CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION

Forced migration and resettlement of people from one country to another is a phenomenon of contemporary human history. The causes of the contemporary refugee migration flows are rooted in the breakdown of the European colonies and creation of new nation-states across the globe after 1945. Within each of these new nation-states such as India and Pakistan triggered an ‘integration revolution’ which contributed not only to the reduction of traditional values of human rights and cultural pluralism but also to the generation of massive refugee migration flows patterned by civil strife, political and religious persecution, and international war, all of which are unpredictable occurrences. In the name of nation-state building, certain categories of population have been selected as targets of persecution, expelling them outright or creating conditions as that of construction of hydro-electric dam that pushed them into risky flights, like the exodus of the Chakmas from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of the erstwhile East Pakistan to Arunachal Pradesh of North East India in 1964.

Refugee resettlement has had wide ranging ramifications for societies and polities of the recipient countries. It is not just the shifting and resettlement of people from one place of abode to another but also most fundamental to the understanding of the ever changing ‘space content’ and ‘space relations’ of an area. Refugee resettlement is found to have affected both the demographic and economic balance of groups within a given space. Hence, the protection of space and economic opportunities has become
central objectives of the local population, while expansion of opportunities within that space has become the central objectives of migrant population.

Resettlement of refugees has also changed the political structures and the mode of politics of a given area. The size, composition and distribution of population in relation to both government and politics have undergone a change as a result of refugee resettlement. In multiethnic societies, refugee resettlement has led to intense conflicts between the refugee settlers and the local population. Politics over the fear of land alienation, perceived demographic and political threats, xenophobia, and identity crisis have become prominent in places affected by refugee migration. In most cases, the question of citizenship rights of the refugees has become the single most important source of ethnic-conflict and power politics of ‘who gets what, from whom and how much.’ In such a situation, ethnic loyalty has been mobilized and manipulated by political parties and other social groups.

Migration and resettlement of people has become an important component of the contemporary ethnic politics. Ethnic politics has been often shaped by constraints imposed by outsiders. Thus, the internal ‘we’ has been distinguished from the external ‘aliens.’ Where no relevant outsiders exist, the necessity for ethnic politics disappears. The need of ethnic politics arises only when strange, threatening, competitive outsiders must be confronted. Ethnicity as politics is meaningful only in such a relational framework as in the case of native Arunachali tribes and outsider Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh. Further, in ethnic politics, outsiders are viewed negatively as threats to generate political interests and internal coherence.
In the present study, changes in the politics of Arunachal Pradesh in relation to the Chakma issue have been examined. Most of the States in India received large number of refugees from the neighboring countries, particularly in the aftermath of partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 as in the case of Arunachal Pradesh of North East India which received over 30 thousand Chakma refugees from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of former East Pakistan in 1964. Today, the citizenship question of the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh is found to have affected the society, polity and economy of Arunachal Pradesh. The citizenship issue of the Chakmas has been politicized by political parties and social groups of Arunachal Pradesh for the interest of mass mobilization and political power rather than to bring out a solution to the issue. This has been evident from the way different social organizations of Arunachal Pradesh such as the All Arunachal Pradesh Students’ Union (AAPSU), political parties, and the State and Central Governments have responded to the issue.

The study has been divided in to six chapters.

Chapter- I, Introduction: Migration and Resettlement of the Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh has discussed various definitions, types and theories of migration and examined the nature and the causes of Chakma migration and resettlement in Arunachal Pradesh. The meaning and different types of migration have been examined in various conventional and institutional definitions of migration. A distinction has been made between voluntary migration and forced migration. Voluntary migration has been defined as unforced movement of people for better ‘economic life’ from place or country to another. Forced migration has been defined as impelled movement of people for ‘fear persecution’ or ‘forced displacement’ from one country to settle permanently in
another as in the case of Chakma migration from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to the NEFA (now Arunachal Pradesh) of North East India.

In this chapter, different nature and causes of migration have been discussed through various theories of migration such as Rational Choice Theory, Migration Systems Theory, Transition Theory, and World Systems Theory. Among these theories, the World Systems Theory has been found to be the most helpful and applicable in explaining the case of the present study. This theory explained that the causes of migration and the subsequent problems in the contemporary world are being rooted in the breakdown of European colonies during the late 1940s leading to the creation of many new nation-states such as India and Pakistan. Within each of these nation-states triggered an ‘integrative revolution’ which has contributed not only to the reduction of traditional values of human rights and cultural pluralism but also to the generation of massive refugee migration flows patterned by civil strife, political persecution and international war. This theory argued that in the name of nation-state building, certain categories of population have been selected as targets of persecution, expelling them outright or creating conditions as that of construction of hydro-electric dam that forced them into risky flights as has been the case behind the exodus of the Chakmas to Arunachal Pradesh of North-East India in 1964.

**Causes of Chakma Migration to Arunachal Pradesh**

The Chakma exodus to Arunachal Pradesh was caused by two different circumstances: 1) Pakistan government’s persecution policy over the Chakmas, and 2) Displacement.
1) Pakistan government’s persecution policy over the Chakmas

The Chakmas are an indigenous tribal community of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh. They differ from the majority people in three respects: they are the Sino-Tibetan descent; their language is more akin to those spoken by their neighbors in North-East India and Burma; and they are predominantly Buddhist. During partition of British India, Chakmas demanded that the CHT be included in India. On August 21, 1947 the Pakistan Government took over the CHT. In 1964, the government of Pakistan ended the special status of the CHT followed by its persecution policy over the Chakmas because they expressed anti-Pakistani sentiment during the partition. The victims were forced to leave for India.

2) Kaptai Dam and Displacement of the Chakmas

It was in the Pakistan period in 1964 that the massive Kaptai hydro-electric dam was built in the CHT leading to the creation of a huge reservoir which displaced an estimated 100,000 Chakmas from their lands and livelihoods. About 40,000 of these displaced Chakmas came to India, majority of whom went to the NEFA.

Resettlement of the Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh

According to the opinions of Chakma respondents who have been interviewed for the purpose this research study, they were resettled in demarcated areas of Miao Sub-division (Diyun Circle) of the Changlang District, Chowkham Circle of the Lohit District and Kokila Circle of the Papumpare District under a special scheme by the Central Government of India on the basis of their ‘Relief Eligibility Certificates.’ The opinions of the respondents are consistent with a letter issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
Chapter- II, Chakma Issue and the All Arunachal Pradesh Students’ Union (AAPSU) has examined the Chakma Citizenship issue and the movement led by the AAPSU. The AAPSU movement on the Chakma issue started in the early 1980s. In fact, it is in response to the Chakma issue that the AAPSU changed its movement strategy from peaceful and co-operational in nature to agitational mode in 1979. This shift is marked as a turning point in the history of the AAPSU.

The AAPSU movement in response to the Chakma issue was conditioned by different external and internal factors. The external factors include inspiration from the Assam movement and the North East Students Organization (NESO). The internal factors include rapid expansion of education in Arunachal Pradesh, pessimism over government’s failure to resolve the Chakma issue, demographic and political threat, feeling of exclusiveness with the Inner Line Regulation Act 1873, and strategic location.

The AAPSU movement on the Chakma issue has been followed by a series of action programmes which have affected the economic, social and political life of Arunachal Pradesh from time to time. These action programmes have been examined by dividing them into three stages: first, agitation phase (1982-1990) characterized by adoption of resolutions and submission of memoranda, ultimatum to the State and Central governments demanding immediate expulsion of the Chakmas; second, insurrection phase (1990-1995) characterized by bandh calls, economic blockade, “Delhi Chalo Movement”, and “Quit Arunachal Pradesh” notice. The third, the civil disobedience movement launched by the AAPSU from 2004 when 1,497 Chakmas for
the first time have been granted citizenship and were allowed by the Election Commission of India to participate in the Assembly elections of 2004. Over the inclusion of Chakmas in the electoral roll by the Election Commission of India, the AAPSU called for a total boycott of the elections followed by a 48-hour bandh all over the State.

In responses to the AAPSU movement, Chakmas have organized themselves by forming organizations such as the All Arunachal Chakma Youths’ Federation (AACYF), the Committee for Citizenship Rights of the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh (CCRCAP) while 20 percent respondents answered that they also sought help from the Central Government for their life security and appealed to the National Human Rights Commission of India for their citizenship rights and they also appealed to various Members of Parliament and the Central Ministers. They also answered that they often sought justice from the Supreme Court of India and the High Court of Delhi. Viewed in this perspective, the Chakma issue can be regarded as an essential component of student politics in Arunachal Pradesh.

Chapter- III, Chakma Issue and Political Parties in Arunachal Pradesh has dealt with the Chakma issue and the changes in the party politics of Arunachal Pradesh. There was no antecedent of party politics in Arunachal Pradesh in relation to the Chakma issue until the beginning of the 1980s. It was only during the second general elections of the State held in 1980 that the Chakma issue made a place in the mass mobilization strategies of the political parties of Arunachal Pradesh, particularly the Congress led by Gegong Apang who subsequently came to power on January 18, 1980.
The genesis and the early nature of party politics in Arunachal Pradesh have been discussed in this chapter. Politics and political socialization in the State actually started with the introduction of Panchayat system in 1967. Party politics found its root in the State only when the first Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assembly elections were held in Arunachal Pradesh in 1977 and 1978 respectively. The first regional political party in the State, the Peoples’ Party of Arunachal (PPA) was formed in 1977. The Janata party entered the State as early as in 1977. Both national and regional political parties in Arunachal Pradesh encouraged politics of defection. There was a general tendency among the leaders and people of the State to support the ruling party in the Centre.

The Chakma issue became quite prominent in party politics of Arunachal Pradesh with the Centre’s declaration to grant citizenship to the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh in 1992. In opposition to the decision of the Centre, on December 3, 1992, the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh passed a resolution to deport the Chakmas from Arunachal Pradesh. Given the anti-Chakma sentiment already flourished by the AAPSU movement as examined in the second chapter, the increasing scramble for power between ideologically different power elite groups belonging to different national and regional political parties in the State intensified the adoption and use of the Chakma issue for mobilization of votes. It is revealed that in most of the election campaigns, Gegong Apang’s pledge to resolve the Chakma issue helped him not only sustain popular support but also his party and leadership base in the State.

During the 1995 elections, the election manifesto of the Congress was centered mainly on the Chakma issue and the boundary dispute with Assam. The other contesting
parties were the Janata Dal (JD), the Janata Party (JP), the Bharatya Janata Party (BJP), and the Independents who pledged to resolve the Chakma issue once they come to power. The then Prime Minister, P. V. Narasimha Rao also assured during his campaign for the Congress party that he would take special initiative to resolve the Chakma issue. Over the Chakma issue, the peoples’ verdict again came in favor of the Congress and Gegong Apang returned to power with absolute majority.

The then Chief Minister, Gegong Apang and his Congress party both in the State and the Centre failed to resolve the Chakma issue even after more than a year of his coming to power. Consequently, Gegong Apang started to lose popular support. In 1996, Gegong Apang revolted against the Centre and the Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao by resigning en masse along with his Cabinet colleagues from the Congress and in September, 1996, formed a regional party called the Arunachal Congress. Gegong Apang managed to take with him 54 legislators out of total 60 seats in the Arunachal Assembly.

Thus, the Chakma citizenship issue not only brought changes in the nature of party politics in Arunachal Pradesh but also led to the creation of a regional political party in the State. Earlier it was the development issue that led to the creation of the Peoples’ Party of Arunachal in 1977.

Chapter- IV, Centre-State Conflict and the Chakma Issue has examined the conflicting views of the Union Government of India and the Government of Arunachal Pradesh on the Chakma citizenship issue that led to the Centre-State conflict. The Centre’s policy to resolve the Chakma issue in Arunachal Pradesh was based on the
Indira-Mujib Pact of 1972 and the Assam Accord of 1985 and also on the basis of the fact that many of the Chakmas have been born in India. On February 27, 1992, the then Union Minister of State, M. M. Jacob, pointed out that in terms of the provisions of the Indira-Mujib Pact of 1972 and Assam Accord of 1985, all persons who came and settled in India prior to March 25, 1971 and January 1, 1966 respectively, were already given Indian Citizenship. Jacob further argued that the Chakmas had migrated to Arunachal Pradesh prior to both these datelines and therefore, they are deemed to be Indian Citizens. It was also pointed out by the Centre that many of the Chakmas were born in India and so they were entitled to citizenship by birth.

However, as against the Centre’s decision, the Government of Arunachal Pradesh adopted several resolutions since 1980 to deport the Chakmas from Arunachal Pradesh. The State Government justified its demand for deportation of the Chakmas on grounds of Inner Line Regulation Act (1873) and also that for acquiring land in Arunachal Pradesh, one has to be an indigenous person. The State alleged that the customary laws of the indigenous tribal people have been violated by allowing settlement of Chakma and Hajong refugees by the Central Government.

Centre’s positive stand on the Chakmas has created resentment in the minds of the people of Arunachal Pradesh leading to the development of ethnocentrism in the State which has been evident from the speech of the then Chief Minister, Gegong Apang on December 8, 1995, who stated that “the people of Arunachal Pradesh might start an agitation for ‘self-determination’ if the Centre would not cancel its decision to grant citizenship to the Chakmas.” He further said, “New Delhi has to choose between the Arunachalis and the Chakmas.”
Chapter- V, Chakma Issue and Ethno-politics in Arunachal Pradesh dealt with the perceived threats of the Chakmas and the resultant development of ethno-politics in Arunachal Pradesh. The level of ethnicity formation in Arunachal Pradesh has been examined in this chapter. The basic criteria of ethnicity arising out of a collective sense of identity is seen absent in Arunachal Pradesh because of the existence of multiple ethnic groups each of whom is distinct from each other not only in terms of the geographic boundary but also languages.

Politics in Arunachal Pradesh seems to have followed ethnic path as far as the Chakma citizenship issue is concerned. This is evident from the role played by the AAPSU, the Peoples’ Referendum Rally and the political parties in mobilizing ethnic sentiment projecting the Chakmas as demographic threat.

The ethnic role of the AAPSU has been seen in its history and constitution. In fact, the very reason behind the emergence of the AAPSU was to raise the grievances and aspirations of the indigenous people of Arunachal Pradesh. The role played by the AAPSU is distinct in many aspects. One aspect is that it has not been stereotypical to students’ interests within the institutional campus only. It has engaged itself in social cause and politics to bring about transformation. One of the fundamental premises to be considered here is that although the AAPSU is an organization of students, it has often been influenced by the tribal intelligentsia of the State for ethnic mobilization.

The threat factor of the Chakmas started to dominate the ethnic mobilization activities of the AAPSU as early as 1980. For example, on August 26, 1985, the AAPSU for the first time organized a general public meeting with representatives from
various tribes and political parties in which a detailed deliberation was made on the issue of demographic threat posed by the Chakmas. The xenophobia of the AAPSU towards the Chakmas has developed mainly because of two different factors. First, in the perception of AAPSU, the Chakmas form a sizeable non-local population vis-à-vis the small indigenous population of the State. Secondly, the AAPSU has been concerned about the protection of their rights to land and resources in the State and not to share these with non-locals. Viewed in this context, the ethnic issue taken up by the AAPSU has acquired the dimension of a nativist movement because it highlighted the conflicts between the sons of the soil and the migrant Chakmas.

Thus, the perceived threats of the Chakmas have been politicized by the tribal elite of Arunachal Pradesh under the banner of the AAPSU for ethnic mobilization to serve their interests as the Peoples’ Referendum Rally provided the evidence.

**Chapter- VI: Conclusion:** This chapter is the summary and the major findings of the study. The causes of Chakma migration and resettlement in Arunachal Pradesh and the role of different social forces such as students’ organization and political parties influencing the politics of Arunachal Pradesh in relation to the Chakma issue are summarized in this chapter. The following are the major findings of the study:

1. It has been found that most migration cases of recent times have occurred due to war, persecution and displacement and has affected the societies, polities, and economies of all continents of the world. It is revealed that these causes of migration are rooted in the breakdown of the European colonies followed by the emergence of many new nation-states after 1945 like India and Pakistan. The ‘integrative revolution’ within each of these new nation-states not only
undermined the traditional values of human rights and cultural pluralism but also triggered massive refugee migration flows patterned by civil war, persecution and international war. In the name of nation-state building, certain categories of population have been selected as targets of persecution, expelling them outright or creating conditions as that of construction of hydro-electric dam that pushed them into risky flights as has been the case behind the exodus of the Chakmas from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of erstwhile East Pakistan to Arunachal Pradesh of North-East India in 1964.

2. The exodus of the Chakmas to Arunachal Pradesh was caused by two different circumstances: 1) Persistent politico-religious persecution by the Pakistan Government against the Chakmas and 2) Displacement by the Kaptai dam. The Chakmas are an indigenous tribal community of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh. During the partition of the Indian sub-continent, the Chakmas demanded that the CHT be included in India. On August 21, 1947 the Pakistan Government took over the CHT. In 1964, the government of Pakistan ended the special status of the CHT followed by its policy of persecution over the Chakmas because they expressed anti-Pakistani sentiment during the partition. Also, it was in the Pakistan period in 1964 that the massive Kaptai hydro-electric dam was built in the CHT leading to the creation of a huge reservoir which displaced an estimated 100,000 Chakmas from their lands and livelihoods. As a result of persecution and Kaptai dam, about 40,000 displaced Chakmas came to India majority of whom went to the NEFA.
3. Most of the Chakmas were resettled in Arunachal Pradesh in 1964 by the Central Government of India in consultation with the then NEFA administration and local leaders in demarcated areas of the Kokila Circle of the Lower Subansiri District (now Papumpare District), Miao Sub-division (Diyun and Bordumsa Circles) of the Changlang District, and Chowkham Circle of the Lohit District. The present Chakma citizenship issue emanated from the background of their migration and resettlement in Arunachal Pradesh way back in 1964.

4. The Chakma resettlement was not a political issue until the Centre declared to grant citizenship to the Chakmas in 1992. Since then the Chakma citizenship issue started to gain ground in the politics of the State spearheaded by various socio-political forces such as the All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union (AAPSU) and political parties of Arunachal Pradesh.

5. The Chakma citizenship issue has altered the nature of student activism in Arunachal Pradesh from peaceful and co-operative nature to political and agitational mode. The educated elite of Arunachal Pradesh under the banner of the AAPSU often used the Chakma issue for mass mobilization by whipping up public sentiments against the Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh.

6. It has been found that partly over the Chakma citizenship issue, the Congress Party in Arunachal Pradesh was split. The then Chief Minister, Gegong Apang, resigned from the Congress along with his Cabinet colleagues and formed a new State political party called the Arunachal Congress in September, 1996 because his own party holding power in Delhi failed to resolve the Chakma issue.
7. The Chakma issue has had important ramifications on the Centre-State relations. Centre’s decision to give citizenship to the Chakmas has generated a lot of resentment in the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh which has in turn caused ethnic polarization.

8. The perceived fear of the Chakmas has brought about some sense of unity among the diverse ethnic groups in Arunachal Pradesh.

9. The Chakma citizenship issue is still far from being resolved. Granting citizenship to 1,497 Chakmas in 2004 is too late and too little a solution to the issue. More than 18,000 applications of the Chakmas for citizenship are still pending since 2004. On the other side, the AAPSU and the Peoples’ Referendum Rally are making preparations for further movements. On March 23, 2005, the Election Commission of India, taking cognizance of demands of the Committee for Citizenship Rights of the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh (CCRCAP), passed specific Guidelines for investigation and inclusion of all eligible Chakma and Hajong claimants as voters in the electoral roll of Arunachal Pradesh. In 2009, the AAPSU has filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in Gauhati High Court terming the Election Commission’s guidelines to include the names of Chakma refugees in the electoral roll for the Lok Sabha elections as illegal. After that no further development has taken place till date.
Observations

The study revealed the background and present condition of the Chakma issue and development of politics in Arunachal Pradesh in relation to the issue. In the light of the findings, the following observations have been made towards a lasting solution to the Chakma issue in Arunachal Pradesh.

- It has been observed that the Chakma issue continues to remain unresolved mainly due to the lack of serious measures and political will both on the part of Central and State Governments to settle the issue permanently. It appears that the High Level Committee constituted by the Centre to work out an amicable solution to the problem has long been inactive and now almost redundant. If the issue remains unresolved, it may give rise to violent ethnic conflict between the Chakmas and the native tribes of Arunachal Pradesh since socio-political forces of Arunachal Pradesh such as the AAPSU, the Peoples’ Referendum Rally and various political parties of Arunachal Pradesh have already politicized the Chakma issue for ethnic mobilization by projecting the Chakmas as demographic threat to the native tribes.

- The Chakmas have been living in Arunachal Pradesh for almost half a century since 1964 till date. Therefore, the demand of the State Government and the AAPSU to remove the Chakmas from Arunachal Pradesh seems too late and difficult to be fulfilled. Moreover, the Chakmas came from erstwhile East Pakistan which ceased to exist in 1971 with the creation of Bangladesh. More importantly, 40 percent of the present Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh were actually born in the territory of Arunachal Pradesh itself and by virtue of that they claim themselves as natural citizens of the State. Therefore, such a demand
of the State Government looks unrealistic except making the issue more complex particularly for the Chakmas. Instead, the Government of Arunachal Pradesh may adopt a political measure to resolve the Chakma issue permanently as that of the Tibetan refugee issue in the State which was resolved by giving citizenship to 90 Tibetan refugee families living in Shyo village of Tawang District in 2002.

- Centre’s policy to grant citizenship to the Chakmas has been rather too slow. The applications submitted by Chakmas for citizenship to the concerned District Collector’s office are rarely forwarded to the Centre for final approval of citizenship. It is therefore, suggested that the Government of India takes a prompt action towards granting citizenship to the Chakmas.

- The intellectual elite of Arunachal Pradesh seemed to have exaggerated the demographic and political threat of the Chakmas for psychological and political reasons rather than finding an intellectual approach for understanding and resolving the Chakma issue. The educated elite of Arunachal Pradesh can play a significant role to resolve the Chakma issue rather than taking political advantage out of the issue.

- During the fieldwork it has been observed that Chakmas are deprived of basic facilities human life such as medical treatment, primary education, and trade permission. So far no Chakma is given a Government job in Arunachal Pradesh.

- If the citizenship status of the Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh remains unresolved and if the Government of Arunachal Pradesh, the people of
Arunachal Pradesh do not sympathize and accept them as fellow citizens of the State, there is very little chance for them to survive. The solution of the Chakma issue lies in the hands of the Government of Arunachal, the Central Government and more importantly in the hands of the people of Arunachal Pradesh.