on FRDS and significant mean differences (in parentheses) for Chakma respondents under study.

Respondents	Scores on FRDS
Graduate	94.80 (-5.20)
Undergraduate	84.96 (-15.04)
Male	81.87 (-18.13)
Female	97.88 (-2.12)

**Note:** Figures within parentheses indicate deprivation score after subtracting from constant 100.

Differential mean scores of educated Chakma respondents irrespective of their residential background and gender are presented in Table 2. Regardless of residence and gender, undergraduate Chakma respondents ( $M = -15.04$ ) expressed significantly high fraternal relative deprivation as compared to their graduate counterparts ( $M = -5.20$ ). It indicates that undergraduate Chakma respondents perceived significantly higher injustice in the distribution of social, economic and political privileges. Graduate Chakma respondents, on the other hand, did not feel relative deprivation to extend of undergraduate Chakma respondents. Hence they perceived relative deprivation in low intensity. This study indicates that graduate Chakma respondents hold a liberal attitude available in the society. However, both the graduate and undergraduate Chakma displayed relative deprivation, but the amount of deprivation varied in degree only, suggesting that own-group favoritism and out-group discrimination were found to work very actively in inter-group relationships between Bengali and Chakma populations in the CHT. So, the results imply that both the graduate and undergraduate Chakma respondents, irrespective of their residential background and gender, perceived social injustice and absence of equity giving birth to distributive injustice.

The results presented in Table 2 also suggest that regardless of education and residence, the male Chakma respondents ( $M = -18.13$ ) perceived significantly more relative deprivation than that of the female Chakma respondents ( $M = -2.12$ ). It means that perceived relative deprivation was more dominant in male Chakma respondents as compared to the female Chakma respondents, indicating that male Chakma respondents as influential member of the community bear more responsibility resulting in higher felt relative deprivation.



**Fig. 1.** Mean scores and significant mean differences representing a two-way interaction between educational level and gender of Chakma on the scores of FRDS. Figures within parenthesis indicate deprivation score after subtracting from constant 100.

An inspection of the mean scores (Fig. 1) showed that graduate male ( $M = -18.47$ ) Chakma respondents

expressed significantly more perceived relative deprivation as compared to graduate female ( $M = 8.07$ ) as well as undergraduate female ( $M = -12.30$ ) Chakma respondents. Again, undergraduate male Chakma respondents ( $-17.78$ ) perceived significantly more relative deprivation than the graduate female ( $M = 8.07$ ) as well as undergraduate female Chakma respondents ( $M = -12.30$ ). Again, undergraduate female Chakma respondents ( $M = -12.30$ ) expressed significantly more relative deprivation as compared to graduate female Chakma respondents ( $M = 8.07$ ). These mean that highest felt relative deprivation was found in graduate and undergraduate male Chakma respondents followed by undergraduate female Chakma and least by graduate female Chakma respondents.

The data of the present study were analyzed to measure the fraternal relative deprivation of Chakmas in relation to their education, residence and gender. Undergraduate Chakma respondents expressed significantly higher intensity in perceived fraternal relative deprivation as compared to their graduate counterparts. This finding supports the contention that education is an important social variable in the study of fraternal relative deprivation. The more the tribal Chakma population is educated, the less they perceive deprivation in the context of social, political and economic privileges. This finding supports the contact hypothesis of inter-group relations (Amir, 1969) in that contact between ethnic groups helps to reduce prejudices. Education appears to be an important agent for contact between two conflicting groups. Hence graduate Chakma perceived low fraternal relative deprivation. The contact hypothesis also states that the contact between the members of different social groups would help to understand each other and diminish prejudice by lowering down the social distance among them. Education as a media of social contact leads to inter-group harmony. It encourages sharing group identification and pursuits to join the valued objectives. It also enhances inter-group cooperation. It is, therefore, plausible to argue that graduate Chakma are capable to share privileges and extend their cooperation to out-group members. This may help to reduce prejudice. As a result graduate Chakma do not perceive fraternal relative deprivation to the extent that the undergraduate Chakmas' fraternal relative deprivation.

According to the present results male Chakma respondents exhibit more felt relative deprivation compared to the female Chakma respondents. This finding was based on the theoretical context of Festinger's social comparison processes. According to Festinger (1954), the more the differences in status between two social groups, the less is the comparison. In other words, the comparability between individuals decreases directly as

status differences increase. The Chakma females found their counterpart out-group females as non-comparable group. Hence they seldom make any comparison with the out-group. Chakma males, on the other hand, found their out-group male counterparts as comparison groups. As a result male Chakma respondents exhibited significantly higher perceived fraternal relative deprivation as compared to their female counterparts. It seems reasonable to state that non-comparable status of the females was positive factor to make differentiation between Chakma males and females in their perceived fraternal relative deprivation.

Chakmas with rural residential background would have expressed more felt relative deprivation as compared to the Chakmas with urban residential background has not been supported by the findings of the present study. Perhaps the reason is that sharp differentiation between urban and rural population in the Chakma in the context of CHT is not possible. Almost all people of urban region have their connection with rural region. Urban people are constituted of rural population and as such they share many things in common. Hence, residential background did not contribute significantly in the felt deprivation of Chakma tribal population.

Tripathi and Srivastava (1981) conducted a study on Muslim minority in India. They found highly deprived Muslims expressed significantly more negative out-group attitude than low deprived Muslims. Again highly deprived Muslims expressed more positive in-group attitude than the low deprived Muslims. Huq (1991) conducted a study on fraternal relative deprivation in Bangladesh and the result of his study showed that male subjects expressed significantly higher feeling of gratifications and female subjects expressed significantly higher feeling of deprivation. Furthermore, male subjects of urban and rural background showed significantly highest feelings of gratifications in political areas as compared to social and economic areas. But female subjects of urban and rural background expressed significantly highest feelings of deprivation in political areas as compared to social and economic areas. Taylor (1982) provided the concept of relative deprivation hypothesis where argued that improved conditions, rising expectations and dissatisfaction are closely related with the deprivation of a disadvantageous group. These research findings show that relative deprivation in general and fraternal relative deprivation in particular may emerge due to social injustice, racial discrimination, unequal distribution of resources and discriminative treatment to one group by another group.

In conclusion it can be said that tribal issue is a sensitive issue in Bangladesh. Hence, some realistic approaches need to be implemented for its proper solution. Thus the

structural as well as functional changes in the thought processes of Chakma due to education, residence and gender should be recognized by the social workers, political thinkers, anthropologists, sociologists and the social psychologists.

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