Chapter III
AAPSU: The Role and Relevance

Political parties remain indispensable to the working of any democratic society or system. A party is a mechanism through which ordinary masses have indirect say in the policies and programmes of the government. In Arunachal Pradesh, however, parties become active only at the time of elections, and they often fail to raise issues concerning the people. Hence, role of opposition party is played by student's unions or associations. The student's unions apart from playing the role of opposition party very often transgress into the issues outside their domain. There are multiple factors how, in Arunachal Pradesh, student's bodies have emerged as the major spokesperson of the grievances and aspirations of the indigenous people. This has made the role played by the students of Arunachal Pradesh distinct in many respects as compared to students' unions we see elsewhere. S. Dutta has identified the following contributing factors to this trend, which are as follows:

(i) The Socio-Administrative structure of the society evolved over centuries recognizing democratic participation right down to the villages, as mentioned earlier, provided ample scope to the Younger generation also for participation and deliberation in community affairs and service.

(ii) Due to low literacy rate, the students initially enjoyed place of prominence and influence in their respective communities. The Authority in administration, in its initial stage, utilized the services of the influential section of the communities i.e. the students, though
small in number, as a communication-link between the administration and the local people, who did not understand the administrative policies and the procedures introduced in the area at its primary stage of inception.

(iii) Absence of formal political parties for a long time practically till 1978, made the students the chief spokesman of the people vis-à-vis the administration. Moreover, in absence of popular media like newspaper of any kind till recently to moud public opinion and in absence of any other organization, student Union were the only means through which public grievances and aspirations of the people of the State could be ventilated.

(iv) Lack of a strong opposition in the State Legislature and in the State, mostly because of defection, students is to act as the custodian of public interest to a great extent. Further, because of political neutrality, the student bodies generally get support and appreciation from wider section of the people.

(v) The recruitment of members to the student bodies from primary level onward, which is a rare phenomenon in the country, strengthens the base, number and bonds of unity among all sections of students and between students and people. For, in a small size of population, where again individual community have still smaller size, the recruitment of students from all level facilitates better interaction and influence of the students in the society.

(vi) There is very little industrialization in the State leaving vast scope for tapping the immense natural resources and hydel power gifted by
nature. It leaves the Governments as the only source of all kinds of employment. The dominance of non-Arunachalees in jobs and services, in trade and commerce, creates frustration in the minds of local unemployed youths. Further, there is more production of Arts graduates with Scientific and technical education covering only a microscopic minority of the total student strength. Even in case of technically qualified people many are unemployed, as here again government departments are the only source of employment for them, which has created deep resentment.

(vii) The role students in the North Eastern Region especially the example set by the All Assam Students Union has boosted the morale of the student activities and organization of Arunachal Pradesh.

(viii) The unbalanced economic growth resulting in differential distribution of benefits of development among various communities and regions and various other historical factors have created tension and awareness among the students of various communities. This has resulted in the growth of community and district level student unions and organizations to draw attention and get due shares of the development programme of the Stat (Dutta, 1998: 20-21).

Since the days of NEFA, students have been vocal in raising issues concerning state and its people. The 7th Session of All NEFA Students’ Union Conference was held on 17th October 1967 at Jawahar Lal College, Pasighat. The Conference discussed some ‘burning’ issues of NEFA and passed certain resolutions to be presented before the NEFA Administration and the Government of India. The following resolutions were adopted:
(i) Constitution of Boundary Commission to resolve NEFA and Assam outstanding boundary disputes.

(ii) Deportation of Chakma, Hajong and Tibetan refugees from NEFA.

(iii) Shifting of NEFA Capital from Shillong to within suitable place of NEFA.

(iv) Continuation of Inner Line Permit system in NEFA A.

(v) More representatives in parliament- 2 MPs for Lok Sabha and 1 MP for Rajya Sabha.

(vi) More reservation of posts of Govt. services to NEFA tribals.

(vii) Appointment of efficient and experienced teachers in NEFA A schools and colleges.

(viii) Provision of free textbooks and Library facilities in schools and colleges.

(ix) Early completion of IN College buildings and introduction of Science stream at IN College.

(x) Construction of inter-District road communication and Border roads for Defence Forces.

(xi) Abolition of Assamese Language as medium of instructions from all school of NEFA and introduction of Hindi and English subjects in schools.

(xii) Construction of Rest Houses at Dibrugarh, Naharkatiya, Tezpur, Guwahati, Shillong and Delhi.

(xiii) Enhancement of NEFA stipends.⁹

⁹(a) PG Course from present Rs. 110.00 PM to Rs. 150.00 PM.
(b) College course -do-- Rs. 90.00 PM to 120.00 PM.
PN Luthra, the then NEFA Adviser to the Governor of Assam, indicated to the students delegates that all the demands, except issues regarding NEFA-Assam boundary and refugee problems, put forward to the state Administration shall be fulfilled. The NEFA-Assam boundary and refugee issues were left for consultation with the Government of Assam and the Government of India (Yonggam, 2015: 13-14).

The Language Issue

The then undivided Assam comprised of the present states of Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Constitutionally the state of Arunachal Pradesh remained a part of Assam till 1972 when the state was granted the status of Union Territory. Unlike rest of the states, Arunachal Pradesh was not exposed to western culture and education, as the British government did not pay any attention towards this frontier territory. This territory was beyond the reach of Christian proselytizers, and hence English language could not be developed.

After independence, Government of India introduced Assamese as a medium of instruction in educational institutions. This was done only in case of Arunachal Pradesh and other states like Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoiam, Tripura and Manipur were learning English. Some of the NEFA students came to know that Assamese was a regional language that confines only in the State of Assam. In the mean we the educated students of NEFA realized that Assamese Language is not going to help us in career building in all India Level competition examination. Realizing all these facts

(c) Medical course --do-- Rs. 100.00 PM to Rs. 150.00. PM
(d) Engineer course --do -- Rs. 150.00 PM to Rs. 170.00PM.
(e) Agriculture course-do-- Rs. 100.00 p.m. to Rs. 150.00PM.
(f) School course --do-- Rs. 35.00 PM. to Rs. 50.00. PM.
we the students of NEFA particularly the students of JN College, Pasighat under the leadership of Gegong Apang former chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh launched agitation for abolition of Assamese language as medium of instructions from all schools of NEFA and appealed to Government of India, through NEFA administration in Shillong, to abolish Assamese language as medium of instructions from schools of NEFA and to introduce Hindi and English language as medium of instructions in all schools of NEFA without delay. The Administration fulfilled the demand of the students and medium of instruction was changed accordingly in 1972. Nyodek Yonggam gives credit to students belonging to Galos, Minyongs and Padams, now Adi Galos, Adi-Minyongs and Adi Padams from Abor Hills now East, West, Siang and Upper Siang and part of Lower Dibang Valley districts of Arunachal Pradesh (Yonggam, 2015: 15-16).

It is no wonder that the movement for replacement of Assamese by English was spearheaded mostly by the students and the elite class of the society. Earlier, Assamese was the medium of instruction and also the lingua-franca of the people of erstwhile NEFA. As no language was that developed and common to take the place of Assamese, as the local people were slightly scared of a developed Assamese culture that could engulf the local one and also as perhaps the local educated generation was more fascinated by the development on other hill areas of the North East because of English education as one of the factors, they demanded English as the medium of instruction in NEFA with Hindi, the national language, as the Second language, with of course a place to Assamese in the Course of study. They aim of getting English as the medium of instruction was achieved in 1972 but with certain fall-outs. Even though English has become the medium of instruction from Primary to University level, Hindi gets unofficially preference and priority over English. As a result, he
Students become proficient neither in English nor in Hindi leading to general deterioration in academic standard. It is surprising to note that because of this, there is a tendency of opening more privately owned English medium Schools separately in a State where otherwise also English is the medium of instruction. Though emphasis on Hindi is good for national integration, the voice of the people of the State should always get top priority for language and script they desire. Unnecessary effort to use Devnagari script in developing tribal dialects against the wishes of the local intellectuals for Roman Scripts should be avoided. The apprehension of loss of tribal identity by preference of Young generation for Hindi in place of tribal languages of their own has also been expressed by intellectual of the area (Dutta, 1998: 25).

Another important demand was the shifting of the NEFA Head Quarters from Shillong to a place within Arunachal Pradesh, which was fulfilled by the government in 1974, with the shifting of capital city from Shillong to twin-city of Naharlagun and Itanagar. Initial demands such as Assam-Arunachal boundary issue and refugee problem did not get any definite place, which have become serious issues after the creation of Union Territory and subsequently the statehood.

**NEFA Students’ Union to AAPSU: Its Activities**

NEFA Students’ Union, after its nomenclature was changed to All Arunachal Pradesh Students’ Union in 1972, achieved a sort of Pan-Arunachal identity. In order to get their demands fulfilled the All Arunachal Pradesh Students’ Unions till adopted such means, what Dutta calls as “pray, petition and partnership” (Dutta, 1998: 28) with the Government to draw its attention to some of the problems of the student community in particular and the people of the State in general. However, with the achievement of an independent political status in the form of
Union Territory, its demands became more specific. Some of the important demands include:

(i) Solution of Assam Arunachal boundary problem.
(ii) Detection and deportation of foreign national from the Territory.
(iii) Withdrawal of land allotment permits and trade license from the non-Arunachalees.
(iv) Effective checks against further infiltration of foreign nationals.

The year 1979 saw a drastic change in "strategy, tactics, style of functioning and policy towards Government" (Dutta, 1998: 29) by the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union. An incident related to boundary problem between Assam and Arunachal near Likabali in present West Siang district led to this change. There was an allegation that an Anchal Samiti Hall belonging to Arunachal Pradesh at Likabali was illegally occupied by the Assam police. The local people demanded its vacation by the Assam police which ultimately led to a police firing. It is said that the Assam police also arrested a student of Pasighat Higher Secondary School in Silapathar, near Likabali in Assam-Arunachal boundary.

The matter was reported to the AAPSU and the Union took up the matter rather seriously and submitted a charter of demands to the Government of Arunachal Pradesh that was prepared in a meeting held at Pasighat. The then General Secretary of the AAPSU Tanya Dabi, however, took a moderate view on the problem and played a very constructive role to diffuse the tension. He could convince the Arunachal Government about seriousness of the problem that could ultimately pave the path for a convention on the problems of the two chief ministers of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Dabi took initiative to solve the problem at the level of the students of the two states by having a meeting with his counterpart of the All Assam
Students’ Union in May 1979 at Tezpur. They arrived at an Agreement for a joint action by both parties on the problem. The summary of the Agreement is presented below:

(i) To keep the issue at abeyance for sometimes.
(ii) To work for restoring peace and harmony between the people of the two States.
(iii) To convince the Governments of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh to find out a permanent solution to the boundary problem.
(iv) To hold a joint student conference of the AAPSU and the AASU to deliberate on the problem at Itanagar.

The late seventies was a period of anti-foreigner agitation which was led by AASU. As the AASU was involved in a prolonged and serious movement of foreign national issue in Assam, the proposed meeting between the AASU and the AAPSU could not be held. However, several meetings on official and ministerial levels had been held on the path paved by the Students organisations of the two States.

A two-day Arunachal Bandh call was given by the AAPSU in support of their demands listed earlier for the first time in early 1980. The Arunachal Government took notice of the situation and in a radio broadcast on 23rd April 1980 from the Dibrugarh station of the All India Radio, the Chief Minister Gegong Apang tried to persuade the Students to desist from agitation path explaining his Government’s stand and viewpoints on the demands of the AAPSU. The Government also enhanced the amount of stipend to the Arunachal Students. But the AAPSU was no satisfied with the Government stand and became increasingly ‘agitational’ in the subsequent years.
In the meantime, the new office bearers of the AAPSU were elected in its meeting at Tezu in April 1981. Jarbom Gamlin and Larbin Nashi were elected as president and general secretary respectively. The Executive Body prepared a new eight-point memorandum in its executive meeting held at Pasighat on 10th February, 1982. The Memorandum, besides including the old demands, also included new demands such as, 80% job reservation to the Arunachalees, stoppage of allotment of contract to non-Arunachalees, etc. In support of these demands the AAPSU organized a series of district-levels bandhs from 17th July 1982 to 27th July 1982. Thus, an atmosphere of confrontation between the Government and the AAPSU was created.

During those days, the Assam agitation started by the AASU in the State against foreign nationals had taken the shape of a widespread mass movement. The AAPSU was inspired greatly by this student movement in Assam and it had given support to the Assam Agitation by launching its movement in 1982 demanding deportation of the refugees from the State besides pressing the Arunachal Government for accepting its other demands too. Similar nature of problems faced by these Student organisations of the two States on refugee and foreign national issues had thus established a concord between the AAPSU and the AASU (Dutta, 1998: 31).

**Refugee Issue**

The issue of settlement of refugees in this protected territory has always been a challenge for the judiciary, policy makers and the researchers. This is a challenge as it involves the rights and status of both the contesting parties. The Government of India accepts this as “a highly emotive issue in the state of Arunachal Pradesh
and is agitating the attention of various sections of the local people\textsuperscript{10}. The ‘emotive issue’, which gave rise to a paradoxical situation, has political, legal, social and demographic ramifications. Invocation of international legal protections and covenants by the refugees is contested by the natives, who claim to have equal legal protections as the indigenous people of the area.

There are three refugee groups in Arunachal Pradesh – Tibetans, Chakmas and Hajongs. The Tibetan refugees have been settled in Arunachal Pradesh since early sixties. They had migrated out of their homeland with the 14\textsuperscript{th} Dalai Lama when Peoples Liberation Army of China moved inside Tibet. They are spread in three refugee settlement areas in the state, Tenzingang, Miao and Tezu, with a total population of approximately 6,000. In addition, there are the scattered communities of Bomdila and the settlements of Tuting, giving a total population of approximately 9,000 Tibetan refugees in Arunachal Pradesh.

The Chakmas, who hail originally from Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh are actually displaced indigenous people. The region (CHT) was included as a part of Pakistan after partition of India in 1947 in spite of the fact that most of the inhabitants of the CHT are either Buddhist or Hindu. The Chakmas and other non-Muslim tribal communities were forced to move out because of religious persecution and the construction of the Kaptai hydro-electric dam. The Hajongs are Hindus from Mymensingh district of the erstwhile East Pakistan, now Bangladesh.

The word Chakma or Chukma is a generic term given to a predominant hill tribe of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bangladesh (Talukdar: 1994). The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), bordering India and Myanmar, is located in southeastern

\textsuperscript{10}The statement used in the Counter Affidavit on behalf of Union of India filed by J.S. Bhurjia, Director (Assam), Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, in the Supreme Court of India in a Civil Writ Petition No. 720 of 1995- National Human Rights Commission of India vs. State of Arunachal Pradesh and Another.
Bangladesh. It covers an area of 13,190 square kilometers (sq. kms) that constitutes about 10 per cent of the total land area of Bangladesh. The Tract was awarded to Pakistan in 1947, which then was consisting of 98.5% non-Muslim population-thirteen Tibeto-Burman tribes, including the Buddhist Chakmas and Hindu Hajongs (Saini, 2009). The construction of the Kaptai Hydroelectric Dam, between 1957 and 1963, led to the displacement of over 100,000 tribal people (about 25 per cent of the region’s population), and flooded at least 54,000 acres of settled cultivable land (Amnesty International, 2000).

A Report of the Government of East Pakistan notes:

According to the survey undertaken by the Rehabilitation Officer, about 10,000 ploughing families having land in the reservoir bed and 8000 landless jumia (the tribal people whose means of livelihood is Jumming or slash-and-burn cultivation) families comprising one lakh people (1 lakh = 100,000) were displaced. The reservoir submerged a vast area comprising 125 mouzas. The inundation threw over 54000 acres of plough land out of cultivation. This area constitutes 40 percent of the total settled cultivable land of the district viz. Karnaphuli, Chengi, Kasasalong, and Malni have been inundated (CHT District Gazetteer, 1971:42).

An Amnesty International Report, dated 26th January 1994 reads:

Thousands of Buddhist Chakmas and Hindu Hajongs settled between 1964 and 1971 in what was then NEFA (North East Frontier Agency). They came from East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, a Muslim majority state. The Chakmas were at that time displaced by the Kaptai dam, a hydroelectric project in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The Hajongs originate from the Mymensing district in the former East
Pakistan. Many Chakmas and Hajongs say that they came to India because they feared persecution on religious grounds in the then East Pakistan.

As per the estimation of the Government of India at least 140,000 persons, including hundreds of Chakmas and Hajongs, had migrated to Assam. As the State of Assam expressed its inability to settle such a large number of migrants in the State and had requested for relocation, the Government of India resettled some of the refugee families in Arunachal Pradesh. ‘Rehabilitation assistance’ at the rate of rupees 4,200 per family was also sanctioned by the Government of India (Vijayakumar, 2000: 236) From the years 1964-69, as part of the refugee settlement programme, a total of 2,748 families of Chakma and Hajong refugees consisting of 14,888 persons approximately were rehabilitated in Chowkham in Lohit district, Miao, Bordumsa and Diyun in Tirap (now Changlang) district and Balijan in Subansiri (now Papum Pare) district. The area then was administered by the Ministry of External Affairs with the Governor of Assam acting as the agent of the President of India (The White Paper, 1996).

The clear intention of the Government of India to resettle the Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh was reflected from a letter, No. GA-71/64, dated April 10, 1964, of Vishnu Sahay, the then Governor of Assam, addressed to the then Chief Minister of Assam, Bimala Prasad Chaliha, which pointed out that: “It occurred to me that we may get trouble between the Mizos and Chakmas in the Mizo district. These Chakmas would be quite suitable people to go into the Tirap division of NEFA where there is easily found vacant land in the area about which you and I have often spoken” (The White Paper, 1996).

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persons were rehabilitated in Chowkham in Lohit district, Miao, Bordumsa and Diyun in Tirap (now Changlang) district and Balijan in Subansiri (now Papum Pare) district. The records of the Government of Arunachal Pradesh suggest that their population increased to 21,494 in 1979. All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union has estimated the population of Chakma and Hajong refugees to be 60,000. The 2001 Census has listed 39,920 Chakma population and 2,413 Hajongs.

The government of Arunachal Pradesh and AAPSU has been extremely vocal against settlement of any groups of refugees. They argue that under the Constitution of India, Arunachal Pradesh has been given special status and the ethnicity of the State has been protected by declaring the entirety of the area of the State as Scheduled area to be administered under Part X read with the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. The Government of India did not want to bring about any change to disturb the cultural and social life of the tribal communities. Nor it intended to impose any values from outside. Jawaharlal Nehru, who favoured a policy of retaining a distinctive identity of the tribals while integrating them into national mainstream, envisaged Panchsheel (five principles)\textsuperscript{11} for tribal development. The principles, have been “underlined as the policy of the government in the various developmental activities in tribal areas” (The White Paper, 1996: 9). The principles envisaged by Pt. Nehru were, however, ignored while settling the Chakma and Hajong refugees in this territory(The White Paper, 1996:10).

\textsuperscript{11} (a) People should develop along the lines of their own genius.
(b) Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected.
(c) The Govt. of India should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development.
(d) The Govt. should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes.
(e) The Govt. should judge results, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved.
Considering the significance and relevance of *Panchsheel* and keeping in view the special status of the land and the ethnicity of the indigenous people of Arunachal Pradesh, the then Adviser to the Governor of Assam, P.N. Luthra, formulated a broad guidelines for implementation of settlement schemes pertaining to Chakma and Hajong refugee.\textsuperscript{12} The guidelines specify that:

(a) Land should be voluntarily given by the people to whom an emotional approach has to be made. Such approach should be made by the Political officer himself and he should consult the leaders in the areas to ensure that any resettlement proposals do not lead to misplaced agitation or misunderstanding.

(b) Land should as far as possible not belong to anyone and this point should be fully cleared, before its utilization for settlement. There are areas where tribal rights area not likely to be affected by settlement of people of NEFA.

(c) Land may be given to the settlers on lease for which a term has to be prescribed along with the Performa to be signed by the settlers.

(d) Where land is given by the people voluntarily there ought to be written agreement about it on either side.

(e) Wherever any compensation is needed, it would be duly paid to villagers and necessary documents prepared.

(f) Only that much of land which may be adequate to constitute an economic holding should be allotted to each family coming from outside NEFA. As a rule, the ceiling for allotment of land to each family of settlers should be put up to this Administration for approval.

\textsuperscript{12} Vide his letter No. PR. 17/64 dated 21\textsuperscript{st} April, 1965.
(g) Any ground survey must precede any attempts at settlement.

The Government of Arunachal Pradesh argues that the settlement of Chakma and Hajong refugees took place in total disregard of the principles and guidelines, and the local authorities (traditional tribal Village Councils) were never consulted. The government report notes that the “settlement got started on the basis of the report of Shri U. Chakma the then Political Officer, Pasighat which was highly biased against the indigenous people”. His bias attitude is reflected in a file noting on Settlement of Miao-Bijoynagar Valley, wherein he advised that “too much importance and indulgence should not be given on “tribal reactions” and so-called tribal policies which encourage pampering and spoils the tribals”. U. Chakma himself suggested that he be made settlement Officer-cum-Additional Political Officer of Changlang district in addition to his present duties, as Political Officer, Pasighat(The WhitePaper, 1996: 10)

*Why Arunachalees are Opposed to Permanent Settlement of Chakma and Hajong Refugees*, an undated pamphlet issued by All Arunachal Pradesh Students’ Union notes, “there is nothing on record to show that land was given to the settlers on lease or any term for such lease holding was prescribed. .....at no point of time indigenous people were consulted while making decision for resettlement of Chakma and Hajong refugees in their area”. The settlement of the refugees “is a clear indifference to local sentiments and sufferings” (Arunachal Students’ Union Delhi, 1996). The Union cited an instance of the demand of the Tirap Students Conference way back in 1968, which stated that “The refugee problem is becoming a source of headache to the local people and the administration as well. No more refugees should be settled in Tirap district” (Arunachal Students’ Union Delhi, 1996). In a letter to the Divisional Forest officer,
Changlang dated July 21, 1964, the then Director Forest, P.B. Kar stated that “the main work that requires to be done is to obtain concurrence of the villagers. They have sent a representation against such settlement”. In the same letter he had questioned, “whether the villagers have given this permission of their free will or out of fear that the administration wants it, we do not know” (The White Paper, 1996:22). The indigenous tribal people have opined that “their customary laws have been violated and traditional rights have been encroached upon by allowing settlement of Chakma and Hajong refugees by the Central Government much against their wishes” (The White Paper, 1996: 1).

The Government of Arunachal Pradesh maintains that Arunachal Pradesh is an ethnic state as it consists exclusively of schedule tribes’ population. Since the tribal communities here have their own cultural traits, unique to themselves, there is “nothing common between the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh and the Chakma refugees” (The White Paper, 1996: 4). The presence of the Chakma and Hajong refugees in the State and repeated attempts being made by various agencies to vilify the state government is a deliberate attempt to jeopardise the efforts being made by the State Government in preserving the tribal identity and culture. The White Paper notes that:

The ethnic tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have distinctive culture, traditions and customs. They have been following their customs and traditions, evolved over ages from time immemorial. These customs and traditions, which are integral parts of their life and living in tough hilly terrain in challenging circumstances, have given rise to a distinctive identity to the indigenous tribal people (The White Paper, 1996: 4).
It has been argued that "throughout the course of administrative and political events Arunachal Pradesh has been enjoying a special status under which no person or persons other than the indigenous people have the right to settle in Arunachal Pradesh permanently" (All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union, 1996: 3). The "Protected status" was granted to the then North-East Frontier Tracts during the British rule in India. The Tracts were considered as a 'non-regulated area', the area which was to be ruled by summary legislation in the discretion of the Governor. The powers under summary legislation authorized the then Lt. Governor of Bengal to prescribe a line called Inner Line in each or any of the districts beyond which no British subjects can pass without an Inner Line Permit, under Section 7 of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873. The relevant portion of the Regulation, which is still in operation in entire territory of Arunachal Pradesh, reads: "it shall not be lawful for any people not being the native....to acquire any interest in the land or product of land beyond the said "Inner Line" without the sanction of the Local Government".

The Inner Line for the first time separated some tracts inhabited by tribal people from the districts of Assam and British authority. The area was kept outside the purview of regular laws of the country and administered in different way by passing regulations and framing procedures from time to time. The Scheduled Districts Act, 1874 was passed by the government to administer the tracts or districts inhabited by the tribal people in rude and rough manner by simple regulations. The Chief Commissioner-ship of Assam including the North-East Frontier hills was declared as scheduled district under the Act. A special statutory power with regards to the administration of the frontier hill areas was conferred on to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.
The Government of India Act, 1915 as amended by the Govt. of India Act, 1919 provided for designation of tribal areas as 'Backward Tracts.' The Governor-General acting under Section 52A of the Act of 1919 declared the tribal areas in Assam including North East Frontier areas as 'Backward Tract' within the constitutional framework of the Government of Assam. Under the Government of India Act, 1935, the tribal areas then called as 'backward tracts' were regrouped under two categories, 'excluded' and 'partially excluded areas'. Thus in 1937, the Frontier Tracts- Balipara Frontier Tract, Sadiya Frontier Tract and Lakhimpur Frontier Tract came to be categorised as the 'excluded areas' of the province of Assam under the Govt. of India (Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas) Order, 1936. The excluded areas came under the direct control of the Governor and the legislation for this area was to be effected through Regulations only. No Act of the Federal Legislature or the Provincial Legislature would apply to any area declared as 'Excluded Areas'.

After the independence of India and transfer of power in 1947, the Governor of Assam was deprived of his discretionary powers in respect of the North East Frontier Tracts. The administrative jurisdiction was passed on to the Government of Assam by virtue of the provisions of the Indian Independence Act, 1947. However, the administration was continued to be carried by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister of Assam, who was then called the Prime Minister. With the Constitutional Act of 1950 coming into force, the name 'Excluded and Partially Excluded' areas was done away with. All the hill areas (including the North-East Frontier Tracts) were simply designated as 'Tribal Areas.' The Constitution has brought a change in the administrative set up of the Frontier Tracts. The Government of Assam was relieved of their responsibility for the administration of North-East
Frontier Tracts because of administrative reason. The Governor of Assam was once again entrusted with the discretionary power, who was to act as the agent of the President of India under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India provides special provisions for administration of the tribal areas in Assam. The tribal areas of Assam were divided into two parts: Part A and Part B. The North East Frontier Tract was specified in Part B of the table appended to Paragraph 20 (1) of the Schedule and extension of the Central rule was made possible in the area.

In an effort to “preserve the tribal society in its pristine form and to protect it from any outside interference”, (The White Paper, 1996: 7) the British government in India allowed regulation of the socio-political and cultural life of the people through traditional self-governing institutions. These institutions work within the general framework of Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945. Under this Regulation Gaon Buras (village elders) are appointed as Village Authorities, which still maintain the law and order in the tribal society of Arunachal Pradesh. The Regulation empowered the Village Authorities to handle the social, cultural and legal affairs at the village level with great degree of freedom. The existing traditional laws are such that no any member of a tribal community is permitted to settle down in the territory belonging to other community. Therefore, settlement of non-natives/foreigners in the tribal territory defeats the very essence of such customary laws.

By the Foreigners Protected Area Order, 1958, the territory of Arunachal Pradesh was declared as protected area. The civilian authority may, by an Order, may prohibit any foreigner or any class of foreigners from entering or remaining in the area, and impose restrictions on the acquisition of land or any interest in the land
within the area. The Gauhati High Court by its ruling\textsuperscript{13}, dated 30\textsuperscript{th} April 1992, held that the state government has within its jurisdiction to direct the Chakma families, the foreigners, to shift to vacant land as they have no right to seek a permanent place of abode in that area. The court relied upon a ruling of the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of India, which held that the Executive Government has unrestricted right to expel a foreigner. It says, “the power of the Government tin India to expel foreigners is absolute and unlimited and there is no provision in the Constitution fettering this decision”\textsuperscript{14}. The Supreme Court concurred with the decision of the Gauhati High Court and accordingly dismissed the civil appeal filed by Khudiram Chakma\textsuperscript{15}.

Apprehensions of the indigenous communities are palpable, indicating that if the “refugees are settled permanently after granting citizenship, the extinction of the small indigenous population of Arunachal Pradesh will be imminent” (All Arunachal Pradesh Students’ Union, 1996: 6). They question the insistence of the Government of India for settling the Chakma-Hajong refugees in a “Protected Area” like Arunachal Pradesh in spite of existence of various legal and constitutional provisions and the spirit behind these provisions.

Drawing the attention of the Central Government to the “anti-social and anti-national activities of these refugees” the State Government maintains that “the presence of the Chakma and Hajong refugees in the State is a constant source of social tension.... and ultimately poses a grave threat to the very survival of indigenous people”. (The White Paper, 1996: 23) The State has alleged that the Chakmas are

\textsuperscript{13}Khudiram Chakma vs. Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh and Others, (AIR 1992 Gau 105.}
\textsuperscript{14}Hans Muller of Nurenbeg vs. Superintendent, Presidency Jail, Calcutta, (1995) 1 SCR 1284: (AIR 1955 SC 367.
\textsuperscript{15}Khudiram Chakma vs. Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh and Others, Civil Appeal No. 2181 of 1993.
indulging in “heinous crime of murder, arson and loot; encroachment of Reserved Forests, manufacturing of arms and ammunitions, and training of the youths in underground activities” (All Arunachal Pradesh Students’ Union, 1996: 4). The Supreme Court, in Khudiram Chakma vs Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh And Others case, had observed that “from files, it is clear that there have been complaints against Chakmas that they are procuring arms and ammunitions and indulging in anti-social activities....... There are altogether 76 cases registered upto November 1979 against the Chakmas and most of them were related to theft, assault and offences under Forest act. The Chakmas also encroached upon the neighbouring area by unfair means and created trouble for the local people”.

The State Government is equally concerned about the Chakmas “hobnobbing with the underground outfits and their criminal mentality” (The White Paper, 1996: 23). The Chakmas, numbering more than one hundred, were reported to have undergone arms and other training under Kachin Independent Army in a place called Pinosop/Chidi in Kachin area of Burma by procuring arms from the Government of China. They are also reported to be instigating the Lisus of Gandhigram to take up arms against the Government of Arunachal Pradesh\(^{16}\).

There are reports of 65 criminal cases, which included kidnapping of local youths, registered against Chakmas in Diyum police station alone. They attacked local Singphos and government officials by injuring scores of them when 60 Chakma families were evicted being from M-Pen following a court order to vacate the area. Indigenous sacred places were burnt down in Kathan village to pave the way for establishment of new Chakma village (The Arunachal Times, May 24: 2011). Quoting

\(^{16}\)WT Message from the Deputy Commissioner, Changlang dated 16\(^{th}\) August, 1990
the Forest Range Officer of Diyum. The Arunachal Times reported that “Once they had attacked forest officials and police while they were carrying out eviction drive. Taking advantage of their ever increasing population, Chakmas always resort to violent act when we try to evict them. Situation is very alarming and there is urgent need for higher authorities to intervene” (The Arunachal Times, May 27: 2011). The RFO adds, “They have destroyed 2649.47 hectare of forest land causing heavy loss to the department in Diyun area. Every month they are spreading their settlement to various reserve forest areas. If we don’t act now, it will be too late” (The Arunachal Times, May 27: 2011).

It is also reported that there has been massive encroachment of the Reserved Forest areas in Changlang and Lohit districts by moving out of their designated camps. Such act of the refugees has led to the destruction of many endangered forest species. Despite many eviction drive carried out by authorities, they have not moved out of encroached land till date and are expanding their settlement to new areas, which prompted the Vice-President of All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union, Tobom Dai to remark, “Chakmas are challenging the rule of this state by destroying reserve forest area and illegally encroaching land of tribal people. Government should immediately intervene and help local people” (The Arunachal Times, May 27: 2011).

The White Paper maintains that the phenomenal growth of the population of the Chakma and Hajong refugees may cause “disaster to the natural eco-system carefully nurtured by the local tribal people through the ages” (The White Paper, 1996: 13). The State of Arunachal Pradesh, one of the ten international “hot spots” in the world, has a very fragile eco-system which requires constant and urgent protection and is known for its mega-biodiversity at the global level. In spite of retrieval of about 400 hectares
of Diyun Reserved Forest land which was under illegal occupation of Chakmas since 1986, they continued to remain in illegally occupied areas in Reserves Forest and National Parks.

As per reports, Chakma and Hajong encroachers of 20 hectares plantation (1985-86) near Bijoypur under Bordumsa Range were evicted on 31st October, 1995. On 18th June, 1994, 50 Chakma families were evicted from Manabhum Ridge of Tengapani Reserved Forest. On 9th August, 1994, Chakma occupants of 20 huts were evicted. On 22nd November, 1995, notices were issued by Divisional Forest Officer, Banderdewa to 20 Chakma refugees settlers to vacate nearly 110 hectares of Drupong Reserved Forest allegedly encroached by them. Between 20th October, 1995 and 26th October, 1995, in all, Chakma encroachers from 46 huts were evicted and an area of 47 hectares of Diyun Reserved Forest was retrieved. Chakma refugees have been intruding into the Namdapha Tiger Project/National Park area and causing destruction to the habitat. Their cattle have also been grazing unauthorisedly inside the park area and damaging the plantation raised by the Government. They have also been indulging in illegal cutting of trees. This biotic interference has damaged the flora and fauna of the habitat. A recent assessment conducted by the Field Director, Namdapha Tiger Reserve shows that an area of 24.6 square miles has been adversely affected by the biotic interference by the Chakmas (The White Paper, 1996: 13).

Although AAPSU launched its first agitation against the refugees in 1982, it failed to bring any tangible result. In May 1994 the AAPSU organized a huge ‘Delhi Chalo Movement’ where a delegation of about 400 students went to Delhi, organized rallies and stayed there for about a month to attract the attention of the Central leaders to the problem. The effort of AAPSU could not bear much fruit, and they even failed to meet the Prime Minister to drive home this point. It was reported that the Prime
Minister refused to meet the AAPSU delegation. But the Prime Minister met the Chakma student delegation n(Dutta, 1998: 247).

It was a letter, dated 7th July 1994, from P.M. Sayeed, then Minister of State (Home), to Nyodek Yonggam, then MP (RS) that sparked a ‘critical phase’ in AAPSU’s movement against the refugees. The letter in question reads: “under the Indira-Mujib Agreement of 1972, it was decided that the Chakma/Hajong refugees who came to India from the erstwhile East Pakistan before 25, 3, 1971 will be considered for grant of Indian Citizenship”\(^1\). Almost as a reaction to this letter, the AAPSU served a “Quit Arunachal Notice” on 1st August 1994 asking all the refugees and the foreign nationals to leave the State voluntarily and honorable by 30th September, 1994.

The Arunachal Assembly in its eleventh session held from 7th to 9th September 1994, unanimously adopted a resolution\(^1\)

\(^1\)DD No. 13/12/94 MZ, dated 7th July 1994 written by Sri. P.M. Sayeed, Union Minister of States, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India, addressed to Sri. Nyodek Yonggam, M.P. of Rajya Sabha from Arunachal Pradesh.

\(^1\) Four Assembly Resolutions have been passed so far on the issue: First, on September 23, 1980- “This Assembly urges upon the Government to take steps to remove Chakma refugees from Arunachal Pradesh”. Second, December 3, 1992- “The members of the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh. The House also expressed strong sentiment and exception to the letter No.DO/12/16-92-MZ dated 23rd September, 1992 by Shi M.M. Jacob, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, addressed to Shri LaetaUmbrey, MP, (Lok Sabha) in Jacob, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, addressed to Shri LaetaUmbrey, MP, (Lok Sabha) in Jacob, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, addressed to Shri LaetaUmbrey, MP, (Lok Sabha) in Jacob, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, addressed to Shri LaetaUmbrey, MP, (Lok Sabha) in Jacob, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, addressed to Shri LaetaUmbrey, MP, (Lok Sabha) in Jacob, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, addressed to Shri LaetaUmbrey, MP, (Lok Sabha). Third, September 21, 1993- “The House unanimously connection with the Chakma Refugees.” Fourth, earlier resolution for deportation of Chakma and other refugees from Arunachal Pradesh.” Fourth, earlier resolution for deportation of Chakma and other refugees from Arunachal Pradesh.” Fourth, earlier resolution for deportation of Chakma and other refugees from Arunachal Pradesh.” Fourth, earlier resolution for deportation of Chakma and other refugees from Arunachal Pradesh.” Fourth, earlier resolution for deportation of Chakma and other refugees from Arunachal Pradesh.” Fourth, earlier resolution for deportation of Chakma and other refugees from Arunachal Pradesh.” Fourth, earlier resolution for deportation of Chakma and other refugees from Arunachal Pradesh.” Fourth, earlier resolution for deportation of Chakma and other refugees from Arunachal Pradesh.” Fourth, earlier resolution for deportation of Chakma and other refugees from Arunachal Pradesh.”
other refugees from the State. In the same resolution the House expressed its strong
sentiment and resentment and took exception to the letter. Referring to the “Quit
Arunachal Notice”, the Chief Minister said that his Government could not take any
action against the students as they are voicing the demand of the entire population on
the State. He was critical of the Central Government for its inaction on several issues
confronting the State like, amendment to the Statehood Act, Assam-Arunachal
boundary dispute, etc., all of which are in the agenda of theAAPSU\(^{19}\).

An All Party Legislators Meeting was convened by the Government of
Arunachal Pradesh on September 6, 1995 to discuss the problems of refugees and
evolve action plan to deport them. In the meeting, it was decided to hold Peoples
Referendum Rally to be spearheaded by AAPSU, the apex students’ body of the state.
The Referendum Rally was accordingly convened which was attended by
representatives from various political parties, panchayat leaders, representatives of the
NGOs, village elders, etc. The following resolutions were adopted:

(i) The Govt. of India while honouring the decisions of the Hon’ble
Gauhati High Court & the Hon’ble Supreme Court vide which Chakma
& Hajong refugees of Arunachal Pradesh have been held as foreigners
and in deference of the demand of all indigenous people of Arunachal
Pradesh should take a firm decision of deport Chakma and Hajong
refugees out of Arunachal Pradesh within a period of three months i.e.,
by January one, 1996.

(ii) That the state Govt. must ensure eviction of Chakma & Hajong
refugees from unauthorized occupied areas including forest areas

\(^{19}\) The proceedings of the 11\(^{th}\) Session of the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly, Legislative
Assembly Secretariat, 1994
encroached by them within a period of one month to confine them to their originally earmarked settlement camp.

(iii) The formation of committee organization like the Committee for Citizenship Rights and the Peoples’ Rights Organization (PRO) for agitating the issue of grant of their citizenship formed by Chakma & Hajong refugees be banned forthwith as foreigners cannot form such Organization committee, the act being illegal & un-constitutional and such act also undermines the protected status of the indigenous people.

(iv) The Govt. of India particularly the ministry of home affairs must not entertain representation of and grant of audience to Chakma & Hajong refugees in connection with grant of citizenship as the issue of grant of citizenship to them has finally been decided by the Apex Court of the country in negative.

(v) If the deportation of Chakma & Hajong refugees out of Arunachal Pradesh is not carried out within the stipulated time frame by the central Govt. all political leaders of the state shall resign from the primary membership of their respective political parties and shall form a common organization under the banner of which indigenous people shall continue to fight for the cause of indigenous people and till the Chakma and Hajong refugees are deported out of Arunachal Pradesh.

(vi) That any indigenous people if found to be extending any help or assistance to Chakma and Hajong refugees, directly or indirectly, shall to ex-communicated and expelled from the society state. That the presidents of all political parties and the students’ organizations unions are jointly authorized to forward the resolution to the Prime Minister of
India & the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh and all political party presidents, students organizations and the state Govt. shall take such follow up action as necessary to materialize the above resolutions.

About 5000 students and people from different parts of the state participated in the rally. It was a time when the Chief Minister of the State along with many of his Cabinet colleagues stood together with the AAPSU and other public leaders demanding immediate solution of the refugee problem. While supporting other demands of the AAPSU like, amendment on Statehood Act, boundary problem with Assam, the Chief Minister said in the rally that while his people are not opposed to the grant of citizenship to the refugees, the people of Arunachal Pradesh under no circumstances can accept their residentship in the State. Neelam Taram, the Home Minister, while supporting the cause of the AAPSU, appealed to the students not the take law into their own hands. The meeting was addressed by several public leaders and the president and General Secretary of the AAPSU.

The AAPSU to keep the issue alive adopted a unique method demanding early solution of the problem, by launching of the “Quit Certificate Movement” on January 25, 1995, in protest against the indecisive stand of the Central Government on deportation of the Refugees. AAPSU organized the move for surrender of certificates in the district Headquarters also. A local daily has commented, “The Supreme Students Union (AAPSU) is starting its first phase of agitation by observing “Quit Certificate Movement” from to-day. Interestingly, this is the first of its kind and will have to wait to see whether most parents would like their wards to surrender their certificates as it amounts to surrendering one’s career in a platter”(The Echo of Arunachal, 25th January: 1995).
The AAPSU has not opposed the conduct of election to the State Assembly, but has opposed the campaign by the leaders of the national Parties in support of their candidates in the State. But as Narasimha Rao, the Prime Minister and president of the National Congress (I) visited the State capital Itanagar to address a campaign meeting in favour of candidates of his party, the AAPSU declared a 10-hour capital Bandh on 27th February 1995 opposing his visit. The AAPSU president Tage Lapung stated that the Prime Minister who had no concern for development and problem of the State and who had also denied audience to the Arunachal Student-Delegates during their ‘Delhi Chalo March’ in May 1994, should not visit the State in the wake of Assembly elections. The AAPSU had also called a bandh in Pasighat on 4.3.95 in protest against the visit of former Prime Minister Mr. V.P. Singh to campaign for his party candidates and in Tazu and Namsai on 7th and 8th March respectively in protest against the visit of Cine-actor SatrughnaSinha to campaign for BJP candidates.

Refugee problem came to surface again in April 1020 when scores of people were injured in M-Pen under Miao sub-division following a clash between Singphosand Chakmas over a dispute land(The Arunachal Times, April 2: 2010).The troubled started when 60 Chakma families were evicted from M-Pen following a court order to vacate the land on March 31 as some Singphos, who have Land Possession Certificate wanted it back. Chakmas in early sixties were given settlement in an area of 8 miles across one side of the road, but with the passage of time their population increased and they started to encroach the land of the Singphos. According to a source Chakmas armed with Lathis and Doas allegedly ambushed on some 30 Singphos who were on their way to start construction in M-pen. This incident provoked widespread condemnation from the society, including AAPSU. The AAPSU in a
statement strongly criticized the “unacceptable behavior” of the Chakmas and demanded action against those who were involved in the attacking of the Singphos. The Chakmas should be restricted to their designated refugee camp and their movements in Arunachal Pradesh should be restricted. Further AAPSU President Takam Tatung added that if no concrete action is taken within a month then AAPSU will resort to democratic means of protest. *(The Arunachal Times, August 14: 2010)*. He said that M-Pen incident is not an isolated one, and there are many criminal offences committed by the Chakmas. It has also been mentioned that Chakma and Hajong refugees are undergoing underground training in collaboration with some extremist outfits of the North East.

Yet another institutional intervention that ignited the minds of indigenous people of the state was the decision of the Election Commission of India (by its 2004 Order) to include 1,497 eligible Chakma and Hajong voters in the electoral rolls. The ECI overruled a State Cabinet Resolution dated 14-05-2003, terming it as “not in consonance with the provisions of the constitution and acts and rules governing the matter”. The Cabinet Resolution directed that non Arunachalees shall not be entitled to be enrolled in the electoral rolls in the state unless they possessed Inner Line Permits.

The Gauhati High Court dismissed a PIL filed by AAPSU against the guidelines issued by the ECI for revision of Electoral Rolls in respect of 14-Doimukh (ST), 46-Chowkham (ST), 49-Bordumsa-Dayum, and 50-Miao (ST) Assembly Constituencies.

Boycott call was given to 2004 parliamentary elections by APPSU on the question of voting rights to the Chakmas and Hajongs. A lesser-known militant group, the National Liberation Front of Arunachal, backed the AAPSU’s call to boycott
election on the vexed refugee issue, holding the central government responsible for it (The Arunachal Times, May 1:2004). The AAPSU announced “no solution, no election” and stated that “if any political party or individual files nomination defying the boycott call, AAPSU will take serious exception and they will face the consequence”. The Union asserted that “there should be no representative in the Lok Sabha from Arunachal Pradesh as the Centre has neglected the pleas of the people”. It further warned that the Union would “try by all means to close down all central establishments in the state besides boycotting Hindi language” (The Echo of Arunachal, March 14:2004).

On 17th September, 2015, the Supreme Court. (bench of Justice Anil R. Dave and Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel), allowing the petition by the Committee for Citizenship Rights of the Chakmas (CCRC) of Arunachal Pradesh, said: ”We direct the government of India and the state of Arunachal Pradesh to finalise the conferment of citizenship rights on eligible Chakmas and Hajongs.” The court further said that the exercise for the grant of citizenship to Chakmas and Hajongs people may be “completed at the earliest preferably within three months from today”.

There was a strong protest coming from AAPSU, terming it as “arbitrary” and “hurting the sentiments of the indigenous people of Arunachal Pradesh”. It declared the verdict as “uncalled for and unacceptable”, adding that “any political party, political leader(s), community organization or individual supporting the verdict shall be deemed to be an anti-Arunachal” (Echo of Arunachal, September 20: 2015). Protest rallies were organized in all district headquarters of Arunachal Pradesh and the national capital. The Union had gone to the extent of seeking China’s help if the recent Supreme Court judgment granting citizenship to refugees in the state is not overturned. Speaking to
reporters in New Delhi, former Aapsu general secretary Gumjum Haider, in a thinly veiled reference to China's constant claim over Arunachal Pradesh, said the state can take help of a "foreign country" over the matter."For the Chakmas, India is a foreign country but they are fighting the indigenous people of the country to fight us," he said. "We can also take the help of a foreign country". He later said the "Chinese government already says we (people from the state) do not require visas to enter china (www.telegrapgindia.com).

Assam-Arunachal Boundary Issue

The issue of demarcation of boundary between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh has remained a bone of contention between two neighbouring states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The AAPSU, in the absence of any organized groups to raise the issue, had taken unto itself for 'justified' solution to this problem. This issue, still remains unresolved, has been one of the main causes for the AAPSU to adopt aggressive posture against the governments.

When Arunachal Pradesh was created (out of Assam) in 1972, the Assam-Arunachal boundary was not properly defined and demarcated. The AAPSU not only demands return of plain portions of North East Frontier Tracts, which was transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the government of Assam in 1951 by a Notification, but also it demanded pre-1914 status to be restored. It may be mentioned here that in 1914, a Notification was issued by the Foreign and Political department of the Government of British India, which created a Tract, namely, North Eastern Frontier Tracts. The 1914 Notification had clearly identified the areas that belong to the Territory.
The AAPSU claims that the 1951 Notification was issued by the Governor of Assam without taking the people of Arunachal Pradesh into confidence. The Union, therefore, rejects it as being "unjust" and "unacceptable". By the said Notification, the plain portions of the Balipara Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract, Abor Hills District and Mishmi Hills district were transferred to Assam.\(^{20}\)

Bijan Mahanta writes that "with the transfer of these plain land to Assam, the boundary of the North-East Frontier Agency came to the foot hills" (Mahamta, 1984: 113). Since this transfer has complicated the matter further, the AAPSU demands that the areas should be restored to Arunachal Pradesh in the interest of the solidarity and tranquility of the people.

A six-point Resolution, signed by the AAPSU president Nabam Rebia and its general secretary Tabin Taki, was adopted in a meeting held in Pasighat on 26th August 1985. The meeting was attended by representatives of tribes from different districts and political leaders of various political parties and was presided over by the Vice-President of the AAPSU Dawa Tsering Thongdok.

It resolved that,

Whereas, a grave injustice had been done to the people of Arunachal Pradesh by the unlawful and unilateral transfer of certain areas from Arunachal Pradesh to Assam in 1951;

\(^{20}\) Notification No.TAD/R/35/50/109, dated 23rd February, 1951. Many studies have suggested that the notification was not transferred because of recommendation of Bordoloi Committee. The Committee did not transfer was effected because of recommendation of Bordoloi Committee. The Committee did not transfer was effected because of recommendation of Bordoloi Committee. The Committee did not transfer was effected because of recommendation of Bordoloi Committee.
Whereas, the meeting considered the Boundary as delimited in the boundary Notification of 1914 as the original, true genuine and natural boundary of this region; Whereas, all territories carved out of Arunachal Pradesh and handed over to the State of Assam without consulting the people of Arunachal Pradesh (erstwhile NEFA) in 23rd Feb' 1951. The meeting now resolves that these areas should be restored to Arunachal Pradesh in the interest of the solidarity and tranquility of the people of India;

Whereas, this Boundary problem be given urgency by the Govt. of India, as otherwise the enforced partition of Arunachal Pradesh people will give mere rise to great discontentment, leading to serious conflict which must be avoided at all costs in the interest of tranquility and security of the country;

Whereas, the meeting further resolves to withdraw the all police posts established in disputed areas by the Assam Government and some areas after 1979 violating the status quo agreement reached between the Government of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam in 1979 immediately;

Whereas, this meeting of the students of Arunachal Pradesh resolved to convey the Government of India, to constitute a Boundary Commission immediately to resolve any outstanding disputes with regards to the territories which Assam may claim on the ground that they have been attached to the said State. This commission should be empowered to give decision on the spot and demarcate the boundary on the ground.

In a representation to then prime minister of India, Indira Gandhi, the NEFA Students’ Union had urged upon the Government of India to take the following steps, for urgent solution the boundary problem:

(i) To secure the cooperation of the Surveyor General of India to survey the area and fix the boundary of disputed areas.
(ii) To form a Boundary Commission consisting of the official and non-official from both the State Governments to have a permanent settlement of the problem.

Giving details of the historical background of boundary issue, the Union writes that the "boundary issue between NEFA Assam had been bone of contention between the two neighbours since India achieved independence". It adds,

More often than there have been several incidents culminating bloodshed and burning down of houses at place like Likabali and Jonai areas of Siang Frontier Division of NEFA. Similarly, there have been incident concerning the same problem places like Rupa in Kameng Frontier Division and Kimin in Subansiri Frontier Division, Sunpura in Lohit Frontier Division is being experienced by the local people. No such proper attention has been paid by any authority from either side. Still the people of Assam continue occupying the best fertile lands belonging to NEFA. As known to the Govt. of India that accepting the small area of foot hills the whole of NEFA covering 31,000 sq. miles is mountainous. The major parts of NEFA are steep hills that are unfit for human dwelling. Sub-tropical disadvantages have caused land problem in NEFA. In view of the increasing population resulted by the gradual decline of death rate the land problem is becoming an acute and burning question of the day keeping in view of the fact that land is the only source of income of the people of NEFA. In addition to these disadvantages cause by natural calamities land left to the people are also allotted to the refugees from East Pakistan, Tibetan and to ex-serviceman of our country. But it does not mean that we the people of NEFA have any such feeling against the follow Indian refugees rather we would help the later in every possible way within our capacity. But we ourselves have been facing acute scarcity of land we cannot be expect to part our own holdings.
With a view to keeping a permanent and peaceful solution of the problems we the people of NEFA had submitted a number of memorandums to the NEFA administration, to Government of Assam and to the Govt. of India. The Parliamentary delegation headed by Shri. S.Y. Krishnamurthy Rao the then Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha when he paid a visit to NEFA in the month of May 1966 recommended that boundary problem between NEFA and Assam should be solved sooner or later to establish a feeling of friendship and goodwill among the plains and hill tribals. Apart from this suggestion, suggestion of Administrative Reforms Commission who visited NEFA recently have also strongly felt the necessary of finding some effective measures to the land problem that NEFA people are suffering from so as to enable them in procuring sufficient foods. They have strongly recommended that an immediate measure should be taken by forming a boundary Commission to avoid the existing conflict of the land between Assam and NEFA and find out the ways and means to bring about good understanding, peaceful and friendly feeling among the plains and tribals. But it is matter of regret that such valuable suggestion has not been implemented so far by the Government, of India. Due to such delay and negligence of the Govt. of India in taking of effective measure to the people further bloodshed and more considerable incident are expected to be taking place sooner or later as recently the inhuman treatment has been made to the tribal people of Jonai21.

Very often border clashes do occur in the boundary and such clashes are more active in the areas like Emchi (Papum Pare district), Likabali (West Siang district) Ruso (Londging district), Kimin(Papum Pare district), Holongi

21Letter to the prime minister, signed by the president NEFA Students’ Union, dated 24th February, 1969, Ref. No.P/NSU/183/69
(Papum Pare district). In 2010, the problem became very acute at Ruso village of Kanubari sub-division (Londging district) when some unidentified miscreants demolished two police barrack constructed by Assam authority on 14th of August 2010 at Simhokho which the local Arunachalees claim that area where police barrack was constructed belong to them (The Arunachal Times, August 14:2010). Situation turned volatile with the injury of one civilian because of firing by the Assam Police at Simhokho following a long standoff between the local public and Assam Police. The firing incident forced the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh to personally take stock of the situation. He took strong exception of the situation, and spoke to the Assam caretaker Chief Minister, Bhumidhar Barman and asked him to intervene in the matter so that such incidents are not repeated along the inter-state boundary (The Arunachal Times, August 16: 2010).

Situation remained tense with hundreds of armed agitated people ready to retaliate and the All Tirap Student's Union declared a 12-hour Tirap bandh in protest against the unilateral action of the Assam police. Local populace were further displeased by the sensationalization of the inter-state boundary issue by some media houses of Assam which reported that NSCN ultras had fired upon the Assam police and arms and ammunition were also captured.

The All Assam Student Union, Sivasagar district unit imposed economic blockade in Kanubari Circle causing acute shortage of essential commodities in eastern Arunachal Pradesh. The old method of choking supply of essential commodities to Arunachal Pradesh adopted by Assam students' union had angered entire people of Arunachal Pradesh. The Arunachal Citizens' Right (ACR) while expressing concern over the imposition of economic blockade
against Tirap by All Assam Students' Union (AASU), called on All Arunachal Students' Union (AAPSU) and All Assam Students' Union to sit together and come to an amicable and agreeable decision which would safeguard the interest of the people of both the states, rather than resorting ways which may worsen the situation (*The Arunachal Times*, August 21: 2010).

Expressing serious concern over the situation the AAPSU president Takam Tatung had appealed to AASU and North-East Student Organization (NESO) to intervene and end this "humanity crisis". AAPSU criticized the failure of State government to bring permanent solution to the boundary problem and President Takam Tatung also stated that "After repeated pressure from AAPSU, government of Arunachal created department of boundary affair. But since then this department is dormant and we have not heard them carrying out any activities. Government needs to explain public about reason behind nonfunctioning of this department." (*The Arunachal Times*, August 19, 2010). The economic blockade was lifted by Assam Government on August 27 after a Ministerial Level peace talk. While welcoming the lifting of blockade AAPSU President Takam Tatung also requested people living along the border to respect sentiments of each other.

The AAPSU stands to uphold the principle of preservation of territorial integrity of the state, and its leadership has always been in the forefront to achieve this principle. A statement from a former AAPSU president, Takam Tatung, clearly sends the signal, "AAPSU stands with those Arunachalee who are fighting to safeguard their Land and will extend any Help to them. We won't let even an inch of our Land taken away by outsiders" (*The Arunachal Times*, August 19, 2010).
So, when it comes to the demands of NSCN (Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland) for inclusion of Tirap, Changlang and Lordinging district of Arunachal Pradesh to their so-called Nagalim (Greater Nagaland), AAPSU’s stand is very clear. On 2nd April AAPSU submitted a seven-point Memorandum to Union Home Minister, P Chidambaram at Raj Bhavan, Itanagar which clearly states that “The people of Arunachal Pradesh and its popularly democratically elected State Government must be taken into confidence when the question of conceding any part of the Arunachal’s territory arise” (The Arunachal Times, April 2: 2010). AAPSU also vehemently objected the idea of Naga Peoples Front trying to field candidates in the last assembly election in the state. Assam-Arunachal Boundary problem was also included in the memorandum, urging the Minister to play a catalyst role in finding a permanent solution to the boundary issue.

**Problem of Immigration**

Most of the Northeastern states have faced the problem of illegal immigration, particularly of illegal Bangladeshi migrants, who provide cheap labor in abundance. These migrants have posed threat to the security and cultural identity of the indigenous people of the region. The problem is the most acute in the state of Assam.

Arunachal Pradesh, though protected by the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873, also faces similar problem because of presence of large number of illegal migrants. Because of lack of work force and availability of vast tract of unused land, outside laborers find it easy to move inside this ‘protected area’.

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22NSCN proposes to include some areas of districts of Assam, including Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Nagaon, North Cachar Hills, some districts of Manipur, which include, Temenglong, Ukhrul, Chandel and Senapati, besides three districts of Arunachal Pradesh.
They are easily hired for agricultural and other related activities, and also for construction works. There are reports of illegal migrants being given shelter by the local residents.

Arunachal Pradesh not only faces the problem of illegal migrants but there are many instances of issue of Scheduled Tribe certificates and trading licence to outsiders through fraudulent means.

"Operation Clean Drive" was a drive against infiltration, illegal land allotment and issuance of fake ST certificates, launched by AAPSU on 4th May 2007. In the backdrop of this drive, the then President of AAPSU KaniuBagang stated that they would soon constitute a committee in this regard and visit various districts to assess the number of people possessing fake ST certificates and land allotment. Union demanded that police force at the check gates should be strengthened and Government to view the problem of illegal immigrants seriously or the day will not be far when Arunachal will witness the situation akin to Assam (http://news.oneindia.in/2007/05/04/aapsu-to-launch).

It was reported that AAPSU was fairly successful in the first phase of the operation by driving away 5,000 illegal migrants from various districts of Arunachal Pradesh (http://news.oneindia.in/2007/08/14/aapsus-drive-against-illegalmigrants).

However, the second phase of the Operation Clean Drive received a jolt when the Papum Pare District administrator impose ban on such activities. After being not allowed to launch the second phase of movement, AAPSU submitted a representation to the Chief Minister to demand a clear cut policy regarding the problem of illegal migrants. They
also demanded that ILP should not be issued to the laborers and appealed to the political leaders of different political parties, contractors, business community and associations not to engage the Bangladeshis as cheap laborers in construction sites, cultivation, crops and markets and for driving auto rickshaws and scrap collectors in the border state (http://news.oneindia.in/2007/08/14/aapsus-drive).

Opposition to Statehood Bill

Arunachal Pradesh attained the fullest political personality with the granting of statehood in 1987. To give effect to the statehood, the State of Arunachal Pradesh Bill was passed in 1986, which AAPSU claims contains many loopholes needing immediate correction.

Dutta opines that “the introduction of Arunachal Pradesh Bill in the Parliament in 1986 added a new dimension to the Students Movement in Arunachal Pradesh”(Dutta, 1998:40). Since the Chinese aggression in 1962, the question of statehood to the Union Territory was gaining ground in the minds of the Arunachal people. During a visit of the Parliamentary delegation to the then NEFA in 1963, the people of Arunachal Pradesh ventilated their desire in the discussion. Since then the demand for statehood was continuously persisted. Provisional Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh in its Budget Session also adopted a Private Members’ resolution unanimously on March 24, 1977, calling for grant of statehood to the Union Territory. The main argument was that if Nagaland could be given statehood, there was no justification to deny the same to Arunachal Pradesh. A delegation of Legislators led by the Chief Minister had called on the then Prime Minister Morarji Desai in New Delhi in April 1977 to press the demand for statehood (Dutta, 1998:40).
After a gap of 10 year Arunachal Pradesh revived its demand for statehood. The decision of the central Govt. to grant statehood of Mizoram as per terms of the Mizo Accord inspired the people of Arunachal Pradesh to intensify the demand. When Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi summoned the Arunachal Pradesh Cabinet to Delhi to discuss the possibility of granting Statehood to Arunachal Pradesh on July 24, 1986, he asked them to work out the details about the mobilization of internal resources by the Union Territory. The Chief Minister Gegong Apang stated that the Prime Minister had agreed in principle to grant statehood to Arunachal Pradesh along with Mizrom. The initiative of the Prime Minister was also hailed by the opposition leader Tomo Riba (Dutta, 1998:41).

AAPSU was strongly opposed to the idea of granting statehood to Arunachal Pradesh at “this stage”. In a fax message to the prime minister, dated 25th August 1986, the Union felt that “Arunachal Pradesh not yet reached stage for granting statehood”. It demanded that “statehood be granted at appropriate time after Arunachal attains certain degree of socio-economic development”. The statehood be granted, when such development is achieved, “after appointing a committee to ascertain the state of development attained”

Experts have, however, suggested that the main reason for opposing statehood appears to be fear that flow of fund of development projects being received from the Central Government on a liberal basis may be effect once Arunachal was made a full-fledged State.

The government maintained its position with certain clarifications. The AAPSU convened a joint meeting of students and publice at Pasighat on 20th December 1986 to oppose the Statehood proposal. It however, adopted a number of

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23Fax Message to the prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, dated 25th August 1986, signed by Nabam Rebia, president and TabinTaki, general secretary.
resolutions seeking certain modifications in the Statehood Bill, which included special constitutional provision for the state of Arunachal Pradesh in the line of Article 371(A and (G); inclusion of all tribes with proper nomenclature in the Scheduled Tribe list; Opposition to inclusion of “Any Naga Tribe”, and opposition to inclusion of 16 scheduled castes in the list.

S. Dutta writes that “it was believed that the opposition of the AAPSU to the Statehood proposal was mainly engineered by the State’s then opposition party i.e. the Peoples’ Party of Arunachal Pradesh (PAA) (Dutta, 1998:40). The scholar, however, believes that PPA would not have influenced the decision of AAPSU to oppose the Statehood Bill. Most of the issues raised by the PPA and AAPSU were identical, as both are fighting for the interests of state and its people.

**Opposition to APPCOCA**

In the absence of any strong opposition party, AAPSU had to play its role by opposing an anti-democratic law passed by the state Legislative Assembly. The Arunachal Pradesh Control of Organized Crime Act, 2002 was passed under the chief ministership of Mukut Mithi on the argument that it would control the worsening condition of the law and order situation in the State, especially in the districts of Tirap and Changlang (http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/arunachal).

These two district shares boundary with Nagaland, and proved to a safe haven for the underground outfit like NSCN. They carried out rampant extortion and abduction, traders and bureaucrats are forced to donate as much 10% of their annual income as Development Funds' (http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/arunachal/Timeline/2002.html). Between the year 2000-2002, 149 insurgency related incidents took place in
which 60 insurgents, 25 security force personnel and 16 civilians were killed, adding to the woes of the state Government. Government decided to take stringent action against insurgency problems, and introduced APCOCA which is an extension and mixture of acts like POT A and TADA. The act has a very difficult provision for anticipatory bail or for automatic enlargement of bail, has a punishment laid down including three years in jail or life imprisonment, and fines ranging from one lakh to five lakhs. But, by far the most controversial provision is the modification of Section 167 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) in terms of which an accused can be kept in police remand for up to 30 days (from the normal 14 days under Cr PC) and in judicial remand for 90 to 180 days (from the usual 60 days under Cr PC). The Act empowers the police to intercept telephones and other modes of communication used by a suspect (http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?221166-web#1299).

Keeping in mind the possible misuse of the act by the politician and by the armed forced, AAPSU was vocal against the Act in the pre-enactment stage and as well as after it came into force. In a press release AAPSU described the Act as "illegal as it seeks to suppress the fundamental rights of the citizens and victimized political opponents", and the Union maintained "the ground realities in the State do not warrant the enactment .... The imposition of stringent measures and giving blanket powers to police to act with impunity will not only destroy the democratic polity, but also turn Arunachal Pradesh into a police state" (www.sapt.org).

AAPSU called a central Executive Body meeting and decided to call for a 12-hour bandh (general shut down) on 23rd August to oppose the passing of
the Bill, but the APCOCA was passed by the Legislative Assembly on the very same day. AAPSU launched state wide agitation on 18th September to oppose the Bill, few minor incidents of violence were reported and approximately 200 activists, including the President of the Union Dominic Tadar were taken into custody (http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/coun).

APCOCA cost Mukut Mithi his chair and there was a change in the Government, the new Government under Gegong Apang ultimately revoked the Act on 19th August 2003. The hard work and energy that AAPSU put into scrapping of this Act was finally fulfilled, thus reassuring the importance of the AAPSU in political arena of, the State.

Opposition to Granting of PRC to Non-APST

Apart from refugees and illegal migrants, there are many communities in Arunachal Pradesh who have been settled in the state many years but have not been granted the status of permanent residents. These groups include Mishings, Karbis, Deoris, Morang, Mottak, Adhivashis, etc. They have been demanding for grant of Permanent Residence Certificates on the basis that they are in de facto occupation of land and resources within the state for generations together.

The Government of Arunachal Pradesh decided to grant PRCs to those Non APST and their families who are residing in the districts of Lohit and Changlang prior to the 1968, and whose record are available with the administration24. The government, citing an Order from the Supreme Court, indicated that granting of PRC shall not entitle the Non-APST to claim for Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe status and any benefit or reservation meant for APST.

The AAPSU, not being satisfied with the clarification being given by the government, served an ultimatum for cancellation of the said order. The Union while condemning the government had accused it of “betraying the sentiments of its people” (The Arunachal Times, September 12: 2010). It argued that granting of PRC to Non-APST was a clear violation of the provisions of Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873. Moreover, AAPSU pointed out that, these two districts are hideouts for many insurgents groups in North East India which includes ULFA from Assam and NSCN from Nagaland. The Union went to a step further by stating that "whoever supports the cause of non-APST will be from now treated as traitor and people of Arunachal will not forgive them for siding along with outsiders" (The Arunachal Times, September 14: 2010).

AAPSU was joined by other organizations in its fight against the government's order. People, particularly of the affected districts, expressed utter discontentment over the government decision and came out in protest in huge numbers. District Union like All Mishmi Students Union (AMSU), All Tirap Students Union (ATSU), Tirap Changlang Students Union (Itanagar), All Tai- Khampti Singhpo Students Union (ATKSSU), and All Changlang District Students Union extended their support to AAPSU and demanded for immediate revocation of the order.

The AAPSU president announcing a Protest Rally stated that "It's not only about Lohit and Changlang, the entire people of Arunachal are very angry and sad with this order. When this anger grows and if people's movement is launched, state government will be in deep trouble," (The Arunachal Times, September 22: 2010). The rally, as decided, took on 28th
September from Akashdeep (New Itanagar) market to the Chief Minister's bungalow, and submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister. Simultaneously similar public rally organised at Tezu by the indigenous tribal people of Lohit district. The representative of All Mishmi Students Union and All Tai Khampti Singpho Students Union submitted their representation to government of Arunachal Pradesh through the Deputy Commissioner. Sensing the mood of the people and AAPSU the Government of Arunachal Pradesh finally revoked the order on 29th September" (The Arunachal Times, September 29:2010).

Opposition to Chinese Claim over Arunachal Pradesh

Communist China claims whole of Arunachal Pradesh as a political as well as geographical extension of mainland China, calling it 'Southern Tibet'. China has repeatedly been objecting to the visit of Indian leaders in what they called as 'disputed territory'. She also objected to Asian Development Bank loan to India as it was going to be used for the development of Arunachal Pradesh. Occasionally the Chinese Embassy does not issue visa to 'Indians' from Arunachal Pradesh maintaining that Arunaclalees are their own people and hence need no permission to visit their 'own country'. It happened to our former Chief Minister, Gegong Apang and Ganesh Koyu, IAS, a senior official of Government of Arunachal Pradesh. At present it issues 'stapled visa' to any visiting individuals from Arunachal Pradesh.

China had expressed its resentment over the visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Arunachal Pradesh in the month of October 2009. Troubled by the repeated Chinese claim over Arunachal the APPSU staged a dharna on 3rd November 2009, in front of Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, the national capital. The resident Takam Tatung in his address to the gathering
said, “Young generation of the state wants to send a strong message across to
Beijing that Arunachal is a part of India. It would be good if China realizes
this undisputable fact, he said denouncing the Chinese claims” *(The Arunachal
Times, November 3: 2009)*

The *dharna* was supported by various students’ bodies from North-East
India under the banner of North Eastern Students Organization (NESO). Five
member’s delegation under the leadership of President Takam Tatung decided
to build national opinion on the Chinese claim over Arunachal Pradesh and
termed it as "Mission Opinion". Under this programme AAPSU leaders called
on the leader of opposition in parliament L.K Advani and apprised him about
the “deep agony and anguished of the people over Chinese claim”*(The
Arunachal Times, November 3: 2009)*.

As an extension of it protest against the Chinese claim, AAPSU called
common people and the business to the boycott of Chinese product with effect
from 8th February 2010 in the State. On the same day, the Union (AAPSU)
burnt the effigy of Chinese President Hu Jintao along with Chinese goods.

**AAPSU on Education**

The primary objective of AAPSU, as points out, was to “spread the light of
education in the society” *(Dutta, 1998: 23).* Change of medium of instruction from
Assamese to English with Hindi as second language was also spearheaded by
the Union. Use of Assamese as a medium of instruction slightly scared the
people of developing Assamese culture that could engulf the local culture, and
the fascination of the young educated generation with the development in the
other hill areas owing to the use of English education also acted as one of the
factors for the demand. The demand for the use of English medium of instruction was achieved in the year 1972. Demands were also made for the enhancement of the rate of Stipend to NEFA students and establishment of hostels for NEFA students studying at Shillong and reservation of seats in various Science and technical institutions across the country for the NEFA students.

As the AAPSU takes up issue concerning state as a whole, the issues related to educational sector were sidelined very often. However, from time to time demands related to improvement of educational infrastructure, timely supply of text books, enhancement of stipend, posting of adequate teachers etc were made.

AAPSU has been demanding for the introduction of Education Bill, and in 2007 it expressed it resentment over the non-inclusion of the Union's demand for introduction of the Arunachal Education Bill in the Assembly. AAPSU believed that the introduction of the bill will help in providing qualitative education and improving the Education system of the State. Arunachal Legislative Assembly passed the historic Education Bill on 19th March 2010. Union welcomed the Bill by saying that "it was a momentous occasion in the annals of the state's history"(The Arunachal Times, March 21: 2010).

In September 2010, the AAPSU submitted 11-point memorandum to the Government. Topping the chart of the demands was the renaming of Rajiv Gandhi University to Arunachal University, followed by the demand for upgradation of the Jawaharlal Nehru College, Pasighat to a State University. The Union said that State needs another University to cater the increasing
population of students in the State. AAPSU also suggested Government to use the fund from DoTC (Department of Tirap and Changlang) for the infrastructural development of the Deomali College, Tirap and Ranfra College, Changlang. The list of demands also included the rising of reservation of seats allocated for the Arunachalee students from 10% to 30% at North East Regional Institution of Science and Technology (NERIST). Furthermore, AAPSU tried to draw the attention of the Government to the pathetic condition of the Government Schools of the State, and to protect the schools from illegal encroachment Union urged Government to demarcate the school’s boundary by constructing walls, to improve hostel infrastructure and early release of stipend which has been pending for last five months, and suggested government to release stipend in the interval of every two months. Union also demanded sanctioning of 200 cores as a special package in the educational sector and which should be use for the completion of the entire ongoing projects and schemes that stale due to shortage of funds(The Arunachal Times, September 9: 2010).