

## **Inclusion and Security: A Case of Arunachal Chakmas in India**

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**Abstract:** The paper reviewed and discussed some of the elements and attributes of sense of security among the Chakma settlers in Arunachal Pradesh. The findings of this paper are based on survey and analysis of the data gathered from 360 Chakma households in 12 study villages in Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh. The paper critically examined the background of the displacement of Chakmas from Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh and causative factors of their displacement and the contributory factors towards the continued existence such as political participation, entitlements, governance, and land in the settlement areas in Arunachal Pradesh, India. The sense of security is found to be very crucial since the Chakmas belonged to stateless in the study area.

**Keywords:** Attributes, sense of security, political participation, entitlements, governance

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The poverty, non-identity and inequality are the key contributory factors towards the insecurity of human beings. In the case of displaced, refugees or migrants, they are more prone to violence, conflicts and other social exclusion factors which are marked as the consequences of increasing inequality and poverty. Edward & Frestman (2010) narrated that the human security connected to the competency of the people to rise themselves for survival and it also means creating systems that allow people to prepare the building blocks of survival. The feeling of sense of security is highly critical if an individual or community groups belonged to stateless, refugees or non-citizens due to various socio-political and cultural outcomes. Moreover, human security is being considered as an integral part of fundamental rights and essential core element of universal human rights. The right to citizenship is the fundamental to ensure human security. Landlessness, unemployment, homelessness, marginalization, increased morbidity and mortality, food insecurity, loss of access to common property are leading to insecurity (Perera, 2011). State is the main player to ensure protection and security and beyond the state, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, affected individuals and community themselves may be acted as security providers (Edwards & Frestman, 2010).

### **II. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The Chakmas are settled in four main districts-Changlang, Namsai, Lohit and Papumpare in the State of Arunachal Pradesh. The study focuses on the six villages each in Miao and Bordumsa subdivisions of Changlang district. The researcher covered one respondent each from 360 Chakma families. Detailed households survey and focused group discussions are conducted in the study villages. Chakma families residing in Bordumsa and Miao subdivision in Changlang district are identified as the unit of the study. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to explore the contributing factors towards the sense of security as social survival of Chakma settlers in the study area.

### **III. RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

#### **1. Background to Chakma's Sense of Security**

Since India's partition in 1947, more than 50 million people crossed international borders either in search of security or for economic and social reasons. Absence of legal framework to protect the refugees and stateless is considered as a big gap in India (Ghosh, 2014). It is evident that North Eastern Region of India had witnessed the influx of Chakmas-Buddhists displaced people from East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) during the period 1961-1964 and even after, due to various socio-political threats from Bengali speaking Muslims in Chittagong Hill Tracts (Siddiqui, 2003). The Chakmas were displaced to Mizoram, Tripura, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in North Eastern part of India in different years in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Prakash, 2008). The Chakmas are also considered as the first victims of development induced displacement in modern South Asia

(Singh, 2010). The Chakmas were displaced from the Chittagong Hill Tracts due to the religious persecution and Kaptai Dam project in erstwhile East Pakistan(now Bangladesh).

In 1964, North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) agreed to accommodate the refugees including the Chakmas and Hajongs. It was in this sequence that during 1964-1969, Chakmas and Hajongs comprising, 2,902 families were settled in NEFA, present day Arunachal Pradesh in three districts of Lohit, Tirap (present day Changlang) and Subansiri ( present day Papum Pare). Plots of land varying from 5 to 10 acres per family ( including 3 to 5 acres of land on an average for cultivation) depending upon the size of family, were allotted to Chakma and Hajong families under Centrally sponsored rehabilitation scheme. A cash grant for each family was also sanctioned by the Rehabilitation Ministry as rehabilitation grant.

With the support of ethnic brothers in Tripura, five hundred Chakma families moved to Diyun in Changlang District. Some refugees reached India via Demagiri (Mizoram) later they also taken to NEFA. Later the Chakmas who had been sent to Bihar earlier were brought back to NEFA in 1968. In that time total population of Chakmas in Tirap (now Changlang) district was 1,967 families with a population of 16,000. Thus the Chakma refugees in Arunachal were accommodated into three districts-Tirap, Lohit and Subansuri. They have settled there and started new life and built a new society as ordained by fate (Talukdar, 1988:101-102).

Though the refugee population settlement did not directly displace the indigenous population from their ancestral habitats, as they were initially settled in vacant lands, so far the community right over the land is concerned; the indigenous population lost the right due to this settlement. It is true that, at that juncture, that portion of the land was left unoccupied which would have been occupied subsequently. As it was allotted to the refugees, the adjacent ethnic groups inhabiting near the area have lost the possible future opportunity of claiming right over that patch of land. It is obvious that the area of land which was allotted earlier to the Chakma population is found to be insufficient and more land has to be occupied or acquired for increasing population. As their population increased, they began to encroach on forest reserve land as well as the pastoral land of the host communities (Dutta, 2002). Government of Arunachal Pradesh had expressed their grievance towards the initiative of Central Government to accommodate the Chakmas as permanent settlers. The State Government asserted that even citizens of India of the other parts of the country are not allowed to entry in the State without Inner Line Pass, but, the Central Government has been forcing the permanent settlement of the Chakmas.

The key assumption is that, in the present situation, apart economic factors, political marginalization is another major threat to the indigenous community if citizenship is granted to these refugees. The indigenous population has already become minority in the assembly segments of Bordumsa, Diyun, Miao etc. In the context of India in which the majority matters, there is very possibility of the marginalization of the indigenous people with threat of displacement (Dutta, 2002). If such situation arises, there is a possibility that small Tribals like Tangsas, Singphos and the Khamptis will be politically outnumbered and displaced.

Kumar (2011) asserted that Chakmas are the third largest ethnic communities in Arunachal Pradesh. Chakmas who migrated at the same time as their brethren who settled in Arunachal Pradesh, but settled in various parts of North East India got citizenship rights as well as Scheduled Tribal status in Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and West Bengal. Major controversial issue concerning Chakma community is that the Arunachal Pradesh, the State where they finally settled down, which has been enjoying a 'Special Protected Area' status since the pre-independence period under the provisions of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873. According to this regulation even Indian citizens of other states cannot stay in Arunachal Pradesh permanently. In other words, any Indian citizen from States other than recognized scheduled tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, as per the rules of the regulation, cannot own any piece of land or develop any permanent stake in the State (Pulu, 2014). Following an order issued by the Governor-General in 1876, even the British subjects were prohibited from going beyond the inner-line without a pass under the hand and seal of an authorized Political Officer. This protectionist policy has been continuing uninterruptedly since then with the objective of safeguarding the indigenous culture and identity of the Arunachalis from the onslaught of external influences.

## **2. Profile of First Settlers and Reasons for Displacement**

CCRCHAP Summary Report 2012 claimed that there were 5095 first settlers, who experienced the traumatic situations of forced displacement from CHT, are still alive in Arunachal Pradesh. The report further explained that 3336 first settlers are alive in 25 villages in Diyun Circle and 1032 first settlers in Miao. Through this research, 360 Chakma families are surveyed and profiled the details of the first settlers. Many of the settlers were in their early and late childhood and teen ages during the influx and most of them received refugee certificate in India which enabled them to access the provisions such as cash doles, food, temporary shelter and agriculture land during the time of settlement.

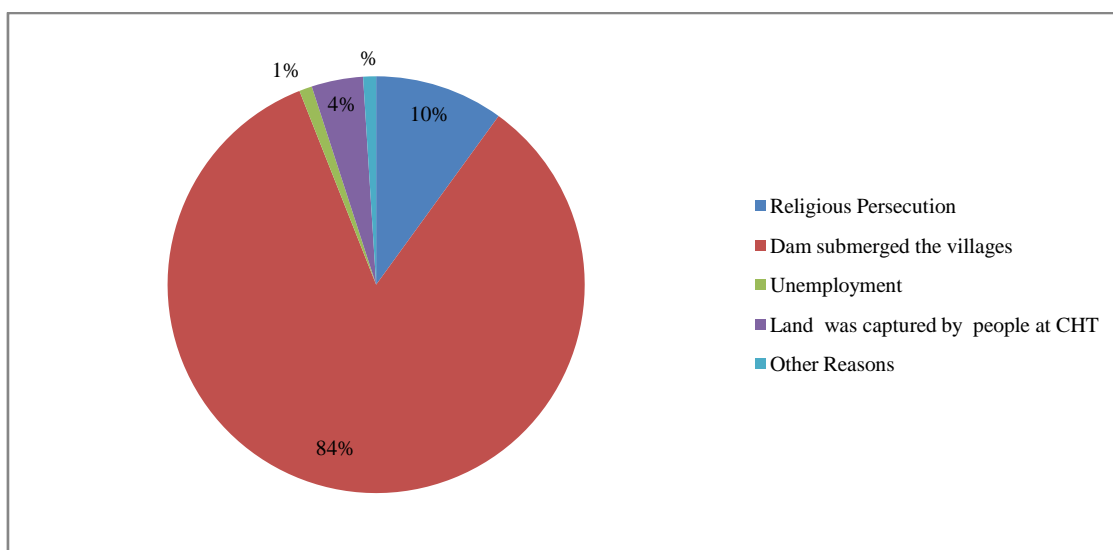
**Table no 1:** Profile of First Settlers

Response	Bordumsa	Miao	Total
Is your family consisting of member/members of first settlers?			
Yes	105	64	169(47%)
No	75	116	191(53%)
Total	180	180	360(100%)
If Yes, How many first settlers are there (alive) in your family?			
One	48	38	86(50%)
Two	30	24	54(33%)
Three and more	27	02	29(17%)
Total	105	64	169(100%)

Source: Primary Data

The table no 1 revealed that, out of 360 sample households, 47 per cent have first settlers, who reached Arunachal Pradesh between the years 1964-1969. It is observed that Bordumsa households have more number of first settlers than Miao. Another key observation is that, out of 169 households, 50 per cent of them have one first settler each and 33 per cent have two first settlers in each family. It is also noted that 17 per cent sample households accommodate three or more than first settlers. Thus, it is evident that Chakma households have a considerable number of first settlers who are termed as ‘refugees’.

**Chart: 1** Main Reason for Displacement from Chittagong



Source: Primary Data

Chakma Community in Chittagong Hill Tracts is displaced to different parts of the countries and to India and Myanmar due to the construction of 120000-kilowatt Kaptai Hydroelectric project on Karnafuli River and various other socio-political reasons. The dam submerged 40 per cent of the Chakmas inhabiting area (Debbarma and George, 1993. as cited in Kharat, 2003). Hazarika (1994) has pointed out that the Chakmas who lost their land and livelihood moved to the places nearest them where there is friendly environment and where there can work and survive. By understanding the history at CHT, 169 sample households where the first settlers are present, are further interviewed to get their responds regarding the cause of their movement from CHT, the original inhabitant are of Chakmas.

The chart:01 portrays the main reason behind their movement from CHT. Out of 169 first settlers, 84 per cent responded that the main reason for their movement was that the loss of their houses, agriculture land and other assets due to the construction Kaptai dam. Also, 10 per cent of them shared that they decided to quit their place of origin due the religious persecution faced from the Muslim communities who encroached their inhabited areas. It is also revealed that 4 per cent households moved to India as their land was encroached by the newly entered Muslims in CHT. Also, another 1per cent shared they quitted their land due to severe unemployment.

### 3. Political Participation of Chakmas

Participation in voting is the key tool to ensure and sustain the democracy and good governance in the State. In the case of Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh, engaging in voting process is found to be complex due to various political situations. Since many of the first settlers, who were denied citizenship, are still legally considered as refugees hence they are without voting rights. However, the second and third generation Chakmas in the State are Indian citizens by birth and they have all the right to be taken part in the voting process. The Chakma voters are distributed into four State Legislative Assembly Constituencies such as 49 - Bordumsa-Diyun, 46-Chowkham, 50 Miao and 14-Doimukh which are located in the districts of Changlang, Lohit and Namsai.

**Table no 2:** Chakma and Hajong Voters in Arunachal Pradesh

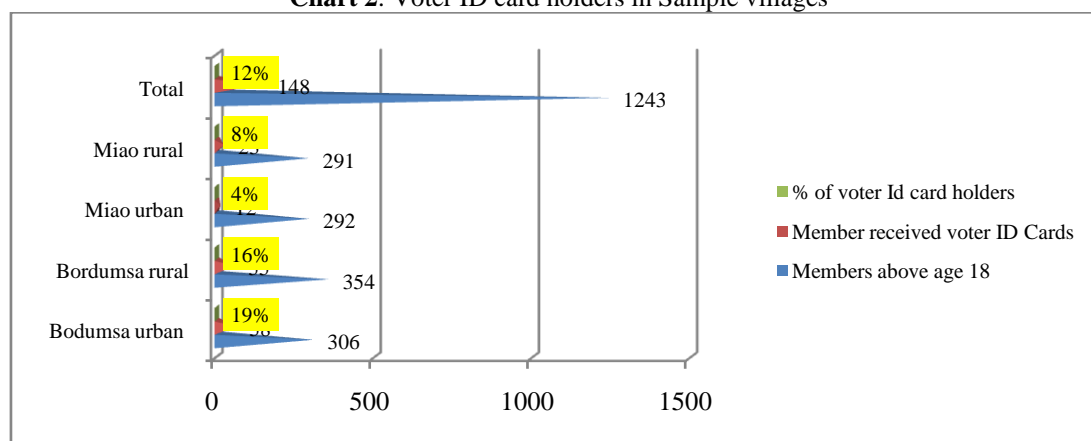
Name of the Constituency	Mother roll	2018 new enrolment	Total
49th- Bordumsa-Diyun	2673	341	3014
46-Chowkham	496	22	518
50 Miao	469	60	529
14-Doimukh	601	23	624
<b>Total</b>	<b>3307</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>4685</b>

Source: ceoarunachalpradesh.nic.in as cited by Chakma (2018)

The table above depicts that there are 4685 Chakma are enrolled in the voters list in which 446 members are recently enrolled just before the parliament election 2019. It is still noted as democratic gap that a major population of Chakma are still not enrolled in the voters list. Civil Society Organisations such as Committee for Citizenship Rights of the Chakmas and Hajongs of Arunachal Pradesh (CCRCHAP) is leading legal battle to access the voting rights for all the deserved people belonged to Chakma and Hajong communities. The Section 5 of the Birth and Death registration Act and order of Supreme Court on September 1998 undoubtedly permit the Chakma to be enrolled in the voters list and to exercise the votes for Panchayat election and State and Parliament Assembly elections (Chakma, 2018).

“ Now the entire country and other communities in Arunachal know that we, the Chakmas are not refugees, we are citizens of India. But, our population in Changlang, especially in some constituencies favoured us vote banks, we are considered as a threat to them as they think that Chakma may contest for elections and take over the power. But we need only peace and comfortable life for our coming generations. The 49-Brdumsa Diyun MLA won it with our support” said Mr\*\*\*\*Chakma, Jyotipur village.

**Chart 2:** Voter ID card holders in Sample villages



Source: Primary survey

The chart: 2 illustrated the scope and status of engagement of Chakmas in the democratic process. The chart revealed that out of 1243 members of above 18 yrs from the 360 sample households, only 12 per cent have received voter identity cards. When we analyse the data at subdivision wise, it is further revealed that number of voter Id card holders in Bordumsa Subdivision is higher than that of Miao Subdivision and 19 per cent and 16 per cent eligible family members are received voter Id cards in Bordumsa urban and Bordumsa rural villages respectively. The further analysis brought out that the villages where Chakmas’ engagement in Citizenship dialogues and legal battle and also where they are majority and united, marked with more number of card holders than the villages where Chakmas are less in numbers and marked poor engagement in political

dialogues. Hence, the villages adjacent to Diyun such as Jyotipur, Dumpathar and Rajanagar have more card holders than Miao villages such as Dharmapur II and Dharmapur III.

“ .....only those who have good relation with political leaders are provided with voter Id cards. Recently our youths actively engaged in the activities of Bharathiya Janatha Party (BJP) and they played a major role in the victory of the BJP candidate. Interventions of CCRCHAP helped the villagers adjacent to Diyun town to receive voter Id cards and other political right too. 49 Bordumsa –Diyun constituency is a ‘General seat’ and therefore our Chakma community are given more importance there and our Civil Society Leaders (egs: CCRCHAP) had taken more interest in enrolling more Chakma people in the voters list. They could convince the authorities that many families lost their major Id proof during flood, house burning and cyclone and accordingly more members were enrolled there. But in my villages (Miao), people lack documents to be submitted along with the application for the voter Id card. But, before 2019 parliament election, we tried to enrol more people, but the authority told us that they can’t do everything at one time and they promised that all will be enrolled gradually. As, 50 Miao constituency is a ‘Tribal seat’ (reserved seat) and therefore we, as general category, have not been given more importance till date by our own organisations” said Mr. \*\*\*\*\* Chakma, respondent, Dharmapur II village. Thus, it is evident that such political engagement by the youths and legal battle led by CCRCHAP resulted to the inclusion of the some of the Chakma people in the voters list.

#### 4. Accessibility of Entitlements

Accessing Government schemes and services refer to the process of improving quality of life and economic well-being of the people living in most remote and underdeveloped areas. Soon after the Arunachal Statehood, Chakma villages were denied all the facilities including the rural development schemes, Public Distribution System (PDS) and educational facilities. However, the outcome of the recent legal battles, the relationship established by the village leaders with MLA, local authorities and other tribal communities made progress and hence, many new developmental projects such as North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project (NERCORMP) is being implemented in some of the selected Chakma villages.

**Table no 3: Accessing Entitlements**

S.No	Entitlements	Bordumsa urban	Bordumsa rural	Miao urban	Miao rural	Total
1	Ration Card	0	0	0	0	0(0%)
2	Passport	4	12	11	7	34(9%)
3	Job card/MGNREGA	0	0	0	0	0(0%)
4	Aaadhaar	2	31	83	74	190(53%)
5	Bank Account	58	72	54	47	231(64%)
6	PAN Card	9	9	1	0	19(5%)
7	Birth Certificate	70	58	42	49	219(61%)

Source: Primary Data

The table no 3 illustrated that apart from voter identity cards, Chakma families now started to access passport, *Aaadhaar* Card, Bank accounts and PAN card. It is noted that, out of 360 surveyed families 53 per cent of them shared that their members have accessed the *Aaadhaar* card recently. While doing the survey, villagers shared that in some of the villages, *Aaadhaar* application is under process and further noted that more families received *Aaadhaar* card in Miao villages than Bordumsa villages. Also, 9 per cent respondents shared that they have members with passport. While interacting with family members it was made known that Delhi based friends and NGOs support them to get the passport and some of them mentioned that they have added Delhi based residential address in the passport. It is also observed that 64 per cent of Chakma families have members who could open bank accounts in their own home town and 5 per cent of respondents have Permanent Account Number ( PAN) too. However, Chakma families are still denied the ration card which is one of the key services to be provided by the Government. It is noted that there is a promising progress observed in the case of accessing birth certificate by the Chakma families as before it was denied. 61 per cent of the families responded that they are able obtain the birth certificate without much difficulty compared to the earlier days.

#### 5. Accessing Government Facilities

It is noted that primary health facilities and health care schemes are being accessed by the Chakma families. Antenatal and post-natal care and schemes are accessed by 89 per cent of the surveyed households and while interaction it was made known that there are Chakma ladies who work as Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) under National Health Mission and they are active to provide awareness and care to the pregnant women and mothers. Also, 83 per cent responded that Primary Health Centre (PHC) provided regular

vaccination to infants and children. It is learnt 62 per cent of the families started accessing the benefits of NERCORMP. The recently initiated North Eastern Community Resource Management Project (NERCORMP) is becoming a platform for the villagers to access the community infrastructure, micro-credit and self employment schemes. Thus, it is evident that, in the recent past, a remarkable progress was observed in the areas of accessing entitlements and Government schemes, especially the schemes of Health and Income Generation Activities (IGAs). These positive factors might be contributed in building a high sense of security feeling among the Chakmas which lead to their social survival.

#### **6. Land Erosion and Land Loss**

During the field study, it was observed that many of the villages in Bordumsa rural, Miao rural and urban areas are located adjacent to the river banks of Noa-Dihing and kutcha houses and farm areas used to submerge during regular flash flood and poor Chakma families lose massive land every year. Also, villagers shared that flash flood causes deaths and severe damages of agriculture and assets.

While analyzing the response gathered from the 360 sample households, 29 per cent of the study families shared that they lost their households due to various reasons and households in Borduma villages are more vulnerable to such causes. 23per cent households shared that they lost their land due to flood. It is also noticed that 3 per cent of sample households responded that their land was encroached by local *Arunachali* tribal groups. In addition, details of the areas of land lost due to flood and other reasons also reviewed. It is noticed that 11per cent of the sample households shared that they lost land of area below 0.5 acres since the year of settlement. Also, another 13 per cent shared that they lost between 0.6-2.5 acres. 10 sample families of Dumpathar village (Bordumsa rural) lost land of area up to 0.5 acres each. Most of the villages adjacent to Dihing river affected more and those areas are prone to flood and land erosion every year. Another 1 per cent households shared that they lost more than 6.6 acres over a period of time.

### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The paper critically examined the background of the displacement of Chakmas from Chittagong Hill Tracts and causative factors of sense of security and the contributory factors such as political participation, entitlements, governance, and land towards the continued existence in the settlement areas. The sense of security is found to be very crucial since the Chakmas belonged to stateless and non-citizens. The concept of human security is very well connected to the study since the human security is being considered as part of fundamental right and essential core element of universal human rights. The area of land allotted during 1964s settlement is found to be inadequate now as the population have increased. As their population increased, they are forced to encroach on forest reserve land as well as the pastoral land of the host communities. It is understood that growing population of Chakmas is one of the main concerns for the local people of Arunachal Pradesh. Currently, more Chamka families are being enrolled in electoral list by the State Government. In Changlang district, there are 4685 Chakmas who are enrolled in the voters list out of which 446 members were recently enrolled, immediately before the parliament election 2019. It is revealed that in recent past, Chakmas started accessing entitlements and Government schemes, especially the schemes of Health and Income Generation Activities.

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