Although the Chakma refugees were settled in Arunachal Pradesh way back in 1964, the question of their citizenship rights was left undecided by the Government of India for nearly three decades. As discussed in the foregoing chapter that the Union Government of India decided to grant citizenship to the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh only in 1992 which greatly affected party politics of Arunachal Pradesh. However, the decision of the Centre to grant citizenship to the Chakmas has also been the genesis of conflict between the Union Government and the Government of Arunachal Pradesh. The beginning of the conflict has been evident from the heated debate the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh had on December 3, 1992 in which the Chief Minister, Gegong Apang said that the decision of the Centre to grant citizenship to the Chakmas was not acceptable on the part of his Government.¹

Having observed the development in Delhi, the Government of Arunachal Pradesh reiterated its demand for immediate deportation of Chakma and other refugees residing in different parts of the State. The State Assembly on September 24, 1993, expressed grave concern over the Centre’s passive attitude towards the burning refugee problem. The House unanimously condemned the ‘dharna’ organized by the PRO in Delhi and considered the action as unconstitutional. Clarifying the Government stand on the issue, the Chief Minister Gegong Apang said that people of this ‘virgin paradise’

were raising their voices demanding the deportation of refugees since NEFA days through various resolutions adopted by the Assembly, students’ organization, and political forum. It was unfortunate that the Centre paid no attention, Apang lamented. Moreover, repeated deputations to the succeeding Central Governments, Home Ministers, Prime Ministers, and Presidents of India have failed to yield any result so far. While terming the statement of M. M. Jacob on granting citizenship to the Chakmas, Gegong Apang expressed concern that instead of voicing against the issue, the Centre instigated the Chakmas to move to the Supreme Court. Gegong Apang’s leadership rejected the Centre’s directives on the issue earlier and continued to do so to safeguard the interest of the peace-loving innocent people of the State.  

From August 20 to 22, 1994, the Committee for Citizenship Rights of the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh (CCRCAP) organized a three-day hunger strike as a mark of protest against the Government of India’s half-hearted approach and Arunachal Government’s opposition to the implementation of the policy decision taken by the Union Government to grant citizenship rights to the Chakmas and Hajongs in Arunachal Pradesh. The CCRCAP questioned the Union Government as to why it silent when all the constitutional rights of the Chakmas were being taken away? The State Government had already banned employment rights to the Chakmas through an official circular issued on September 29, 1980 and also banned issuance of ration cards to the Chakmas on October 31, 1991. There was no action from the State Government when on February 5, 1983, the AAPSU activists attacked six Chakma villages and burned down their houses to ashes in Balijan Circle of Subansiri District. It was reported that the Arunachal Pradesh Police (APP) has let loose a reign of terror against the Chakmas. The

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Chakmas and Hajongs are now suspended between the threat of deportation on the one side, and grant of Indian citizenship on the other. Thus, the Committee for Citizenship Rights of the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh (CCRCAP) demanded immediate implementation of Government of India’s decision to grant citizenship to the Chakmas, restoration of all the de facto rights arbitrarily revoked by the State Government and enrolment of all eligible Chakma and Hajong voters in the Electoral Rolls.

On July 7, 1994, the Union Minister of State for Home P. M. Sayeed indicated in a letter to Noydak Yonggam, a Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament from Arunachal that citizenship may be granted to the Chakmas and Hajongs settled in Arunachal Pradesh in 1964. In his letter, Sayeed stated that the Centre had already examined the matter in details and found that the Chakmas, Hajongs, and Tibetan refugees had settled in Arunachal in consultation with the then NEFA Administration. The policy of the Union Government was that refugees who came to India before March 25, 1971 would be considered for Indian citizenship. However, on September 9, 1994, the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly once again adopted a resolution demanding deportation of the refugees from the State in opposition to Sayeed’s statement. During the Assembly sessions, the Chief Minister Gegong Apang pointed out that the Centre was behaving not only step-motherly with the people of Arunachal Pradesh but was also provoking the peace-loving people in the State. Similar resolutions were adopted by the House four times since 1977 demanding deportation of ‘foreign nationals.’ On August 15,

1995, the AAPSU gave a 15-hour ‘bandh’ call with tacit support from the State Government.\(^5\)

However, the Government of Arunachal Pradesh set a deadline on the deportation of the refugees by December 31, 1995. The Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Gegong Apang told the media in Calcutta on December 8, 1995, that if the Centre fails to take decision on the deportation of the Chakma refugees by the year end of 1995, it may lose Arunachal as all the Congress MLAs in the State are unhappy about the Centre’s pro-Chakma stand and so are ready to resign and go for a regional party. It is now up to “Delhi to choose between the Arunachalis and the Chakmas.”\(^6\) The Chief Minister said the Centre had settled the Chakma refugees from the erstwhile East Pakistan in 1964 despite opposition from the local people. At that time, Arunachalis had no voice or representation in the administration of the Assam State whose jurisdiction extended to the region.\(^7\) Thus, it has been seen that the Government of Arunachal Pradesh not only resorted to a propaganda war against the Centre on the Chakma issue but also threatened that the people of Arunachal Pradesh might start an agitation for “right to self-determination.”\(^8\)

**Views of the Ministry of Home Affairs**

When the conflict between the Centre and the State of Arunachal Pradesh became extreme, the Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions was formed on August 23, 1995 at a sitting in the Rajya Sabha under the Chairmanship of Sangh Priya Gautam on

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\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) Ibid.
the Petitions signed by Snehadini Talukdar of Mizoram and Subimal Chakma of Delhi pertaining to the problems faced by the Chakmas in Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. The Committee submitted its report on August 14, 1997. It has obtained written comments from the Ministry of Home Affairs on the Chakma issue. The Ministry supplied the comments on the basis of its own perception as the State Government did not supply the information asked for on the various issues raised in the petition. The comments of the Ministry of Home Affairs in brief were:

1. About 15,000 Chakmas and Hajongs out of 140,000 refugees, who entered India from erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), were settled from 1964 to 1969 in the then NEFA (now Arunachal Pradesh). In addition to a rehabilitation grant, each family was allotted land varying from 5 acres to 10 acres (depending upon the size of the family). A total of Rs. 130.41 lakhs was spent by the Central Government till 1968 when the scheme was transferred to the NEFA Administration for further implementation.

2. The local tribals have resented the presence of the Chakmas due to encroachment by them on lands outside the original settlements. The fact that the Chakmas have developed the original forest land into good agricultural fields has also become a source of envy. It has also been alleged that the Chakmas have been indulging in criminal activities and contributed to the denudation of forests and depletion of wild life. Their present population in Arunachal Pradesh is estimated to be between 45,000 and 65,000.

3. During talks between the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh in 1972, it was agreed, inter alia, that Bangladesh would take back the refugees who came

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9 Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions, no. 2, p. 3.
10 Ministry of Home Affairs (North East Division) on the petition pertaining to the problems being faced by the Chakma Tribal Population in Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh vide their Office Memo No. 13/15/95-NE September 18, 1996.
11 Ibid.
to India after 25 March 1971. Under the Citizenship Rules of 1955, applications for registration as Indian citizens are required to be submitted to the Central Government by the Collector of the concerned district through the State Government. However, as regards the Chakmas and Hajongs settled in Arunachal Pradesh, the State Government has raised objection to their continued presence in the State and has demanded either their repatriation to Bangladesh or their re-settlement in some other part of the country.\textsuperscript{12}

4. Following the agitation, during 1994, led by the All Arunachal Pradesh Student’s Union (AAPSU), a series of violent incidents targeting the Chakmas were reported. While the Ministry of Home Affairs had advised the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh to ensure protection of life and liberty of all residents including the Chakma and Hajong refugees, the affected persons had filed a complaint with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The Chakmas had, inter-alia, alleged harassment and intimidation and sought some relief from the Commission. The allegations included withdrawal of ration cards and trade licenses and denial of medical, educational and employment facilities. The NHRC had filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court in November 1995. The State Government, in their counter affidavit did not comment specifically on the withdrawal of ration cards and trade licences and denial of employment opportunities. However, it was indicated that the State Government had incurred considerable expenditure on providing health, water supply, education and social welfare facilities in the Chakma inhabited areas. It was contended that health centres and schools were established and maintained by the State Government.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
5. The Supreme Court, after a detailed hearing on January 9, 1996 disposed off the matter with the directions, inter-alia, that the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh shall ensure that the life and personal liberty of each and every Chakma residing within the State shall be protected and that, except in accordance with law, the Chakmas shall not be evicted from their homes and shall not be denied domestic life and comfort therein. The Supreme Court further directed that the applications made for registration of the Chakmas as citizens of India shall be forwarded by the Collector of the concerned District to the Central Government for its consideration in accordance with the law, which was heard and dismissed by the Supreme Court on August 5, 1996. The Central Government has so far not received any applications from the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh.\footnote{Ibid.}

6. The Central Government, on its part, had constituted a High-Level Group under the chairmanship of the union Home Minister with representatives from both the Central and State Governments with a view to identify the course of action to be adopted for a resolution of the problem. The Group met on January 5, 1996 and constituted an official level Sub-Committee comprising senior officials from both the Central and State Governments for ascertaining the detailed facts and suggesting the course of action which could be adopted for a resolution of the problem. The Ministry of Home Affairs had written to the state Government on February 16, 1996 requesting for convenience of the State Government for a visit by the official level Sub-Committee. The Chief Secretary, Arunachal Pradesh after dismissal of the Review Petition by the Supreme Court, agreed to
allow a visit to Arunachal Pradesh by the official level Sub-Committee. A programme is being chalked out accordingly.¹⁵

**Views of the Home Secretary on the Chakmas Issue in Arunachal Pradesh**

The Committee obtained views of the Home Secretary on September 21, 1996 on the problems faced by Chakma Tribal Population in Arunachal Pradesh.¹⁶ The Home Secretary informed the Committee briefly as follows:

1. In Arunachal Pradesh, there were only 14,888 Chakmas who had migrated to India in 1964 after their homes were uprooted.

2. The Committee on Petitions of the Tenth Lok Sabha desired that the Government of Arunachal Pradesh may be persuaded not to deny basic facilities like education, trade, ration cards and so on to the migrants for their sustenance. In view of the long stay over 24 years in India as refugees, the Government should explore the possibility of granting Indian Citizenship to these refugees as far as possible.

3. Between 1964 and 1969, 140,000 Chakmas came into Assam. Out of 140,000, about 15,000 refugees were sent to NEFA now Arunachal Pradesh. Loans and land have been given by the Government to the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh and State Government at one point itself recommended that these people should be given citizenship.

4. The Government of India took the stand that the Chakmas and Hajongs had been there for so many years from 1964. Now it is 1996 and they should be granted citizenship. The State Government is not cooperating.


¹⁶ Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions, no. 2, pp. 6-8.
5. In October, 1994 complaint regarding stoppage of ration card, ban on employment and economic blockade to the Chakma settlements was made to the National Human Rights Commission.

6. The National Human Rights Commission had asked the State Government to submit the Report but no report has been submitted till date.

7. The Supreme Court heard the case of complaint and passed an interim order on November 2, 1995 that they were not citizens because no citizenship had been granted but they were entitled to citizenship under a particular section of the Citizenship Act.

8. The Supreme Court directed in the interim order that even if they were not citizens, their lives and limbs must be protected and they are entitled to their lives and limbs and that they cannot be evicted from their own places.

9. On January 9, 1996, a final order was passed directing the State Government (i) not to take any action to evict them except under due process of law (ii) application for citizenship should be looked into and sent to the Central Government (iii) to give police force, Central Police for the protection of those people on the demand of State Government.

10. A High Level Group was constituted on December 29, 1995 under the control of the Home Minister of India in which the Chief Minister was also a member to decide and adopt appropriate measures on this particular issue.

11. The Committee could not go to the State because there was no cooperation from the State Government till this review petition has been disposed of by the Supreme Court.

12. The contention of the State Government was that they had not been consulted when these people were settled.
13. The Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh agreed that Chakmas could be given citizenship since they had been living in India for the last 30 years but he said that Chakmas should be settled outside his State.

14. In Arunachal Pradesh, their trade licenses have been stopped and their ration cards have been cancelled. Delegations of India and Bangladesh went to a particular area and convinced the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh to cooperate with the Chakmas.

15. The Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873 governed the Inner Line permit in Arunachal Pradesh. According the Regulation, nobody was allowed to enter Arunachal Pradesh without the permission of the State Government.

16. On October 7, 1995, the then Home Minister, S. B. Chavan, made a statement about relaxation of the Inner Line Permit in Arunachal Pradesh.

17. Restricted Area Permit (RAP) from Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura had been removed with effect from May 19, 1995.

Views of the Government of Arunachal Pradesh on the Chakma issue

The Committee undertook a study visit to Itanagar between November 1 and 5, 1996, and heard the views of the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh and Representatives of Chakmas and indigenous people during the course of the study visit. The Committee heard the views of the representatives of State Government of Arunachal Pradesh at Naharlagun on November 2, 1996. The views of the Government of Arunachal Pradesh included:

1. The Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh may be shifted to places other than the State of Arunachal Pradesh.

17 Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions, no. 2, pp. 13-4.
2. The Gauhati High Court had declared Chakmas as foreigners, since they had no right to vote.

3. The number of Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh is about 60,000 as per refugee calculation.

4. For acquiring land in Arunachal Pradesh, one has to be an indigenous person.

5. Land cannot be given to Chakmas under Legislation passed in 1873 and under the existing laws.

6. About 10 schools for Chakma and non-Chakma children are functioning in Miao Sub-division (Diyun Circle) of the Changlang District, in Chowkham Circle of the Lohit District and in Kokila Circle of the Papumpare District. There is no difficulty in running those schools.

7. The people of Arunachal Pradesh have been tolerating the Chakmas for the past 30 years.

8. There is no political problem in the State.

9. The problem of settlement of Chakma and Hajong Refugees in Arunachal Pradesh arose during the period of 1964-69. During that time, there was no popular Government in Arunachal Pradesh. In 1964, North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) was administered by the Central Government, through the Governor of Assam. The Indian People have not been consulted on the settlement of Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh.

10. The customary laws of the indigenous tribal people have been violated and their traditional rights have been encroached upon by allowing settlement of Chakma and Hajong refugees by the Central Government much against their wishes.
11. The indigenous tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh are of the view that the presence of Chakma and Hajong refugees on their soil is a serious threat to their own survival, their age-old customs and traditions and also the peace.

12. There is nothing common between the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh and the Chakma refugees.

13. Under the Constitution of India, Arunachal Pradesh has been given special status.

14. The Chakma and Hajong refugees hail from Chittagong Hill Tracts and Maimen Singh District respectively of erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

15. Arunachal Pradesh, the youngest State of the Union of India, has been the most peaceful State in the North-Eastern Region of the country. There is Chakma lobby in Delhi. They go to Minister for assistance and they have association in Delhi. They also go to the Human Rights Commission.

16. A day will come when Chakmas will be in majority, and indigenous tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh will be in minority.

**National Human Right Commission vs. State of Arunachal Pradesh and Union of India**

The stand of the Centre to give citizenship rights to the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh is also related to the Supreme Court’s judgement on the case of National Human Right Commission vs. State of Arunachal Pradesh and Union of India. The judgement was delivered on January 9, 1996 in following words:

“There is no doubt that Chakmas who migrated from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1964 first settled down in the State of Assam and shifted to areas which now fall within the State of Arunachal Pradesh. They have settled there since the last about two and a half decades and raised their families in the said State. Their children have married and they too have had children. Thus, a large number of them were born in the State itself. If a person satisfies the requirements of Section 5 of the Citizenship Act, he/she can be registered as a
citizen of India. The procedure to be followed in processing such requests has been outlined in part II of the Rules. According to these Rules, application for registration has to be made in the prescribed form, duly affirmed, to the Collector within whose jurisdiction he resides. Under Rule 9, the Collector is expected to transmit every application under Section 5 (1) (a) of the Act to the Central Government. The Collector has merely to receive the application and forward it to the Central Government. The DC or Collector, who receives the application should be directed to forward the same to the Central Government to enable it to decide the request on merit. The Supreme Court has further added that no person can be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law. Thus, the State is bound to protect the life and liberty of every human being, be he a citizen or otherwise. The State is duty bound to protect the threatened group and if it fails to do so, it will fail to perform its Constitutional as well as statutory obligations. The State Government must act impartially and carry out its legal obligations to safeguard the life, health and well-being of Chakmas residing in the State without being inhibited by local politics.”

The Supreme Court, accordingly, directed that:

1. The State of Arunachal Pradesh shall ensure that the life and personal liberty of each and every Chakma residing within the State shall be protected and any attempt to forcibly evict or drive them out of the State by organized groups shall be repelled.

2. The Chakmas shall not be evicted from their homes and shall not be denied domestic life and comfort therein except in accordance with law.

3. The quit notices and ultimatums issued by the AAPSU and any other group which tantamount to threats to the life and liberty of each and every Chakma should be dealt with by the State of Arunachal Pradesh in accordance with law.

4. The application made for registration as citizen of India by the Chakma shall be forwarded by the Collector or the DC who receives then under the relevant Rules with or without enquiry, as the case may be to the Central Government for its consideration in accordance with law.
Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions

The recommendations of the Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions also played an important role in Centre’s taking decision to grant citizenship to the Chakmas. The main recommendations of the Committee in brief are:

1. The Committee have noted that the Chakmas have demanded citizenship, stoppage of their harassment, lifting of ban on their employment, allowing admission to schools, providing medical facilities, trade and business facilities, restoration of ration cards and compensation to the victims of atrocities.

2. The Committee have also noted the contention of the representatives of non-Chakmas and the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh that the presence of Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh is a threat to their survival, their culture, tradition and peace and that the Chakmas should be evicted from Arunachal Pradesh.

3. The Committee after carefully considering the all facts and the whole issue, has come to the conclusion that Arunachal Pradesh is the only State in the North East which has three International boundaries (with Bhutan, China and Myanmar), which is strategically very important and which has also been relatively calm and insurgency free. It is the sincere desire of the Committee that a reasonable solution is found out to the problems and Justice is done to all.

4. The Committee feels that the spirit of the Indira-Mujib Accord as well as the Judgement of the Supreme Court in the matter may be made applicable to all the affected States for the solution of the problem. As per the Accord, all those Chakmas who came to India prior to March 25, 1971 are to be granted Indian citizenship.
5. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh who came there prior to March 25, 1971 be granted Indian citizenship. The Committee also recommends that those Chakmas who have been born in India should also be considered for Indian citizenship. The Committee further recommends that the fate of those Chakmas who came to the State after March 25, 1971 be discussed and decided by the Central Government and State Government jointly. The Committees also recommends that all the old applications of Chakmas for citizenship which have either been rejected or withheld by Deputy Commissioners or the State Deputy Commissioner or the State Government continue to block the forwarding of such applications to Central Government, the Central Government may consider to incorporate necessary provision in the Rules (or the Act if so required) whereby it could directly receive, consider and decide the application for citizenship in the case of Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh. The Committee also recommends that Chakmas be also considered for granting them the status of Scheduled Tribes at the time of granting the citizenship. The Committee would like to earnestly urge upon the Central Government and State Government to ensure that until amicable solution is arrived at, the Chakmas are allowed to stay in Arunachal Pradesh with full protection and safety, honour and dignity.

Role of Election Commission of India on the inclusion of Chakmas in the Electorate of Arunachal Pradesh

On the basis of a petition filed by the Committee for Citizenship Rights of the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh and the Peoples’ Union for Civil Liberties before the Delhi High Court in 2000 seeking for directions to the Election Commission of India to
enrol all the eligible Chakma voters, the Delhi High Court in a judgement on September 8, 2000, directed the Election Commission of India to enrol the eligible Chakmas and Hajongs into the electoral rolls. On March 29, 2003, the Election Commission of India ordered Special Revision to enrol the Chakma voters pursuant to which more than 11,360 eligible voters have claimed for inclusion of their names. Out of these eligible voters, only 1,497 claimants were accepted and the rest rejected. The State Government of Arunachal Pradesh vide a Cabinet decision on June 14, 2003, deleted the names of these 1,497 Chakma voters from the electoral rolls. The Election Commission of India directed the State government to respect the rule of the law and ensure that the Chakma voters who have been included should not be deleted but the State Government failed to comply with the directions of the Election Commission after which the Commission vide its order dated January 2, 2004, suspended all electoral activities in four Chakma inhabited Assembly constituencies of 14 Doimukh in Papum Pare district, 46 in Chowkham in Lohit district, 49 Bordumsa-Diyun and 50 Miao in Changlang district until the Chakma voters were included in the electoral rolls.18

On February 24, 2004, the former Chief Minister Mukut Mithi approached the Gauhati High Court against the Election Commission of India by a petition seeking quashing of the Election Commission’s order of January 2, 2004. On March 3, 2004, the Election Commission of India by another order asked the State Election Commission of Arunachal Pradesh to include all those 1,497 Chakma voters and publish the electoral roll forthwith.19

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18 Committee for Citizenship Rights of the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh (CCRCAP), An Appeal, New Delhi, August 20, 2004.
19 Ibid.
On March 23, 2005, the Election Commission of India issued additional guidelines for Enumeration to be followed by the electoral authorities in areas having substantial presence of Chakmas.\(^{20}\) It has ordered that special care has to be taken at the time enumeration in areas having substantial presence of Chakmas namely 14-Doimukh (ST), 46-Chowkhram (ST), 49-Bordumsa-Diyun and 50-Miao (ST) assembly constituencies and the following procedures shall be adhered to:

(a) The assembly constituencies where there is a large scale presence of Chakmas should be identified first by the State Government authorities concerned and within such assembly constituencies, the polling areas having a substantial presence of Chakmas should also be likewise identified by those authorities.\(^{21}\)

(b) At the time of house to house enumeration in these areas, the enumerators shall include in the ‘Electoral Card’ the names of all the persons as are declared to be adult Indian citizens by the head/senior adult member of the household furnishing the information to the Enumerator. He shall also record the date of birth of persons below the Age in the Electoral Card.\(^{22}\)

(c) The Supervisor concerned on receipt of the enumeration pad and manuscript from the enumerators shall prepare a list of Chakmas separately and submit the same to the ERO.\(^{23}\)

(d) The ERO concerned, on receipt of the enumeration pad and manuscript from the supervisors shall segregate the names of the Chakmas into two sections, as per the date of birth mentioned in the enumeration pad;


\(^{21}\) Ibid.

\(^{22}\) Ibid.

\(^{23}\) Ibid.
(i) Containing the name of persons who were born in India between January 26, 1950 and July 1, 1987; and in whose case linkage could be established that their parents had migrated to Arunachal Pradesh in 1964, as per the refugee registration records or any other relevant records.

(ii) Containing the names of persons who were born in India between January 26, 1950 and July 1, 1987; and in whose case linkage could not be established that their parents had migrated to Arunachal Pradesh in 1964, as per the refugee registration records or any other relevant records.

e) In respect of those persons whose names have been included in category (d) (i), above, their names shall be straight away included in the draft electoral roll.

f) In respect of persons whose linkage could not be established, category (d) (ii), the ERO immediately on receipt of the said list shall cause conduct of local verification to establish the eligibility for enrolment of name in the electoral rolls. The local verification officer shall, among other documentary evidence, rely on the following documents to establish the eligibility of a person of Chakma origin to enrol his or her name in the electoral roll:24

(i) Birth certificate showing date of birth and place of birth in India issued by the competent authority;

(ii) School certificate indicating therein date of birth and place of birth in India, and any other certificate which is relevant in the State of Arunachal Pradesh in this regard.

24 Ibid.
(iii) Only names of those persons whose identities have been established and who were born in India between January 26, 1950 and July 1, 1987 shall be included in the draft electoral rolls.

The disposal of claims and objections received after publication of the draft rolls in the areas as identified above shall be done by following the procedure stated above.25

On August 12, 2010, the Government of Arunachal Pradesh wrote to the Election Commission of India requesting it to reinvestigate the inclusion of Chakmas and Hajongs in the electoral rolls. The State Government constituted a nine-member high level committee under the Chairmanship of a representative of the Union Home Ministry in June 2010 to examine the Chakma and Hajong settlement report.26

Given the above views of the Centre, the Government of Arunachal Pradesh, the Supreme Court, the Rajya Sabha Committee on Petition, and the Election Commission of India in relation to the Chakma issue, it appears that the Centre’s approach to resolve the Chakma issue by giving citizenship rights and Scheduled Tribe status to the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh has been influenced by various factors such as the permission of the NEFA Administration to settle the Chakma refugees in 1964, the Parliamentary Team’s recommendation of 1982, the Assam Accord of 1985, the Indira-Mujib Pact of 1972, the Supreme Court judgement of 1996, the recommendations of the Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions of 1997, and the role of the Election Commission of India.

25 Ibid.
26 For details see, “Khandu moves poll panel after violence,” The Telegraph, August 12, 2010. p. 17.
On the other hand, the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh rejected the Centre’s grant-citizenship approach to resolve the Chakma issue. The State Government opposed the Centre by adopting counter-resolutions demanding the removal of the Chakmas from Aruanchal Pradesh on the grounds that indigenous people of Arunachal Pradesh were not consulted about their settlement in 1964, customary laws of the indigenous tribal people have been violated and their traditional rights have been encroached upon by allowing settlement of Chakma and Hajong refugees by the Central Government much against their wishes, land cannot be given to Chakmas under Legislation passed in 1873 and under the existing laws, Chakmas are foreigners so they are not entitled to vote, the indigenous tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh are of the view that the presence of Chakma and Hajong refugees on their soil is a serious threat to their own survival, their age-old customs and traditions and also the peace, and under the Constitution of India, Arunachal Pradesh has been given special status. It is also to be noted that the Government of Arunachal Pradesh waged a propaganda war against the Centre as has been evident when the Chief Minister said that if the Centre fails to deport the Chakmas by the year end of 1995, the people of Arunachal will launch agitation for the ‘right to self-determination’ and the State Government should not be put to blame if the youth of the State went violent against the Chakma settlers.27 It is also evident from the fact that the Government of Arunachal Pradesh provoked the AAPSU to stage an angry protest against the Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions when they landed in the helipad of Naharlagun on November 1, 1996.28

27 Ashis Chakrabarty, n. 13.
28 Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions, no. 2, p. 32.
Table 4.1 Responses of the Union Government over the Chakmas issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Responses of the Centre</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>To grant citizenship to the Chakmas</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Expel the Chakmas from India</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>To grant citizenship only to those Chakmas born in India</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Facing opposition from the State Government to grant citizenship to the Chakmas</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>All of the above</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Any other: both the Centre as well as the State Government wanted to keep the issue of granting citizenship to all the Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh alive for political interests.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.1, 39 percent of the respondents expressed that the Central Government has been affirmative to grant citizenship to the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh. No respondents said that the Central Government ever wanted to expel the Chakmas from India. 11 percent of the respondents expressed the view that the Centre had given citizenship only to those Chakmas who were born in India. Another 35 percent said that the Centre has been facing opposition from the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh to grant citizenship to the Chakmas. However, 15 percent of the respondents expressed that both the Centre as well as the State Government wanted to keep the issue of granting citizenship to all the Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh alive for political interests.
In view of the discussion, it has been seen that the citizenship issue of the Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh has had serious ramifications on Centre-State relations resulting in a continuous conflict between the Union Government and the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh. It is also important to note that the conflict between the Union Government of India and the Government of Arunachal Pradesh prompted the rise of ethno-centric politics and ethnic polarization in Arunachal Pradesh which has been examined in the next chapter.