

Chakma and Hajong communities

August 26, 2021

In news- Recently, Chakma and Hajong groups have rejected a purported move by the Arunachal Pradesh government to relocate them to another state.

Key updates

- In their letter to the Central government & State government, they added that despite two Supreme Court orders in 1996 and 2015, not a single one of the nearly 15,000 Chakmas/Hajongs who migrated in 1964 have been granted Indian citizenship.
- The letter mentioned that descendants of those migrants who are citizens of India by birth have not been included in voter lists in Arunachal.
- It is alleged that this relocation plan is an act of racial profiling of the Chakmas and Hajongs.
- The letter also criticised the State government, which granted citizenship to the Lisus/Youbins who migrated to Arunachal Pradesh in 1960s en masse through a notification on January 18, 1994.

Applicability of CAA on Chakmas and Hajongs

- As they entered India between 1964 and 1969, this makes them eligible for citizenship under the CAA.
- But Arunachal is among the states exempted from the CAA since it has an inner line permit to regulate entry of outsiders.
- At present, Chakmas and Hajongs are citizens by birth as per Section 3(1) of the Citizenship Act and the eligible portion of their population exercise the right to vote as citizens of India and they were given voting rights in 2004.

Migration & rehabilitation of Chakma and Hajong

- Chakmas and Hajongs are ethnic groups **migrated to India between 1964 and 1966 from Chittagong Hills Tract** of then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to escape religious persecution and were settled in North East Frontier Agency, present Arunachal Pradesh.
- They **were settled with a rehabilitation plan and allotted permanent land** and provided with financial assistance depending on the size of their families to help rebuild their lives.
- Their rehabilitation was under a centrally-sponsored plan following a series of discussions between the representatives of the Central government, the NEFA administration and local tribal leaders.
- As per the 2011 census, there are 47,471 Chakmas and Hajongs in Arunachal Pradesh.

About Chamkas-

- The name *Chakma* derives from the Sanskrit word *Sakthimaha*, which means powerful and great.
- This name was given to Chakmas by one of the Burmese kings during the Bagan era.
- Chakmas are predominantly **Buddhists(mainly Theravada Buddhism)**.
- It is believed that the first generation of **Chakmas migrated to India in 1964 after the Kaptai Dam tragedy**.
- Today, Chakma communities are found in Bangladesh, India(Assam, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh) and Myanmar.
- **In Myanmar Chakma people are known as Daingnet people.**
- Their **ethnicity is closely linked with the peoples of East Asia**, but the **Chakma language (written in the Chakma script)** is part of the Indo-Aryan language family of the Indian subcontinent.
- The Chakmas are **divided into 46 clans or Gozas**.
- The community is headed by the Chakma Raja.
- They believe they are also part of Buddha's Sakya clan

from Himalayan tribes

About Hajongs

- The **Hajong** are a tribal group native to the Indian subcontinent, notably in the northeast Indian states and Bangladesh.
- The Hajong belong to the Bodo-Kachari people, and **they speak Hajong, an Indo-Aryan language.**
- Hajongs are ethnically related to Garo and Koch.
- The majority of the Hajongs are Hindus and settled in India.
- Hajongs are predominantly rice farmers.
- They are said to have brought wet-field cultivation to Garo Hills, where the Garo people used slash and burn methods of agriculture.
- The Hajongs have five different clans. Marriage within the same clan is prohibited. Their culture slightly differs from clan to clan :

1. Korebari.
2. Doskinâ.
3. Su-Sungyâ.
4. Barohazari.
5. Mespâryâ.

- In India they are spread across Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and other states.