

Jumgam Kamduk

ANALYSIS OF INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONSHIP OF CHAKMA IMMIGRANTS AND OTHER TRIBAL GROUPS IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Abstract

This article highlights the nature of the inter-ethnic relationships between the Chakma immigrants and other tribal groups in their early period of settlement, as well as the changes that have taken place thereafter. The forced migration of Chakmas from erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to Arunachal Pradesh has generated a range of socio-economic, political, and ethnic tensions in their areas of settlement. Consequently, Chakma immigrants largely remain outside the public 'consciousness' or 'imagination,' experiencing a high degree of alienation, marginalization, and exclusion from the larger society. Over time, the Chakma issue has become prominent in the Indian national context.

Keywords: *Inter-ethnic relationship, consciousness, imagination, immigrants & alienation.*

Introduction

Migration from the erstwhile East Bengal/East Pakistan and the present-day Bangladesh to Eastern and North-Eastern parts of India has been an ongoing phenomenon. The scale of migration from Bangladesh to India may never be fully known, but its impact is seen to be 'severest on the ethnic, economic and ecological fabric of Northeast India and West Bengal leading to the coinage of the phrase 'Bangaldeshisation of India' (Hazarika 1992a).

The migration history of the Chakmas tells us that they were the original inhabitants of the undivided India. The migrated and settled down in Mymensingh district of today's Bangladesh, and their fate took them back to India's Arunachal Pradesh. When dominion of India was divided into India and Pakistan in 1947, the Chakmas were forcefully integrated with then East Pakistan. They migrated back to India, and settled in the eastern

JUMGAM KAMDUK, Assistant Professor, Sant Franchise Desales college Aalo, Arunachal Pradesh, E-mail kamdukjumgam@gmail.com

frontier of India, under some abnormal circumstances (Bath 2023). Insecurity of life, loss of land and livelihood and fear of politico-religious persecution in East-Pakistan have forced the Chakmas to settle in Arunachal Pradesh and other North-eastern States. In 1964, the Government of India granted migration certificates into the country to approximately 35,000 Chakmas to enable them to come to India. Initially they were sheltered in government camps in Assam and later shifted to a camp within the state of Arunachal Pradesh which was then known as North-Eastern Frontier Agency. The migrants were settled by the late Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the Erstwhile North- East Frontier Agency (NEFA) (Thakur 2011:35). In the absence of proper resettlement and rehabilitation policy, most of them have experienced multiple displacements. In fact, the Chakma ethnic groups due to their controversial habitations in Arunachal Pradesh and in other parts of Northeast are the victims of inadequate facilities and opportunities. The recent, peaceful repatriation of 6,000 Chakma refugees to their homes in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tract is a welcome sign. Still, there are numerous refugees with no hopes of returning because of unstable conditions in their mother land (Hindwan :2010).

Review of Literature

Some relevant observations and studies are reviewed here.

Bath (2023) in his study tries to understand the concepts of refuge, indigenous people and citizenship. It brings into light the context, political or strategic, under which the refugees from Bangladesh were settled in an otherwise 'Protected Frontier', protected legally and historically. Towards the end of the study, different models for solutions suggested by different committees, have been presented. Further, the researcher aims to find a democratic solution to the protracted issue and ignite the minds of all stakeholders, including the host communities.

Kamduk (2023) provided an understanding how Chakma immigrants were dislocated from their original habitats, and constitute as a distinctive ethnic group in the state. It further highlights how various factors such as withdrawal of basic facilities such as education, healthcare, employment and other factors withdrawn by the State Government in the state over the years have contributed to the evolution of Chakma ethnic consciousness which resulted in the growth of ethnic conflicts between them and other tribal groups in the state.

Prasad's (2013) study provides some general insights in the ongoing debate about the notions of home, trans-nationalism, issue of citizenship and return migration. It mainly analysed the socio-economic and political condition of the Chakmas in settled area due to denial of basic fundamental

rights. The study also looks into the various aspects of constitutional provision and citizenship rights related to Chakmas.

Methodology and Profile of Chakmas

This article draws on ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2014-2017 among the displaced Chakma ethnic group who migrated to the state of Arunachal Pradesh. The field study was conducted in three districts—Papumpare, Changlang, and Namsi—where the Chakmas were resettled between 1964 and 1969 and have lived ever since. To achieve the objectives of the study, in-depth interviews and on-site observations were used. Before beginning the interviews, the researcher established contact with community leaders; an introduction from them usually made the households more responsive.

As the respondents were mainly cultivators, they were heavily engaged in agricultural activities during the first phase of fieldwork, which began on June 1, 2016. Some respondents were unavailable for months because they were sharecroppers working on land owned by other tribal groups in distant locations. Others went to their fields early in the morning and returned late, around 5 p.m., making it difficult to meet them on a daily basis. Since Sunday was their only day of rest, many agreed to meet on Sundays, in addition to other days of the week. Respondents were asked questions regarding their migration experiences, sources of livelihood, relationships with other tribal groups, and ethnic conflict. During the interview process, it was found that self-identification as citizens of India was much more pronounced among those born and brought up in India than among those who originally fled the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and came to Arunachal Pradesh as refugees. Furthermore, it was found that they did not like to associate themselves with their country of origin, Bangladesh.

The word ‘Chakma’ or ‘Tsakma’, according to Talukdar, “is a generic term given to a predominant hill tribe of Chittagong Hill Tracts dwellings on the corridor link of Arakan (Myanmar)” (Talukadar 1988:5). The Chakma are considered to be of “Sino-Tibetan and Mongoloid descent, having their own distinct way of life, languages, values and culture. They share linguistic, racial and ethnic ties with South East Asia and the hill peoples of Assam of North East India, Thailand and Upper Myanmar (Chowdhury 2015:41). Majority of them are Buddhist by religion, every village in the study areas has a Buddhist temple within the village.

The Chakmas were rehabilitated in three distinct areas of settlements in Arunachal Pradesh. They were allotted with 5 to 6 acres of land per family in Lower Subansari (now Papumpare), Tirap (now Changlang) and Lohit districts (now Namsi). They were issued trade licenses, ration cards, given employment rights (Paramilitary) and some even exercise their voting

rights in Arunachal Samiti and State Assembly elections (Dutta 2005:151). The Chakmas immigrant group had experienced resettlement problems from the very beginning -Papumpare (Kokila), Changlang (Diyun) and Namsai (Chakma Basti) where entire settlement of Chakma ethnic group is concentrated is largely on the banks of rivers, which remains flooded in rainy season, caused lots of destruction to life and property (Prasad 2013:110).

The refusal by the successive Bangladeshi regimes to own them and non-grant of Citizenship status by the Indian government in more than five decades of their stay in Arunachal Pradesh is what has made the Chakma *Stateless* people with no access to any civil or political rights whatsoever (Singh 2010:124). The withdrawal of basic amenities like employment opportunities, termination of trade licence and confiscation of ration cards made it quite difficult for the refugee to survive (Prasad 2007:1377).

Constructing the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’

In some parts of the northeast, the issue of ethnic identity assertion is related to migration that resulted in a sense of exclusion. This region since Independence witnessed migration of Bangladeshis, Nepalese and migrant workers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ syndrome crippled the social, political, economic and cultural life of the tribal communities (Bijukumar 2013: 28). As a foreigners, they are often treated as outsider by the local population and language barriers further deepen the divided between them (Sengupta 2008).

The Chakma ethnic group are the most marginalised and excluded section of population in the state. They have lacked a voice of their own and many a times they remain invisible. By and large, they remain outside the public “consciousness” or “imagination”, experiencing a high degree of alienation, marginalisation and exclusion from the larger society. For the Chakma immigrant’s life in Arunachal Pradesh is characterized by lack of opportunities for employment, education, health care, clean water supply etc.

The continued discrimination, domination and harassment faced by the Chakma immigrants over the years have contributed to the evolution of Chakma ethnic consciousness. Their ethnicity has led to development of ethnic identity consciousness and resulted in the growth of ethnic conflicts between them and other tribal groups in the state. The first problem faced by the Chakma ethnic group pertains to be their ethnic identity, because of their immigrant status; the host community have entitled them as ‘refugee’ ‘foreigners’ or ‘illegal migrants’ or ‘aliens’. The relationship between the Chakmas and other tribal groups is presently classified as “us” and “them”, “we” and “they”, and “in -group” and “out-group”, “dominant” and “minority” and “Tribal and Non-Tribal”. Consciousness of distinctiveness in terms of

ethnic differences among Chakmas and other tribal groups is playing an important part in the emergence of ethnic sentiments. Other tribal groups popularly view the Chakmas as 'immigrant group', whose cultural moorings and ethnic make-up is different from them. Further, Other tribal groups believed that ethno- religious affinity in itself cannot be the basis for ethnic intermixing of people (Singh 2010: 195).

Inter-ethnic relationship

At the time of my fieldwork, most Chakma migrants appeared to have adjusted to life in exile, observing everyday life processes to varying degrees of success. But beyond surface observations, their relationship with life in Arunachal Pradesh is far from certain.

An elder respondent of M'pen village in Changlang district explaining the relationship between them in their early days of their settlement.

When we first came here the local people like the Khamptis, Singphos and even Tangsas were very good to us. We had learnt the local language and connected with them emotionally. At our marriages and other celebrations Singphos and Tangsas were invited they would come with their families and friends. Marriages have taken place between the Chakmas and other tribal groups; we still have. We were invited for their celebrations; we used to invite them for the same. Such practices lead to development of close relationship between us. During Agriculture season especially in harvesting seasons they would employ us to work in their field and provided lunch and local wine. They would appreciate our work and pay us in cash and kind. We were also glade to work in their field".

Another elder respondent of Bordumsa also shares similar view about their ethno-religious affinities, "Our relations with Singphos have been very good for long period of time, and they visit our village in Buddha Purnima which is celebrated in the month of May and participate and rejoice with us in name of Buddha. We also reciprocate in the same manner. We have learnt the local language well and mixed with the other tribal groups intimately during our prolong period of the stay. Such commonalities in terms of religion and ethnicity have led to greater understanding and mutual respect for each other. We wanted such practices to grow and bloom without being influenced by external factors such as politics, religion, ethnicity etc., but in recent past politics have taken toil over it and turned it the other way around".

It was admitted by the most of the member of other tribal groups that Chakmas are hardworking and have contributed to the economic development of Arunachal Pradesh in many ways. Due to dint of their hard work, over a period of time, they have become main suppliers of vegetables and fruits in

the areas of their settlements. The host society also search for the Chakma labour for jungle cutting, taming elephant, hire them to work in their field in exchange for cash or kind. The Chakmas are relatively more skilled in agriculture than other tribal groups. It was found during the fieldwork that the educated Khampti youth of Namsi district who have job in town hire Chakmas to cultivate their land and farms. This necessitated the localized mutual dependence as well as enmity between the host community and immigrant group. On other hand, they oppose them as encroachers on their land, resources and employment and on the other hand, their low wages have become a vested interest with contractor and agriculturist. The Chakma ethnic group and other tribal groups in their settlement areas continued to remained as identifiable cultural groups and suffer from the loss of sense of belonging and lack of self-fulfilment.

Reasons for Prohibiting Permanent Settlement of Chakma

T.K. Oommen points to several cases where the original inhabitants of a territory became a minority group. He uses the term 'ethnification' of nationals to refer to such minoritisation of a group. Tripura, a neighbouring state of Assam, was engulfed by Bengalis migrants following the partition riots, and now the Bengali-speaking people constitute the majority population. The tribal people in Tripura are turned into a minority group (Oommen 2002: 172). The most common threat-perception of the Other tribal groups emanates from the fast-growing population size of the Chakmas in the state. It is estimated that nearly 35000 Chakmas were settled in the state as refugees and over the period of five decades their population is approximately 1, 00,000. Looking at such phenomenal growth, other tribal groups fear that Arunachal Pradesh would turn into another Tripura; a situation in which the immigrant population has established its hegemony (Singh 2010:17). The huge population of Chakmas settled in Arunachal Pradesh has created a sense of insecurity in the minds of the other tribal groups in the areas of their settlement. The Chakma ethnic group no longer clamour for their homeland (origin) and are determine to stay in the areas they have made homes. On the contrary, the other tribal group and All Arunachal Pradesh Student Union (AAPSU) have raised their voice against the Central Government's decision to settle Chakma ethnic group in their land permanently, fearing that it may change the demography of the state and may soon pose serious threat to their identity and culture. With such constant oppositions from all sections of the society, the Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh find themselves in the midst of uncertainty and hopelessness (Kamduk 2023: 38).

According to the oppositional approach, ethnic groups are viewed as persistent identity systems. Examples such as the Jews, Irish, Welsh and the various tribal groups in the north-east come to mind. They have persisted

over long periods of time despite adverse circumstances. These groups have deep ineffable affective importance for their members. What, however, sustains and accentuates such an importance is the oppositional process. The sociocultural, economic and political opposition experienced by a group from the other, usually dominant groups, is direct proportion to the amount of opposition encountered by the group, the greater the opposition, the greater the degree of solidarity and conversely, the lesser the amount of opposition, the lesser the degree of solidarity(Kumar 2018: 6-7). Chakmas have come to constitute as one of such ethnic groups who have been socially excluded from social services, welfare programmes, materially excluded from land, security networks, political choice etc., for a very long period of time. The non-grant of Citizenship status by the Indian Government is the major cause of the Chakma unrest in the State, as they perceive that their political status in society is in jeopardy without such attendant rights. They have a feeling that they have not been given due status regardless of sharing a common homeland along with common bonds of ethnicity and religion with other tribal groups in the state. Also, the executive actions taken against Chakma ethnic group in terms of withdrawal of basic facilities like ration cards, employment opportunities and legislative steps including passing of resolutions in the legislative assembly against their settlement in the state are clear indications of its intent of not considering the Chakmas as one of the natives or tribal communities (Bath 2023:16). The continued discrimination, domination and harassment faced by Chakmas over the years have contributed to the evolution of Chakma ethnic consciousness which resulted in the growth of ethnic conflicts between them and other tribal groups in the state.

Keeping this in mind, let us try to understand why the other tribal groups are vehemently opposing the idea of permanent settlement of the Chakma ethnic group is

1. Protected nature of State

The settlement of Chakma ethnic group in Arunachal Pradesh is variously viewed by the other tribal groups as 'unilateral', 'arbitrary', 'illegal' and 'unjustified'. The shelter provided by the Central Government of India is vehemently criticized by the local people of the state. Deepak K. Singh also argued that it was a historic mistake to provide shelter to the Chakma refugees by the Central Government (Singh 2010). While reacting to Union Government's arbitrary decision of settling the Chakmas in the state, most of the interviewees and All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union(AAPSU) members pointed out to the contradiction emanating from such settlement in a state which enjoys protection under various acts such as the Bengali Eastern Frontier Regulation Act, 1873, the Chin Hill Act 1896; the Sixth Scheduled of the Constitution, ILP and host of local customary conventions widely prevalent

and upheld by the people of different ethnic communities in the state, since the pre-independence period. These provisions have become important tool to provide special protection to indigenous people of the state. Under provisions of these regulations, non-tribals or outsiders are debarred from entering into a notified hill territory without ILP and disallow to own any piece of land or develop any permanent stake in the state. And it further empowered the State Government to extern any person, if his or her presence is considered to be harmful to the local interest. AAPSU points out that the Indian Government violated the legal provisions such as “Inner Line Regulation” in NEFA, which prohibit people from outside Arunachal Pradesh from even entering the state.

II. Land Question

As Fernandes argues that “given their symbiotic relationship with the land and the close link between natural resources and culture, the affected ethnic groups view the land shortage also as an attack on their identity” (Fernandes 2004:610). Other tribal groups perceived that - their presence is causing ‘irreparable damage’ to the fragile ecology of Arunachal Pradesh-known for being one of the 10 global ‘hotspots’ of biodiversity and for its fragile mountain eco-system (Singh 2010:146). Numerous instances of large-scale encroachment of reserved forest land and illegal felling of trees are cited by the State Government in support of its contention against the Chakma settlement in the state. Initially in 1964, the Chakma ethnic groups were allotted a fixed area for their homesteads and cultivation. Gradually their numbers spilled over the adjacent lands belonging to the indigenous tribal group. In Miao subdivision a committee constituted by the State Government found an area of some 872 hectares encroached upon by 788 Chakma families. The report further noted that the encroachers were indulging in criminal and illegal activities (Saikia 1994:3311-3312).

In the Namdapha National Forest, the Chakmas have settled there and destroyed the forest for jhum cultivation. The government officers had evicted them which had led to ethnic conflict between them in the past. The AAPSU asserts that its movement against the Chakmas is to protect their right over land, forest and water resource in Arunachal Pradesh (Eastern Panorama, October 1994: 1-3).

III. The Fear of Losing of Employment in Government Sector and Other Sphere

Economic factor also appeared to be an important determinant of the conflict between the Chakmas and the Other tribal groups. The leaders of Other tribal groups believed that the denial of Citizenship to the Chakmas

would solve the unemployment problem to some extent. The fear of losing of employment opportunities in the state is more acute among the educated youth. There is no private sector or industries where the educated youth could get employed. In such conditions the government job is the only avenue left among the educated youth, where they could find employment. In such a stiff competition situation the youth belonging to Other tribal group cannot wish to share the job opportunities with them.

The Chakmas fitted admirably and became critical actors in the tremendous expansion of town in their areas of settlements. In Diyun-Bordumsa, Miao, Chowkham area, the Chakmas are a force to be reckoned with, not just because of their number but because they are hardworking and dominate the local economy. Youths belonging to Other tribal groups with some education do not take up manual jobs, partly due to unrealistic expectations ie look down up on manual work. They work everywhere where the youth of Other tribal groups would not think of even venturing into; be it running the vegetable markets, work in paddy fields as hired labourers or as household helpers. They grow rice and wheat in the fertile low-lying areas of Miao Subdivision and cash crops like Maize, ginger, chilly, beans and other vegetables products in the uplands. They are also the main suppliers of agricultural products in Miao and other towns in Changlang district. The growth of vegetable markets has also been noticed even in the interior places especially around the area occupied by them.

As Arunachal Pradesh faces a labour shortage, certain sections of Other tribal groups also encouraged immigrants by providing them shelter, land for settlement and cultivation. Local contractors and businessmen also prefer to engage Chakma immigrants as they provide cheap and skilled labour force. On the contrary, the Other tribal groups often allege that the avenues for gainful employment among low-skilled job are shrinking due to continued presence of low-skilled Chakmas workers. Over the years, on the whole, it is observed that the Chakmas have more successful economic pursuits despite limited fortuity.

IV. A sense of insecurity due to presence of large number of Chakma

The local tribesmen accused the Chakmas of all sort of crimes like destroying the environment by mercilessly felling trees, poaching Elephant for ivory, smuggling, armed robbery and murder (Pulu 2014:120). Social offences and crimes like theft, burglary and forgery became very common with the settlement of the Chakma ethnic group. As reported by the respondent belonging to other tribal groups number of incidents of crimes such as jail breaking, theft, murder, rape etc became very common with the settlement of Chakma ethnic group. Chakmas alleged involvement in 'criminal' and 'anti-

national' activities were perceived by the State Government, as yet another ground for the latter's continuing opposition to their permanent settlement in state. The Chakmas are said to covertly engage in illegal timber business in Changlang and its neighbouring Namsai district. Where such is their clout that local people fear to enter (Sikaia 1994: 3312). The migrants from the CHT were skilled in making country-made gun and pistol and have carved out enclaves in Namsai and Changlang District. The entire community are said to believe to be engaged in these prohibited activities according to the local administration. Moreover, the Chakmas are taught to be self-centred, hostile, and notorious and have remarkable ethnocentric attitude. The other tribal groups associated these harmful changes in their social and economic environment with the arrival of the immigrant Chakma ethnic group.

Ethnic Conflict

The concept of conflict has drastically changed in the recent times. It is no more between the invader and the invaded, but between the native and the migrants. It is the settlement, which begins peacefully by stray migration of a handful of people in batches over untrodden land that later ignites the tension (Oinam 2003: 2035). Movement against the anti-foreigner movement in Arunachal Pradesh has also been seen in ethnic context by the scholar Deepak K. Singh in his book 'Stateless in South Asia: The Chakmas between Bangladesh and India'. Singh argues that, "The genesis of the anti-foreigners (read Chakmas) movement in Arunachal Pradesh can be located in the recent past. Although voices of protests against outsiders have been raised from time to time in the past, it was only in the early 1980s that the issue of illegal infiltration of Chakmas started attracting public attention in a significant way and was widely covered in the media. Singh further observes that in Arunachal Pradesh the movement against 'the Chakma refugees, has always been on the top of the agenda of All Arunachal Pradesh Student Union body since the early 1970s'. For Singh, "this is particularly significant in the light of the fact that this was a period in which the anti-foreigners' issue in North-East India had not yet become part of the popular discourse (Singh 2010). H. Srikanth in his article, "Resolving Ethnic Conflicts in the North East: Need for Radical Civic Forums", has stated that, "The outsiders are generally thought to be migrants and illegal migrants from both domestic as well as neighbouring countries. Various ethnic communities contend that the outsiders are the root cause of their problems and sufferings. Hence, they demanded deportation and denial of Citizenship to those outsiders. In this regard the Arunachalee opposition for granting Citizenship for the Chakmas, the Khasis' assault on the Bengali and the Nepalese and the Bodos; attack on the Adivasi and the Bengalis Muslims are indicative of such ethnic movements (Srikanth 2005).

The settlement of Chakmas in the state has added to the plurality of society but has also brought ethnic conflict to many areas. Tensions occasionally develop over land boundaries, resources, and cattle, which sometimes flare up into incidents of violence. For instance, a land dispute occurred between the Chakmas and the Singphos at M-Pen in the Changlang district on April 9, 2010. The clash was over 60 acres of land occupied by five Chakma families, who had developed it into a homestead and practiced settled cultivation over time. The Chakmas claimed the land belonged to them due to 25 years of occupation and alleged that it was allotted to them by the State Government, giving them a legal right to it. Conversely, the Singphos claimed the land was given to the Chakmas only for sharecropping and clearing the forest. Consequently, both communities fought over the same natural resources and geographical area, resulting in violence against and the eviction of the Chakmas.

To safeguard the interest of its people, the AAPSU launched a number of agitations against the Chakmas in the recent past. The incident of another ethnic conflict also took place between the Chakmas and Other Tribal Groups in the late 1980s, when the Chakma population started asserting their political rights with various other demands such as reservation of job for the Chakma ethnic group, inclusion of them in welfare services under Public Distribution System (PDS), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNERGA), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) scheme a housing programme of Govt. to allot shelter to BPL families etc.

Also, in 2015, the Supreme Court had directed the Centre and Arunachal Pradesh Government to grant Citizenship to Chakma within three months, to those Chakmas who had migrated from Bangladesh in 1964-69, saying they cannot be discriminated in any manner. The verdict was received with huge backlash and disruption of the normal life. There was total shutdown apart from violent reactions from people of the state (Times of India September 20:2015). In a press release, AAPSU termed the order as arbitrary and stated that "AAPSU will fight tooth and nail against the verdict and it wants all the stakeholders of the state cutting across party line to openly disapprove this unacceptable verdict of the apex court of the country (The Arunachal Times September 21, 2015). The Arunachal Pradesh government approached the apex court to review its order but in vain. After the Supreme Court rejection, both the central and state government have started consultation to find a solution to the issue (The Hindu September 23, 2015).

When the anti-foreigner movement swept the state, the Arunachal Pradesh Government were forced to withdraw all the facilities from them. In 1980, the State Government banned the employment opportunities for the

Chakmas. It stopped issuing trade licenses to members of the community. Furthermore, all trade licenses issued to them were seized in 1994. On February 21, 1992 a full year prior to elections to the Arunachal Pradesh State Assembly yet another circular was signed by Circular officer withdrawing all facilities under the PDS from them (Hindustan Times, 14 November 1996). Arunachal Pradesh Government decided not to issue ration cards to the Chakmas with effect from 1 November 1991 and those already issued, were to be surrendered immediately. Further they started dismantling the basic social and economic infrastructure in the Chakma settlement areas. The AAPSU took up various steps to drive the Chakmas away from the state like deletion of their names from the voter's list, questioning the census report, burning up Chakma villages in Diyun, M pen and Kokila areas. In 1982, AAPSU launched a campaign demanding not to give admission to the Chakma students in the schools and colleges. This effectively curtailed their right to education. schools built by the Chakmas using local community resources were closed down or destroyed. Thus, the Chakmas in the state are hopelessness and uncertainty due to denial of basic facilities and amenities such as education, healthcare facilities, employment and trade licenses withdrawn by the state government have not been restored. Thus, the context of oppositional process becomes clear in such cases. As a result, the socio-economic and political conditions of Chakmas continue to remain unsatisfactory. The ethnic rivalry seems to have both sharpened the sense of identity with one's own community and reduced empathy and fellow-feeling between members of Chakmas and other tribal groups.

Conclusion

Ever since the partition of the Indian subcontinent and the subsequent formation of East Pakistan (later Bangladesh), nationals such as the Chakmas have come to Arunachal Pradesh, with or without valid documents. The permanent settlement of Chakma migrant group has generated a range of socio-political, economic, and communal tensions. To safeguard the interest of its people, the AAPSU launched a number of agitations against the Chakma immigrants in the recent past. The withdrawal of basic facilities, such as ration cards and employment opportunities, clearly indicates the support of the state government towards the AAPSU and Civil society. On the other hand, the Chakmas immigrants began to seem themselves as people deeply wronged and marginalized. These events accentuated the sense of opposition among the Chakmas towards the other tribal group in the state. This led to intensification of ethnic sentiments, which led to formation of number of ethnic based organization among the Chakma immigrants. Furthermore, the ethnic conflict between them and other tribes in the state has become a major obstacle to the peaceful coexistence and well-being of the people in the region.

Over the years, this conflict has escalated mistrust and tension between the Chakma settlers and other tribal groups. There is a strong connection between the immigration and the communal unrest in Arunachal Pradesh. Thus, both rising expectations and a sense of injustice and discrimination have contributed to the rising ethnic consciousness among the Chakmas. A democratic solution to the problem must be sought—one that satisfies the local tribal groups while taking into full consideration the humanitarian and legal rights of the Chakma residents in the state.”

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