

STUDENT MOVEMENTS IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

BY
S. DUTTA

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To
Sri Gegong Apang, Hon'ble Chief
Minister of Arunachal Pradesh,
who is always sympathetic to
genuine demands of the students
&
The poineers of the Student
Organisations in Arunachal Pradesh
&
Late Bakin Pertin,
one time prominent office-bearer of the AAPSU.

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PREFACE

The Department of Political Science of the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong, organised a National Seminar on 'Student Movement of the North East' on 30-31st March, 1995 commissioning seven key papers on student movement of all the seven states. The organisers of the Seminar rightly selected such an important topic, as North East India has been continuing to be a hot bed of student-politics for quite sometime now. Society, polity and economy of all the seven states in the North East India today are greatly affected and influenced by student movements. A series of massive movements have been launched by the students of the region on issues of ethnic and cultural identity, economic backwardness and refugee and infiltration problems. A few of them are having even secessionist overtones. Though the issues of these movements have some variance from state to state and from region to region, a minimum programme on some common problems faced by all the seven states have paved the path for the emergence of a common platform of the students of the North East in the form of North East Students Organisation (NESO). This organisation also sometimes takes up agitational programmes. The subject of student movement, as such, is of vital importance for all.

But inspite of its obvious importance, attention of scholars has not been sufficiently focussed on student movements. Literature on the subject is still very limited. But recently, it has been observed, scholarly interest particularly of young researchers on student and youth movements as a branch of social science research, has been gradually growing. In the North East also though some attempts at outlining historical facts in the case of Asam, Meghalaya and Tripura have been made, there is no such attempt on the student movement in case of the four other states. As there is still dearth of accounts even with historical facts, the idea of theoretical formulation on the subject has not been achieved.

Prof. A.K. Barua, Head of the Dept. of Political Science of NEHU, requested me to prepare a key paper on the historical background of the students movement in Arunachal Pradesh.

While responding to the request to prepare a paper, the writer faced a number of problems. There is practically no published materials, documents or records systematically preserved on the student activities and movements of the State. This was mainly because of absence of regular permanent office of the Union, which generally moved with every new office-bearer of the organisations. It is extremely difficult to contact the old office-bearers of the organisation who are scattered all over the state in different professions. Moreover, as the issues raised by the student organisations overlap each other or are mostly taken together, major ones of which are yet to see a solution, it is very difficult to study the movement in the State in chronological order. Anyhow, the paper was prepared and presented in the Seminar on the basis of stray records available, paper published on the Movement, news paper-reportings, interviews with old office bearers and letters collected from some of them. The personal experience of the writer, who has been witnessing the evolutionary development of the state for almost three decades as a teacher in higher education, has greatly helped in outlining the account on the subject.

The present book is an enlarged version of the paper that includes suggestions made by the scholars in the Seminar. I am thankful to my one time student Mr. Joram Begi, the Registrar of Arunachal University and a local educational administrator of repute, not only for going through the manuscript but also for his suggestions. I also extend my sincere thanks to Sri Tage Lapung, President of the All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union (AAPSU) for kindly going through the manuscript and extending valuable suggestions.

It being a pioneering effort on the student movements of Arunachal Pradesh, with all the difficulties mentioned above, there is ample and wide scope for omission and commission. Moreover, some more information sought on the subject from different corners either did not come in time or did not come at all. All these will be taken care of in future edition of the volume, when the volume will be expanded to include the post-rally happenings. The author would be grateful for any feedback on the subject for future enrichment of the book.

Date: March, 1997
Rono Hills, Itanagar.

(Prof. S. Dutta)

CHAPTER I

Society has generally been defined as a system of human organisations generating distinctive cultural pattern and institutions or an organised group of people associated for some specific purpose or on account of some common interest. No society remain static in a progressive and dynamic world. In the evolutionary or revolutionary process of history, its organisations, institutions, cultural pattern, value system, etc. change and vary for various factors- both internal and external. Of these factors 'Movement' in the society which is generally termed as 'Social Movement' plays a vital role in this respect. The pages of history are replete with such 'Movements'- both peaceful and violent.

Therefore as against conventional belief of 'Social Movements' being rarely viewed as sources of change and development in the society along with other factors, such as, technology, urbanisation, industrialisation, immigration, education, etc., now-a-days there is evidence to suggest that 'Movements' are being increasingly perceived as vehicles of innovative and creative ideas, change and development. And again, movement participants being considered so long as deviants who are creating instability in the social system indulging in anti-establishment activities, to-day they are very often considered as martyrs of their faith. And so 'Movements' are increasingly viewed as creative confrontations engineered by collectivities in search of a society based on qualitatively different collective conscience. 'Movements', as such, are being perceived as playing positive role¹. Then the question comes how can we define 'Movement' and 'Social Movement'?

Webster's Encyclopaedic unabridged Dictionary of the English language has defined 'Movement' as: The Act, process or result of moving, actions or activities, as of a person or a body of persons; rapid progress of events or abundance of events or incidence; a progressive development of ideas towards a particular conclusion; a series of actions or activities directed or tending towards a particular end; a diffusely organised or heterogenous group of people or organisations tending towards or favouring a general common goal. Con-

ceptually, 'Movement' is an organised effort made by some persons, group(s) or community for some specific case. Besides all these, a movement may be protest in nature wherein some persons or group(s) of the community, as such, may launch a protest movement in getting a number of irregularities or social inconsistencies corrected.

'Social Movements' has been variously defined by different thinkers. According to M.S.A. Rao 'Social Movement' is "an organised effort on the part of a section of the population, involving collective Mobilization based on ideology, to bring about changes (either partial or total) in the Social System"². According to S.P. Arya, "Social Movement is mostly used in common practice, as designating any collective effort on a mass scale by the concerned society, aiming to tackle and eradicate some widespread social problem of wider dimensions having existed among the people of the region for a fairly long period"³. According to Hurbert Blumer "Social Movements" may be defined as "Collective enterprises to establish a new order of life".⁴ They have their inception in a condition of unrest and derive their motive power from dissatisfaction and from hopes of a new scheme of living. The central conception here is group behaviour directed in a concerted way at bringing about social change.

In the words of Gusfield, Social Movements are "Socially shared demands for change in some aspect of Social order"⁵. This view commits the mistake of equating 'Social Movement' with Social Change', assuming that all such movements aim at change. Turner and Killian offer a better perspective defining 'Social Movement' as "Collectivity (which acts) with some continuity to promote or resist a change in the Society or group of which it is a part;"⁶ In fine, 'Social Movements' are loosely organised but sustained campaigns in support of a social goal either for implementation or prevention of a change in Society's structure and values. Actually, the idea behind 'Social Movement' is that of a commotion, a stirring among the people, an unrest, a collective attempt to reach a visualised goal. Besides its peculiar nature a 'Social Movement' generally includes among its salient characteristics, a shared value system, a sense of community, norms for action and an organisational structure.⁷

The 'Social Movement' mostly arises due to the discontentment of the people with the existing Social order. Thus the roots of 'Social Movement' lie within the social problems. A social problem is a condition affecting a significant number of people in ways considered undesirable about which it is felt something can be done through collective action. "A genuine movement is one which ensures participation by masses in it and which carries forward the economic and political power of the masses. Contrarily, a movement will be spurious where the link between the cultural ideals of the leadership and the masses is weak and where the movement does not consistently aim and act towards the expansion of politico-economic power of the masses⁸.

'Social Movements' have long attracted the attention of the Social Scientists due to their enormous potential for violence, capability of profoundly transferring the social order, and their sudden appearance. Based on the definitions given above, the movements of Peasants, workers, women, backward classes, tribals, religious communities, students and so on can come under the category of 'Social Movements'. While some 'Social Movements', such as, movements for political emancipation, peasant movement and labour movement are very old, other 'Social Movements', such as, the feminist movement, the regional movement etc. are very new. The youth and the students movement also belong to the new genre of 'Social Movements'⁹. One significant role of student movement is that they reflect the characteristics and contradictions of the Society of which they are members.

Students of late, have started holding a very significant position in any discussion on all types of 'Social Movements'. But inspite of this, Student Movement as a branch of Social Science research, remained neglected till the 70s of this century. In fact Scholarly interest in student movement is a rather recent phenomenon.¹⁰ There is no denying the fact that student movements have played a very crucial role particularly in the developing communities in their national liberation movements in the recent past in different parts of the world. For example, student movements had been an important element in the revolution of 1848 in Germany and Austria, the Russian revo-

lutionary atmosphere of 1917 and the growth of Chinese revolutionary organisation. In many of the developing countries, student movements have brought significant social and political changes in the mid-twentieth century. In Indonesia, for instance, Student Movement was crucial in the growth and development of national movement. In Korea, Japan, Equador, South Vietnam and other nations, student Movements have led to political upheavals. In Latin America, Student Movement set in motion a massive educational reform in the early 20th Century. In many countries students movements have created cultural revivals.

Even in the developed countries like France, England, USA and Germany or the Scandinavian countries, students had participated in anti-authoritarian movements at various levels and this participation had taken various forms ranging from simple authoritarianism to more complex form of radicalism. Thus all through modern history and particularly since 19th Century participation of young people in mass movement has been very common and noteworthy.

Student movement in India also played a pioneering and important role during the freedom struggle. It began during the 1920s with Mahatma Gandhi's Non-cooperation Movement, touched its zenith during the 1942 'Quit India' call and subsided by 1947 after India became independent.¹² But despite signal significance of the role of students in the freedom struggle of the country, it seems to have been neglected by scholars during the post-independence years. Prof. A.K. Barua has rightly said, "However, such participation of students in revolutions and mass movements did not draw particular attention of social scientists mainly because of the fact that in most of the cases, in such movements, students were drawn into larger struggles where the issues involved were of general nature and were not specifically related to the students as such. Moreover, the leadership of such movements were in the hands of other sections of society and students were involved in those only as activists and supporters. They were not leading, they were being led"¹³.

It would be appropriate to give a glance to the student Movement in the changed socio-cultural climate of the country

during the post-independence period. The noble cause of Independence that brought the students into the vortex of freedom struggle during the British rule, was achieved with the liquidation of the British empire and declaration of Indian independence. In the changed situation, the same very national leaders, who mobilised and inspired the students to plunge into the fight for freedom, started discouraging students from taking part in politics following freedom of the country. Now students movements very often came to be dubbed as 'student indiscipline'.¹⁴

Further, the post-independent transformed Socio-cultural matrix had their impact on the student organisations and thereby on student Movement. The students now had to confront a totally new cause- the cause of building new India. The students in free India confronted two- pronged problem - one related to society that affects their life and living, and the other relating to the education. The qualifications and loyalties of students changed drastically in comparison to pre-independent days. The caste, communal, linguistic and regional loyalties, which were forgotten, suspended, subdued or put aside' in collective endeavour to drive the British from India, regained their old hold. The qualification of student leaders now come to depend more and more on one or more of these loyalties.¹⁵ There emerged a series of student leaders in specific places and regions. Moreover, unlike in the colonial period, when students from higher or elite classes only joined higher education, the students in post-colonial period came to join higher educational institutions from various strata of the society.

Moreover, the democratic polity of the country in the post independent period paved the path for emergence of a large number of political parties. With the coming of political parties also came their student wings. However, the political parties adopted an ambivalent posture towards the student organisations. They wanted the student organisations, to be political and un-political at one and the same time. Student movements, therefore, are very often believed to be the handywork of the opponents of one established regimes or appendix of the party in power.

On the basis of orientation, student movements can be

classified into two broad types: (1) cultural movements and political movements. Cultural movements may be of two types—norm oriented and value oriented. The norm oriented movements aim at the connection of a specific grievance, or at a particular goal and do not often based on broader ideological overtones. As a result, much movements disappear after the goal is achieved. The value oriented student movements, by contrast, are concerned with broader ideological issues, and when it is involved in specific demonstration or programme, this activity is linked directly to a broader political ideology. Political student movements aim at seeking power, for, in the challenge to authority in various ways, students' search for power is hidden.

On the basis of issue, student movements can be divided into two types: (1) campus oriented and (2) society oriented. Campus oriented movements are primarily student interest oriented movements. The society oriented student movements are related with broad social issues which may be political, economic, cultural, etc.

The occupation span of students is shorter in comparison to other occupations in society and as a result, the membership leading to frequent change of political attitude, issues, ideologies and organisational style.¹⁷ So the nature of student movement varies from State to State and region to region from time to time depending upon issues and characteristics of student leaders. The success of the student organisations, therefore, depend on the extent to which they successfully express the feelings, resentments, worries, fears, concern and hopes of large number of students and people in the society, whose concern they claim to represent.

LEADERSHIP:

In every phase of the historical development of a society, a particular class always comes to hold the dominant position in it that can be loosely termed as leadership. It is usually the ruling class that exercises the dominance, but very often, in special circumstances, even a non-ruling class might rise to a dominant position and maintain a hegemony over the

society.¹⁸ The emergence of an elite is in evidence in all societies as a result of the spread of English education as one of the factors, that got greatly influenced by the ideas of western liberalism. With the emergence of this class with western ideas, they begin to influence all sections of the society, as these ideas became the ideas of the hegemonic class. The aims, aspiration, values and interests of the dominant class become the ideas, aims, aspiration and values of the students. More than any other section of the society, the students as receptive members of the intellegentsia, as persons constantly engaged in studies are exposed to this hegemony.¹⁹ Thus students in most societies are believed to articulate the ideas of the dominant classes in the society. The general assumption is that the movements are essentially based on the economic and political interests of the rising hegemonic elite class who wish to monopolise their dominance over a region and mobilise the relatively passive tribal and peasant masses to fulfil their limited class aspiration.²⁰

Prof. A.K. Barua has rightly raised a legitimate question: how is it that very often student movements activate almost an entire student community? Or, how can student organisations master support from their members who come from widely varied social strata?²¹ The answer to this can be traced in what Gramsci called the "hegemony". The concept of hegemony as developed by Antonio Gramsci is: ".... linked to the way in which the interests of the dominant class are represented ideologically as those of society as a whole and, to the organisations of concept to that end"²²

The mobilisation of traditionally deprived categories for their welfare should be encouraged as a strategy in so far as they pursue instrumental goals. These mobilisations play an important role in the social emancipation of these social categories. The possibility of a small elite emerging from these social categories as a vested interested group, monopolising the benefits coming from the Government and other sources, is a real danger.²³ Because this section seeks to conceal its exploitative character by focussing people's attention on certain equally important problems by pausing to defend and promote the interest of the masses. For example, in the issue of non-

tribal and outsiders, all the ills of society and its lack of rapid progress in Hill areas and other regions are sought to be explained away by the presence of an continuous entry of non-tribal and exploitation in trade and industry and as job hunters.²⁴ While the domineering and exploitative tendencies on the part of the 'Outsiders' should be discouraged, the locals should be encouraged to think that both the Social categories - tribal and non-tribals are partners in a common effort of development of that region.²⁵

Prof. A.K. Baruah, therefore, rightly says that it is necessary in the study of a student movement not merely to locate the class which apparently rules but to locate the class which exercises hegemony in that particular society at that particular phase of history.²⁶

Now coming to the North Eastern region of the Country, the North East India has been a hot-bed of student movement and politics for quite sometime now. A series of massive movements have been launched by the students of this region on issues of cultural identity, economic backwardness, foreign nationals and at times with secessionist overtones, that have great impacts on the society and politics of the North Eastern region. Student Movements of the North East unlike the student movement of the 60s of the West are not generated by campus issues involving only young people. When we look to the movement of the student organisations like the AAPSU, AASU, KSU, NSF, BSF, etc, we find that these organisations have raised issues which concern ethnic communities to which they belong. Moreover, contrary to the belief of many western scholars that students can influence the society only for a limited period, duration. Generally speaking, the students movements in the North-east have acquired larger in North-East India by and large similar in all the Seven states like having the sense of the area being "neglected" and "underdeveloped" by State and specially national authorities, or of treating it like a "colony" of "foreigners" and "outsiders" and of not responding to their various kinds of "genuine" demands by the powers that be.

Prof. B. Pakem has rightly said, "for so long, the youth and student Movements and the concerned authorities in North

East India have been emphasising in their dealing with each other on the basis of the "conflictual" nature of power relations. It is time that the two sides should try to jointly solve their continuing problems on the basis of the "consensual" nature of power which is similar to the best tradition of the "consensual Politics" as usually experienced by the people of the region. While "conflictual" politics is naturally beastly in nature that of "consensual" and "co-sensual" politics have a human face with a "responsibility to otherness" based on "commulative action" and "care". And it is this human face that we need in solving the present day Youth and Student Movements in North East India. The concerned authorities in these movements should realise that they are not fighting against their enemies but dealing with their own young people who are greatest hope in the coming third millenium"²⁷. Though cent percent achievement is not possible in solving problems after "consensual" agreement, as found after various Accords in the North East, it certainly paves the path for rapprochment and reduction of sufferings of the masses. For, the nature of equilibrium existing in societies if examined with care, "consensual" equilibrium has come to be recognised as qualitatively different from "Coercive" or "conflictual" equilibrium.²⁸

Now coming to Arunachal Pradesh, the area which was kept practically in isolation till independence, Social Movements in its concept of creating an entirely new politico economic and socio-cultural order or in the sense of an explicit and conscious indictment of the whole or part of the Social order, together with a conscious demand for change or staticness, has rarely occurred in the State. This was mainly because of the historical, social, demographic and political as well as the geographical background of the State, that are being discussed hereafter. Besides these, widespread illiteracy, lack of political consciousness, unfamiliarity with modern institutions and procedures, absence of vernacular press and other media for effective political communication, slow pace of elite formation and high degree of elite recruitment to government jobs, have prevented for a long time the outbreak of any major Social Movement in Arunachal Pradesh. But the introduction of modern education in the area since independence has produced some ferment, as student bodies have gradually emerged as the

major spokesman of the grievances and aspirations of the people of the state. As Social Movement means the activities of an integrated and long-lasting concerted action group, the activities of the All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union (AAPSU) can certainly be regarded as Social Movement.

As Arunachal Pradesh (erstwhile NEFA) was practically kept in isolation till independence, the Independence Movement did not have much effect either on the people or on the students. Moreover, till 1947, the year of the country's independence, there were only two primary schools in the then NEFA, with no other institution of higher education, thus leaving little scope for any student organisation or student Movement in the area. But after independence, a rapid expansion has been achieved in the field of education with gradual increase in number of various types of educational institutions from primary to University level with consequent increase in the number of student-population. The student Union in the area was first started in 1947, with gradual evolutionary process in its growth, paving path for the emergence of the All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union (AAPSU), that cover almost all the student population of the State today.

In Arunachal Pradesh student bodies have emerged as the major spokesman of the grievances and aspiration of the local people, where the masses of the old generation unfortunately did not see the light of education for various factors. The State, besides other socio-economic problems has been facing two major problems- the boundary settlement with Asam from which the area was carved as a separate State; and the other nationals illegally entering into the area. As, a social problem is a condition affecting a significant number of people in ways considered undesirable about which it is felt something can be done through collective action, the students of Arunachal Pradesh have started. Movements demanding solution of these problems, that threaten to affect the whole Arunachalee society, polity and economy. It can, therefore, be correctly said that the student movements in Arunachal Pradesh is mostly society-oriented and not campus-oriented ones, barring an exceptional occasion when the Colleges of Arunachal Pradesh were sought

to be affiliated to Punjab University by the State Government against the desire of the students who wanted the affiliation with North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), that led to some student commotion in the campus.

Most of the leadership of the AAPSU and other student organisations in the State has come from College level students. With the spread of English education with ideas of Western liberalism, there emerged an elite class that began to influence the students and almost all sections of the society as a hegemonic class. This class, of course, come from widely varied strata of the society. In a State where caste-class system in its classical concept, hardly prevailed and where democratic institutions like the *Kebang* of the *Adis* are prevalent from time immemorial, barring a few Chieftainship system among a few tribes; wisdom, knowledge, oratory power, personality and social service are being considered as more important leadership qualities among the students. If we study the list of Presidents and General Secretaries of the AAPSU, it has been found that most of the leaders of the AAPSU belong to the *Adi* and the *Nishi* tribes with occasional chance to the *Apatani* and other tribes. That the leaders of the Student organisations were rightly selected for their qualities mentioned above, has been justified by the important role played by these leaders in their subsequent careers in various fields of the State.

There is high degree of elite recruitment to Government jobs, as the State administration is in its initial stage with more or less unsaturated job-markets for the locals. This elite-class, even after their absorption in Government jobs or in other professions, extends its hegemonic influence from the background on the student organisation in preparation of their plans and programmes. For example, the *Nishi Elite Society* very often acts as the friends, philosopher and guide to the *All Nishing Students Union (ANSU)*. More such examples can be cited.

So far political parties vis-a-vis student organisations are concerned, barring for a short period, Arunachal Pradesh is having a monolithic party rule. For a period, when the peoples' party of Arunachal Pradesh (PPA) was functioning in the State, some kind of influence of this Party on the student organisation

was visible. However, excepting NSUI (National Students Union of India), which is a student wing of the Indian National Congress, the AAPSU, the major Student organisation of the State has been maintaining more or less a neutral and equidistance position from all political parties.

So far relationship of the State Government and the AAPSU is concerned, excepting for a period of "conflictional" and "coercive" attitude, the "consensual" equilibrium seems to predominate. For, the Arunachal Government has rightly realised that it is not fighting against its enemies but dealing with its own children, who have been trying to safeguard and promote the interests of the people of the State.

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CHAPTER - II

BACKGROUND

Before going to study any movement in any part of the world, we must have some basic information and knowledge of various aspects of that area, which are responsible for the origin, nature, ideology and direction of such movement. After all in any type of movement, feelings, sentiments and aspirations of the people are reflected.

Arunachal Pradesh, situated in the north-eastern corner of India is nearly 84,000 Sq. Kms. in area and has a long international boarder with Bhutan to the West (160 kms), China to the north and north east (1080 kms) and Burma to the east (1440 kms). It stretches from snow-capped mountains in the north to the plains of the Brahmaputra valley in the South. Arunachal is the largest State areawise of all the seven states in North East, even larger than the most populous state of Assam of the region. The population of Arunachal Pradesh is 8.65 lakhs according to 1991 census and is scattered over 12 towns and 3649 villages with a density of population 10 per sq. km., which is again one of the lowest in the region. 70% of the total population of the State are of indigenous tribes.¹

L.A. Wadell had written long back like this, "Driven into these wild glems by the advance of civilisation of the plains and lower valleys, these people have become hemmed in among the mountains, where pressing on each other in their struggle for existence they have developed into innumerable isolated tribes"² K.A.A. Raja, the first Lt. Governor of Arunachal, in a similar tone expressed:³

Numerous communities in the earlier stage of material culture has moved away, over centuries into these hills... They moved in batches and stages depending on the pressure exerted. Each batch was self-sufficient and lost contact with parent stock and the related groups in the course of migration. Every fresh arrival pushed those that had preceded it and was pushed later by those that followed it, from place to place, till they all reached their present habitats. These movements accelerated and intensified diversification. The struggle for room created

and widened distances between communities and settlements irrespective of their tribal and other affinities.

High mountains and dense forests have prevented inter-communication between tribes living in different river-valleys. Isolation imposed by geography has led over 26 major tribes with several languages to live and flourish with their distinct identities. Most of these communities are ethnically similar having derived from an original common stock, but their geographical isolation from each other has brought certain distinctive characteristics in language, dress and customs. The Ahom monarchs, during their reign in Assam, followed a policy of coercion in extreme need, but mostly conciliation in the form of 'Posa' to some of the Arunachal hill-tribes on the border that they came into contact. The British too, after occupation of Assam, followed more or less the same policy. The British in certain cases, of course, established some administrative centres in the foothills of the area, now known as Arunachal Pradesh, through army expeditions. They also implemented an Inner Line Regulation to check land-grabbing and exploitation of the simple tribal people by outside elements.

But all these were a part of the past history. From a mere 'Geographical expression' to a Union Territory in 1972 with a new name Arunachal Pradesh, which has again been upgraded to a full-fledged state on 20th February 1987, has indeed been a long march, which the people of this State have covered successfully. Most of the Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have highly ordered and organised system of functioning in the villages from time immemorial. All matters relating to community as a whole are decided at the village level. The Socio-administrative structure of the society, as evolved over a period of centuries, recognises democratic participation right down to the level of villages.⁴ On August 15, 1975, this democratic process had been given further thrust by upgrading the pradesh council to a Legislative Assembly and appointing five councillors as the first Council of Ministers. The first general election to the Assembly was held in February 1978. Thus a wind of change has been blowing over this land gently, which has brought about a "Synthesis of the old and new" to add to the progress and prosperity of the people. The narrow attitude

of groupism and localism have been gradually substituted by scientific approach to problems, togetherness and a common socio-political personality - an Arunachali community feeling - a feeling of oneness belonging to one State.

The State got late to pick up the pace of development. Unfavourable terrain for road construction, inadequacy of easily cultivable land, scattered population added with legacy of subsistence economy based on Jhum or shifting cultivation, long isolation and inaccessibility of the area paused formidable obstacles and constraints to the efforts of socio-economic development and profitable utilisation of the natural resources of the State. However, with the increasing thrust over successive plans, remarkable progress has been achieved by 1992-93 in all aspects of the State economy⁵. Elwin's Philosophy for NEFA and Nehru's cautions gradualism marked a slow pace of development in first three Plans of the Post independence period. The post 1962 Indo-Chinese war period, infact, witnessed rapid development in all spheres. In 1961 census, entire Arunachal was treated as rural one. In 1971, 1981 and 1991 censuses four, six and ten towns have been reflected respectively in the State. According to 1991 census 7.54 lakhs of the total population live in rural area, whereas 1.11 lakhs in urban area, the percentage being 87.2 and 12.8 respectively. Road communication which has been rightly considered as the priority sector in a hill State like Arunachal Pradesh, the road density by 1992-93 is still as low as 11.84 kms per 100 sq kms. Still then it is a spectacular achievement considering the construction of different kinds of roads from almost zero in 1947 to over 9700 kms by 1992-93.

These socio-economic and political changes took place in the initial phase not because of any conscious demand or move on the part of the people or students of the State, but as a result of external forces and liberal help from the Central Government.

THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT:

As student movement derives its origin and strength from the student-population of an area, it is desirable to study the growth of education, educational institutions and student

population over a period in Arunachal Pradesh. A rapid expansion has been noticed in the field of education in Arunachal Pradesh after independence. In 1947 there were only two primary schools in the then NEFA. The total number of educational institutions at the 7th plan was 1705 which rose to 1987 in 1991-92 and its number at the end of 1992-93 is 2157 (including 266 community schools). Between census periods, the rate of growth of literacy was 7.23% in 1961, 11.29% in 1971, 20.79% in 1981 and 41.59% in 1991 with a total enrolment of about 1.92 lakhs.

The following tables will give an idea of the rapid progress achieved in the educational section.

TABLE 1 : ENROLMENT IN .000 NOS.

Stages	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	P.C. in 91-92 over 90-91	in 1991-93 over 91-92
1.	2	3	4	5	6
1. Pre-Primary	13	15	16	15.38	6.67
2. Elementary (1 to VIII)	138	147	154	6.52	4.76
3. Secondary Class (IX-X)	11	12	13	9.09	8.33
4. Hr. Secy. Class	5	5	6	-	20.00
5. Graduate	1	2	3	100.00	50.00
6. Post-graduate	0.1	0.1	0.2	-	100.00
(a) Total enrolment	168.1	181.1	192.2	7.73	6.13
(b) Enrolment of Students belonging to Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribes (APST)	119	129	141	8.40	9.30
(c) P.C. of APST enrolment to total enrolment	71%	71%	73%		

TABLE 2 : EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Sl.No.	Educational Institutions	At the end of 7th plan '89-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-9
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Pre-Primary Schools	249	249	284	299
2.	Primary Schools	1101	1122	1144	1174
3.	Middle Schools	236	250	265	274
4.	Secondary Schools	68	73	78	84
5.	Hr. Secondary Schools	45	46	49	55
6.	College	4	4	4	4
7.	University	1	1	1	1
Total		1704	1745	1825	1891
8.	Community Schools	1	100	162	266
Total		1705	1845	1987	2157

Source: *Economic Review of Arunachal Pradesh*, 1993, Directorate of Economics and Statistics. Govt. of A.P. Itanagar.

The Students of the State studying outside the State and sponsored by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh to study in the technical education outside are not included in the above tables. For technical and professional courses like veterinary, medicine, engineering, agriculture, fishery, etc, the State is still dependent on allotment of seats outside the State, excepting 20 seats allotted per annum in the NERIST which is located in the State. More the number, more the strength. As Mazzimi, the famous Italian patriot, while founding his 'Young Italy' in 1831 stated, "place youth at the head of insurgent multitude, you know not the secret of the power hidden in their youthful hearts, nor the magic influence exercised on the masses by the voice of the youth"⁶. Historical evidences suggest that students play very influential roles almost in every community and nation especially in case of new and developing states and nations.

In Arunachal Pradesh also students Bodies have emerged as the major spokesman of the grievances and aspirations of the local people. The role played by the students of Arunachal

Pradesh is distinct in many respects that we generally see or observe elsewhere. The history of the student movement of the State demolish many stereotype conclusions regarding the role of students in politics and society⁷. Some of the factors contributing to this trend may be as follows:

- (i) The Socio-Administrative structure of the society evolved over centuries recognising 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 services.⁸
- (ii) Due to low literacy rate, the students initially enjoyed a place of prominence and influence in their respective communities. The Authority in administration, in its initial stage, utilised 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.⁹
- (iii) Absence of formal political parties for a long time practically till 1978, made the students the chief spokesman of the people vis-a-vis the administration.¹⁰ Moreover, in absence of popular media like newspaper of any kind till recently to mould public opinion and in absence of any other organisation, student Unions 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 are 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 industrialisation 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-Arunachalis 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 of 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 organisation 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 State.

The conglomeration of a few or in some cases more of the factors enumerated above facilitated the birth and growth of Students' Union and movements in Arunachal Pradesh.

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CHAPTER - III

INITIAL PHASE OF THE MOVEMENT

The student union in the area was first started during the last part of the forties i.e. 1947 at Pasighat by a few Adi and Mishing students called the Adi-Mishing students Union with its headquarters at Pasighat. The students forming this Union were mostly the students of Sadiya Govt. High English School. Late Dr. Daying Ering, who later on became a Union Deputy Minister, was its founder President and Sri. Matin Dai, who recently retired as Chief Secretary was the General Secretary and Shri Oshong Ering, who very recently retired as the Registrar, Co-operative Societies of Arunachal Pradesh, was its Treasurer. Other founder members were Talom Rukbo, Obang Dai, Tajum Koyu, Sushen Pao, Toi Dai, Yonggam Lego and others. All these student leaders, later on became prominent Government officials and public leaders of the State¹. The Union was named so with an aim to bring the Adis and Mishings under the same and one identity of their original culture.

The Union in the initial stage aimed at spreading the light of education among the innocent tribals by convincing them to send their wards to schools. The Union also organised meetings in various places to attract the people to explain them the meaning of Indian independence and the responsibility of the grown-up people or generation for allround development of the area and the people. They included social service in their annual programmes and accordingly conducted social service to propagate the ideas of cleanliness of the people and their surroundings. They also organised cultural programmes to explain the meaning and value of their traditional culture, its preservation and promotion. So in the initial phase of its movement, the students Union attempted to spread the light of education in the Society.

In the second phase, the Students Union started demanding development schemes and programmes from the Government, as then desired by the Government that the demand for nature of change and development, should come from the tribal people themselves. In absence of an educated elite class, this burden of advising the Government on the matter, was to be borne by the students. The students' demands included opening of

more schools, health centres, construction of roads, improvement of communication, etc. The then NEFA Administration responded to the demands of the Students Union by opening more schools in farflung villages and upgraded the existing ones. For instance, the Pasighat Lower Primary School was upgraded to Middle English School in 1949 and then to High School in 1952. The constant meetings of the Adi-Mishing students Union infact created awareness of social changes and importance of education in the minds of the people. The poineers of the new Schools organised the same and similar activities in their respective areas with establishment of branch Students Unions to intensify the Student - Movement. Thus the Galong-Adi Branch Students Union for Western part, the Adi-Branch Students Union for Central part and the Eastern Adi Branch students Union for eastern part of the Adi-inhabited area were formed in quick succession.

After creation of these branch Students' Union, the name of the Union was changed to ALL NEFA STUDENTS UNION with headquarters at Pasighat. The establishment of this Agency level Students Union encouraged formation of Students Union in other districts or divisions in a phased manner. With the coming up of Agency level Students Union covering the entire areas of the then NEFA, its demands also covered broader aspects, which were as follows:

- (i) Establishment of higher educational institutions like High and Higher Secondary Schools and College within NEFA to provide educational facilities to the tribal students within their reach, as till then only a fortunate few could go to shillong, Gauhati and other places for College-education.
- (ii) Change of medium of instruction from Assamese to English with Hindi as Second language in NEFA.
- (iii) To upgrade the NEFA Administration to Union Territory with a Lt. Governor.
- (iv) Shifting of NEFA Headquarters from Shillong to a place within NEFA.
- (v) Creation of more administrative centres in all vulnerable

and strategic places of the region.

- (vi) Enhancement of the rate of stipend to NEFA students and creation of hostel facilities at Shillong for NEFA students studying at Shillong.
- (vii) Reservation of seats in various Science and technical institutions of the country for the students of NEFA.

The Government responded to these demands of the Students Union sympathetically and implemented them in phased manner. Thus the infrastructures of a State were formulated and helped in their creation by the Students Union in its very early phase. It is, of course, a fact that the first phase of the Students Movement of the area was of Pray, petition and partnership with the Government, as in the case of Indian National Congress after its creation in 1885. In the words of Sri. Talom Rukbo, one of the founder-members of the Students Union of Arunachal Pradesh and a respectable citizen and intellectual of the State, "It must be remembered that the students Union of the early days never launched strike in the present manner of the present Students Unions. They also used to give thumping pressure to the Government on any demand if not satisfied, but in a reasonable and peaceful manner".² In view of its low numerical strength, the Students Union in its early phase rightly adopted the policy of petition and partnership in place of confrontation with the Government, which was otherwise also not necessary for its sympathetic attitude to the just demands of the students.

The movement for replacement of Assamese by English was spreadheaded mostly by the Students and the elite class.³ 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 in 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. The 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, the 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.⁴

The demand for shifting of the NEFA Head Quarters to a place within and the right response to this demand of the Students by the Government in 1974, has given the State beautiful twin-capital towns of Naharlagun and Itanagar. The other demands like more administrative centres, more stipend, more reservation of seats in technical institutions outside the State, Converting NEFA to Central Territory were but natural and just demands, most of which are being implemented. Interestingly, in the initial demand list of students Assam-Arunachal boundary issue did not get an emphatic place, which has become a serious issue after the creation of Union Territory in the area.

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2. For initial phase of the student Movement of Arunachal Pradesh, the Author gratefully acknowledges the debt to Sri Talom Rukbo for the information provided in his letter dated 9.2.95.
3. Interview with Sri Oshong Ering dated 28.1.95.
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CHAPTER - IV

THE ALL ARUNACHAL PRADESH STUDENTS UNION (AAPSU) PHASE:

After creation of the Union Territory in 1972 and its naming as Arunachal Pradesh, the NEFA Students' Union was also named as the ALL ARUNACHAL PRADESH STUDENTS UNION. With the elevation of the status of the area, the responsibility and burden of the AAPSU also became heavier. For, AAPSU has been the strongest, oldest and the apex body having linkage with students of almost every educational institutions of the State and with students studying outside the State. The constitution of the AAPSU (later on named so) which was adopted in 1967, provides for a federal structure of the Union. The preamble of the constitution declares that the objective of the AAPSU is to promote unity and fraternity among the students in particular and the people of the State in general, to explore and exploit the energy of the student community of the State in the greater interest of the Nation and to preserve and promote the tradition and culture of the people of Arunachal Pradesh.

The real history of higher education in erstwhile NEFA infact began with the establishment of Pasighat Govt. College at Pasighat in 1964, that was later named as Jawaharlal Nehru College after the name of illustrious first prime Minister of the Country, who had always a soft-corner for the tribal people of this region. With the establishment of this College, the students of NEFA got a common platform to discuss, discourse and decide everything of a students Union. In fact most of the leadership of the AAPSU come from the College level students of Jawaharlal Nehru College. The establishment of second Government College at Itanagar, the State capital, in 1979, gave a further philip to the strength of Students Union of the AAPSU. These two Government Colleges, in absence of a University in the State, were initially affiliated to Gauhati University in Assam. But because of prolonged student agitation sponsored by the All Assam Students Union (AASU) against foreign nationals in the State, as examination could not be conducted by the University, the Arunachal Government, in the academic

interest of the students of the State, decided to affiliate the Arunachal Colleges to Punjab University, Chandigarh, which was effected in 1980. (Appendix-A)

The AAPSU demanded the affiliation of the Colleges to North Eastern Hill University, Shillong. The Government decided otherwise, it was alleged, to keep the Arunachal students apart from the students of NEHU, who were predominantly Christians. But the then Arunachal Government headed by Sri Gegong Apang as Chief Minister, put forward the argument that if the Colleges of Arunachal Pradesh were affiliated to the neighbouring NEHU, there would be no possibility of having a University of its own. The affiliation to a distant University like Punjab University would pave the path for establishing a University of its own. Here the Chief Minister proved to be more diplomatic and pragmatic in his ideas, as the plea of distance ultimately could convince the Central Government then headed by Late Mrs. Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister to allow a University to the State, which was established in Itanagar on 4th February 1984. The Student Body of the AAPSU, of course, did not raise much hue and cry afterwards on this issue.

AAPSU MOVEMENT - 1979 - 1993 PHASE

So long AAPSU mainly remained as an elite club with a further limitation of small number of students in the State as a whole in its back. Its main mode of activities, as mentioned earlier, was of pray, petition and partnership 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. In the meantime with the creation of Union Territory and its corollary side-effects, the charter of demand of the AAPSU became more specific and broadbased. Some of the important ones were as follows:

- (i) Solution of Assam Arunachal boundary problem.
- (ii) Detection and deportation of foreign nationals from the Territory.
- (iii) Withdrawal of land allotment permit and trade license from the non-Arunachalis.

- (iv) Effective checks against further infiltration of foreign nationals.

The year 1979 is a turning point in the history of the Student Movement in Arunachal Pradesh as this year showed a drastic departure from the earlier policy on strategy, tactics, style of functioning and policy towards Government.¹ This, of course, was caused by a boundary incident² near Likabali in present day West Siang district in 1979, which had greatly intensified the Assam-Arunachal boundary problem. It was alleged that an Anchal Samiti Hall belonging to Arunachal Pradesh at Likabali was illegally occupied by the Assam police. The people demanded its vacation by the Assam police which ultimately led to a police firing. The Assam police also arrested a student of Pasighat Higher Secondary School in Silapathar, a place near Assam-Arunachal boundary.

The AAPSU took up the cause and submitted a charter of demand to the Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh that was prepared in a meeting held at Pasighat. The then General Secretary of the AAPSU Sri. Tanya Dabi, however, took a moderate view on the problem and played a very constructive role to diffuse the tension. He, however, could convince the Arunachal Government of the 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. Sri. Dabi used his good office to solve the problem at the level of the students of the two states by having a meeting with his counterpart of the AASU in May 1979 at Tezpur. They arrived at an agreement for a joint action on the problem as follows²:

- (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.

But as in 1979 the AASU was involved in a prolonged and serious movement on foreign national issue in Assam, the proposed meeting between the AASU and the AAPSU could not be held. Though several meetings on official and ministerial levels had been held on the path paved by the Students organisations of the two States, the problem is yet to see a solution.

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 Sri. Gegong Apang tried to persuade the Students to desist from agitational path explaining his Govt.'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 not satisfied with the Government stand and became increasingly agitational in the subsequent years. The new office bearers of the AAPSU, elected in its meeting at Tezu in April 1981, Sri. Jarbam Gamlin and Sri. Larbin Nashi, President and General Secretary respectively, prepared a new eight point memorandum in its executive meeting held at Pasighat on 10th February, 1982. This new memorandum, besides covering the old demands included certain new ones, such as, 80% job reservation to the Arunachalis, stoppage of allotment of contract to non-Arunachalies, etc. In support of these demands the AAPSU organised a series of district level bandhs from 17.7.82 to 27.7.82. An atmosphere of confrontation between the Government and the AAPSU developed as a result.

In the meantime, 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 also. The more or less identical problems faced by the two Student-organisations of the two States on refugee and foreign national issues had thus established a concord between

the AAPSU and the AASU.

Here it would be appropriate to analyse the roots of the Assam-Arunachal boundary problem and the refugee problem of Arunachal Pradesh, which have become the main causes of the AAPSU agitation. So far the boundary problem of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh is concerned, it arises because of the fact that the states of A.P., Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram were parts of the composite Assam State, but at the time of separation and creation of these states the boundaries were not properly defined and demarcated leading to claims and counter-claims on the issue which have persisted till today. The problem from the Arunachal end can be best understood from resolutions of the AAPSU signed by its president Sri. Nabam Rebia and its General Secretary Sri. Tabin Taki adopted in a meeting held in Pasighat on 26th August '85, which 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 Sri Dawa Tsering Thongdok. The resolutions on Assam-Arunachal boundary were: (Appendix - B)

RESOLUTION 'A'

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.

RESOLUTION 'B'

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.

RESOLUTION 'C'

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.

RESOLUTION 'D'

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.

RESOLUTION 'E'

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.

RESOLUTION 'F'

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 dispute 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.

On refugee problem the Meeting took the following resolutions.

REFUGEE PROBLEM NO. 'A'

The meeting resolves that the refugees like Chakmas, Tibetans settled permanently in Arunachal Pradesh should be withdrawn immediately from Arunachal Pradesh. It is a sensitive area and as such it restricts entrance of even Indian citizens to Arunachal Pradesh without valid Innerline Permit in accordance with the "Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act of 1873". The Meeting feels that the settlement of foreigners in Arunachal Pradesh for a prolonged period may be risky to security and hamper the integrity of the territory in due course. Further, in certain areas the concentration of refugees and the speedy growth of their population has threatened to change the demographic picture of the area. The Government

was seized with this problem and the present Hon'ble Chief Minister said in his broadcast to the people of Arunachal Pradesh on 23rd April, 1980, that the Government of Arunachal has taken up dispersal of these refugees with central Government. The meeting now resolves to urge the Govt. for immediate dispersal of Tibetan and Chakma refugees from Arunachal Pradesh, before they can destroy the demographic harmony of the territory.

INFLUX OF OUTSIDERS NO. 'B'

The meeting further resolves that the Government of Arunachal Pradesh should take necessary steps to strengthen the "Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act, 1873" while issuing Innerline Permit, enrolment in voters' list, land allotment and trading license, etc.

In view of the recent agreement between Assam Agitation Leaders and the Central Government, it is feared that there will be an influx of displaced persons from Assam into Arunachal Pradesh. The meeting urges the Government to take effective measures to prevent any such entrance and to take utmost care in issuing any Innerline Permit to people of doubtful origion.

The meeting observes that while the Hon'ble Chief Minister assured in his broadcast of 23rd April 1980 that no land allotment has been made to non-Arunachalis on permanent basis, there are cases of permanent land allotment, Trading license and other facilities granted to non-Arunachalis in violation of the Innerline Act. The Government is therefore, urged to check and withdraw such facilities extended to non-Arunachalis at an early date.

It would be appropriate now to take stock of the refugee problem in Arunachal Pradesh that has created apprehension and anger in the minds of the Students, people and the Government of the State. Following eruption of ethnic riots in 1961 in Chittagong Hill Tract of erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) thousands of tribal people, rendered homeless, fled away to India. In 1964 again the religious persecution of the Chakmas and Hajongs of the Tract in East Pakistan compelled

them to leave their country to join the earlier hordes of their refugee brethren in Tripura. As the Pakistan Govt. showed no signs of taking their people back and as the Tripura Government had to take a tough stand because of the heavy burden of refugees there, the refugees moved further east. Mahavir Tyagi, the then Union Relief and Rehabilitation Minister tried to settle them in Bihar by offering cash doles. But majority of the Chakmas refused to move to Bihar and settle there on the plea that the climate of that State would not suit them.

At that critical juncture the Government of India contemplated a plan of settling these refugees in the then NEFA. Thereafter, the history of settlement of Chakma and Hajong refugees in NEFA began. Even those refugees who went to Bihar for settlement at Gaya district with cash doles from Govt. of India came back to join their brothers in NEFA in 1968. Thus the flow of refugees continued from 1965-66 to 1968 and they were settled in three districts Tirap, Lohit and Subansiri.

So far the migration of the Tibetan people to India is concerned, that started in 1959 when the Tibetan religio-political leader Dalai Lama, with his followers, entered India via Kamang district of Arunachal Pradesh and took political asylum in India. The Indo-Chinese war of 1962 added a further dose to the stock of refugees in NEFA. It was decided to allow settlement of a limited number of Tibetan refugees distributed over the districts of NEFA. Though some Tibetans were settled in Lohit and Changlang, their main concentration remained confined to Kameng and Tawang.

The Chakmas, Hajongs and the Tibetans were allowed to settle in NEFA when it was under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs upto 1965 and then directly under the Ministry of Home Affairs till 1972. Thus while the seeds of a critical problem were sown in the area, NEFA did not have any representative institution till 1969 and a popular Government till 1975. Here lies the root of the entire problem, as neither the people nor their representatives were consulted in settling these refugees in the area.

There is, of course, diverse opinion regarding the actual number of such refugees in Arunachal Pradesh. The census

of 1981 shows that there were total 35,892 foreign immigrants, that constitutes 5.88% of the total population of 6.28 lakhs. Of these the Tibetans, Chakmas and Hajongs numbers about 16,018. A circular issued in 1986 by the Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh estimated a total of 27,154 refugees of which Chakmas and Tibetans were shown as 20,899 and 6,255 respectively. In the same year AAPSU put the refugee figure at 80,000 approximately and in 1994 the same organisation suggested the figure at more than one lakh. Mr. Takam Sanjoy, till recently the President of the AAPSU, has even estimated the refugee population in Arunachal Pradesh at more than 2 lakhs.³ A Scholar of Chakma studies Mr. S.P. Talukdar mentions that in 1966-68 there were approximately 20,500 Chakmas in NEFA, out of which 16,000 were settled in Balijan and Kokila area of Subansiri district and 4500 were settled in Chowkham area of Lohit district.⁴ A proper census is, therefore, essential to know the actual number of such refugees in the State, as with even 5.88 intake of refugees of the total population mentioned earlier, the refugee population in 1995 will be substantially high.

The refugee problem has been considered serious for two more reasons strategic and fear for demographic imbalance between indigenous tribals vis-a-vis refugee population. Refugee inhabited areas are considered to be strategically sensitive. Tirap and Changlang are on the boarder of Nagaland and serve as the passage and breeding ground of terrorist and anti-national elements, doing activities like smuggling drugs and arms. It has already been alleged that the Chakmas, besides setting up bunkers in their settlement areas, they have been making lethal weapons and accumulated arms and ammunitions. It has also been alleged that Chakma youths are getting arms training in the neighbouring state like Assam, and Myanmar.⁵ Tawang and Kameng are strategic places as they are linking points to Bhutan, Tibet and China. In a sparsely populated State like Arunachal Pradesh where density of population per km is only ten in 1991, which again is predominantly inhabited mostly by smaller tribes with small population, presence of a big chunk of refugee population of moolithic groups may always pose a threat to demographic balance of the area.

Students in Arunachal Pradesh and its organisation AAPSU are fortunate to have a very considerate State Government and still more a very considerate Chief-Minister in the person of Sri Gegong Apang to take total interest in the refugee problem and co-operate sincerely with the AAPSU in trying to solve the problem. The Arunachal Government has greatly been sympathetic to the aspirations of the Students of the State unlike their counterparts in Assam. AAPSU launched their first campaign against the refugee problem in 1982, whereas the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh has been continually adopting about four resolutions on refugee problem since 1977 including the latest one in 1994.

Very often it has been referred to Indira Mujib Agreement of 1972 from different corners that refugees coming before 1972 from East Pakistan are to be settled here. But recently Mr. R.L. Bhatia, the Union Minister for External Affairs, while replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha on the subject raised by Mr. Nyodek Yanggam, M.P. from Arunachal Pradesh, very specifically said that there was no agreement of provisional settlement of Chakma and Hajong refugees in Arunachal Pradesh. He further added that the salient features of the treaty of friendship, co-operation and pact between India and Bangladesh of March 19, 1972, popularly known as the Indira-Mujib Agreement are concerned only with promotion of lasting peace and friendship, re-affirming of faith in non-alignment and peaceful co-existence, determination to maintain regular contact on matters of mutual interest and development of co-operation in the economic scientific, technical and cultural field⁶. (Appendix - C)

This clarification sets at rest of a doubt on a vital point of violating international agreement or understanding by taking measures of deporting or repatriating the Chakma Hajong refugees from Arunachal Pradesh. Even the legal aspect on the problem has been made clear by the judgements of the High Court and the Supreme Court declaring the Chakma and Hajong refugees as foreigners.

Though the issue contains humanitarian aspect involving innumerable human beings, political and ethnic expediency demands settlement of the problem at the earliest. On dip-

lomatic front, India should pressurise the Bangladesh Government to taken back the Chakma and Hajong refugees settled in Arunachal Pradesh, as has been done in case of Tripura-Chakmas. It should be seen that refugees thus repatriated should get the scope of settling in their old place honourably with some kind of autonomy, so that the problem of infiltration into India does not occur again.

On the vexed issue of Tibetan refugees settled in Arunachal Pradesh, the Indian Govt. should make sincere effort for a political dialogue and settlement with the Chinese Government for the solution of the problem.

Till such settlements become reality with Bengladesh and China, which may be a time-consuming process, to pacify the Arunachalee sentiment and to preserve peace in a strategically located "island of peace", the Indian Government should consider the proposal of settling these refugees in other states of the country on a distributive basis. For, when the fruits of independence are being enjoyed by all States, the disadvantages and difficulties should also be equally shared. Though the Chakma problem is a human problem, and they may refuse to accept such a distributive, disintegrative settlement system, in a critical situation, this appears to be the only way of temporary settlement of the problem. Of course, permanent solution by repatriation, as suggested earlier, would always be the best.

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2. Ibid.
3. Takam Sanjoy, Highland Observer, 1-15 Sept. 1994, p.11.
4. cf. Dr. Sanjay Dubey, 'Gross influx of foreing nationals in North East India and question of National Inde-

pendence - A case study of Arunachal Pradesh',
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6. The Arunachal Times, 4th April 1995.

CHAPTER -V

THE AGITATIONAL PHASE : 1985-1990.

The Assam Accord of 15th August 1985 seemed to have encouraged the AAPSU in its further agitational path. The new twin office bearers Sri Nabam Rebia and Sri Tabin Taki, President and General Secretary of the AAPSU respectively, turned out to be more hardliners than their predecessors. After convening a public meeting at Pasighat on 26th August 1985, they prepared and submitted a six point memorandum to the Government, wherein besides earlier demands, a new demand urging the Government to take effective measures to check possible infiltration of foreigners to Arunachal Pradesh from Assam as a result of fallout of the Assam Accord, was included. This time the demand for job reservation was increased from 80% to 100%.

The Government was quick in its reaction to the Memorandum and explained the intricacies of the problems and the steps already taken by the Government on the demands. Not satisfied with the clarification and action of the Govt., the AAPSU in another meeting held at Likabali, chalked out an agitational programme that included boycotting of classes and taking out processions. In this way the confrontation between the AAPSU and the Government was greatly intensified. AAPSU called for a 12 hours Arunachal Bandh on 15th January 1986, which passed off peacefully with some stray minor incidents. In its subsequent agitational programme Sri Kipa Kache, a student of Nyapin Secondary School, was killed in police firing on 3rd February, 1986. AAPSU reacted sharply by announcing late Kipa as the "First Martyr" of AAPSU. They also in a meeting held at Pasighat on 17.7.86 decided to erect memorial for Kipa Kache in every educational institutions.

The AAPSU decided to further intensify the agitation and chalked out a year long programme for it by deciding to have a poster campaign on 25th August, Arunachal Bandh on 7th October and a series of district-wise bandhs from 15th October to 25th October; which was to be followed by a Statewide hunger-strike on 5th November 1986 and a march to Legislative

Assembly on a subsequent date. Besides, they also decided to submit an ultimatum to the Government to concede to their demands by September 1986. The ultimatum was submitted on 1st August 1986 with an eleven point character of demands, which besides repeating the old demands, including some new ones, such as, freedom of religion, preference of English over Hindi in Arunachal Pradesh and enhancement of stipend to the students¹. (Appendix - D)

The introduction of Arunachal statehood Bill in the Parliament in 1986 added a new dimension to the Students Movement in Arunachal Pradesh. 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.² 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.³

Arunachal Pradesh revived its demand for statehood after a gap of 10 years. 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 Cabinet to Delhi to discuss the possibility of granting Statehood to Arunachal Pradesh on July 24, 1986⁴, he asked them to work out the details about the mobilisation 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 Mizoram⁵. The initiative of the Prime Minister was also hailed by the opposition leader Sri Tomo Riba.⁶

Sri AAPSU surprised everyone hitting headlines by op-

posing the grant of statehood of Arunachal Pradesh. Whereas in other places and States, Student Bodies demand upgradation of status of an area, AAPSU, contrary to the expectation of all including the State and Central leaders, opposed the granting of statehood to Arunachal Pradesh at that stage. They of course, had their own reasons and apprehension for that. By a resolution adopted in a meeting held at Pasighat on 24th August 1986, AAPSU asked the Central Government not to grant statehood to Arunachal Pradesh as it was not yet ready for the same. In November 1986, it submitted a Memorandum to the Prime Minister, opposing Statehood, which of course, included other demands also. 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 effected once Arunachal was made a full-fledged State. In the opinion of the AAPSU, Arunachal had not yet attained the minimum socio-economic and political level of development which was required for the proper functioning of a State in Indian Union. It was of the opinion that granting of Statehood at that stage would not benefit the common people but only a handful of people with vested interests. It, of course, said that Statehood should be given to Arunachal when the students and the people in course of time would demand it. It warned that any move by the Government of India to impose Statehood would be strongly resisted by the Students Union.⁷ (Appendix - E)

Meanwhile in September 1986, the Govt. issued a clarification and explained its position. But the AAPSU convened a joint meeting of students and public at Pasighat on 20.12.86 to oppose the Statehood proposal. It however, adopted a number of resolutions seeking certain modifications in the Statehood Bill. 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). Interestingly, once the Statehood was granted to Arunachal Pradesh in February 1987, the AAPSU did not pursue its stand of opposing Statehood and remained satisfied by demanding a few amendments to the Statehood Act, which has not been achieved till-date. Thus it appears that the vehement opposition of the AAPSU to the grant of Statehood was largely

uncalled for and without proper and calculated discourse and thought on the matter.

With the changing of office-bearers in 1988 and the then ensuing Assembly election, the AAPSU, it appears, toned down its activities to a great extent. But it continued pursuing its demands submitted in earlier Memorandums to the State and Central Governments. Its president Sri Tok Bom Borang and General Secretary Sri Liki Ete met the Home Minister in December, 1989 to press for its demands. It also organised a Dharna before the State Legislative Assembly in February 1990 to press the State Govt. But till 1992 no agitational programme has been adopted by the AAPSU, although its demands, some of which were as old as the Student Movement in the area, still remain unsolved.

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3. Ibid, pp 192-193.
4. The Times of India (City publication), New Delhi July 23, 1986 H. Payeng, opcit, p 105.
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6. The Assam Tribune, Gauhati, July 26, 1986.
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CHAPTER -VI

GROWTH OF STUDENT UNIONS OTHER THAN AAPSU

One of the important factors of the low profile, mentioned earlier, erosion of support base and popularity of the AAPSU was the mushroom growth of various student-Unions and organisations in the State. Recently, a number of community level student-Unions have come up in the State, such as, Apatani Students' Union, Apatani Youth Association, East Adi Students' Union, Adi-Galo Students' Union, All Nishing Students' Union, Nishing Youth Association, All Hill Miri Students' Union, All Tai Khamti Students' Union, Idu Students' Union, Singpho Students' Union, All Arunachal Mishing Students' Union, etc. There are also district and area level Students' Unions, such as, All Tirap Students' Union, All Lower Subansiri Students' Union, All East Kameng Students' Union; Doimukh- Balijan-Kimin Students' Union, Balek group of Students' Welfare organisation, etc. In addition, there are certain professional and general student-Bodies like Arunachal Engineering Students' Association, Arunachal Medical Students' Association, Arunachal Students' Union, Guwahati; Arunachal Students' Union, Shillong; Arunachal Students Union, Delhi, etc.

Of all the student-bodies mentioned above, the All Nishing Students' Union (ANSU) seems to be the most organised, powerful and effective community based students' Union in Arunachal Pradesh. The Nishing people being the original inhabitants of the present capital area of Naharlagun and Itanagar, the students and people of this community can have a better and greater role in influencing the policy and functioning of the Government. Established in 1982, ANSU has grown into a socio-political pressure group in the single-largest tribal community of Arunachal Pradesh. An analysis of its aims and objectives, programmes and policies ascertain the fact of ANSU being the most articulate spokesman of the interest of the community. It is the first Student-body in the State to demand district autonomy to the Nishing-dominated districts of Lower Subansiri and East Kameng on the ground that the people of these districts are still to get due share of the benefits of

development. It has organised several rallies and submitted memorandums to the Government alleging injustice in matters of allotment of land to those evicted for making room for the capital complex, due compensation to the people evicted for the purpose, and proportionate or, if possible, preferential treatment in allotment of land in the capital complex to the evicted Nishing families¹.

The ANSU has also successfully resisted a move for transfer of Raga area to Upper Subansiri district. It had demanded return of 25 Raga constituency to Lower Subansiri as per election law². Besides, the ANSU takes active interest in problems of students and educational institutions in their area along with campaign for spread of literacy and education in the community. It further, seeks to protect and promote the cultural heritage of the people. The demand for revival of the old names of the places in capital like Nitivihar, Vivekvihar, Ganga etc, their active involvement in the solution of a crisis caused by the demolition of Nyokum Piller 39, a Nishing religious symbol, prove the role played by the ANSU in cultural preservation of the community. It has played an important social role by campaigning for reforms like ban on child marriage, polygamy, forced marriage etc. Its other demands for educational and economic development of their region include the construction of more hostels in schools and colleges, establishment of a Science College in East Kameng, reservation of more seats for local students in the NERIST, construction of more roads and bridges in the area and clean and effective administration for the people. One major demand of the ANSU is to shift the district Headquarters of the newly created Papum Pare District from Naharlagun/Itanagar to a place near Doimukh for which it carried on a strong agitation. The Government has accepted the demand but has not started its implementation. One of the important points to be noted here is that like the AAPSU, ANSU has also maintained political neutrality following a pragmatic policy of equidistance from all political Parties.³

As regards the trend of mushroom growth of various community-based students' Unions, Moji Riba, a local Scholar is critical about the trend and remarks:⁴

In the context of the communal atmosphere in Arunachal,

much remains to be said. There is an absence of positive quasi-communal ideology leaving a void to be filled. But surprisingly in Arunachal, negative communalism is projected in heavy undertones basically by the student community. Perhaps no other State in the nation has so many communal student-Unions as there are in Arunachal. These seems to be a general trend of shifting loyalties from broad spectrum unions to narrower, more communal ones. This is surprising because it is contrary to the hypothetical suggestion that the youth (read student community) is most influential in effecting communal harmony.... is it not possible for the youth to unite in one banner with positive outlook and help the 'process of resurrection and development of the State?'.

In a reply to the question on impact of community based students Unions, the Chief Minister Sri Gagong Apang strongly criticised such trends and expressed the fear that they might lead to disintegration of the State. He lamented that crash opportunism had replaced the prized idealism of student bodies in Arunachal in recent years.⁵ In this developing State when a common socio-political personality grew up only recently in place of varied isolated tribal groups, this trend of mushroom growth of separate tribal students' Union is a matter of great concern. The imbalanced economic growth among the various tribes of the State is greatly responsible for this trend. The educated youths specially the Students Organisation led by the AAPSU, the Government, and the social scientists should join their heads together to nip this trend in the bud for the greater interest of the people of the State as a whole.

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3. S.N. Ali, opcit.
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5. The Arunachal Times, dtd. 7.10.91.

CHAPTER-VII

RECENT AAPSU MOVEMENT (1994-1995)

Because of various factors mentioned earlier, the AAPSU maintained a low profile for a period, excepting submitting occasional memorandum repeating its demands. Practically till the end of 1993 no serious agitational programme had been adopted by the AAPSU, though its major demands like the Assam-Arunachal Boundary dispute and the refugee problem remained unsolved. But from the early part of 1994 the AAPSU has again come to the limelight for its serious agitational programme against the refugee problem faced by the State. The boundary problem has been relegated to the background for the time being, as in this case some effective measures have been initiated by the Government of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. At the initiative of the Congress(I) and governments of both the States, a series of meetings have been conducted between the Chief Ministers, Chief Secretaries and Commissioners in which many misunderstandings and irritants have been removed by creating a congenial atmosphere for dialogues. A Tripartite Committee has also been constituted to go into the details of the problem to find out a lasting solution. In the last meeting of the Chief Ministers of the two States, it was resolved to constitute a Boundary Committee of equal ratio of representatives from both the sides by involving the local elected representatives, DCs and SPs wherever it was found to be necessary. The Election Manifesto of the Congress (I) for the election of the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh in March 1995, has promised to leave no stone unturned to come up to the expectation of the people on the problem and convince both the Central and the Assam Governments the importance and urgency for coming to the negotiating table to find an acceptable and permanent solution to this thorny but burning problem.¹ The AAPSU, as such, had to adopt a policy of wait and see on the boundary problem.

As a result of the above, the AAPSU could now concentrate on the life and death problem of the refugees in the State. In May 1994 the AAPSU organised a huge 'Delhi Chalo Movement' where a delegation of about 400 students went to

Delhi, organised rallies and stayed there for about a month to attract the attention of the Central leaders to the problem. In spite of their month-long effort to meet the Prime Minister, to drive home this point, the Prime Minister, it has been reported, refused to meet the delegates. It has been alleged that the Prime Minister, on the other hand met the Chakma student delegation.

In the meantime AAPSU joined in the wider regional students organisation of all the seven States of the North East known as North Eastern Students Organisation (NESO). Besides demanding central attention and action on rapid economic development of the North Eastern Region, the main common demand of this Regional students organisation is to detect and deport the illegal foreign nationals from the North East, that has posed a serious threat to the demographic picture of the Region. Whereas in case of other four States i.e. Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura, the problem is more critical as it requires detection and deportation, in States like Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland, where Innerline Permit system prevails, deportation is the major action required for the purpose. In case of Arunachal Pradesh the problem becomes further easy as the refugees live in defined areas, barring the illegal entrants from Bangladesh, Nepal and other countries, the number of which is comparatively negligible. The AAPSU, therefore, joined in an eleven hour "North East Bandh call" given by the NESO on 15th August 1994¹ demanding detection and deportation of the foreign nationals and expressing resentment on Centre's indecisiveness and step-motherly attitude to the North-East. In spite of having sympathy for the causes of the students, the Arunachal Pradesh Government, because of the auspiciousness of the Day i.e. 15th August, had to arrest about 150 students including the AAPSU General Secretary Sri. Domin Loya. It also led to the closure of two schools in West Siang District.²

Besides this, the AAPSU hosted the first ever general Council Meeting of the NESO in Itanagar from 31st August to 3rd September, 1994, where more than 100 student delegates with their leaders of the entire North East Region participated mainly to demand solution of the foreigners issue. Sri. Takam Sanjoy, the Co-convener of the NESO and President of the AAPSU, could successfully use this Regional Forum to highlight the

refugee problem faced by the State. Besides submitting memorandum to the State Governor urging to use his good office to appraise the Centre of the gravity of the issue, the NESO also organised a Seminar on 'Influx of Foreign Nationals in North East India and the Question of National Independence' where intellectuals ministers, Govt. Officials, public and student leaders participated, all of whom expressed concern over the problem.³ This Regional Meeting has certainly added a colourful feather in the cap of popularity of the AAPSU.

While this way the issue was still very hot not only in Arunachal Pradesh but also in the entire North East, the content of a letter of a Central Minister undiplomatically declaring to consider granting of citizenship to the Chakma, Hajong and Tibetan reugees settled in Arunachal Pradesh, perhaps because of pressure from some corner, provoked the AAPSU to take up the matter very seriously. The letter 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 in the context of granting citizenship to Chakma and other refugees, which was widely published in the regional and national newspapers, created a great apprehension and furore in the minds of not only the students, but also of people and Government of the State⁴.

As a reaction to this beating of the hornest's nest, the AAPSU served a "Quit Arunachal Notice" on 1.8.94 asking all the refugees and the foreign nationals to leave the State voluntarily and honourably by 30th September, 1994. Even the Arunachal Assembly in its eleventh session held from 7th to 9th September 1994, unanimously adopted a resolution, the fourth of its kind, reiterating its eariler demand for immediate deportation of the Chakma, Hajong and other refugees from the State. In the same resolution the House expressed its strong sentiment and resentment and took exception to the letter mentioned above. 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 of the State. He was critical of the Central Government for its inaction on several issues confront-

ing the State like, amendment to the Statehood Act, Asam-Arunachal boundary dispute, etc., all of which are in the agenda of the AAPSU⁵.

The AAPSU organised a public Rally on 21.8.94 in continuation of their 1st August Notice at Kokila, a Chakma-habitat, at a distance of about 80 kms. from Itanagar to create awareness among the people on the refugee problem. As a follow-up action, the AAPSU also organised a rally at Miao in Changlang district, another habitat of the Chakma refugees, on 7th September 1994. Sri. Sanjoy, the Presieent of AAPSU, was critical of the Central Govt. as it had not initiated any action for the deportation of the refugees even after repeated request of the State Government, peope from diferent walks of life including students organisation and above all the historic Supreme Court verdict declaring the Chakmas as foreign nationals.

Another unique example, of clubbing together of the AAPSU, the State Government, the public leaders and the common people against the Refugee problem, was displayed by an AAPSU organised massive rally in Rajiv Gandhi Stadium, Naharlagun on 24th September 1994 as another followup measure of the Quit Arunachal Notice. Nearly 5000 students and people from different parts of the State took up a procession in the main thoroughfares of the twin-capital. It was a noval rally where the Chief Minister of the State along with many of his Cabinet colleagues stood shoulder to shoulder with the AAPSU and other public leaders demanding the solution of the Refugee problem at the earliest. While supporting other demands of the AAPSU like, amendment in Statehood Act, boundary problem with Assam, the Chief Minister emphatically 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 residentsip in the State. Sri Apang, of course, appealed to the AAPSU leaders to wait and see the Prime Minister's decision and Union Home Minister's action on the vexed issue and requested them not to take hasty action. Sri 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

AAPSU⁶. However, the matter was made further critical by the burning of the effigy of the Arunachal Chief Minister Sri. Gegong Apang at Delhi by the Chakma Students and refugees. The Chakma's attempt to raise the issue of Human Rights violation has intensified the problem.

MOVEMENT IN 1995

In the meantime the commencement of the process of election to the State Assembly in February, 1995 brought a low profile to the AAPSU agitation. It was also due to the postponement of any decision on the citizenship issue by the Central Government. Here along with the AAPSU, the State Chief Minister Mr. Apang deserves the lion's share of credit for stalling the central move for a unilateral conferment of citizenship - status to the Refugees against the will of the people of the State. It may be recalled here that in a historic press conference at Guwahati in the recent past Sri Apang in a defiant message made it clear to the Central Government that the interest of the State and his beloved people was more dearer to him than the Chief Ministers' Chair⁷. Because of the above, and in the din and bustle for the election that was to be held on 4th February 1995, later on shifted to 11th March 1995 for photo Identity cards, the refugee problem was relegated to the background. Even the president of the AAPSU Sri. Takam Sonjoy after leaving his Presidentship, joined in the fray for election as Janata Dal Candidate.

The AAPSU; however, to keep the issue alive, started a novel method of protest in the North East demanding early solution of the problem. That was the launching of the 1st phase of the "Quit Certificate Movement" on January 25, 1995, in protest against the indecisive stand of the Central Government on deportation of the Refugees. The 1st phase was started with a mass procession in the capital complex and surrender of all educational certificates of the members of the Central Executive of the main body of the AAPSU and its women wing "The Arunachal Women's Justice Forum" (AWJF) to the Governor of the State. The President of the AAPSU Sri. Tage Lapung and Chairperson of the AWJP Miss Taw Azu called upon all to co-operate in the movement announcing that representatives from various educational institutions from all over the State

would participate in it. The AAPSU organised the move for surrender of certificates in the district Headquarters also. The Echo of Arunachal in its 'Itanagar Note book' caption of its 25th January 1995 issue has, however, 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"⁸. It appears, this movement does not have support from all Students and local intellectuals, and if insisted on the movement, it may lead to unnecessary division of the AAPSU.

The AAPSU has not opposed the conduct of election to the State Assembly, but has opposed the campaign by the leaders of the All India Parties in support of their candidates in the State. But as Sri. Narasimha Rao, the Prime Minister and Chairman 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 27.2.95 opposing his visit.⁹ As per the AAPSU release from its President Sri. Tage Lapung, 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. As the State (AICC(I) has appealed to AAPSU to withdraw the Bandh and as the AAPSU was determined to have it, slight crack had been visible in the honeymoon of the AAPSU and the Government. The State Govt. inspite of its stern support to the Students' demand, had to extend all co-operation to the Prime Minister's visit for its own need and safety. No untoward incident was reported from anywhere during the Bandh except keeping 45 students including 11 girls in custody as a preventive measure. 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 Tezu and Namsai on 7th and 8th March respectively in protest against the visit of Cine-actor Satrugna Singha to campaign for BJP candidates.¹⁰ The local and regional newspapers, namely The Arunachal

Times, and The Assam Tribune, while appreciating the sentiment of the AAPSU on alleged refusal of the Prime Minister to give it audience in Delhi, have opposed the Bandh on the day of Prime Ministers' visit in their editorials dated 26.2.95 and 2.3.95 respectively (Appendix - F). Instead of having bandhs, the AAPSU should have taken advantage of the visit of the central leaders for electioneering in the State to convince them and to take commitment for early solution of the refugee problem.

Interestingly while the students' Body criticised the State Congress (I) party for inviting the Prime Minister during Assembly election despite AAPSU's request not to invite any Central leaders, Sri. Tage Lapung, the President of the AAPSU congratulated the Chief Minister Sri. Gegong Apang and the APCC(I) President Mr. Talar Doye for successfully drawing the attention of the Prime Minister on the refugee and other issues in the Meeting¹¹. Infact the Chief Minister emphatically requested the Prime Minister's intervention in solving inter-State boundary problem, removal of lacunae in the Statehood Bill and the Refugee problem. In the meeting Mr. Rao, on the Inter-State boarder dispute with Assam, emphasised an amicable solution in a give and take spirit; to do the needful in removing the lacunae in the Arunachal Pradesh Statehood Bill and assured his personal attention to find an amicable solution soon to the vexed refugee problem. On charge of neglect Mr. Rao said that the State receives the highest percapita plan outlay in the country and enjoys a special category status that enables the State to present surplus budgets. On the charge of his refusal to meet the AAPSU delegates in Delhi he expressed that he was not told of their visit.¹² The AAPSU, however, reacted to this statement of Prime Minister as 'false' and expressed surprise over such statement.

Even NESO Chairman and the Secretary General Sri. Atul Bora and Sri. Artex Shrimley, who visited Itanagar on 1st March, 1995 expressed strong resentment over the Prime Ministers' reported statement on 27th February meeting at Itanagar that he had no knowledge that the AAPSU sought appointment to meet him in Delhi in May 1994. The NESO office-bearers stressed the need of solving the foreigners and the refugee problem, confronting Arunachal Pradesh at the earliest failing which,

they said, the youth might resort to its own 'action'. NESO, they claim, being a non-political organisation is not supporting any political party in Assembly election in Arunachal Pradesh but they urged the people to elect such representatives who could focus the problems like the refugee issue in all earnestness¹³. The NESO thus has been extending its full support to the AAPSU in times of its need.

ASSEMBLY ELECTION AND AFTER: In the election to 60 seated State Legislative Assembly conducted on 20.3.95, the Congress party secured 45 seats, a two-third majority, leaving only 3 seats to Janata Dal, 2 seats to Janata Party and 12 seats to Independent candidates. Sri. Takam Sanjoy, the ex-president of the AAPSU, as Janata Dal candidate, ofcourse, won the election. On the day (19.3.95) of his assuming charge as Chief Minister for a record 4th time, Sri. Gegong Apang talking to pressmen (reported in Arunachal Times, dated 20th Feb. '95) told that his Government would attach priority to disperse all foreign nationals illegally settled in the State for the safety of its native people and would find out an amicable solution to border dispute for peaceful co-existence with the neighbouring State. He further told that the Congress (I) Manifesto, which includes these two problems too and which are in the demand list of AAPSU also, would not only be judiciously and sincerely implemented but would constitute a steering committee headed by a Cabinet Minister to monitor the progress. With the ex-AAPSU President in the opposition and the Congress (I) in the treasury bench having similar opinion on refugee and border problems, a concerted action can be forseen between the AAPSU and the Govt. There was a proposal of the visit of the Prime Minister to the State capital Itanagar in the month of April, 1995. The AAPSU this time decided to welcome the Prime Minister and meet him during his visit to seek his clearcut verdict on the foreigners and refugees issues. The AAPSU considered this meeting as very crucial that would decide the future course of anti-foreigners movement in the State. The Union also, decided to intensify its 'Quit Certificate Movement' after its meeting with the Prime Minister if no tangible results come out of the meeting.¹⁴

As the Prime Minister's visit did not take place in the

month of April, the AAPSU in the meantime has announced their future plan of agitation. The President of the AAPSU Sri Tage Lapung decided to organise a 'Delhi Chalo' programme in the mid of June to press its demand for deportation of foreign nationals from the State. It has also decided to resume its second phase of 'Quit Certificate' movement soon. Sri Lapung demanded 100 percent job reservation for the local people in all categories of jobs¹⁵.

The AAPSU team led by its president Sri Lapung and the General Secretary Sri Loya visited West Kameng district to liaise with the people of the District and to create awareness on the foreigners problems. For, West Kameng and Tawang district had been hotbed of controversy, as many Tibetan refugees had left their campus within the specified area to conduct business openly in the State. The AAPSU has been asking the Tibetan refugees to remain confined to their camps.¹⁶

As in the meantime the Summer vacation started in the educational Institutions of the State, the AAPSU had to maintain a low profile till the beginning of the new session after reopening of the institutions.

The AAPSU has rightly decided to launch a drive against corruptions in the State. it has exhorted the bureaucrats and ministers to make all possible efforts to see that the benefits of the increased plan-funds percolate down to the real beneficiaries. The Union cautioned all those who are allegedly involved in corruption at various levels.¹⁷

With the reopening of the educational institutions from the University to School level in the State after Summer vacation, the AAPSU has again become active. It has sought active co-operation of the State Government to solve the Refugee problem. The AAPSU has urged the Chief Minister Sri Gagong Apang to put constant pressure on the Centre for a permanent solution of the Chakma and other refugee problems faced by the border State. The AAPSU leaders felt the necessity of intensifying the anti-foreigners movement and has further urged that since there was no difference of opinion on the question of deportation, a common action plan should be formulated to provide uniformity in approach and action by involving all

political parties and the other voluntary organisations to solve the problem.¹⁸

In the same letter the AAPSU leaders urged the State Government to properly examine the Supreme Court verdict to formalise the power of the State Govt. to take action against those Chakmas against whom the verdict was pronounced in particular. The letter also mentions about the Supreme Courts' verdict manifesting power to the State Govt. to implement the judgement.

The AAPSU now has rightly decided to ask for a census to ascertain the number of refugees living outside the settlement areas in the State. They have also repeated their call for confinement of the refugees within the settlement areas until the final deportation takes place.

It has also been mentioned that Chakma and Hajong refugees are undergoing underground training in collaboration with some extremist outfits of the North East. In view of this serious situation, the AAPSU has asked for proper vigilance on the matter from the Government.¹⁹

The AAPSU has resolved to seek explanation from Members of Parliament of the State including the Union Minister of the State for Urban Development, Mr. P.K. Thungon, for their inability to highlight the foreigners issue in the floor of the Parliament. This decision is a part of the Union's rejuvenated effort to intensify the State-wide mass movement against refugees and foreign nationals residing in the State.²⁰ Besides the local MPs, the ruling Congress (I) Govt. has also come to be at the receiving end of the Students' resentment. Mr. Tage Lapung, the AAPSU President stated that the AAPSU in its General Meeting held on 5.8.95 expressed its deep anguish over the 'silence' of the State Government on the foreigners' issue, though the ruling Congress (I) assured the people of the State before election to take up the matter seriously with the Central Government after the election.²¹

Addressing press personalities on August 6, 1995 at Itanagar, Mr. Lapung also informed that a separate Committee had been formed at the General Body Meeting on August 5, to accelerate the pace of anti-foreigners movement in the State. The Com-

mittee would be headed by the President of the Arunachal University Students' Union which would have representatives of various Students' organisation of the State.²²

The AAPSU has rightly decided on 5.8.95 meeting not to continue the "quit certificate" movement launched last year to press for early detection and deportation of foreign nations.²³ The AAPSU has further warned that if the Centre and the State Govt. remain apathetic to the problem, it would intervene in the ensuing Lok Sabha election and take its own course of action to deal with the situation. Mr. Lapung also revealed the plan of another "Delhi Challo programme" just before the Lok Sabha election to press its demand.²⁴

In the meantime Mr. P.M. Sayeed, the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, informed in a written reply to Mr. Nyodek Yonggam, the Rajya Sabha Member from the State on August 16 that the Chakmas settled in Arunachal Pradesh had approached the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) alleging violation of their human rights by the State Government. He, however, expressed his unawareness as to whether the Chakmas had also approached the United Nations' Human Rights Commission (UNHRC). The Minister further disclosed that on receipt of some reports of the problems faced by the Chakmas, the Central Govt. had advised the State Government to take necessary steps for providing security, ensure normal supplies of essential commodities and medical facilities in the Chakma inhabited areas.²⁵

This Statement of the Minister has naturally stirred the hornet's nest by hurting the sentiment of the local people specially the Students. The APPSU has in the meantime, in a press release, strongly refuted the statement on human rights violation upon Chakma refugees in Arunachal Pradesh, terming the statement as unfortunate and irresponsible. In fact the AAPSU has termed the exploitation of natural resources of the State by the Chakma refugees as violation of indigenous rights of the local people like the Singphos, Noctes, Wanchos and the Khamptis. They have also questioned the using of human rights as a plea of granting citizenship and permanent settlement to the Chakma and other refugees in Arunachal Pradesh. AAPSU, therefore, has threatened the launching of

a vigorous mass movement in the month of September, which so on remained peaceful expecting an early solution of the problem.²⁶ The local newspaper in its editorial has disapproved such statement that might lead to provocation (Appendix - G)

It can be presumed that the coming months will be months of intense and eventful activities for the AAPSU, specially in view of the ensuing parliamentary election. It has already called for a massive public rally on 29 September, 1995 in the Rajiv Gandhi Statium at Naharlagun.²⁷

The Arunachal Times dated 15.9.95 reported again that the AAPSU would be holding the mass Rally on September 29, 1995. It was reported that the proposed massive rally on the vexed foreigners issue would be organised by varous students organisation under one banner of the APPSU.

In the meantime some development in the political front had an impact on the biggest student organisation i.e. the AAPSU. All the political parties of the state including the party in power i.e. the Congress, cutting across their party lines, joined hands and held an All Party Legislatures' Meet on 6.9.95 to discuss and evolve an action plan on the deportation of the refugees and to organise a mass rally on 29.9.95. Even AAPSU, which had been spearheading the movement of the youths against Chakmas and Hajongs for years endorsed the views expressed by the above Meet. The AAPSU President Shri Lapung, in a press release, said that the decisions of the 60 MLAs on the vexed refugee issue is welcome as it reflected a creditable move on the part of the leaders, which it wanted so long. He even termed the bringing of all sections of political leaders, irrespective of party affiliations, to a single platform, as remarkable achievement.²⁸

Interestingly, The Arunachal Times of 16.9.95 reported that the AAPSU also would be holding rally on September 20 instead of earlier proposed one in September 29. It was reported that after heated arguments between APPSU President Tage Lapung, Vice-President Nabam Jollaw, General Secretary Domin Loya and other Central Executive members, it was decided to hold the "massive explanation call-cum-public rally", on September

20 for the convenience of all political parties, as well as, the people of the state. It was also decided that the Union would make arrangements for the Students, while the concerned Ministers and MLAs will make arrangements for the delegates of various political parties leaders of all levels and people in general, coming for the Rally. The Union also clarified that the explanation call to all the MPs of the State would be done only by AAPSU President and General Secretary and not by any political leaders.²⁹

But eight students leaders of AAPSU, All Nishing Students Union (ANSU) and the Arunachal University Students Union (AUSU) in a jointly signed release stated that the proposed All Party Rally by Congress (I), BJP, Janata Dal, Janata Party, APYC (I), NSUI etc., on September 20 should not be misunderstood as AAPSU sponsored rally. While welcoming the all party rally on behalf of the APPSU, the release said that the students are free to attend the said Rally on September 20, in their individual capacity without involving the name of any students' organisation. It has also been reported that meanwhile a students' Platform consisting of members of various district students unions, community based students' organisation and central executive members of the AAPSU, have sought explanation from AAPSU President and General Secretary and ANSU President for their "alleged involvement with political party without consulting AAPSU Exeucitve members". The signatories of the release include Vice- President of AAPSU, Nabam Jollaw, and Publicity and Information Secretary Taring Mama, ANSU President Kipa Babu, Vice-President Muro Tana Tara, Spokesman Dominic Tadar, General Secretary Tani Loffa ANSU President Negra Techhi and Vice-President Johny Techhi.³⁰

From the above happenings, it can be rightly presumed that some kind of misunderstanding and cleavage have developed among the students regarding participation of the students in the All Party organised Rally on 20.9.95. But the dye was cast and the AAPSU President Tage lapung was included as one of the members of the ten members All Party Delegation, led by the Chief Minister of the State Shri Gegong Apang, to Delhi to apprise the Prime Minister on the vexed Chakma issue and to invite him and the Union Home Minister to attend

the people's Refrendun Rally scheduled to be held in the State Capital on 20.9.95. The other members of the Delegation were State's Home Minister Neelam Taram, former Chief Minister and Independent MLA Tomo Riba, APCC(I) President Talar Doye, State Janata Party President Tadar Tang, State BJP President Shri C.T. Manpong, State Janata Dal Secretary General Shri T.C. Teli and Janata Dal Spokesman and a former AAPSU President Shri Takm Sanjoy and the State National Students' Union of India (NSUI) President Tarung Mize. The Delegation aimed to make the Prime Minister aware of the volatile situation arising out of the continued illegal settlement of Chakma and Hajong refugees in the State, their false and uncalled for demand of permanent settlement in the district of Tirap, Changlang, Lohit, Lower Subansiri and Papumpare that has added fuel to the already explosive situation, and the Centre's latest move to grant citizenship to these foreigners on the face of the judgement of the Hon'ble Gwahati High Court and the Honorable Supreme Court of India terming them as foreingers.³¹

The Arunachal Times dated 20.9.96 reported that the All Party Delegation including the representatives of the AAPSU and NSUI could get an audience from the Prime Minister in Delhi and presented a Memorandum to him highlighting the volatile situation of the State and inviting him to attend the rally. It was reported by the Chief Minister to the press that the Prime Minister, who had all the information on the vexed issue, was convinced of the unanimous demand and had assured to look into the demand of the deportation. The Prime Minister, however, expressed his inability to attend the Rally because of his pre-fixed foreign trips to the Central Asian Republics, but wished the Rally a success. Mr. Apang further stated that though the Delegation presented all the demands before the Prime Minister, complete discussion could not take place due to the absence of the Union Home Minister S.B. Chavan.³²

And at last the Rally was held on 20.9.95. The Arunachal Times of 21.9.95 had rightly termed the day as a Historic Day, as all roads led to Rajiv Gandhi Stadium Naharlagun, where the long planned peoples' Refrundum-cum-Rally was organised. A slight web was visible in the attendance of Students perhaps because of the differences mentioned above. But it was infact

a unique assembly of people representing all sections of society who poured in from various parts of the state braving inclement weather and communication disruption in several places of the state for heavy rains. Thousands of people, young and old, students and public, leaders and followers, cutting across their party affiliation, stood shoulder to shoulder under one umbrella in response to the call of the Organising Committee of Peoples' Refrundum Rally headed by the State Chief Minister Gegong Apang; and unequivocally demanded deportation of Chakma and Hajong refugees from Arunachal Pradesh by 1st January, 1996.³³

The AAPSU leaders both ex and new got the lion's share of time to address the rally, along with the leaders of the various political parties, a few ministers, all the three MPs from the state in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, and the State Chief Minister Shri Gegong Apang, the Chairman of the Rally. Shri Tage Lapung, President of the AAPSU, in his forceful speech, while criticizing the Central Government for its negligent attitude to the problem, expressed that it was high time to protect the future of the State which is at stake; and the rich culture of the people is being threatened by the continued presence and unlawful activities of the refugees in the State. He also asked explanation from the MPs of the State Shri P.K. Thungan (till recently Minister of State in the Central Govt.) Shri Laeta Umbrey from Lok Sabha and Shri Nyodek Younggam from Rajya Sabha. All the MPs in their address tried to convince the Rally of their activities in Delhi to attract attention towards the vexed problems faced by the State.³⁴

Prior to his address on the main issue, Shri Lapung could present shields through the Chief Minister Shri Gegong Apang to the parents of the martyrs of the AAPSU Movement including the first one Shri Kipa Kache as a token of respect to the martyres.³⁵ Thus the State Government recognised the AAPSU sacrifice by acknowledging the martyars, which may be termed as a work of atonement.

Besides the AAPSU General Secretary Shri Domin Loya, two Ex-presidents of the Organisation Shri Nabum Rebia and Shri Takam Sanjoy, a JD MLA and spokesman, addressed the Rally. Shri Sanjay was given the honour of offering vote of

thanks in the Rally. Thus the AAPSU leaders old and new, could successfully ventilate their minds on the issue in the Rally.

The mammoth gathering, unheard and unseen of in the history of the State after a deliberation of long seven hours with intermittent cheering and thunderous clappings, unanimously adopted various resolutions relating to the vexed foreigners issue, put to vote by the Chief Minister Shri Gegong Apang. The Resolutions are as follows:³⁶

The Govt. of India while honouring the decisions of the Guwahati High Court and the Hon'ble Supreme Court vide which Chakma and Hajongs refugees of Arunachal Pradesh have been held as foreigners and in defence of the demand of all indigeneous people of Arunachal Pradesh should take a firm decision to deport Chakma and Hajong refugees out of Arunachal Pradesh within a period of three months i.e., by January 1, 1996.

That the State Government must ensure eviction of Chakma and Hajong refugees from unauthorisedly occupied area including forest area encroached by them within a period of one month to confine them to their originally earmarked settlement camp.

The formation of Committee/organisation like the Committee for the Citizenship Rights and the peoples' Rights organisation (PRO) for agitating the issue of grants of their citizenship formed by Chakma and Hajongs refugees be banned forthwith, as foreigners cannot form such organisation/Committee, the act being illegal and unconstitutional and such act also undermines the protected status of the indigeneous people.

The Govt. of India, particularly the Ministry of Home Affairs must not entertain the representation or the grant of audience to Chakmas and 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.

If the deportation of Chakma and Hajong refugees out of Arunachal Pradesh is not carried out within a stipulated time

frame by the Central Government, all Political leaders of the State shall resign from the primary membership of their respective political parties and shall form a common organisation under the banner of which indigeneous people shall continue to fight for the cause of indigeneous people and till Chakma and Hajong refugees are deported out of Arunachal Pradesh.

That any indigenous people if found to be extending help and assistance to Chakma and Hajong refugees directly or indirectly, shall be excommunicated and expelled from the society or the State. That the Presidents of All Political parties and students organisations/unions are jointly authorised to forward the resolution to the Prime Minister of India and the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, and all political Parties' Presidents, students organisation and the State Government shall take such follow up action as necessary to materialise the above resolutions.

The Regional News Papers from the North East in their Editorials have given due importance to the Rally terming it as historic event (Appendix - H)

Now the ball for solvng this vexed problem has been thrown to the court of the Central Government. In the meantime the Rally proposed by the APPSU on 29.9.95, however, was not held, perhaps because of an understanding among the student leaders. It would be better for the AAPSU, the biggest and the most effective student organisation of the State to present a united front in such a critical period faced by the State.

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CHAPTER - VIII

LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT BASE

Most of the leadership of the AAPSU has come from College level students. After the establishment of Jawaharlal Nehru College in 1964, the College has been serving as the breeding ground of the leadership of AAPSU till the establishment of Govt. College, Itanagar, after which the leadership has been shared by the students of these two institutions, with of course, occasional share in it to the students studying outside the state. The Arunachal University started playing role in the leadership of the Student organisation after campus teaching was started in 1988. The organisation has served as the source of State as well as central level leadership. Some of the Office bearers of the recent time contested the State Assembly Election this time. Many of the Office-bearers and members of the AAPSU have served the State successfully as administrative officers and some like Mr. Talom Rakbo as a dedicated Social Worker in the State. (For office-bearers of the AAPSU please see Annexure-H)

The AAPSU enjoyed full support of the entire student community till 1985. However, recently the NSUI has also increased its support base and influence among a section of students community in the State. During 1988-89 a splinter group of students with support from some corners, formed a parallel AAPSU and for sometime it even claimed to be the real AAPSU. Thus the support base of the AAPSU suffered from some erosion, which it greatly recovered by its recent Refugee-movement. Even though the AAPSU now does not enjoy full support from all the students of the State, it is undoubtedly the biggest, the most powerful and effective Student organisation of the State. So far the Political parties are concerned, the Peoples Party of Arunachal Pradesh (PPA), the one time main opposition party of the State, always extended its support to the AAPSU and the vice-versa. But the Party's joining Janata Dal in 1989 effected the relationship greatly. A section of the AAPSU leadership became critical and sceptical about the attitude of the Janata Dal towards Arunachal Pradesh and they became unhappy at PPA's loosing regional character¹.

Since then the AAPSU has maintained an equidistance from all Political Parties. The NSUI wing of course, is under the influence of the Congress (I) party.

So far the popular support is concerned, it does not appear to have much influence among the people for all its demands.

The main reason for this popular indifference appears to be failure on the part of the AAPSU to articulate and ventilate the general interest of the common people. Most of their demands concern only the elite class. But whenever it has taken up issues that concern the people, like the Assam Arunachal Boundary problem or the recent Refugee problem, the local people have come forward to its support. Moreover, ideologically the AAPSU does not desire any drastic change in the socio-economic life of the people², whereto major portion goes to the elite and fortunate class only. Further, for a long period of its existance the student organisation was handicapped by its small strength. Even now the number of students in undergraduate and post-graduate level would be not more than 5,000. The large-scale recruitment of educated class into Government services reduce the strength of the voice of the elite class, forbidding this section to voice the demand of the people and take active part in such efforts openly. In spite of all these, the AAPSU has emerged as a major pressure group having a definite role and say in the decision-making process of the State. It is heartening to note that in a State, where women folk are extremely backward and neglected, the women's volunteers force, an AAPSU wing, has given a charion call to the women of Arunachal Pradesh to rise and fight against the neglect, oppression, superstition and social evils from which they have been suffering for ages³.

CONCLUSION:

The major challenges before the APPSU, as it appears today, are: (i) ability to resist the influence and interference of politicians and Political Parties; (ii) ability on the part of its leaders to resist from interested corners the temptation and allurements of power and careers, (iii) Setting proper rules and procedures, (iv) consolidation of membership; (v) establishment of effective linkages with people, Government and media; (vi) successful

neutralisation of emerging divisive forces and tendencies in the community and region-based student-Unions⁴, (vii) taking practical, calculated and right decision at right moment with the help and guidance of local intellectuals, (viii) explicitly expressing ideological basis (ix) playing effective role in maintaining and improving academic standard and atmosphere in the State and above all (x) establishing mass contact with the people to revive and promote, work culture among the locals. Here though uttered in different time and circumstances, Garibaldi's famous appeal to the members of his organisation 'Young Italy' can serve as a guideline, wherein he told the members to "climb the mountains, and share the humble food of the labourers, to visit the workshops and the artisans, to speak to them their rights,...., recount to them endless oppression of which they were ignorant, because none took it upon himself to reveal it⁵.

From the above account it appears that the role of Students and Student Movement in Arunachal Pradesh is much broader, positive and of greater importance than that of their counterparts elsewhere in the country and abroad. Whereas, in case of others, they find a prepared-frield, ideology, established leadership and a history of movement, here in Arunachal it is quite a Young Movement with practically nothing to inherit but to do everything by the student bodies as poineers in one of the most backward, predominantly tribal-inhabited areas of the world. So far the AAPSU has been successfully neutralising the multipolarity of the Student-bodies by maintaining a collective identity in the form of the AAPSU and voicing the demand of the State effectively. In future the unity, co-operation, strength and success of the Movement will largely depend on the ability of the AAPSU to cope with the emerging stress and strains in the inter-community, inter-tribal relations in the State, an inevitable fall out of the uneven development process,⁶ by demanding and helping implementation of development plans, on a balanced basis, if not 100% atleast to the practicable extent, among the communities and the different component-parts of the State.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. A.C. Talukdar, Op cit.
2. Ibid.
3. The Arunachal Times, dt. 26.5.90.
4. S.N. Ali, op cit,
- 5 C.D. Hazen, opcit, p. 135.
6. S.N. Ali, opcit.

APPENDIX - A

THE ARUNACHAL PRADESH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

THE ARUNACHAL PRADESH UNIVERSITY BILL, 1984

(EXCERPTS)

THE FIRST SCHEDULE

(SEE SECTION 4)

The University shall endeavour through research education, training and extension to play a positive role in the socio-economic development of Arunachal Pradesh, and based on the rich heritage to advance the culture of its people. Towards this end it shall undertake:

- (i) strengthen and diversify certificate and diploma courses related to the needs of employment, and building the economy of the region on the basis of its natural resources;
- (ii) introduce relevant undergraduate courses of enhancing knowledge and skills;
- (iii) provide education and training in the various arts, crafts and skills of the region, raising their quality, and improving their availability to the people;
- (iv) provide, or arrange training of teachers required for such activities or institutions;
- (v) provide training and other facilities to equip persons for different categories of jobs;
- (vi) to provide suitable postgraduate courses of study;
- (vii) undertake and organise research to develop the creative potential of its people for optimal use of the resources of the territory particularly that which is related to regional development; and
- (viii) to provide for counselling and guidance and facilities for helping in placement of students.

In furtherance of the fulfilment of the above objectives and activities the University shall function in close collaboration of the Union Territory and concerned institutions in the Union Territory and the country.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES AND REASONS

The areas in the union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh which prior to Twenty-first January Nineteen Seventy-two being the appointed day under provisions of section 7 of the North-Eastern Area (Re-organisation) Act, 1971, were comprised in the tribal areas specified in Part B of the table appended to paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, were totally neglected even in respect of Primary education during the foreign rule and for much time thereafter, what to say for provisions for higher education which were totally non-existent.

At the time, when the country attained Independence, there were hardly two Primary schools which catered to the educational needs of the people of this Territory. Though the condition in respect of the provision of Primary and Secondary Education has vastly changed during the last thirty-three years of Independence, as at present there are a total of 1,235 institutions which include 18 Higher Secondary, 34 Secondary and the rest Primary and Middle Schools, great need is felt to provide higher education for students coming out of these institutions and consequently two colleges were established for the purpose of higher education, one in the year 1964 and the other in 1979 at Pasighat and New-Itanagar respectively. In spite of that a good number of students continued to join Colleges/Universities outside the Territory since all courses of studies could not be provided in these Colleges.

These colleges were affiliated to the Gauhati University which was the nearest University for convenience in all respects. But, a lot of inconvenience and dislocation was caused in the normal functioning of these colleges due to the continuing agitation in Assam and consequently the Government of Arunachal Pradesh approached the Government of India to get these Colleges affiliated to any University having such Statutes for extra-territorial affiliation. After much effort these

Colleges were affiliated to the Punjab University in 1980. There have been many handicaps and difficulties while these were affiliated to Punjab University due to unsurmountable problems such as the instructions regarding duration of the first degree courses and the block period prescribed by Punjab University for the students graduated from Gauhati University for admission into post-graduate courses etc. It has been suggested unanimously by one and all that it is after all a distant control and the solution lies in having a separate University for Arunachal Pradesh. In the mean time, under directions of the Government of India, a Committee on Development of Higher Education in Arunachal Pradesh was constituted which went into full details of the matter. The Committee has so far met four times to deliberate on the matter and it has suggested for the establishment of a University in Arunachal Pradesh with the following object:-

- (i) That the University should cater to the educational needs for higher education in Arunachal Pradesh.
- (ii) That the University should help in the preservation of the rich cultural heritage of various tribes of Arunachal Pradesh which possess a variety of folklores, folk music, folk dances, arts and crafts. The Committee suggested that the University should provide adequate facilities to study, record and further develop these sub-cultures of various tribes.
- (ii) Since the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh has immense potential for economic development, this University should provide for such courses of studies so as to help in producing required skilled manpower for adequate economic exploration and provision of job opportunities and entrepreneurship in the Territory.
- (iv) Since this Territory has been neglected educationally for decades, it becomes the moral responsibility of the Government to provide adequate facilities for the people of the Territory to fill up the gap speedily so that the people of the area could join the mainstream of the country at equal level with other citizens as best as possible.

Together with the above recommendations of the committee of the Government of India for Development of Higher Education, the people of Arunachal Pradesh have also been pressing for a long time for the establishment of a University for the Union Territory and actually on a number of occasions the members of the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh have broached on the subject on the floor of the House and consequently looking to the dire needs for such an Institution, the Government seeks to establish a University in Arunachal Pradesh in pursuance of the recommendations of the Committee on Development of Higher Education appointed by the Government of India.

Hence the Bill.

(GEGONG APANG)
Minister, Education

APPENDIX - B

(COPY)

**OFFICE OF THE
ALL ARUNACHAL PRADESH STUDENTS' UNION,
ESTD-1947**

**RESOLUTION ADOPTED IN THE MEETING CONVENED
BY THE ALL ARUNACHAL PRADESH STUDENTS'
UNION HELD AT PASIGHAT ON 26TH AUGUST 1985.**

A meeting convened by all Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union AAPSU was largely attended by all tribes of different Districts of Arunachal Pradesh and political leaders of different parties held at Pasighat on 26th August, 1985 presided over by Shri Dawa Tsering Thongdok Vice-President of AAPSU, having deliberated upon the burning problems of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam-Arunachal Boundary, and the Refugee problems unanimously adopts the following resolutions.

(1) ASSAM - ARUNACHAL BOUNDARY PROBLEMS:-

RESOLUTION NO. 'A'.

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.

RESOLUTION NO. 'B'.

Whereas, the meeting considered the Boundary as delineated in the boundary Notification of 1914 as the original, true genuine and natural boundary of this region.

RESOLUTION NO. 'C'.

Whereas, all territories carved out of Arunachal Pradesh and handed over to the state of Assam without consulting the people of Arunachal Pradesh (erstwhile North East Frontier Agency) 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.

RESOLUTION NO. 'D'.

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 discontent, leading to serious conflict which must be avoided at all costs in the interest of tranquility and security of the country.

RESOLUTION NO. 'E'

Whereas, the meeting further resolves to withdraw the all police posts established in disputed areas by the Assam Govt. and some areas after 1979 violating the status-quo agreement reached between the Govt. of A.P. and Assam in 1979, immediately.

RESOLUTION NO. 'F'.

Whereas, this meeting of the students of Arunachal Pradesh resolves to convey the Govt. of India to constitute a Boundary Commission immediately to resolve any outstanding dispute 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.

(2) REFUGEE PROBLEMS:-

REFUGEE PROBLEMS NO. 'A'.

The meeting resolves that, the refugees like Chakmas, Tibetans settled temporarily in Arunachal Pradesh should be withdrawn immediately from Arunachal Pradesh. It is a sensitive area and as such it restricts entrance of even Indian citizen to Arunachal Pradesh without valid Innerline Permit in accordance with the "Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act 1873". The meeting feels that the settlement of foreigners in Arunachal Pradesh for a prolonged period may prove risky to security and hamper the integrity of the territory in due course. Further, in certain areas the concentration of refugees and the speedy growth of their population has threatened to

change the demographic picture of the area. The Govt. was seized with this problems and the present Hon'ble Chief Minister said in his broadcast to the people of Arunachal Pradesh on 23rd April, 1980 that the Govt. has taken up dispersal of these refugee with central Govt. The meeting now resolves to urge the Govt. for immediate dispersal of Tibetans and Chakma refugees from Arunachal Pradesh, before they can destroy the demographic harmony of the territory.

INFLUX OF OUTSIDERS NO. 'B'.

The meeting further resolves that, the Govt. of A.P. should take necessary steps to strengthen the "Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act 1873" while issuing Inner Line Permit, enrolment in voter list, land allotment and trading licence etc.

In view of the recent agreement between Assam Agitation leaders and the Central Government, it is feared that there will be an influx of displaced persons from Assam into Arunachal Pradesh. The meeting urges the Govt. to take effective measures to prevent any such entrance and to take utmost care in issuing Inner Line Permit to people of doubtful origin.

The meeting observes that while the Hon'ble Chief Minister assured in his broadcast of 23rd April 1980 that no land allotment has been made to non-Arunachalis on permanent basis there are cases of permanent land allotment, trading licence and other facilities granted to non-Arunachalis in violation of the Inner Line Act. The Govt. is therefore, urged to check and withdraw such facilities extended to non-Arunachalis at an early date.

Sd/-
NABAM REBIA
President
AAPSU

TABIN TAKI
GENERAL SECRETARY
AAPSU

APPENDIX - C

INDIRA-MUJIB AGREEMENT OF 1972

‘NO PACT ON PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT OF CHAKMAS & HAJONGS IN ARUNCAHAL’

There was no agreement on provisional settlement of Chakma and Hajong refugees in Arunachal Pradesh, according to Union External Affairs Minister Mr. R.L. Bhatia.

Mr. Bhatia was replying to a question on the subject raised by Member of Parliament from Arunachal Pradesh, Mr. Nyodek Yonggam, in the Rajya Sabha recently. Mr. Bhatia further said that the salient features of the treaty of friendship, co-operation and peace between India and Bangladesh of March 19, 1972, popularly known as the Indira Mujib Agreement are promotion of lasting peace and friendship, reaffirmation of faith in non-alignment and peaceful co-existence, determination to maintain regular contact on matters of mutual interest and development of co-operation in the economic, scientific, technical and cultural fields.

This was stated in a release by Mr. Yonggam.

It may be mentioned here that Arunachal Pradesh government has been demanding deportation of all refugees, including Chakma, and Hajongs, temporarily settled in the state by the Centre.

Several resolutions to this effect had also been passed in the Assembly.

The All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU) has been spearheading the movement demanding deportation of all-refugees and foreigners from the state.

(The Arunachal Times, April 4, 1995)

APPENDIX - D

(COPY)

OFFICE OF THE ALL ARUNACHAL PRADESH STUDENTS' UNION

ESTD: 1947

MEMO NO. AAPSU/GS-17/84-86/03. DTD. PSGT. THE
18TH JULY' 86.

CIRCULAR

The All Arunachal Pradesh students' Union (AAPSU) held a general Body Meeting at Pasighat, East Siang District, on and from 15th to 17th July 1986 to review the pros and cons of the last agitation called by the Union, and to decide future course of action. The meeting unanimously adopted the following resolutions:-

1) **CONDOLENCE:** The meeting observed a two minutes silence in memory of late Kipa Kache, student of Nyapin Secondary School, Lower Subansiri dist., who was a victim of deliberate police firing on 3rd Feb., 1986 in the wake of last AASPSU agitation. The meeting reaffirmed the firm determination and solemn pledge of the students community of Arunachal Pradesh to make the highest sacrifice, the cause for which late Kipa Kache laid down his life. In this context the meeting once again, has unanimously resolved to take up the following tasks in memory of the "FIRST MARTYR OF AAPSU".

(a) **ERECTION OF MEMORIAL PILLAR/STATUE:-**

The meeting was unanimous that, every educational Institutional in Arunachal Pradesh shall erect the Memorial pillar/statue of Late Kipa Kache in their respective Institutions within the month of October, 1986.

(b) **JUDICIAL ENQUIRY AND COMPENSATION OF RS.
ONE LAKH:-**

The meeting strongly landed at the decision that, the Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh must institute a judicial enquiry into the cause of police firing at Nyapin Secondary School leading to the killing of a student.

Secondly, the meeting held the Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh responsible for the said police firing which was pre-planned, unprovoked, unwarranted, unjustified and uncalled for. Therefore, the AAPSU demands that an adequate material compensation including a cash relief of Rs. One Lakh should be paid to the members of the bereaved family within the month of October 1986.

(c) STATE-WIDE POSTER CAMPAIGN ON 25TH AUGUST, 86:-

A mass poster campaign throughout the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh has been proposed on 25th August 1986, as a step in continuation of the present AAPSU movement and to commemorate late Kipa Kache. The following slogans have been suggested for the poster campaign.

1. LONG LIVE KIPA KACHE
2. Long Live AAPSU martyr
3. NO SOLUTION NO AAPSU ELECTION
4. LONG LIVE AAPSU
5. SAVE AAPSU SAVE ARUNACHAL
6. AAPSU DEMAND IMMEDIATE JUDICIAL ENQUIRY.
7. AAPSU DEMAND COMPENSATION OF RS. ONE LAKH.
8. NO SOLUTION NO AAPSU ELECTION
9. REFUGEE GO BACK.

INSTRUCTION:- The instructions for poster campaign throughout Arunachal Pradesh on 25th August'86 will be as under.

1. It will be a only a peaceful poster campaign.

2. Students will not take out any processions/demonstrations on the way or indulge in any destructive activities.
3. Students will not boycott the classes or create any public nuisance.
2. (a) ULTIMATUM TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE GOVT. OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH:

The meeting decided to submit the "LAST ULTIMATUM" of the students demands to the Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh giving specific times of two months from August to Sept., 86 to concede the charter of demands, submitted by all Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU) within the specified times given above. Should the Govt. fail to do so, AAPSU will be obliged to resume its movement, Meanwhile, the AAPSU members will call on the Hon'ble Lt. Governor, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh to apprise him of its demands. The AAPSU members will also make extensive tour programme to various parts of Arunachal Pradesh to acquaint the people of its charter of demands.

(b) ARUNACHAL BANDH ON 7TH OCT. 1986:

As a first step and in continuation of 15th January 1986 agitation the general body meeting of AAPSU has declared Arunachal Bandh on 7th October 1986.

(c) DISTRICT WISE BANDH IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH FROM 15TH TO 25TH OCTOBER, 1986.

Secondly, the meeting resolved to observe district wise Bandhs from 15th to 25th Oct., '86 in Arunachal Pradesh according to the following order:-

Sl.No.	Date	District
1.	15.10.90	West Siang Dist.
2.	16.10.90	Tawang
3.	17.10.90	East Siang Dist.
4.	18.10.90	West Kameng Dist.

STUDENT MOVEMENTS IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

5.	20.10.90	Dibang Valley
6.	21.10.90	East Kameng Dist.
7.	22.10.90	Lohit Dist.
8.	23.10.90	Upper Subansiri
9.	24.10.90	Tirap Dist.
10.	25.10.90	Lower Subansiri

INSTRUCTIONS: The modus operandi of the Arunachal Bandh on 7th October 1986 and District wise Bandhs from 15th to 25th October 1986 will be as under:-

1. Bandh period.... 6.00 a.m. to 5.00 P.M.
2. Things to be affected:
 - (a) Boycott of classes by students of all educational Institutions on "Arunachal Bandh Day" and boycott of classes in District Educational Institutions in respective districts during "District Wise Bandh" as per dates given above.
 - (b) Closure of all business and Trading establishments/ agencies all the public and private vehicles to remain off the road throughout Arunachal Pradesh during Arunachal Bandh and in respective districts during district-wise bandh.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTION: The following machinaries should not be affected during Arunachal Bandh day on 7th Oct., 86 and during district wise Bandh days from 15th to 25th Oct., 1986.

1. AMBULANCE / FIREBRIGADE VAN/ POLICE AND ARMY VEHICLES/ MILK VAN (2) HOSPITALS/ WATER SUPPLY/ ELECTRICITY AND GOVT. OFFICES.

N.B.: (a) The students should request the shops/vehicles owners both public and private to co-operate with them for high lighting their demands before the Govt. for an early solution of their charter of demands.

(b) The students should winover the sympathy and goodwill of people and organise the Arunachal Bandh and District wise Bandh in a peaceful manner and should avoid occurance of violence and untoward incidents.

(D) STATE WIDE HUNGER STRIKE ON 5TH NOV 1986

Thirdly, it has been decided to stage a HUNGER STRIKE throughout Arunachal Pradesh on 5th Nov' 1986 from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. by all Arunachal Pradesh students' Union (AAPSU)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Hunger strike should be staged infront of all the Administrative centres/education Institutions of their respective Districts/ Sub-Division/ Circle Hqs.

2. Students should boycott their classes and they should not take any eatable things except water during HUNGER STRIKE period.

3. Working of Govt. offices/ business establishments should not be disrupted.

4. Students should not take out any processions/ organise demonstrations or shout slogans.

5. Students are allowed to use posters and Banners to focus their charter of demands during Hunger Strike and suggestive and suggestive slogans are as follows:-

- 1) AAPSU HUNGER STRIKE ON 5TH NOV' 1986.
- 2) FULFIL AAPSU DEMANDS.
- 3) NO SOLUTION NO AAPSU ELECTION
- 4) AAPSU HUNGER STRIKE FOR PROSPEROUS ARUNACHAL
- 5) AAPSU SACRIFICE FOR BETTER ARUNACHAL
- 6) LONG LIVE AAPSU
- 7) LONG LIVE STUDENTS' UNITY

(E) AAPSU MARCH TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Fourthly, the AAPSU has resolved to sponsor a STUDENTS MARCH to the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh Itanagar to submit its charter of demands to the speaker of the Legislative Assembly. The date and detail programme will be intimated accordingly.

(3) EXTENSION OF THE TENURE OF THE PRESENT
AAPSU EXECUTIVE BODY MEMBERS:

The house vehemently ruled out the feasibility of holding a "FRESH ELECTION" of AAPSU Executive body members till an amicable and acceptable solutions to its charter of demands are arrived at. With none against, the meeting was unanimous of the decision (NO SOLUTION NO APPSU ELECTION) and it also resolved to launch a poster champaign throughout Arunachal Pradesh to this effect on 25th August, 1986.

The meeting seriously viewed the failure of some of the cabinet members in discharging their duties effectively and sincerely. A major reshuffle in this regard was deemed inevitable for which the sitting AAPSU cabinet members have been empowered to demand explanation from such members and substitute them by other efficient candidates by 20th of Aug ' 86.

N.B.: The proposed "ULTIMATUM" in the form of the charter of demands to be submitted to the govt. of A.P. shall be made available at the earliest convenience.

LONG LIVE AAPSU

LONG LIVE STUDENTS UNITY

SD/- (NABUM REBIA SD/- TABIN TAKI

PRESIDENT

GEN. SECY.

AAPSU

AAPSU

H.Q. J.N. COLLEGE, PASIGHAT

HILL TOP-791103.

APPENDIX - E

(COPY)

OFFICE OF THE ALL ARUNACHAL PRADESH STUDENTS' UNION

ESTD.-1947

**TELEGRAM TO HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA
FROM ALL ARUNACHAL PRADESH STUDENTS' UNION
(AAPSU) ON 25TH AUGUST 1986 AGAINST GRANTING OF
STATE-HOOD TO ARUNACHAL PRADESH.**

To

RAJIV GANDHI

PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

NEW DELHI.

**FROM: ALL ARUNACHAL PRADESH STUDENTS UNION
(AAPSU)**

**ALL ARUNACHAL PRADESH STUDENTS' UNION
(AAPSU) FEELS ARUNACHAL PRADESH NOT YET REACHED
STAGE FOR GRANTING STATEHOOD (.) IT STRONGLY
OPPOSE GRANTING STATEHOOD TO ARUNACHAL AT THIS
STAGE (.) IT DEMANDS THAT STATEHOOD BE GRANTED
AT APPROPRIATE TIME AFTER ARUNACHAL ATTAINS
CERTAIN DEGREE OF SOCIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
(.) AS AND WHEN SUCH DEVELOPMENT IS ACHIEVED
STATEHOOD BE GRANTED TO ARUNACHAL AFTER AP-
POINTING A COMMITTEE TO ASCERTAIN THE STATE OF
DEVELOPMENT ATTAINED (.) ALL ARUNACHAL PRADESH
STUDENTS' UNION (AAPSU) AND THE PEOPLE OF
ARUNACHAL SHALL ALWAYS RESIST ANY ATTEMPT TO
IMPOSE STATEHOOD AT THIS STAGE AS THIS BRING NO
GOOD TO COMMON MAN IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH.**

SD/- NABAM REBIA

SD/- TABIN TAKI

STUDENT MOVEMENTS IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

PRESIDENT	GENERAL SECRETARY
ALL ARUNACHAL PRADESH	ALL ARUNACHAL PRADESH
STUDENTS UNION.	STUDENTS' UNION.

H.Q. J.N. COLLEGE: PASIGHAT
HIL TOP : 791103.

APPENDIX - F

PM AT ITANAGAR

While the demand of the All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union (AAPSU) to solve the problem of foreigners, mainly the Chakmas and Hajongs, is justified, few will endorse its decision to call for an Itanagar capital complex bandh on the day the Prime Minister, Sri P.V. Narasimha Rao, visited this sub-Himalayan State. That the bandh did not have much of an impact is clear from the fact that a large number of people came to hear the Prime Minister. The pique of the AAPSU is however understandable, because a delegation of the students body that went to New Delhi last May to meet the Prime Minister to place its grievances about the foreign nationals could not obtain an interview. AAPSU President Taga Lapung did not mince words when he declared that before coming here 'the Prime Minister should remember what he did to us in Delhi'. The delegation camped in Delhi for a month and could not obtain an audience with the Prime Minister while a delegation of the Chakma refugees was allowed to meet him to discuss their problems. Actually, the AAPSU leader had said they would not allow any central leader to come to Arunachal Pradesh for campaigning, but the Janata Dal President, Sri S.R. Bommai, had already addressed meetings without any resistance. So the Administration knew that notwithstanding the bluster the AAPSU would not create much trouble. Besides Chief Minister Gegong Apang who is known to have supported the AAPSU stand on the Chakma issue is well-liked. The students have not objected to the Chakmas and Hajongs being granted citizenship, but they want them to be moved out of Arunachal Pradesh to some other States in the country or "go back to the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh where they belong".

One recalls the incidents of a batch of foreigners being pushed into Assam in the wake of the AAPSU agitation last year which fouled up the relationship between Dispur and Itanagar. The Assam Government naturally objected to the unwanted persons of Arunachal being pushed into Assam. The issue of the Chakmas and Hajongs has become a live one for the Arunachalis and Sri Apang's stand on the issue has made

him popular with the people: The Prime Minister's disclosure that he had already directed the Home Ministry to prepare a plan to solve the problem should give a quietus to the students who have been agitating over it for quite some time. Sri Rao's regret expressed at the Itanagar meeting for the failure of the AAPSU team to see him because he was not aware of their request should also assuage the hurt feelings of the student leaders. The fact that the bandh passed off peacefully and there was no untoward incident anywhere also shows that the students did not like to create any trouble for the Government or the Chief Minister. The Prime Minister's appreciation of Sri Gegong Apang for providing a stable government in the north-eastern region which is well known for instability, as also mention of the Central Minister Sri P.K. Thungan and the Congress Working Committee member Smti Omen Deori, who has been doing "a good job", must have been pleasing to the audience.

The Prime Minister's assurance to both Assam and Arunachal of solving the boundary problem is welcome. The boundary dispute Assam is facing is mainly because of the fact that the States of Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh were once part of the composite Assam State, but at the time of creation of these States the boundaries were not properly defined and demarcated. Claims and counter-claims therefore have persisted. It is, therefore, necessary to have a high-power body set up by the Centre to look into the entire boundary problem in the North-east. The fact that neither the Sundaram Commission nor the Shastri Committee could break the deadlock between Assam and Nagaland shows that it may be necessary to constitute a committee with power to enforce its decision. In any event it is good that the Prime Minister has taken cognisance of the problems insofar as Assam and Arunachal are concerned.

(The Assam Tribune, Thursday, March 2, 1995)

APPENDIX - G

AAPSU APPEALED

The 10-hour bandh call given by AAPSU on 27th February with the avowed purpose to register protest against the proposed visit of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao must shock all right thinking men and women in the state who take genuine pride in their peaceful democratic heritage.

The ill-conceived move must have hurt the Chief Minister Mr. Gegong Apang the most, as he, more than AAPSU or anyone else, has gone on record several times in recent past, in support of unanimous popular demand for deportation of refugees from the State.

Frankly, Mr. Apang deserves the lion's share of credit for stalling the central move for a unilateral conferment of citizenship status against state people's will. One may recall the heroic and defiant message from the historic press conference at Guwahati in recent past when he made it clear that the interest of the State and beloved people was more dearer to him than the chief ministerial chair.

Honestly, AAPSU should appreciate the brave commitment of the chief minister and dynamic leadership of the Congress (I) government in the state which expressed full sympathy and solidarity with the popular cause and in fact openly participated in the AAPSU sponsored state level mass rally on 24th October, 1994.

Rao Government, too, did not act unkindly in harsh reaction. The concerns of the state were shared, as both Home Minister and Prime Minister assured Mr. Apang about an amicable settlement with the consent of the local people. Centre also postponed its programme on gradual phazing out of the inner line permit system, but for the tolerant and flexible outlook of the Centre, a confrontation would have an ugly turn.

The notification, interalia states, "this issued in compliance of the union's decision to boycott all the sovereign visit of the Govt. of India and restriction to central political leaders

of different political parties in the ensuing Assembly election". One really has to ponder on what is meant by "the sovereign visit of Government of India". Moreover, if the present elections are fought by political units of national political parties like Congress (I), Janata Dal and BJP, how can anyone disallow party leaders to visit the state for campaign?

Well, the Prime Minister visiting on the eve of election is nothing unusual. Nor one should read too much into the potency of such visits. If Rao fails to click in Andhra, his home state, how come he can change the mind of the electorate in few minutes stay in Arunachal. State elections are mostly fought on local issues and fortunately for Mr. Apang the record of performance is creditable enough to return him to power.

The charge of neglect by the Centre in the development front does not hold much water as plan outlays and budgetary allocations for the state have been on the increase and the state has been presenting surplus budgets.

AAPSU has one valid point to justify its anger, that is, the callous manner in which the Prime Minister refused meeting with the 400 strong students' delegation who waited for about a month in Delhi to drive home their point. May be, the extraordinary bandh call is prompted by a policy of tit for tat. Leaders in New Delhi need to learn lessons from these events to avoid causing further alienation of sensitive popular opinion.

In the same vein, it is expected of a responsible and mature students' organization like AAPSU to review its conduct and repeal the bandh call forthwith.

It has every right to campaign in points of view but it must respect similar rights of others too. In stead of resorting to questionable means of protest, it can very well issue appeals to people and allow them to decide whether or not they will attend the P.M.'s meeting.

No cause can be served through dictates and divisions. Let the hard-earned unity of the local people be kept intact and people like Mr. Apang are not forced to regret their steps in reposing their faith in something, which betrayed them in

the critical hours of their trial.

Let AAPSU rethink and withdraw their proposed bandh, the sooner they do it the better for them all Dialogue is better sometimes, than misconstrued boycotts.

(The Arunachal Times, Sunday, February 26, 1995)

APPENDIX - H

ECHO OF ARUNACHAL EDITORIAL

VOL VIII NO. 182 AUGUST 25, 1995

**EVERY MAN HAS HIS FAULT, AND HONESTY IS HIS.
SHAKESPEARE.**

IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR

The statement of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Shri P.M. Sayeed in the Parliament regarding the Chama refugees of having approached the Human Rights Commission on some atrocities committed against them by the State Government has naturally stirred a hornet's nest by hurting the sentiments of the local people of Arunachal Pradesh, who have so far exercised enough restraint on the matter and has been pressing for deportation of all foreign nationals including the Chakmas and Bangladeshis for protecting the rights of indigenous people of the state. This was being spearheaded by the supreme students union AAPSU since quite some time through democratic means and is therefore naturally provoked by the statements made by ill-informed Union Ministers, on alleged violation of human rights resorted to by the local people upon the Chakma refugees. This kind of provocative statements by responsible persons can only worsen matters as these have been made without checking all the facts. On the other hand, it is feared the Chakmas are themselves responsible for carrying out unlawful activities like hunting of wild animals, encroaching upon the land of local people, undergoing armed training which has raised doubts in the minds of local people about their intention.

APPENDIX - I

ARUNACHAL'S ULTIMATUM

The decision of the leaders of all political parties in Arunachal Pradesh including the ruling Contress (I) to resign from the primary membership of their respective parties if the Central Government did not deport the Chakma and Hajong refugees from the State by January 1 next has given a new twist to the Chakma refugee issue over which the people of the State have been agitating during the last few years. Significantly, the decision which is part of a seven-point resolution adopted at an all-party public rally organised by the powerful All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union (AAPSU) has been supported by the Congress (I) Chief Minister Gegong Apang, his Cabinet colleagues, all three MPs from the State and Independent legislators besides leaders from all political parties. Chief Minister Apang and all three MPs including the recently dropped Union Minister P K Thungon addressed the rally and demanded immediate removal of the refugees from the State. The unity displayed by the political parties, youths, students and indigenous people of the State in serving the ultimatum to the Central Government over an issue on which the Centre had been delaying a clear-cut decision does not augur well for the unity and integrity of the country as the latest decision indicates a sense of frustration and alienation at the Centre's inaction. The growth of such negative tendencies among the tribal population residing in a sensitive border state is all the more alarming and the Central Government is largely to be blamed for the prevailing state of affairs as Delhi appears to be least concerned about the genuine grievances of the indigenous people of the NE region.

The anti-Chakma agitation in Arunachal Pradesh had come to the forefront last year when the then Minister of State for Home P.M. Sayeed in a letter addressed to State Rajya Sabha member Nyodak Yongam said that the Central Government had decided to consider the grant of citizenship to Chakma and Hajong refugees who came to India from erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) before March 25, 1971 as per the Indira-Mujib Agreement of 1972. The Union Minister's letter

provoked the AAPSU to serve 'Quit Arunachal Pradesh' notices to the Chakmas, numbering about a lakh and largely residing in the Dyun Circle in Changlang district along the banks of the river Na-Dihing. The students' demand was further strengthened by a Supreme Court verdict in April, 1993, which stated that the Chakmas residing in the Miao subdivision of Changlang district could not be regarded as citizens of India. Though the Chakma organisation have alleged that the agitation against them was more for economic reasons as the indigenous tribals have become envious of the fertile land the Chakmas have developed over the years through hard work, the political fallout of the Chakma presence in Arunachal Pradesh cannot be ignored. The political clout of the Chakmas in a State where the total population is only 10 lakh can well be imagined once citizenship right is granted to them. The decision at the all-party rally reflects the realisation by all indigenous political workers that their own political identity is at stake, not to speak of the interest of the common people at large. Even the defiance displayed by the ruling Congress-I Chief Minister against his party leadership at Delhi speaks volumes about his concern over the Chakma issue as grant of citizenship right accompanied by voting right would bring to the fore a powerful political lobby in the State's socio-economic and political scenario.

Interestingly, the developments in Arunachal Pradesh over the foreigners issue are in sharp contrast to the state of affairs in Assam where the first banner of revolt on the foreigners issue was raised by the students and a six-year long agitation was carried out resulting in the Assam Accord of 1985. While the people Arunachal are united on the Chakma issue, the people of Assam are divided over the matter. Even a regional party like the AGP which had come to power on the foreign nationals issue is today shy to raise the issue as the minority vote banks are considered more important in view of the coming elections. The Congress-I leadership in Assam is today at loggerheads with their counterparts in the sister States of the region on the foreign nationals issue as minority votes again take the upperhand. The assurances given by the Central Government on construction of border fencing and roads are yet to be fulfilled even as influx of foreigners continue. The Central Government's failure to adopt a firm decision on the

delicate foreign nationals issue in the NE region today has pushed the situation to a point of no return where foreign agencies inimical to the interest of the country have found a fertile ground to operate. Significantly, the North-East Co-ordination Committee of the Congress (I) at its Dimapur convention had expressed concern over the infiltration problem facing the region. With the insurgency scenario spreading in the region, the Central Government would do well to take a positive decision on the Chakma issue at the earliest to arrest the growing alienation in the State, before this frontier State becomes another trouble spot in the region. It is high time the Centre adopted a comprehensive policy on the foreigners problem in the NE at the earliest to allay the fears and apprehension of the indigenous people.

(The Assam Tribune, Friday, September 22, 1995)

APPENDIX-J

IN SOLIDARITY WITH ARUNACHAL

One cannot but be pleasantly surprised at the unheard of solidarity of the people of Arunachal Pradesh on the demand for the deportation of the Chakma and Hajong refugees from the State. The unprecedented rally in Itanagar, participated by all the political parties, both national and regional and including the Contress-I - besides the All Arunachal Pradeh Students' Union on Wednesday - will go down in the history of the country as a monumental event, which can match with only the solidarity rallies organized during the freedom movement all over the country. It is true that many will be aghast at such a description of the event but the fact remains that the people and the political parties of Arunachal Pradehs have sent the message across the country that they will not allow the Government of India to treat their State as a dumping ground for refugees and to eventually resort to the mischievous policy of utilizing them as vote banks. Refugees and illegal migrants have already turned the indigenous population of Tripura a minority people in their own homeland while they pose a similar threat to the indigenous people of Assam today. In all this, the role of the Congress party in particular and other "national" parties have been down right anti-national and unpatriotic. They have connived at the unabated influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh to Assam and other States of the region because they are always mortally afraid of the indigenous people that they would not be hoodwinked for long with tall promises during election time and that therefore, the illegal migrants, refugees and others alone could be a safe bet for winning elections.

Given this background, the crusade - if one might put it that way - of the people and all the political parties of Arunachal Pradesh against a similar attempt by the centre in that State, has come as a welcome relief in that here at least are a people who will not allow themselves to be overwhelmed by refugees and illegal migrants. The Chakmas and Hajongs in Arunachal Pradesh were settled in relief camps as refugees in 1964 by

the then NEFA administration with the promise that they would be shifted elsewhere very soon. But that moment never came and, after long 30 years, the population of these refugees have swelled to nearly one lakh, posing a serious threat to the demographic composition of Arunachal Pradesh. The Chakmas were brought to southern Mizoram also by the Government of India in the early fifties to create a "social springboard" against MNF insurgents who were giving the Army a real run for their money in Mizoram, which is known for its difficult terrain and the topography. Today the Chakmas of Mizoram, who have been granted Indian citizenship by the Government of India, are a constant source of social friction and tension in Mizoram. The political parties and various organisations of Mizoram are determined to see that the Chakmas are not able to enjoy the status of the indigenous Mizos. In the case of Arunachal Pradesh however, the Government of India dared not confer citizenship to the Chakmas and Hajongs and continued to treat them as refugees even after long 30 years because the people of Arunachal Pradesh would not commit the mistake, unlike the people of Assam and Mizoram, of allowing the refugees to overwhelm them in course of time. In the first place, the Government of India had not informed anybody in the the, NEFA or in the then Lushai Hills district that it was bringing in thousands of refugees from an alien country to settle there. Apart from exposing the sheer fallacy of the Government of India's policy of inviting refugees and conferring citizenship to a section of them and leaving the other section to remain as refugees, the Arunachal refugee question has also established the mischief of the Government of India to drag on the issue for long 30 years. And this, despite the fact that the Arunachal Pradesh Assembly, both before and after it was declared a full-fledged State, had passed unanimous resolutions at least six times, demanding the deportation of the Chakma refugees. But the Government of India, instead of taking timely action on those resolutions, ignored them all these years and made a surreptitious move to confer citizenship to the Chakmas and the Hajongs. The issue was also taken to the Supreme Court by some organizations of the Chakmas but the Supreme Court also said that they were refugees. The Government of Arunachal Pradesh did the right thing by cutting off all additional facilities that the refugees were enjoying as

the citizens enjoy and asking that the Chakmas and the Hajongs would be kept confined to their camps.

Many would see in all these a clear violation, of human rights of the Chakmas and the Hajongs. In fact, it is the various human rights organizations which have been spearheading a movement on the demand that the Chakmas and the Hajongs of Arunachal Pradesh be granted citizenship and settled in that State permanently. It is perhaps only in India that such bizarre things can happen. In no other civilized country will anyone dare to raise such as anti-national demand. On the contrary, refugees are treated in a way which only forced them to go back to their own country. This is not only a prevalent practice, but also the only accepted norm of international behaviour in such cases. People flee to another country for various reasons but when the reason or reasons for which they had fled their country no longer exist, they go back. If they refuse to go back, they are forced to go back. And that is the civilized mode of international practice in such cases. But it is perhaps only India, and particularly its politicians, who would invite foreigners to its lands as indeed the Government of India had done in the case of the Chakmas and Hajongs of Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. A pertinent fact to note here is that when the Rohingya Muslims fled Myanmar, unable to bear the atrocities committed by the Buddhist regime there a few years ago, to Bangladesh - by traversing the inhospitable hills and dales and the jungles - with the fond hope that Bangladesh, being an Islamic country, would certainly shelter them, they were shocked to discover that the atrocities committed by the Bangladeshi authorities on them far surpassed those of the Buddhist officials of Myanmar! They had to flee Bangladesh. If India cannot learn from the civilized, western world, it can as well learn from Bangladesh about how to treat refugees and foreigners. Arunachal Pradesh has also shown the way. Let the Government of India take up the case with Bangladesh with the urgency it deserves. It cannot take the Chakmas and Hajongs of Arunachal Pradesh to any other State in India and settle them as citizens (perhaps the Government of Assam will accept them with the quid proquo that they would vote for the ruling party!) The issue is wholly of the Centre's making and let the Centre solve it. May be our human rights activists

might also lend their helping hand. But the people of the North-east must stand in solidarity with the people of Arunachal Pradesh. Any faltering, any deviation at this critical movement will spell disaster for them as well.

(The North East Times, Vol. V, No. 348 Guwahati Friday, September 22, 1995)

APPENDIX - K

Names (available of some of the office-bearers (Presidents and General Secretaries only) of the student-organisation of the State later on known as the AAPSU.

1. Dr. D. Ering (founder president)
2. Matin Dai (founder General. Secretary)
3. Mr. Doley
4. Jomin Tayeng
5. Talom Rukho
6. Bakin Pertin
7. Nyodek Yonggam
8. Shoben Tayeng
9. Rinchin Norbu
10. Tahum Taipodia
11. Chamchom Ngemu
12. Eken Riba
13. Talom Gao
14. Wangnia Pongte
15. Higam Ponglaham
16. Hage Batt
17. Raso Tama
18. Tanya Dabi
19. Jarbom Gamlin
20. Larbin Nachi
21. Nabam Rebia
22. Tabin Taki

23. Tokbom Borang
24. Liki Ete
25. Takam Sanjoy
26. Tage Lapung
27. Domin Loya

APPENDIX - L

CHAKMA - HAJONG REFUGEE PROBLEM IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH:

A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

1. INTRODUCTION:

- 1.01 The All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union (AAPSU) in a meeting convened by it at Pasighat on 26.8.85, which was attended by representatives of all tribes of different districts of Arunachal Pradesh and leaders of all political parties accepted a resolution on the vexed refugee problem faced by the state as follows¹:

The refugees like Chakmas, Tibetans settled permanently in Arunachal Pradesh should be withdrawn immediately from Arunachal Pradesh. It is a sensitive area and as such it restricts entrance of even Indian citizens to Arunachal Pradesh without valid Innerline Permit in accordance with the "Benal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act of 1873". The Meeting feels that the settlement of foreigners in Arunachal Pradesh for a prolonged period may be risky to security and hamper the integrity of the territory in due course. Further in certain areas the concentration of refugees and the speedy growth of their population has threatened the demographic picture of the area. The Government was seized with this problem and the present Hon'ble Chief Minister said in his broadcast to the people of Arunachal Pradesh on 23rd April, 1980, that the Government of Arunachal has taken up dispersal of there refugees with the Central Government. The Meeting now resolves to urge the Government for immediate dispersal of Tibetan and Chakma reugees from Arunachal Pradesh before they can destroy the demographic harmony of the territory.

- 1.02 Prior to this, the Assam agitation started by the All Assam Students Union (AASU) in the State against

foreign nationals, that had taken the shape of a widespread mass movement, inspired the AAPSU to launch its first movement in 1982 demanding deportation of refugees from Arunachal Pradesh. Thence forth year after year the AAPSU has been launching agitation, year after year the State Assembly has been passing resolutions in the floor of the State Assembly including the latest and fourth one in 1994², demanding solution of the problem. Since the first AAPSU movement, much water has flown in rivers of Arunachal Pradesh like Siang, Lohit, Subansiri, Kameng, Tirap and Dikrong, but no ray of hope has been seen till now of a probable solution of the problem or of any seriousness on the part of the Central Government to find out an acceptable solution. In order to understand the magnitude and seriousness of the problem, we are to take an account of the historical background and strategic aspect of the settlement of refugees in Arunachal Pradesh.

2.00 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND STRATEGIC ASPECT.

- 2.01 The Chakma and Hajong refugees were originally the natives of Chittagong Hill Tracts and Mymensingh district respectively, a part of erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

Following eruption of ethnic riots in 1961 in Chittagong Hill Tract of erstwhile East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh), thousands of tribal people rendered homeless fled away to India. In 1964, again the religious persecution of the Chakma and Hajongs of the Tract in East Pakistan compelled them to leave their country to join the earlier hordes of their refugee brethren in Tripura. As the Pakistan Govt showed no signs of taking their people back, and as the Tripura Government had to take a tough stand because of the already existing heavy burden of refugees there, the refugees moved further east. The displacement of the Chakmas was also partially caused by Kaptai High Road Project in Chittagong. Mahavir Tyagi, the then Union Relief and Rehabilitation Minister, tried to settle them in Bihar by offering cash doles.

But majority of the Chakmas refused to move to Bihar and settle there on the plea that the climate of that state would not suit them.

- 2.02 At that critical juncture, the Government of India contemplated a plan of settling these refugees in the then NEFA. The NEFA Administration then was directly under the control of Govt. of India. Thereafter, the history of settlement of Chakma and Hajong refugees in NEFA began first with their settlement in Abhaypur Block of Diyun circle in erstwhile Tirap district in 1966. Even those refugees went to Bihar for settlement at Gaya District with cash doles from Government of India came back to join their brothers in NEFA in 1968. Thus the flow of refugees continued from 1966 to 1968 and they were settled in three erstwhile districts of Tirap, Lohit and Subansiri.
- 2.03 So far the migration of the Tibetan people to India is concerned, that started in 1959 when the Tibetan religio-political leader Dalai Lama, with his followers entered India via Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh and took political asylum in India. The Indo-Chinese war of 1962 added a further dose to the stock of refugees in NEFA. It was decided to allow settlement of a limited number of Tibetan refugees distributed over the districts of NEFA. Though some Tibetans were settled in Lohit and Changlang, their main concentration remained confirmed to Kameng and Tawang.
- 2.04 the Chakmas, Hajongs and the Tibetans were allowed to settle in NEFA when it was under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs upto 1965 and then directly under the Ministry of Home Affairs till 1972. Thus while the seeds of a critical problem were sown in the area, NEFA did not have any representative institution till 1969 and a popular Government till 1975. Here lies the root of the entire problem, as neither the people nor their representatives were consulted in settling these refugees in the area.
- 2.05 There is, of course, diverse opinion regarding the actual

number of such refugees in Arunachal Pradesh. The census of 1981 shows that there were total 35892 foreign immigrants, that constitutes 5.88% of the total population of 6.28 lakhs in the State. Of these the Tibetans, Chakmas and Hajongs numbered about 16,018. A circular issued in 1986 by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh estimated a total of 27,154 refugees of which Chakmas and Tibetans were shown as 20,899 and 6,255 respectively. In the same year AAPSU put the refugee figure at 80,000 approximately and in 1994 the same organisation suggested that figure at more than one lakh. Mr. Takam Sanjoy, till recently the President of the AAPSU, has even estimated the refugee population in Arunachal Pradesh at more than 2 lakhs³. A Scholar of Chakma studies Mr. S.P. Talukdar mentions that in 1966-68 there were approximately 20,500 Chakmas in NEFA, out of which 16000 were settled in Balijan and Kōkila area of Subansiri district and 4500 were settled in Chowkham area of Lohit district⁴. A proper census is, therefore, essential to know the actual number of such refugees in the State. With even 5.88 intake of refugees of the total population mentioned earlier, the refugee population in 1995 will be substantially high, as by now the total population of the state might have crossed the limit of 10 lakhs. (According to 1991 census the total population of the state was 8.65 lakhs.)

- 2.06 The refugees problem has been considered serious for two more reasons - strategic and fear for demographic imbalance between indigenous tribals vis-a-vis refugee population. Refugee inhabited areas are considered to be strategically sensitive. Tirap and Changlang are on the boarder of Nagaland and serve as the passage and breeding ground of terrorist and anti-national elements doing activities like smuggling drugs and arms. In view of the recent demand for a 'Greater Nagland' that proposes to include a part of Arunachal Pradesh specially parts of Tirap and Changlang districts, the problem has become further complicated.⁵ Tawang and Kameng are strategic places, as they are linking points to Bhutan, Tibet and China. In a state like Arunachal Pradesh

predominantly inhabited by smaller tribes with small number of population, presence of a big chunk of refugee population belonging to monolithic groups may always pose a threat to demographic balance and security of the area. Further, a question has often been asked as to why the largest state of the North East with about 84000 kms and a sparse population of only ten per km (as per 1991 census) cannot accommodate this refugee population. Besides the Innerline Permit system under the "Bengal Eastern Frontier Act of 1873" mentioned earlier that legally debar permanent settlement even of other Indians in the State, contrary to the off-repeated misconception of 'size and sparse population', it should be remembered that the actual usable space of the State is much less because of its mountainous nature.

- 2.07 Very often it has been referred to Indira - Mujib Agreement of 1972 from different corners that refugees coming before 1972 from East Pakistan are to be settled here. But recently Mr. R.L. Bhatia, the Union Minister for External Affairs, while replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha on the subject raised by Mr. Nyodek Yonggam, M.P., from Arunachal Pradesh, specifically said that there was no agreement of provisional settlement of Chakma and Hajong refugees in Arunachal Pradesh. He further said that the salient features of the popularly known Indira - Mijib Agreement are concerned only with promotion of lasting peace and friendship by paving path for co-operation in economic, scientific, technical and cultural fields.⁶
- 2.08 This clarification sets at rest of a doubt on a vital point of violating International Agreement or understanding by taking measures of deporting or repatriating the Chakma - Hajong refugees from Arunachal Pradesh. Even the legal aspect on the Problem has been made clear by the judgements of the Supreme Court declaring the Chakma and Hajong refugees as foreign nationals.

3.00 CONCLUSION:

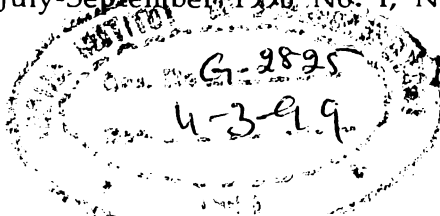
- 3.01 Though the issue contains humanitarian aspect involving innumerable human being, political and ethnic expediency demands settlement of the problem at the earliest. On diplomatic front India should pressurise the Bangladesh Government to take back the Chakma and Hajong Refugees settled in Arunachal Pradesh, as has been done in case of Tripura-Chakmas. It should be seen that the refugees thus repatriated should get the scope of settling in their old places honourably with some kind of autonomy, so that the problem of infiltration into India does not occur again.
- 3.02 On the vexed issue of Tibetan refugees settled in Arunachal Pradesh also, the Indian Government should make sincere effort for a political dialogue and settlement with the Chinese Government for the solution of the problem. The Indian Government should take advantage of the recent improved understanding between the two countries.
- 3.03 Till such settlements become reality with Bangladesh and China, which may be time-consuming process, the Indian Government should consider the proposal of settling refugees in other states of the Country on a distributive basis. For, when the fruits of independence are being enjoyed by all States, the disadvantages and difficulties should also be equally shared. Though the Chakma problem is a human problem and they may not like to accept such a distributive, disintegrative settlement system, in a critical situation of constant popular agitation mooted by the students in a strategically located border State, this appears to be the only way of temporary settlement of the problem. Of course, permanent solution as mentioned earlier, would always be the best solution.
- 3.04 Students in Arunachal Pradesh and its organisation AAPSU are fortunate to have very considerate State Government and still more a very considerate Chief Minister in the person of Sri Gegong Apang to take

total interest in the refugee problem and co-operate sincerely with the AAPSU in trying to solve the problem. The Arunachal Government has been greatly sympathetic to the aspirations of the students of the State unlike their counterparts in Assam. AAPSU launched their first campaign against the refugee problem in 1982, whereas the Legislative Assembly of Arunachal Pradesh has been continually adopting about four resolutions on refugee problem since 1979 including the latest one in 1994. The consensual approach of the students and the State Government in demanding solution of the problem is a noteworthy aspect in the State of Arunachal Pradesh in contrast to the conflictual or confrontational approach between students and State Govts. in some other States of the North East.

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