



Documenting the Chakma Women's Experiences : *From the Chittagong Hill Tracts to North-East Frontier Agency (Tracts)*

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Abstract :

The present article seeks to explore the issues and challenges faced by the Chakma women during their migration journey from the Chittagong Hill Tracts to the then North East Frontier Agency. The Chakmas are an ethno-religious minority group in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh who had encountered discrimination and displacement that contributed to their migration from their homeland. However, this article seeks to explore only the various issues and challenges faced by the Chakma women before their migration, during their course of migration journey and also in their post-settlement periods. The study is based on oral narratives shared by the women themselves who had encountered the displacement and migration. The study is an attempt to focus on the issues of women during cross-border migration and also their situations prior and *after the migration*.

Keywords: *Partition, Chakma, Cross-Border Migration, Experiences of women, Statelessness*

Introduction :

For more than 60 years, the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh have been struggling to attain their citizenship rights. Ever since, their flight from the Chittagong Hill Tracts during the period between 1964-1969 and their subsequent resettlement in the then North-East Frontier Agency Tracts (NEFA), the Chakmas have been stranded between statelessness and citizens. Albeit, there have been varied narratives regarding their numbers in the present Arunachal Pradesh, however, now

an average number of 65,000 Chakmas are believed to inhabit in Arunachal Pradesh and this figure is used by both the Chakmas as well as by other researchers (Singh, 2010).

The Chakmas were displaced from their homeland in the CHT as result of the construction of the Kaptai Dam over the Karnafuli River. Moreover, being an ethno-religious minority in the East Pakistan the Chakmas were also victims of religious persecution and due to which the women had to face both sexual violence and forceful



marriage. In fact, drawing references from previous works as well as from our field work, we found that the apprehension among the Chakmas for the safety of women also fueled their flight from their homeland. Therefore, it is in this context, that the present paper seeks to explore the everyday lived experiences faced by the Chakma women prior to their migration, experiences of the women during their migration journey and the challenges faced after being settled in the then NEFA. Moreover, the paper is an attempt to study the nuanced experiences and challenges of women during migration and their life as stateless refugees.

Emphasizing on the specific experiences of women in refugee setting, various nuanced challenges that they face during their course of flight or even before their migration have formed an important space in the refugee study since the 1980s and 1990s notably after the second wave feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s (Ali, 2011). As regardless, of their race, place of origin, religion, and caste or even class women remain in a vulnerable condition especially when it comes in terms of political upheavals and resultant socio-economic changes. Women are susceptible to sexual abuse, physical health problems and even mental health problems during such situations (Kuoich, Wali and Scully 1992). The social and cultural norms of a given society also determines the vulnerability of the women depending upon how women are positioned in the social structure and later on that status in their own native society also influences in the host society. As immigrants as a whole are faced with innumerable problems ranging from decrease in political immunity,

unemployment, homelessness and deterioration in both physical and mental health, therefore, in such conflicting situation women often face more problems which are unique to their social status within both the native and host society. At present, women make fifty percent of any refugee, stateless or immigrant group. Among an estimated 244 million migrants and 19.6 million refugees globally about half of them are comprised of women.

A Historical Background of the Chakmas :

The migration of the Chakmas from their homeland at CHT can be attributed to various historical, political and socio-economic factors. As in the succeeding discussions we would see how following the end of the colonial era and the partition of the Indian sub-continent, victimization of the Chakmas in various forms emerged.

The declaration of Sir Cyrill Radcliffe, the Chairman of the Bengal Boundary Commission on 16th August, 1947 to annex the CHT with East Pakistan was opposed by the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samiti (PCJS) (Singh 2010:33-35; Chakma, 2013:1-4; Talukdar 1988: 47). In fact, prior to the declaration of independence and demarcation of boundaries, the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samiti (PCJS) an association of the tribal people of CHT had begun to articulate their political future by discussing with the British Authority and the Congress High Command at the Shimla Conference in 1945 (Chakma, 2013:1). Similarly, a memorandum was submitted on 15th February, 1947 and initially Indian Leaders like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel had assured the PCJS leaderships that CHT would be included within India. Meanwhile, the PCJS leaderships



even had hoisted the Indian National Flag on 15th August, 1947 at Rangamati, on the basis of the Indian Independence Act of 1947. However, on 17th August, 1947 the PCJS were appraised that the CHT was included within the East Bengal Boundary i.e. in East Pakistan (Chakma, 2013: 5; Singh 2010). In context to this, the fate of CHT was changed as a consequent of the deal with the Sikhs regarding the partition of Punjab and which made Muslim majority district of Ferozpur in Punjab a part of India (Singh, 2010:35).

The Pakistan Govt. also took measures to integrate the Buddhist minority by sponsoring large number of Muslim Bengalis to migrate and settle in the CHT (Singh, 2010; Chakma, 2013). The racial and religious disparity between the immigrant Muslims and the ethnic Chakmas and the sponsored policy of the Government to settle the Bengali speaking Muslim population in CHT had caused ethnic tensions and conflicts leading to displacement of the Chakmas (Chakma, 2013; Weiner, 1993; Singh, 2010; Ghosh, 2016; Prasad, 2013). Simultaneously, the exploitation of natural resources of the CHT and subsequent policy of development of the region (construction of Kaptai dam) have also alienated the indigenous populace from their traditional dependent on the hills and natural resources for economic self-sustainability leading to systematic displacement of the people (Singh, 2010: 39-46).

Moreover, the construction of Kaptai Hydro Electric Project also added fuel to uproot the Chakmas from their homeland. The chronicle of marginalization, systematic persecution and displacement of the Chakmas had reached its summit when the Kaptai dam was constructed

between the period 1959-1963 sponsored by USAID and at an estimated amount of Rs. 2.4 million (Singh, 2010: 41-42). Furthermore, the victims of the catastrophe estimating more than 100,000 with again 90 percent of them being the Chakmas were not compensated and rehabilitated properly in contrast to about 8,000 Bengali settlers who also were displaced but were resettled in fertile land of the *Kasalong* tract (ibid). The Chakmas who were dependent on agriculture for their livelihood were affected due to loss of about 52,000 acres or nearly 40 percent of agricultural land of CHT as a result of flood caused by the Kaptai Dam (ibid). It is also pertinent to mention here that during the British period the CHT was declared as a 'totally excluded area' under the Government of India Act, 1935 (Singh 2010: 30; Paul and Biswas 2014:44). But the abolition of this provision in 1964 due to the passage of a constitutional amendment bill in 1963 had privileged the non-tribal Bengali Muslims to acquire land and settle in the CHT (Weiner, 1993: 1740). This had also facilitated the Pakistani regime to abolish the tribal police force that was constituted under the Chittagong Hill Tracts Frontier Police regulations of 1881 and the administration of the CHT was at large replaced by the Central Government. The demographic pattern of the CHT was changed due to increasing settlement of the Bengali Muslims and gradually the Chakmas became minority in their own land (Singh, 2010).

Thus, it is seen from the above discussion that the Chakmas in the CHT especially in the aftermath of 1947, had to undergo perpetual discrimination often emanating from the very ethos



and legacy of the 'two-nation' theory. Following this legacy the CHT which was a predominantly Non-Muslim region and constructed as a peripheral excluded area had to face paradigm shift within the new Pakistani regime from its peripheral status to identifying with the larger national identity (Singh, 2010). The abolition of the special status of the CHT in 1964 had not only affected their economy, but also their traditional social life as the CHT was made open to non-tribal Muslim Bengalis from the plain with whom they had many cultural differences (Ibid). Thus, the displacement of the Chakmas from the CHT in 1964 is rooted largely in the effects of partition of the Indian sub-continent.

These uprooted people mostly took refuge in India especially in the then NEFA. The Chakmas could not yield any political fruits in the post-colonial East- Pakistan and then in Bangladesh, though they enjoyed political autonomy to a large extent in the pre-colonial and colonial period (Talukdar, 1988; Patil and Trivedi, 2000). At first they were settled in the Miao sub-division of present Changlang district (previously it was in Tirap district). Later on, on the basis of the field work, it is found that in the nearby Diyun circle they were first settled in six blocks i.e. Moitripur, Gautampur, Shantipur, Jyotipur, Abhaipur and Dumpani by the Government of India. Gradually, from this blocks villages like Moitripur, Gautampur, Shantipur, Jyotipur 1 and 2, Abhaipur, Dumpani, Dumpathar, Rajnagar, Jyostnapur, Kamakhyapur, Mudoidip 1 and 2,, Udaipur 1,2 and 3, Modokonala and Shillongpara. Similarly, in the Miao sub-division, M-Pen 1 and 2 are

large Chakma villages where they were settled in consultation with Tinanong Mahajon (Singpho Headman), Pisila Kotoky (British interpreter from the Singpho community) and with other Singpho community leaders. Besides, a little further from the M-Pen area also the Chakmas were settled in the Dewan area. In the Dewan area too there are Chakma villages like Punya Bhumi 1 and 2, Debo puri 1 and 2, Brajapur 1 and 2, Nandakanan 1 and 2, Kamlapuri 1 and 2, Anandapur 1 and 2, Bodisotto 1 and 2.

Methodology :

The field work was conducted in the state of Arunachal Pradesh in October 2018, February-March 2019 and February 2020, the period in which we visited the Chakma settlements in the Diyun circle of Changlang district and Miao sub-division of Changlang district. In the Diyun region, we conducted field study in the villages of Jyotipur, Rajnagar, Jyostnapur and in the Maio region we conducted field study in the villages of M-Pen and Dewan area. In fact, the Chakmas were first settled in the Miao region way back in 1964 and now the Changlang district alone host more than 50,000 Chakma populations.

As the field is vast and so do the population, therefore, we have deliberately selected 30 women from the Chakma community who had the first hand experience of migration from the CHT to NEFA. We have applied snow-ball sampling and with the help of a gate-keeper we tried to identify and locate our interviewees.

Face-to-Face interviews were taken with the help of semi-structured interview schedule. As Assamese language is largely used as lingua-franca by almost all the ethnic groups of this region,



therefore, interviews and questions were asked in Assamese language.

Everyday life before migration :

While, even in their native homeland due to political instability like war, ethnic cleansing and other forms of violence women remain at high risk of exploitation economically and sexually pushing them to be physically and mentally traumatized. In many instances in the recent violence in the Middle East it is observed how the Islamic State has taken the women as sex slaves for their soldiers. Moreover, women are also used as human shields in such conflicting situations in war zones. To some even attacking or abusing the women caters their goal of subjugating the whole community as women are regarded as reproductive symbols. In fact, 1 in 5 refugees or displaced women are victims of sexual violence as published by UN report (UNESCO 2013). There are many nuances and dynamics where women become victims during their course of their flight from their native land to another alien land. As women play multiple roles as a wife, daughter, mother and even as bread earners, therefore, such multiple roles also sometimes displace from their specific space where they could enjoy their rights. To make an illustration, it can be said that as during the migration phase or as refugees in the host country, the whole community is faced with economic uncertainty, therefore, in many cases women gets menial jobs like to work as maids, cleaners, cook, babysitters etc more easily than men which dislocate her from her previous traditional role as a mother or wife. In context, to working migrant women, they comprise an estimated 72.7% in the labor force and at the

same time, migrant women encompass an estimated 73.4% as domestic workers (Ibid). In fact, in such occupational transition especially in case of women, their traditional roles in their native land only as a mother or daughter or wife gets conflict in their new settings which may even lead to intra-familial conflict. The husband or the male members may not accept their new occupational transition in contrast to their often traditional role as mothers or wives back in the native places. However, new demands especially in economics and financial terms to sustain the family may force the women in shifting their role. Thus, refugees from more conservative countries like Afghanistan, Iraq and other under developed countries face such shift in the comparatively more benign and democratic country like the Europe and North America.

Refugees at large are faced with traumatic situation due to their alienation from native place, families, friends and relatives with women more at risk in developing this traumatic condition provided they are single mother or separated from their husbands or widows. In a study by Deacon and Sullivan (2009) on refugee women from Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia and Syria stated the vulnerability faced by single women in terms of accessing to available resources like employment, education and even welfare services because these women refugees in their host countries were dependent on their husband or other male members of the family. Moreover, ignorance of the English language was also an added lacuna that made the refugee women to debar from the employment and other facilities.

Moreover, another important challenges faced by refugee women is their physical and



mental health, as already being dislocated and alienated from the family members and also from their socio-cultural life, women face long term health issues in this regard. Simultaneously, as already highlighted above regarding the sexual exploitation that they may face during their course of long and often uncertain journey to an alien land, studies by Hynes and Cardozo (2000) also mentions about the vulnerability of refugee women to be sexually exploited by the security personals or even may face from their members also. Similarly, under such condition they may also face problems of malnutrition due to their inaccessibility to sufficient resources. These problems faced by the refugee women may have long term effects in their life even after settling in the host country (Ibid).

Thus, it is in this context that we in the present study have tried to explore on the experiences and challenges faced by the Chakma women in their flight to India. One of the most important reasons was atrocities on women, forceful marriages and even kidnapping of girls. The uncertainty hovering over the security of their women and girls juxtaposed with other reasons forced the Chakmas to take refuge in India. As also cited by Roe (1992) and Friedman (1992) that sexually abusing women not only devalue the cultural ethics of a group or community but it is also used as a means of imposing the political power upon the opponents. Consistence of sexual abuse and violence against women also sometimes reflect as a symbol of weakening the whole community because it hurts also the sentiments and identity of the men folk who wants their women to be protected from such violence and shame (Siemens 1988).

It is in this context that an interviewee shared her experiences

I never thought in my wildest dream that such a day will come to me... though I do not remember my exact age, but still as far as my memory goes I was in my 20s when I had to migrate with my husband leaving behind my other family members, my parents and my siblings. I was pregnant too but even then I walked more months and the sad part is that I had miscarriage. She further addedn:

However, it was safer than to be victim at the hands of those newly settled immigrants from the plains that forcefully married many of our Chakma girls... even kidnapping them or sexually abusing them.

Another woman narrated :

I had a younger sister who was first kidnapped on her way to school, then was forcibly married by the newly settled Bengali Muslim immigrants.... Such fear had forced my parents to leave our ancestral homeland.

The challenges and problems faced by the Chakma women as a result of violence perpetuated by the Bengali Muslim immigrants was an addition to the already submissive role that the women were facing within their own community.

In this context, a woman said :

One of my aunties got married to a Muslim man when she was still in her teenage. But she was ostracized both by the villagers and her family members. Under such circumstances, women were often victims both in their husband's house as they had to acquaint new cultural values and within their own community because of cultural taboos.



Another elderly woman said :

Even though a girl and a woman were forcefully married by the Muslim men, yet it becomes very difficult for such a girl or woman to get adjust in the new society or many a times it is also obscure whether they get their rightful place in the new society. On the contrary, they were also not accepted back in their family due to existing social and religious differences. Therefore, due to such reasons, besides the construction of the Kaptai Dam the Chakma elders of that time decided to migrate to India.

Following the above narratives shared by various women who were also witnesses of the atrocities being meted out to the women, we could see that how the Chakma women were victims not only at the hands of the other but also within their own community as a result of prevalent socio-cultural taboos. Indeed, as could be seen from the shared narratives that the confluence of both dynamics emanating from the 'other' and also from the constructed gendered biasness ingrained in a patriarchal society, the Chakma women had to face certain challenges not indifferent from the findings by Deacon and Sullivan (2009) discussed above. Moreover, due to the constructed gendered biasness and subaltern position of the Chakma society within the context of larger Muslim identity of the erstwhile East Pakistan, the Chakma women were positioned even at the bottom of such subaltern society due to prevalent gender hierarchy.

The Journey :

All of the interviewees that we interviewed had travelled from the CHT over land and most of them by foot, only exceptions were the elderly

and the children who were provided military trucks by the Indian Government. Therefore, even when they had embarked on the journey towards India crossing the border, they did not have the idea where they were heading or where they would settle. As narrated to us by the interviewee, they had to walk an average of 7 to 8 kms per day and then were given accommodation in the transit camps. Moreover, there were total 22 groups who had crossed the international border through the proper channel and each groups consisted an average of 250-400 members, however their number increased to nearly 1000 by the end. Hence, as women formed a formidable part of these migrant groups, therefore, we made an attempt to discern the challenges faced by the migrant women themselves from their own perspectives.

While embarking on such an uncertain journey, the women had to face various problems ranging from health concerns to death. Simultaneously, leaving their home, farm and relatives back at CHT, they also had to be alienated socially and emotionally from their roots along with their spatial alienation.

It is in this context, a woman said :

As my husband was a group leader he could not accompany me and I was left with other group members. There were separate camps for women and children and after reaching Demagri (Lushai Hills) women and elderly persons were taken in vehicles from one camp to another. But what still haunts me is the site of many elderly persons died on the mid way including many women and children. In each camp the number of the persons became less



and less as we moved the next day because many elderly persons and women died.

Another Chakma woman narrated :

There were many who suffered from diarrhea and malaria and due to lack of proper treatment they had to die. Those deceased persons did not even get proper cremation as the elderly women often had to travel alone in the vehicles and their other young family members had to walk. For the last time also their sons and daughters could not pay tribute to their parents under such conditions and often they were buried on mass grave or cremated with no rituals.

Adding to the health condition another woman said :

In the latter days those camps became more unhygienic as thousands of people stayed and many among them died in the camps succumbing to various ailments. Moreover, as the situation got worsen and people had to reach the destination within definite time, therefore, even the relatives of such ailed persons could hardly take care and had to left them in their own fate.

Again, narrating her experience of the health and hygiene scenario during their migration, a woman said :

Even when we migrated also there was uncertainty and insecurity for the girls and women because the camps were temporarily made and there were no proper bathrooms or toilets. I have been witness to many pregnant women dying in the midway and how their dead bodies were left sometimes by even tying to a piece of clothes or mat... they did not get proper cremation also.

Narrating her experiences of migration as a young girl, a woman said :

As a young girl, I faced lots of trouble as there was no security both in our native land and in our journey to India. I do not know what sin we or our forefathers did that still we are suffering the same hardships. Even in our native land also we were forced to leave thinking of ourselves and our future generation especially girls because those immigrant Muslims had kidnapped and even forcefully married off our beautiful girls, if anyone disagreed then they would rape and kill her. No one listened to our grievances and as a young girl back then I was also in constant fear of such atrocities.

However, another woman also recollected some unique experiences related to their journey :

Some were lucky to give birth despite hardships in the camps and even on the way also. And I can still remember that those who were born in the camps were named after the name of those places where they were born like there are two such women still in the Diyun whose name are 'Dholeswari' and 'Monochora' as they were born in Dholai and Monachora camps respectively.

Post-Migration Challenges

As discussed above, we have seen how the women had faced various challenges not only in their homeland but also during their migration journey to India. Again, on arriving to the then NEFA they were not devoid of any problems and in fact, based on our field work we found that in addition to economic hardships, they had also to



cope with new socio-cultural settings which in many ways had created a mental apprehension among them.

As a woman narrated :

After I reached in NEFA the most challenging factor was financial sustainability as we were refugees in a strange land. In comparison to our financial condition in the CHT here we faced with homelessness, statelessness and even poverty. Though I did not have the habit of cultivation but here the situation forced me to learn new things for survival and also for our future generation.

Another woman said :

To cope with the economic hardships I had to sell my traditional ornaments and that moment was more tragic as I felt the guilt of betraying my culture and tradition. Moreover, due to consistent economic hardships, for many years we even remained alienated from our social life like weaving, celebrating our traditional and religious festivals... such alienations have created psychological issues among us as we failed to maintain our previous social life.

However, despite surpassing half a century, the Chakmas are still engulfed with many issues and challenges, the important of which is the issue of citizenship. But as the present paper focuses only on the specific challenges and experiences of the Chakma women, therefore, we would limit our study only on the specific issues faced by the women, however, not completely alienating from the issue of citizenship. While, discussing the various issues of women, we were also appraised that young girls and women at present have to

face nuanced challenges regarding education and employment. Being deprived from the Indian citizenship status, the problem of attaining education and employment is a problem to all the Chakma populace, however; again the girls and the women are the worst victim. As the mother of three young teenage girls said :

Without education in this modern world, one cannot elevate one's socio-economic position. But as Chakmas are not recognized as Indian citizens, it becomes very difficult for the young Chakmas to attain education, let alone the issue of employment... and more specifically, under such circumstances of suspicion I feel scare to send my daughters to other places to attain education... We are helpless in this regard and want a way out for our economic upliftment...

Another woman said :

Being always regarded as foreigners or refugees by the host society, I feel not safe to send my daughters to other places... moreover; anti-social elements might take the advantage of our weak socio-economic condition and involve our girls in anti-social activities. As we have already faced such problems in the CHT and even though if any such incident happens then who would fight for our justice as we have already been framed as outsiders or involving in illegal activities by the host society.

Thus, under such circumstances a large number of Chakma girls and women remain deprived from one of the basic human rights of the modern world i.e. right to education resulting in economic dependency of the women on men. In an already challenging environment due to their



statelessness condition, the case of the Chakma women discussed above have again pushed them towards vulnerability situating them at the bottom of the social hierarchy not only within the larger social context but also within their own community. Moreover, again in the course of enrolling themselves in the electoral roll, the challenges that they face again unfold the same nuanced dynamics of subaltern society. In this regard, a young girl who have applied for her inclusion in the voters' list said :

As I attained the legal age to apply for voting I decided to come for re-verification of the documents to Miao. Because the condition of the road from Deban i.e. my home area is not good, I came walking almost 6-7 kms crossing the river. But the re-verification could not be completed within one day and I could not return back due to lack of transport facility. However, luckily, I had a friend who stays in a rented house and I stayed at her house. But unfortunately, my documents were not accepted.

Sharing her experiences, another girl said :

As the re-verification of documents happen only once in a year, therefore, people from all over the Changlang district come to Miao (Sub-divisional headquarter). The huge gathering at the office and the lack of proper arrangement makes it very difficult for all the people specifically the girls and the women... Lack of washrooms, waiting sheds, accommodation sums up to the already problems faced by the Chakma women.

Conclusion :

This field work and the findings throws light into the various issues that the Chakma women

have been facing since their stay in the CHT to their flight and latter settlement in the NEFA. There have been various studies on the Chakmas, however, those studies have specifically focused on their political situations like statelessness, refugee status and citizenship issues. In fact, the Chakma issue came to limelight once again when on 15th August, 2021 in his speech the Honorable CM of Arunachal Pradesh mentioned about the relocation of the Chakmas that have been residing since 1960s. Prior, to this also this issue have always dominated the state politics of Arunachal Pradesh leading to even clashes and conflicts in 2013 at Miao. Nevertheless, amidst all these macro socio-political issues, the issues related to Chakma women especially during their migration journey and living as stateless people have always been overlooked.

In the present paper, we have tried to focus on the nuanced experiences of the women categorizing on three different periods i.e. the everyday life before migration, the experiences encountered during the journey period and the post-migration challenges encountered by the women. In all these different period, we have observed that how the women have been struggling to find a space within the larger society. As discussed above, during the period before their migration, the women had to face various difficulties like sexual harassment, forceful marriage, kidnapping etc. Besides, the above dynamics, the Chakma women also had to face discrimination within their own society due to prevalent social taboos of inter-religious marriages. These reasons related to women also acted as catalyst in the flight of the Chakmas from the CHT



besides the construction of Kaptai dam. Again, during their migration journey, it has been observed that how the women and young girls had to face lots of trouble and challenges ranging from health and hygiene to even death. In fact, the elderly women and the pregnant women were the worst victims, due to lack of health facilities in the transit camps which had even led to the death of many elderly women without even proper cultural rituals being followed. Albeit, the Indian Government had provided facilities like health, transportation and even rations, yet these facilities could not reach out to the whole populace. The consequent of which could be observed from the experiences shared by the women and due to which many women had to face deaths. Moreover, from the above narratives, we can also draw conclusion that the Chakma women whether in the CHT or during their escapist journey to India had to face various challenges which even continued after their settlement in India as well. From the narratives shared by the women regarding their experiences after their settlement, it is seen that they had to struggle to adapt to their new socio-cultural setting and even had to sell their traditional assets to survive the challenging economic situation. Under such phenomenon, it had exerted impact even upon the traditional values and belief system of the Chakma society as they were forced

to alienate with their traditional assets. The experiences shared by the Chakma women regarding their deprivation from the right to education, presence of fear psychosis, vulnerable economic position have also highlighted new insights that require institutional attention besides the core issue of citizenship as described even by the civil bodies. Moreover, the specific problems that the Chakma women have been facing during the course of documents re-verifications for electoral enrollment also sheds light to the heterogeneous and fragmented nature of the whole Chakma problem. Therefore, in the light of the protracted Chakma issue centering basically on the question of their citizenship in Arunachal Pradesh, such subtle issues related to women, their memories of migration, challenges and their memories with their tradition and culture needs to be focused by the State and within the academia. Because often, such issues related specifically to women gets shadowed under the blanket of macro structural issues of citizenship or other political rights. In fact, the tendency of homogenizing the nuanced micro issues faced by the various social strata of the Chakma society should be relooked and accordingly specific treatment should be focused by the State, civil bodies and the leadership of the Chakma community.

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