CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION: MIGRATION AND RESETTLEMENT OF THE CHAKMAS IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

The demand made in an Appeal by the Peoples’ Referendum Rally of Arunachal Pradesh on September 20, 1995, stating that “The refugee problem is a burning issue in our peaceful State of Arunachal Pradesh. Their demand for permanent citizenship rights is creating panic among the bona fide people. Considering the serious nature of the problem .... We demand Chakma refugees to quit Arunachal Pradesh,”¹ shows the genesis of the Chakma issue in the politics of Arunachal Pradesh concerning which this study has been pursued. The present Chakma issue in the politics of Arunachal Pradesh has emanated from the background of migration and resettlement of Chakma refugees in the State way back 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.² 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.³

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.\(^4\) 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.\(^5\) 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.’\(^6\) In such a situation, ethnic loyalty has been mobilized and manipulated by political parties and other social groups as in the case of Chakma citizenship issue in the politics of Arunachal Pradesh.

Ethnic politics has usually been referred to the art of ethnic political mobilization often in a relational framework between the native ethnic groups and the outsiders such as refugees. Ethnic politics is shaped by constraints imposed by outsiders. Thus, the internal ‘we’ (*ethnos* in Greek) has been distinguished from the external ‘aliens’ (*ethnikos* in Greek). 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.\(^7\) Ethnicity as politics is meaningful only in such a relational framework. Further, in ethnic politics, outsiders are

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viewed negatively as threats to generate political interests and internal coherence. Ethnic politics is cultural mobilization of the *ethnos* or ‘we’ in relation to *ethnikos* or ‘others.’ On the other hand, ethnic politics also refers to politics of assertion on the part of ‘others’ protesting the domination of the native elites.

According to the 2011 Census of India, Arunachal Pradesh is said to be the least refugee affected among all States in India wherein only the Chakma refugees were resettled. It is the most thinly populated State in India having a density of population only 17 persons per square kilometer (2011 Census of India). The demand to remove the Chakmas from Arunachal Pradesh by the social forces emerged after three decades of their settlement in the State way back in 1964. 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. However, discussion on migration, displacement and refugee resettlement will help better understand the Chakma issue in the politics of Arunachal Pradesh.

**Meaning and Definition of Migration**

The word ‘migrate’ has been derived from Latin word *migrare*, which means to move from one place or country to another for permanent or semi-permanent

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People who migrate are called “migrants,” or “settlers,” depending on historical setting, circumstances and perspective. Migration that occurs for economic reasons is called ‘voluntary’ migration. In most cases, migration involves force that push people out of a place or country. Such migration of people has been defined as ‘involuntary’ or ‘forced migration’ (also called deracination – originally a French word meaning uprooting). It often connotes violent coercion, and is used interchangeably with the concepts of ‘displacement’ or forced displacement. Thus, those who have experienced forced migration are termed as “forced migrants” or “displaced persons” or “refugees” although the term ‘refugee’ has restricted legal connotation.

The term refugee has been derived from the Latin word called *refugium* meaning “shelter, security, a haven.” The classical institutional definition of refugee is found in the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees. The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees later extended by the 1967 Protocol, defined refugees as:

> Any person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

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According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are now 22 million refugees around the world who have been forced to leave their countries to escape from political persecution, armed conflict or violence and forced displacement.\(^{15}\)

A broader meaning of ‘refugee’ has been provided by the Organization of African Unity (OAU, 1969) which defined refugees as:

Every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality.\(^ {16}\)

The concept of forced migration is important because it is associated with persecution, war and displacement and also it has become a topic of serious study and discussion in the recent past. This increased attention is the result of the creation of an international legal structure of human rights, Court actions and the realizations that forced migration has created destabilizing effects for societies and polities especially in parts of Africa and Asia such as India and Pakistan.

Another subset of forced migration is development-induced displacement. Such displacement forced communities and individuals out of their homes, often also their homelands, for the purposes of economic development. It has been historically associated with the construction of dams for hydroelectric power and irrigation purposes. One example of development-induced displacement is the result of the construction of the Kaptai dam in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of former East Pakistan


now Bangladesh which forced a segment of the Chakmas to migrate to Arunachal Pradesh in 1964.\textsuperscript{17}

However, the definition that has been used to explain the present study is the definition provided by the International Organization of Migration which defined forced migration as any person who migrates to “escape persecution, conflict, repression, natural and human-made disasters like dam, ecological degradation, or other situations that endanger their lives, freedom or livelihood.”\textsuperscript{18}

Types of Migration

Migration is a differential phenomenon with distinguishable character. There is a growing diversity in migration particularly in relation to its cause, distance, duration, selectivity and motivation. The relatively permanent movement of people from one place to another within a country is referred to as in-migration and out-migration, but when the movement is between countries it is referred as immigration and emigration. The place of in-migration or immigration is called the receiver population, and the place of out-migration or emigration is called the sender population. There are two basic types of migration studied by demographers: internal migration and international migration.


Table 1.1 A General Typology of Migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relation</th>
<th>Migratory force</th>
<th>Class of Migration</th>
<th>Type of Migration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature and man</td>
<td>Ecological Push</td>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>Wandering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ranging</td>
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<tr>
<td>State (or equivalent) and man</td>
<td>Migration Policy</td>
<td>Forced</td>
<td>Displacement</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Impelled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man and his norms</td>
<td>Higher aspiration</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collective behavior</td>
<td>Social momentum</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>Pioneer</td>
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Migration literature also speaks of a third classification: *forced migration.* Forced migration exists when a person is moved against his or her will, for example, a slave, or when the move is initiated because of external factors (persecution or civil war).

The distinction between internal and international migration is crucial because they happen for different reasons. Structural barriers are more likely to impede the mobility of a potential international migrant than an internal migrant. This is because international migration involves more administrative procedures, greater expense, longer distance and more difficulties associated with obtaining employment, accessing state services, and learning a new language. The motivations behind international migration are usually stronger than those behind internal migration. International migration carries greater political and demographic significance than that of the internal migration as it brings about either gain or loss to a country’s population. Table 1.1 shows a general typology of human migration provided by William Petersen.
**Internal Migration**

This refers to a change of residence within national boundaries, for example, between states, provinces, cities, or municipalities. Internal migration occurs owing to several socio-economic factors. Internal migration can be classified as (a) rural to urban, (b) urban to urban or intra-urban, (c) rural to rural or intra-rural, and (d) urban to rural.

Migration from a *rural* to an *urban* area becomes obvious when facilities and opportunities of human life are abundant in the latter. In the urban areas there are better facilities and opportunities in the fields of education, employment, health services, sports, and income generation. Rural-urban migration is primarily a response to economic motives. In effect, the rural to urban migration transforms society rural to urban.\(^{19}\)

The movement of people from one urban area to another is termed as or *intra-urban* migration.\(^{20}\) This kind of migration takes place because larger cities provide relatively better facilities, work-wages and opportunities than in the smaller cities. As a result, big cities are growing unevenly.

In non-industrialized-agrarian economies, large migration occurs from rural to rural area which is described as *intra-rural* mobility. This type of migration originates from the areas with lower per capita productivity and incomes to areas with a higher per capita agricultural productivity and incomes.

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\(^{20}\) Ibid., p. 12.
The excessive urbanization and uneven development in large cities, particularly in the wake of the Second World War generated a counter migration from urban to rural areas. Over population in the cities and depopulation in rural areas are said to be the reasons behind such type of migration as evident in most European countries, the United States of America and even in some developing countries. These are some of the major internal migration variety generated by the push and pull factors having both negative and positive effects.

**International Migration**

International migration refers to change of residence across national boundaries. An international migrant is someone who moves to a different country. International migrants may be classified as legal immigrants, illegal immigrants, and refugees. Legal immigrants are those who moved with the legal permission of the receiver nation. Illegal immigrants are those who moved without legal permission, and refugees are those crossed an international boundary to escape persecution and displacement.

Large scale international migrations occurred mainly between 1800 and 1939 from Europe to other regions of the world. In fact, with the emergence of large number of nation-states after the Second World War, the problem of international migration has rather proliferated.\(^\text{21}\)

The European immigrations, particularly the Portuguese and the Spanish to Latin America are considered as relatively modern and important international migration. Among other emigrants who made migrations to North America were the

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British, French, German and the Irish. The majority of the immigrants from the European continent moved to the United States, which is said to have hosted over 35 million people of British origin between 1850 and 1914. Similarly, North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Canada were major destinations for European emigrants, particularly the British.

These large migration flows influenced the process of nation state formation in many ways. The diaspora cultures and myths reflected the importance of migration to the foundation of certain nations, like the American “melting pot” nation. The transnational labor migration fell to a lower level from 1930s to the 1960s and then rebounded.

Since the second half of the twentieth century, some major international migrations have also occurred from countries within less developed European periphery and parts of the Third World into northern Europe during the 1960s; from Latin America to the USA throughout the period after 1965; from Asia to America, Australia, New Zealand, and even more within Asia itself, during the 1960s and 1980s; and from the former socialist political systems of Eastern Europe and old Soviet Union after 1989. This movement of people across the globe has become an important component of understanding the “globalization” of world economy.

Theories of Migration

Theories of migration are important because they can help us explain and understand the causes and effects of any particular migration phenomenon in its wider social and political contexts. Because of the fact that people migrate for various reasons, migration has acquired different theories advanced by diverse scholars ranging from political scientists, sociologists, demographers and geographers to economists, historians and lawyers. Four major theories of migration – Rational Choice Theory, Migration Systems Theory, World Systems Theory, and Transition Theory have been discussed here.

Rational Choice Theory of Migration

The earliest rational choice explanations of forced migration can be traced in two of E. G. Ravenstein’s celebrated papers under the title “The Laws of Migration” published in the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* of England in 1885 and 1889 respectively.26

According to Ravenstein, every act of migration involves a driving force. He has drawn this conclusion from his observation on migration flows across Europe and North America during the second half of the nineteenth century as a result of the “disruptive influence of Industrial Revolution.” Industrial Revolution displaced millions of people from their traditional homes and livelihoods leading to their migration all across frontiers in search of a better life or to escape one that had become intolerable.

At the heart of Ravenstein’s emerging migration model are the concepts of absorption and dispersion. He defines a country of absorption as having “a population more or less in excess of the number of its natives.” As migrants move toward absorption centers, they leave “gaps” that are filled up by migrants from more remote districts, creating migration flows that reach out to “the most remote corner of the kingdom.”

From Ravenstein’s point of view migration is “change and progress in human life from sedentary stagnation.” People migrate from one country to another basically for economic compulsions. But what is important for Ravenstein is that such movement of people is not likely to take place lawless. His emphasis is that migration is guided by certain laws or rules which he is said to have derived from his analysis of nineteenth-century population data for England. Ravenstein’s laws of migration can be stated as follows:

1. People are more willing to travel long distances to occupy unsettled land than they would in a country more fully settled.
2. Most migrants are adults.
4. Migrants going long distances generally go by preference to one of the great centers of commerce or industry.
5. The residents of towns are less migratory than those of rural areas.
6. Large cities grow more by migration than by natural increase.
7. Each current of migration produces a compensating counter current.

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28 Ibid., p. 19.
8. Migration differentials (such as gender, social class, age) influence a person’s mobility.

9. The major causes of migration are economic.

The seminal significance of Ravenstein’s theory of migration lies in the fact that several of his generalizations are still worth testing and helpful not only to explain why people migrate for economic reasons within a country but also to explain why people move from one country to another for various other reasons such as “persecution” that caused the Chakma migration to Arunachal Pradesh.

**Push and Pull Theory of Migration**

Rational choice explanation of migration can also be had from push and pull theory. Although push and pull theory of migration is a reformulated version of Ravenstein’s theory, it gives us more systematic guidelines as to why people move. Its chief exponent, Everett S. Lee, postulates that migration from one place to another occurs in a “push-pull” formation; that is, unfavorable conditions in one place “push” people out, and favorable conditions in an external location “pull” them out. This “push” and “pull” gravity works like antinomies or, in a more sophisticated version, through “asymmetrical dyads,” with one pole more strongly affirmed than the other.\(^29\)

The push and pull theory defines migration as permanent or semi-permanent change of residence involving an origin, a destination and an intervening set of

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obstacles. The factors which enter into the decision to migrate and the process of migration have been summarized by Everett S. Lee in the following four headings:

1. Factors associated with the area of origin.
2. Factors associated with the area of destination.
3. Intervening obstacles.
4. Personal factors.

In every country there are countless factors which push people out, for example, ‘persecution’ as minus factor may push people out to a proximate country. The safety situation in the country of refuge may be described as plus factor. However, migration for any reason, economic or political, whether within or outside the country and however stronger the push-pull gravity may be, does not take place ‘obstacle’ free. In fact, structural barriers like long distance and rugged passage, old and minor family members, rules of entry in case of international migration, difficulties associated with earning of livelihood at destination, and learning a new language in a new place impede peoples’ mobility. Table 1.2 shows + and – signs inside the circles and intervening obstacles in between the circles.

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30 For details see, Everett S. Lee, n. 10, pp. 14-24.
31 Ibid., p. 16.
Table 1.2  Plus (+) and Minus (−) Factors at Origin and Destination


On the basis of plus (+) and minus (−) factors analysis, Lee has drawn a series of hypotheses about the volume of migration under varying conditions, the development of stream and counter-stream, and the characteristics of migrants.

Volume of Migration:

1. The volume of migration within a given territory varies with the degree of diversity of areas included in that territory.

2. The volume of migration is related to the difficulty of surmounting the intervening obstacles.

3. Unless severe checks are imposed, both volume and rate of migration tend to increase with time.

Stream and Counter-stream:

1. Migration tends to take place largely within well defined streams.

2. For every major migration stream, a counter-stream develops.

3. The efficiency of stream and counter-stream tends to be low if origin and destination are similar.
Characteristics of Migrants:

1. Migration is selective.

2. Migrants responding primarily to plus factors at destination tend to be positively selected.

3. Migrants responding primarily to minus factors at origin tend to be negatively selected; or where the minus factors are overwhelming to entire population groups, they may not be selected at all.

4. The characteristics of migrants tend to be intermediate between the characteristics of the population at origin and the population at destination.

**Systems Theory of Migration**

Systems explanation of migration was first offered by Akin L. Mabogunje. This approach is designed to answer questions such as: why and how does a person become a refugee or an immigrant? What changes does he undergo in process? What effects have these changes both on the place from where he comes and on the place to which he moves? Are there situations or institutions which force people to move between places or countries? What is the general pattern of these movements and how are they determined?

Here, a system has been defined as a complex of interacting elements, together with their attributes and relationships. One of the major tasks in conceptualizing a migration phenomenon as a system is to identify the basic interacting elements of migration and their attributes and relationships. Once this is done, it soon becomes obvious that the migration system operates not in a void but in a special environment. This environment comprises “the set of all objects a change in whose attributes affects
the system, and also those objects whose attributes are changed by the behavior of the system.\textsuperscript{32}

The environment within which the system of migration operates is created by ‘conditions of insecurity’ at origin and ‘conditions of secured life’ at destination. The breakdown of security within an orbit sharpens the peoples’ stimuli to move. The basic interacting elements to be identified in a system of migration are:\textsuperscript{33}

1. A stimuli from environment by which a migrant decides to move.

2. A variety of information which creates ‘propensity to migrate’ or what is called ‘migration elasticity’ being transmitted to a migrant before he makes the desired move.

3. Within a migration system framework, attention is focused not only on the migrant but also on the various institutions (sender and receiver states and governments or sub-systems such as rural and urban administrations) and the political, social, economic, and other relationships (adjustment mechanisms in the new place of resettlement) which are the integral part of the broader migration process of transformation.

4. A control system or a sub-control system which supervises the operation of the general system and determines when and how to increase or decrease the amount of flows into the system just like a thermostat controls the amount of heat that flows into a given area. A control system may include: a family, a community, a collectivity of groups, national and local administrations, and also various socio-political organizations at different locations both within and outside a country.


\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 46-58.
5. A migration system comprises not only matter (the migrant, the institutions, and various organizations mentioned) but also energy. In the physical sense, energy, particularly “potential energy” is the body’s capacity of doing work by virtue of “stresses” resulting from its relation either with its environment or with other bodies. This potential energy likened to the stimuli acts on individuals to move. Unlike push and pull theory which suggest that people migrate for minus (−) and plus (+) factors, for example, environmental deterioration as minus (−) factor push people out and plus (+) factor like better and secured life elsewhere pull people out, the migration systems theory, in contrast, suggests that people migrate for differential individual responses to the stimuli derived both from the environment and from within the system. People move for a set of plausible reasons and not at a simple negative and positive level as explained by push and pull approach.

6. As soon as an individual moves from one place to another, his role in the system is greatly amplified. Basic to an understanding of this amplified role is the concept of “information,” a central notion in the theory of communications. Information in a system is defined as bits of messages which lead to a set of actions. Thus, it is assumed that a migrant soon starts to transmit back to his origin information about his reception and status in the new place of resettlement.

7. Of equal importance is the notion of “feedback” which has been the focus of the field of Cybernetics. The migration systems theory explains its feedback mechanism in terms of stimulus-response behavior. A stimulus affects a receptor which communicates this message to some controlling apparatus and from this to an affecter which gives the response. In feedback, the affecter’s activity is
monitored back to the receptor with the result that the system’s behavior is in some way modified by the information. The feedback process has one of the two effects. It can further amplify the deviation (in this case by stimulating further migration), or it may counteract the deviation by encouraging a return to the initial situation. Deviation-amplifying feedbacks are regarded as positive; deviation-counteracting feedbacks as negative. The general experience is that migrants are never lost to their origin but continue to send back information.

8. Within a migration system framework, it is assumed that one of the concomitants of the continued interaction between the system and its environment will be the phenomenon of growth in the system. This phenomenon involves more than a simple growth or increase in the number of people moving from one area to another. It is much more complex, involving not only the individual components of the system but also the interaction between them and the system as a whole.

9. The interaction between migrants and the system in effect modifies the character of politics, economy, population, and society within any given destination country. The feedback role of migration between origin and destination transforms both areas through the information exchange.

The migration systems theory enables us to explain migration not as a linear, uni-directional, push and pull, cause-effect movement, but as a circular, interdependent, progressively complex, and self-modifying system in which the effect of changes in one part can be traced through the whole of the system. According to this theory, migration is a continuous spatial process shaping the human occupancy of the earth’s surface.
World Systems Theory of Migration

In world systems theory, political scientists examine migration in a framework of global political system as economists would do it in a framework of global economic system. According to global political system framework, migration is an integral part of the world political system created through the expansion of European empire. The leading explainers of this approach are Hannah Arendt and Aristide Zolberg, both political scientists, who have assessed the fact that migration, particularly contemporary refugee flows are rooted in the breakdown of the European colonies across the globe. As asserted by them, the process of decolonization and the increasing number of nation states after 1945 contributed to the generation of massive refugee migration flows. Unlike general population migration which is patterned by economic factors, these refugee flows are patterned by political forces such as civil strife, abrupt changes of regime, arbitrary government decision and international war, all of which are usually considered singular and unpredictable occurrences. These forces are said to be the manifestations of political trends that are much likely to surface in the contemporary world. Refugee migration flows are a concomitant of world-politics as ordinary migration is of world-economics.

It has been emphasized in this framework that the notion of “political persecution” is crucial because it helps one distinguish victims that include most of the citizens of illiberal states, be these totalitarian or authoritarian, that is, a large part of the world’s population who are singled out as targets of the willful exercise of extraordinary malevolence on the part of the agent. Further, the notion is important because it helps us

trace how states select certain categories of population as targets of persecution, expelling them outright or creating conditions that provoke them into risky flights.\textsuperscript{36}

Hannah Arendt’s analysis show how the dissolution of Europe’s erstwhile multinational empires as those of Russia and Austria-Hungary created multiple new states “in the image of nation-states” leading to the reduction of traditional secular and human rights doctrines of the West. The working of these newly nation-states implied only nationals can be citizens, only people of same national origin can enjoy the full protection of legal institutions whereas persons of different nationality needed some law of exception until or unless they were completely assimilated and divorced from their origin. The nation state-formula was adopted to organize political life in regions containing ethnically mixed population, often intractably interspersed across geographical space that it proved impossible to constitute homogenous political entities of viable size. The yawning gap between the formula and social realities generated enormous tensions, out of which two victim groups emerged. They were the minorities and the stateless that lost those rights which had been defined as inalienable, namely the Rights of Man. Minorities had existed before having enjoyed secular tradition and all human rights, but since the creation of newly nation-states they had been turned into political misfits. Such political dynamic of nation-states created refugee-producing conditions in Europe. Theoretically, the concept of sovereignty is nowhere more absolute than in matters of emigration, nationality and expulsion.\textsuperscript{37}

In analogous vein, Zolberg has emphasized that an analysis of the historical processes of democratic revolutions such as the French and American revolutions since

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p. 283.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p. 286.
the late eighteenth century provides the principal key for understanding how refugees come about. The model of nation-state comprised a social and a cultural content ever since the age of the democratic revolutions. This social and cultural content is the underlying force for the creation of refugees. For example, the nation-state of France that had emerged out of democratic revolution generated cultural refugees known as the aristocratic émigrés. The newly nation-states formed out of the debris of empires inherited the legacy. Cultural minorities are viewed as obstacles to successful nation building process. The massive contemporary refugee flows are most prominently concomitant of transformation of world empires and of small self-sufficient communities or tribes into a world of national states.38

Further, the emergence of new states throughout Asia and Africa triggered within each of them “integrative revolution” which required destruction of old solidarities as well as the fostering of new ones. Formation of nation-states out of sharply divided societies as encountered in most of the contemporary third world would generate political tension. The intrinsic difficulties of the task are compounded by underdevelopment. Underdevelopment contributes to the generation of refugee flows in that it fosters the adoption of authoritarian strategies of state and nation formation, whose execution entails political persecution of certain categories of the population. It is generally evident that groups like ethnic minorities that straddle more than one state; trading diasporas without homeland; ethnic groups associated with colonial rule as indigenous governing classes; any victims who seek to defend themselves and hence, by definition, come to be tagged as subversive. Since the integrative revolution tended to erupt in the wake of decolonization, many of the potential refugee flows associated with

38 Ibid., p. 288.
the formation of new states in Asia and Africa have already occurred like the Chakma exodus to Arunachal Pradesh.

**Transition Theory of Migration**

Transition theory hypothesizes migration as a lever of change and evolution. The theory suggests that migration brings transition such as from a primarily tribal society to a primarily modern society (the social transition), from a high mortality society to a low mortality society (the demographic transition), from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy (economic transition), and from an apolitical society to a political society (political transition). Political transition theory to the study of international migration has been emphasized by scholars like Myron Weiner, Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller.

Weiner describes international migration as a political force and migrants as political actors causing change in political processes of the country in which migrants reside and in the relationship between their country of residence and their country of origin. He provides two propositions for political transition. His first proposition is that migrants, or their descendants, seek to alter migration policies in their country of residence intended to benefit economic and political rights. To gain such objectives, migrants attempt to promote various political interventions. He demonstrated these variations by referring to: Sikh secessionists in the United Kingdom; immigrant Filipino opponents of President Marcos in the United States; Polish immigrants and their descendants in Chicago; immigrants from Timor in Holland. Migrants invariably seek to recreate their own religious, social and cultural institutions. Where permitted they

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39 Ronald Skeldon, n. 26, pp. 31-32.
often develop their own media, schools for their children, religious institutions and political organizations.\textsuperscript{40}

Weiner’s second proposition is that migration is critical because it brings transition in politics and economy within a given space. The fear of migrants turns the local people to be protective of their political space and economic opportunities that exist within it. Under such situation when migrants seek expansion of their political and economic opportunities within that space, it results in intense conflicts between the immigrant residents and the local population for control over political and economic resources and opportunities, political power and social status. This proposition of Weiner’s also suggests that migration brings changes in the activities of various socio-political organizations, particularly in relation to electoral politics within that given space. For example, political parties draw political capital out of migration problem. He emphasizes that migration contributes to understanding the size, composition, and distribution of population in relation to both government and politics, and also the political determinants and political consequences of population change.\textsuperscript{41}

Castles and Miller provide a four-stage transition model that explains the migration from Mediterranean countries to Western Europe and to Australia, and from Latin America and Asia to North America. This model provides a framework for the assessment of international migration purely on normative basis. The four stages in the development of an international migration system are postulated as follows:

Stage 1: temporary labor migration of young workers, remittance of earning and continued orientation to the homeland;


Stage 2: prolonging of stay and the development of social networks based on kinship or common area of origin and the need for mutual help in the new environment;

Stage 3: family reunion, growing consciousness of long-term settlement, increasing orientation towards the receiving country, and emergence of ethnic communities with their own institutions (associations, shops, agencies, professions);

Stage 4: permanent settlement which, depending on the policies of the government and the behavior of the population of the receiving country, leads either to secure legal status and eventual citizenship, or to political exclusion, socio-economic marginalization and the formation of permanent ethnic minorities.42

Castles and Miller suggest that international migration evolves in stages driven by an intrinsic momentum in the migration process. The fourth stage conjures up that there is a changing relationship between migration and political transition in the receiving country.

Political Consequences of Migration

Although it is important to discuss the factors, meaning, types and theories of migration for this study, it is also significant here to discuss the political outcomes and consequences of migration. The above transition theory of migration suggests that migration is a potential political factor. Migration is not simply the transfer of people from one place of residence to another but also an important component for understanding the ever changing “political patterns” and “political relations” of an area.43 As stated in the Encyclopaedia Britanica: “Human migrations within recorded history have transformed the political aspect of all continents.”44

42 Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, n. 19, p. 25.
43 W. A. V. Clark, n. 17, p. 24.
Migration causes formation of new political set up both at origin and destination. Migration not only brings intense interactions between different societies but also qualitative changes in political patterns often leading to violent conflicts between different groups.\(^{45}\) Whatever may be the cause and distance of migration, it invariably ends up in the transformation of political structures of both the place of its origin and the place of reception. As a result, the nature of politics both at origin and destination usually does not stay the same. Migration affects both national and international political life.

**Causes of Chakma Migration to Arunachal Pradesh**

On the question of the causes of migration and resettlement, 20 percent respondents said it was due to persecution policy of the Pakistan Government, 68 percent said that it was due to displacement while 12 percent said it was due to both persecution and displacement. Thus, the Chakma exodus to Arunachal Pradesh was caused by two different circumstances: 1) Pakistan government’s persecution policy over the Chakmas and 2) Kaptai Dam and Displacement of the Chakmas.

1) **Pakistan government’s persecution policy over the Chakmas**

The Chakmas are an indigenous tribal community of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of former East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. They differed from the majority people of Pakistan 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, a delegation of the Chakmas went to Delhi and demanded that the CHT be included in India. Nehru and

Patel assured the delegation that the CHT would be included in India. With the belief that the CHT had been included in India, the CHT leaders hoisted the Indian flag in the Deputy Commissioner’s office at Rangamati on August 15, 1947, the ‘Appointed Day of Indian Independence.’ It is said that the Deputy Commissioner of the district of CHT, G. L. Hyde himself agreed that the CHT became free at that very moment as a part and parcel of free India.\(^46\) But to the surprise of the CHT people, on August 17, 1947, the Boundary Commission announced that the CHT was included in Pakistan. 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.\(^47\)

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.\(^48\)

The Kaptai dam was built across the Karnafuli River in the village of Kaptai (27 kilometer west of Rangamati town) with a bilateral loan from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).\(^49\) The government of Pakistan undertook the

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construction project of the dam in 1959 and completed in 1963. It had catastrophic consequences for the Chakmas leading to the widespread disruption of their traditional socio-cultural, political, economic and environmental system. The huge reservoir created by the dam flooded an area of 1,036 square kilometer, covering the entire Karnafuli river valley lands and its tributaries in which 21,853 hectares (40 percent of best agricultural lands in the CHT) were plough lands and the rests were swidden lands, fruit gardens, administrative centers, trading and market places, homesteads, government forest reserves, and so on.50

As a result, the Chakmas had lost their lands, homes, means of subsistence and virtually everything that they had before the flooding of the area. Adam Curle, one of the engineers engaged with the dam project remarked:

The people who had been affected were mostly Buddhist tribe of the Chakmas and had been totally dispossessed of their agricultural fields…The once close-knit society and culture had been fragmented forever.51

According to Anti-Slavery Society, the victims were promised both financial compensation and substitute land. However, most of them are said have received no compensation of any kind.52 In consequence, a large number of them migrated to India. They entered India through Tripura and the Lushai Hill District (now Mizoram). On arrival, they were first given temporary shelter in Tripura and in the Lushai Hills. Then the Central Government of India offered them a choice of locations for future resettlement which included NEFA and Bihar. The choice fell on NEFA. It was reported

in some newspapers that the choice of NEFA by the Chakmas suited the Government of India and its numerous security agencies in the region for at least two reasons. Firstly, the Chakmas were Buddhist and were expected to get along well with their immediate neighbors and co-religionists, the Singphos and Khamtis. Secondly, the Chakmas were seen as another community to buttress the Indian security presence, especially after the 1962 war with China when Chinese troops sliced through NEFA like a knife through butter.\(^{53}\)

After being informed of Chakmas’ decision to go to NEFA, Mr. Mahabir Tyagi, the then Rehabilitation Minister immediately flew to Shillong in order to direct special trains from Guwahati for transporting the Chakmas to NEFA, particularly those flowing through Aizawl. Those flowing through Tripura are said to have started their journey for NEFA with the help of local Chakma guides. They were asked to halt and regroup at Ledo and Margherita, the entry points to NEFA. In the mean time, Chakmas from the Manchera Transit camp in Assam also reached Ledo. Those who were taken to Bihar were also redirected to NEFA via Ledo. It was towards the end of 1964 that Chakmas were allowed to enter NEFA territory by the NEFA administration and then they were taken to Namphai village where they camped out until the government rehabilitation program began in certain specified areas.\(^{54}\)

**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

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\(^{53}\) For details see, “The Chakmas’ flight to nowhere,” *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, October 17, 1994.

\(^{54}\) For details see, “Partition Potentials,” n. 45, p. 1-3.
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.\(^{55}\)

Since NEFA was then administered by the President of India through the Governor of Assam under the general supervision and control of the Ministry of External Affairs, the question of relief and rehabilitation of the Chakmas fell upon the discretion of Central Rehabilitation Department of India.\(^{56}\) Accordingly, the Central Government endorsed a detailed scheme for their rehabilitation in consultation with the Governor’s administration in NEFA as well as by an agreement with the concerned local headmen and land owners.\(^{57}\) The scheme was structured in conformity with the general rules of Government rehabilitation, that is, Chakmas would be provided relief and rehabilitation on the basis of their camp registration certificate known as ‘Relief Eligibility Certificate’ containing particulars of the migrant.

Under the scheme, each Chakma family was allotted land varying from 5 to 10 acres depending upon the size of the family in addition to a rehabilitation grant of Rs. 4,200 per family. The Central Government was reported to have spent a total of Rs. 130.41 lakhs (Rs.1,341 thousand) between 1964 and 1968, when it had transferred the

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\(^{55}\) Letter D. O. No. 12/16/92/-MZ, Minister of State for Home and Parliamentary Affairs, India, North Block, New Delhi, September 23, 1992.

\(^{56}\) According to the Constitution of India, ‘relief and rehabilitation’ of refugees is to be undertaken by the State with full or partial financial support from the Center. In the Indian Union, the question of relief and rehabilitation of refugees is enshrined as a state subject. As NEFA was controlled by the Ministry of External Affairs till 1965, the rehabilitation question of the Chakmas in 1964 fell upon the Central discretion.

\(^{57}\) Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions, \textit{Hundred and Fifth Report}, (New Delhi: Rajya Sabha Secretariat, 14 August, 1997), pp. 43-44.
scheme to the NEFA Administration for further implementation. As stated by S. P. Talukdar:

Chakmas were permanently absorbed in the state of Arunachal Pradesh in 1964 by an agreement between the traditional leaders of the state and the Central Government of India and thereafter the Chakmas started new life and built a new society as ordained by fate.

As a part of further implementation of the scheme, the NEFA administration is said to have issued trade licenses and ration cards to the Chakmas and provided employment, and education and medical facilities. Given that, Chakmas recreated their own social and economic institutions. Social institutions included, for example, Chakma Panchayat composed of a number of village committees, each headed by a Murubbi (headman). Economic institutions included markets of their own in which they sought to establish shops with official license numbers and sold rice, cattle, jute and variety of vegetables to buyers from short and long distances. Many Chakmas are said to have learnt to write and speak Assamese and Hindi. That reflected the socio-economic absorption of the Chakams in Arunachal Pradesh. In 1965, NEFA was brought under the control of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, there was no opposition from the local population to the settlement of the Chakmas. Chakmas are reported to have lived

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58 Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions, n. 56, pp. 43-44.
60 Based on an interview with a Chakma headman, aged about 65, who runs a grocery and garment shop at Diyun market with license number DYN-26/79. According to him, in 1979, 23 trade licenses were issued to the Chakmas settled in Diyun Circle, Changlang District of which he held one.
61 The NEFA has undergone a series of administrative reorganization since 1947. From 1947-1949, it was administered by the Governor of Assam acting on the Provincial Ministry. From 1950-1964, it was administered by the President of India through the Governor of Assam under the supervision of the Ministry of External Affairs. From 1965-70, it was administered as before by the Governor of Assam as agent of the President but under the general supervision and control of the Ministry of Home Affairs. In 1971, it became Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh. On February 20, 1987, Arunachal Pradesh graduated to full-fledged Statehood. For details see, P. N. Luthra, Constitutional and Administrative Growth of the NEFA, (Shillong: NEFA, 1971), p. 42.
amicably with their immediate neighbors like the Singphos and Khamtis in Diyun and Bordumsa Circles in Changlang District, with the Nishis and Apatanis in Balijan Circle in present Papumpare District. The same was maintained with the Kamptis in Chowkham Circle in Lohit District. However, the local tribals started resenting the presence of the Chakmas due to encroachment by them on lands outside original settlements. The fact that Chakmas had developed original forest land into agricultural fields conducive to both food and cash crop farming also became a source of envy. Further, the growing population of the Chakmas created demographic threat in the minds of the smaller native groups such as the Singphos. The present population of the Chakmas numbers about 40,000.

**Methodology**

Data for the study have been collected through both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included the proceedings of the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary debates, records and publications of the Government of Arunachal Pradesh, the Central Government of India, reports of the Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions, National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC, Delhi), Judgment of the Supreme Court of India (New Delhi, 1996) and Judgment of the Gauhati High Court (Gauhati, Assam, 1994). It also included the publications of the AAPSU, the Organizing Committee Peoples’ Referendum Rally (Naharlagun, Arunachal Pradesh).

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62 Rajya Sabha Committee on Petition, n. 56, p. 44.
63 “The Chakmas’ flight to nowhere,” n. 52.
64 The available data on the present population of the Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh are conflicting. The census of 1981 put the figure at 16,018. After 1981, no census report is available on Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh. In 1994, the Chief Minister, Gegong Apang gave an official figure of the Chakma population as 35,000. The newspaper reports put it between 45,000 and 65,000. The figure 40,000 as presented here has been obtained from the Chakma Murubbis (Chakma Village Panchayat Heads) in Arunachal Pradesh and is found to be consistent with the registration books maintained by the Chakma Panchayats in Arunachal Pradesh.
Arunachal Pradesh), various political parties in Arunachal Pradesh, the Delhi Chakma Students’ Union (DCSU), the Committee for Citizenship Rights of the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh (CCRCAP, New Delhi), the All Arunachal Pradesh Chakma Youths’ Federation (Diyun, Arunachal Pradesh), reports of the Peoples’ Rights Organization (PRO, New Delhi), publications of the Humanity Protection Forum (HPF, Agartala, Tripura), the All India Chakma Cultural Conference (AICCC, Machmara, Tripura), the Amnesty International (London, UK), the Organizing Committee Chittagong Hill Tracts Campaign (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA, Copenhagen, Denmark), the Survival International (London, UK), memoranda, appeals of various organizations, letters and recommendations of the Members of Indian Parliament and local newspaper accounts.

Primary sources also included the data collected through structured and unstructured interviews with a cross section of the Chakmas in three districts of Arunachal Pradesh namely, the Lower Subansiri, the Changlang and the Lohit, where the Chakmas are concentrated. In view of an estimated Chakma population of about 40,000, a stratified random sample of 150 has been proportionately drawn from each of the three districts depending on their population size obtained from the village heads. The stratification has been done on the basis of sex, deriving a male and a female from alternate households. Some existing and former General Secretaries of the AAPSU, the DCSU, the CCRCAP, and district officials like Deputy Collectors, political leaders like Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assembly, NGO leaders, and some Chakma leaders like Panchayat and Village Headmen have also been interviewed. Primary data has also been collected from census reports, statistical hand books, published and unpublished research works.
Secondary sources included data collected from books and articles published in various journals and newspapers.

Data collected through both primary and secondary sources have been cross-checked, tabulated and analyzed on qualitative basis. These data have been used throughout the text of the study and then major findings have been drawn.