

# Social Movement against the Issue of PRC in Arunachal Pradesh: An Insight

Dr. Bikash Bage

Dept. of Sociology, Rajiv Gandhi University Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh

## Introduction

The present paper is an attempt to project an overview of the PRC issue which witnessed catastrophic destructions and loss of human lives and property. There has been attempt to narrate the PRC uprisings in Arunachal Pradesh and many concerns from both the sides of APST and Non-APST were not included. In order to understand the issue well the ILP and CCA along with Chinese aggression aftermaths have been discussed.

Arunachal Pradesh falls under restricted area, official permission is required to enter the state, and therefore the visitors other than natives of Arunachal Pradesh are required to obtain Inner Line Permit (ILP) to enter the state which is mandatory.

A major part of the state is claimed by both the People's Republic of China as part of the region of South Tibet. During the 1962 Sino-Indian War, most of Arunachal Pradesh was temporarily captured by the Chinese People's Liberation Army. China's 1959 operation is known as the Longju incident (G.G. Dwivedi and P.J.S. Sandhu major generals). In their book It has been stated that the Tibetan rebellion broke out on 10 March 1959, and was brutally suppressed by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The 14th Dalai Lama escaped and entered Indian territory on 31 March the same year with some followers, and was subsequently granted political asylum by India in Dharamsala. This upset the Chinese authorities a great deal; as they felt that the rebellion had been instigated by India, and was aimed at securing 'independence for Tibet'. The Indian post at Longju irked the Chinese, and in a note dated 23 June 1959, the PLA accused Indian troops of intrusion and occupation of Migyitun in Tibet, and collusion with Tibetan rebels. It was at Longju in the Subansiri Frontier Division that the first armed clash took place between the PLA (2nd Company of 1st Regiment of Shannan Military Sub Command) and personnel of 9 Assam Rifles occupying the Indian post at Longju on 25 Aug 1959. The issue was finally resolved through diplomatic channels, and both sides withdrew from the area on 29 August 1960. However, from 27 Aug 1959, the defence of NEFA which till then was the responsibility of Intelligence Bureau (IB) under the Ministry of Home Affairs and Assam Rifles under the Ministry of External Affairs became the responsibility of the Indian Army. After the Longju incident, Assam Rifles did not reoccupy the post, and instead, set up a post at Maja, Upper Subansiri district 10 km to the south, on 29 August 1959 and managed to build a village on land occupied by the PLA by overrunning an Assam Rifles post in 1959 on the disputed frontier in Arunachal Pradesh and not on territory controlled by India.

In 2018, The Print reported that PLA had set up a military base in Tsari Chu valley, where a new village now stands as seen in the media as seen in 2021. The village on the disputed border in Upper Subansiri district of the state was on territory under Chinese control. Beijing has, for years, maintained an Army post on this territory and the various constructions by the Chinese is not a sudden work as even after the 1962 war, the PLA did not withdraw from the area, and it continued to be under Chinese control, just like Aksai Chin, where they have built airfields and other military establishments. In June 2018, it was reported on the basis of satellite images that the Chinese PLA had moved at least 5 km inside what was Indian Territory, and was setting up base in the strategic Tsari Chu valley, where the present village in news has come up. However, images from 26 August 2019 don't show any village, but those from 1 November 2020 do.

Besides, being strategically situated, and in addition to the above political and inter nation war like pre supposed situations, the state of Arunachal Pradesh, was burning with the PRC issue and the extension of it going through the Northeast India. While people in Itanagar, the capital of the state and Namsai district were vehemently

protesting the recommendation of the state government formed Joint High Power Committee(JHPC) of giving PRC to certain communities especially settled in Lekang areas of Namsai district, people in these areas including Mahadevpur were seen going for economic blockage and literally blocking the national highway connecting Namsai and Lohit districts by demanding the state government to fulfill their promise of granting them PRC.

In addition, Vijaynagar is home to Assam Rifles ex-servicemen (mostly Gorkha) and Yobins who were settled in the region in the early 1960s, during the Indo-Chinese War. The valley is surrounded on three sides by Myanmar. Since independence, this territory has been administered by the Nehru-Elwin approach of 'Least Intervention' with NEFA serving as guide book for all policy matters.

In 1964, about 200 families of Assam Rifles mostly from the General Duty rank were settled in this hostile and inaccessible valley. The valley is grouped into nine villages of Daragaon, Ramnagar, Phaperbari, Gairigaon, Chidudi (Shantinagar), Mazgaon, Top Hill, Buddha Mandir and Two Hut. As per the All Settlers' Welfare Association website, the settlement process continued till 1970-71, followed by the demarcation of Indo-Myanmar International Border in 1971-72 in this sector. Until 1972 settlers could not move out from Vijaynagar without escort and after the border demarcation, no further settlements were made in the area or elsewhere in Arunachal. It must be noted that if India had not made planned settlements and claimed stake on the region of the unoccupied territory, it was certain that Myanmar would have made their claim on the area as a contiguous territory of Kachin state.

Despite having been recognised as citizens and accorded voting rights, the Gorkhas of Vijaynagar are still forced to prove their identity, time and again. It is worth mentioning that no prudent man chooses to sacrifice his existing avocation, a prospect in service and pension for the sake of 11 acres of land (as provided to settlers) that too putting life at stake in the extremely inaccessible remote border. There is no doubt that the Gorkhas settled in Vijaynagar were sent, sometimes forcefully, to the region by the government to safeguard India's interest in the wake of the Chinese invasion of 1962. However, today, with a flourishing economy and a better military system, the government has perhaps started to feel that the citizens of Vijaynagar are disposable.

In the political maze that is being woven around this international border area, the Gorkha settlers stand to lose the most. With the settlement lease coming to an end in 2020, the onus is upon the government to show how much it honors the sacrifices of its army and stands true to its commitment. Hopfully, the state government will do what is right, instead of succumbing to political pressures.

Further, the Citizenship Amendment Bill exemption shows that protection granted to indigenous people nearly 150 years ago still persists. However, the promulgation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act has invited much attention. The insertion of Section 6B in the principal Act limits its applicability to areas covered under the "Inner Line" notified under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, Act 1873. The historical roots of Inner Line lie in the Anglo-Burmese wars of the early 19th century, which exposed British ignorance of a strategic area, abutting Burma and China. After several difficult expeditions, the hill tracts were mapped out. British influence gradually spread beyond Assam and Manipur to other hills states. The BEFR empowered the Lieutenant Governor to define an inner line, beyond which no British subject of certain classes or foreign residents could pass without a license, giving the government untrammelled control. These regulations, which are still in force, cover Arunachal Pradesh along with other states in North East India.

The ostensible explanation proffered by the British was their desire to protect tribal interests. However, the line effectively demarcated the boundary of British commercial interests in the plains of Assam, protecting them from the incursions of warrior hill tribes. The people from either side of the dividing line came under the radar of the imperial government. The terms of engagement between people of the hills and the valley was redefined. The Government of India Act, 1935, went a step further, prescribing "excluded areas" and "partially excluded areas" to be under the direct control of the provincial governor, to the exclusion of the Indian legislature.

It is interesting to study the genesis of British cartographic wizardry, which divides India's northeast in order to understand its contemporary relevance. The logic of the Inner Line found resonance with the political leadership even in independent India, both at the national and provincial levels. Section 7 of the BEFR is at the heart of its enduring relevance. It stipulates that, "It shall not be lawful for any person, not being a native of the districts comprised in the preamble of this Regulation, to acquire any interest in land or the product of land beyond the said 'Inner Line' without the sanction of the State Government." By implication, tribal interests in land, mostly based on customary law, have an umbrella protection. The sale of tribal land in these states is limited only to other tribals of the state, unless the state government expressly allows such exceptions. In most cases, this has been done for the construction of dams, national highways, airports, institutions and other public goods, where land is acquired under the land acquisition law after payment of the assessed compensation. Some state governments have also allowed limited land leasing arrangements to attract private investments.

The nature of restrictions in Arunachal Pradesh by the Inner Line, go well beyond the acquisition of property. Even Indian citizens seeking to travel to these states are required to seek an Inner Line Permit (ILP) for a defined period. The permit, though easy to obtain, poses a regulatory barrier to tourism. An instrument for the protection of tribals has become a device for their isolation.

The insertion of Inner Line exemptions in the Citizenship Amendment Act is an important political signal for the hill states. The protection granted to indigenous people by the British nearly 150 years ago, for completely different reasons, holds good even in modern times. The unique linguistic and cultural identity of this region is sought to be protected by law. The simplicity of tribal life remains intact in the villages, revolving around traditional mores. The hills of the state could have been swamped by people from the plains, driven by mercantile greed, had they not been protected by the Inner Line. As a nation, it is our collective duty to allow the people of this region to flourish according to their own norms, without imposing the rules of a flawed civilisation.

### **PRC and its Status in Arunachal Pradesh**

Permanent Residence Certificate (PRC) is a government issued document. It is a permanent residency certificate that provides domicile to a person in the state and helps in availing domicile-linked quotas. The certificate proves the domicile of an applicant which enables a person to obtain certain domicile-specific quota during admissions in educational institutions. PRC is additionally beneficial for application to certain jobs/career opportunities. The tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh mainly consist of the Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribes (APST) category and they are the main holders of PRC in the state, the communities considered the original natives of the state.

However, some of the tribal and non tribal people who are non-APST communities settled in the state of Arunachal Pradesh are also raising voice for issue of PRC. Several other communities have been demanding the status to get domicile-linked benefits. The non-APST communities have a sizeable population in neighboring Assam and enjoy domicile-linked rights. Many of these communities are recognised as STs in Assam. These non-APST communities say that while their names are on land records, they do not get "pattas" (ownership documents). At the moment their main objective of the demand is on their hardship of proving their permanent domicile status especially during checks in check posts and besides provisions in educational institutions. Using PRC as supporting documents, the beneficiaries or their descendants, however, can apply for unemployment certificates from their respective issuing authority to apply for jobs and for purpose of admission to educational institutions in state or outside where such certificates are insisted upon by school authority.

The main bone of contention lies in the fact that although these communities, some of whom are Scheduled Tribes in neighboring state of Assam and Nagaland, are living in Arunachal Pradesh for a long period. They don't have any official land rights either. While they are regarded as nontribal in Arunachal Pradesh and not offered PRC, their counterparts in Assam enjoy PRC and land rights.

In 2018, the Bharatiya Janata Party government in Arunachal Pradesh announced in favour of granting PRC to six communities. The announcement by the party came even before a joint highpowered committee submitted its report on the issue. The communities include Deori, Sonowal Kachari, Moran, Adivasi, and Mishng, living in the Namsai and Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh. The Deori community lives at Sompoi (in Changlang district and Bordumsa-Diyun Assembly constituency), Mahadevpur and Mohong (in Namsai district and Lekang Assembly constituency). The Sonowal Kachari, Moran, Adivasi and Mishng communities are living in Bordumsa-Diyun constituency as well as Lekang Constituency. Morans and Adivasis come under the Other Backward Classes category in Assam. They say that they should have the same rights in Arunachal Pradesh and the major APST communities are opposed to the demand.

Besides these, the Gorkhas and ex-servicemen living in the remote Vijaynagar of Changlang district are also seeking PRC. Interestingly, they are settled on land leased from the Yobin community and are paying rent. The current lease expired in 2020.

### Concern of the APSTs

The PRC violence in Arunachal Pradesh capital Itanagar primarily started on Thursday as a protest against the probability of granting Permanent Residence Certificate (PRC) to members of six mentioned communities mainly inhabiting Namsai and Changlang districts of the state.

In Arunachal Pradesh, it has been a long-pending demand of these communities to get PRC and be recognised as residents of the state but the demand has run into trouble with powerful groups who oppose the same. Persons belonging to some of the communities in the quest now were issued PRCs earlier till 1992-93, which was stopped consequently.

In some views the Non-APST have expressed their feelings over the PRC issue and seems to be an issue to be addressed. The All Moran Students' Union (AMSU) told the The Indian Express, "The PRC is a genuine, legitimate demand of the communities including Morans living in Arunachal Pradesh. They are not demanding ST status. Though the state government is not able to do it presently but will have to consider the demand in the passage of time. AMSU-Lekang Regional Committee (LRC) says that they have been living on in Arunachal Pradesh since time immemorial and the demand for the PRC is a long-standing demand. The PRC would mean the community is officially recognised as residents of Arunachal Pradesh. They also retreated that they have never been residents of Assam and naturally they would be denied PRC in Assam.

### Politics and PRC Movement

In the 2014 Arunachal Assembly elections, the Congress had won 42 of the 60 seats, but after a series of political U-turns, court cases, and a mysterious suicide of the former chief minister, it is the BJP that ruled the state, with 48 legislators. The Congress was down to five MLAs. Although nothing is known officially about the recommendations prepared by the JHPC, it suggested the granting of the PRC to these communities with a cut-off year of 1968. The PRC is a legal document issued to Indian citizens that serve as evidence of residence and is required to be submitted as residential proof for official purpose. The recent incidents of violence are in the wake of the state government's consideration of issuing the certificate to non-APSTs communities living in Namsai and Changlang districts and to Gorkhas living in Vijaynagar. There is resentment among several community-based groups and organisations in the state, who feel the rights and interests of indigenous people will be compromised if the proposal is implemented.

However, the nature of the mob that has gone on rampage have confused many, including organizations. A senior leader, who refused to be identified owing to the situation, said, "we are not behind this violence. Our offices are being burnt down and there is a possibility of attack on our residences. This seems to be politically backed."

February 21-22, 2019

The movement against the granting of PRC to Non-APST had began and as many as 18 organizations including civil society organizations, community based organizations, Academicians and student organizations participated in Mass protest and demanded for a 48-hour Arunachal Pradesh bandh. The participating organizations in the movement had protested against the alleged recommendation of the JPHC in going ahead of granting PRC to the 6 Non-APST communities. It was an ardent call by the various organization as the JPHC report containing the said recommendation was supposed to be tabled in the current session of Assembly of the period on February 23 2019. Three persons lost their lives, houses of ministers have been attacked, public vehicles burnt, media personnel on duty threatened, and offices of powerful student organisations like All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU) set on fire. The Indian Army on Saturday conducted a flag march in Itanagar and soldiers were deployed to impose caution on protesters”

Arunachal Pradesh, a state marked with a history of political instability and mass defections, is heading for Assembly elections the same year alongside the General Elections. And naturally, on February 22 2019 night, due to mass movement and the violent social disasters across the state, the state government on declared that in view of the protests the report will not be tabled during the current session of the Assembly.

The violence started soon after the body of a person who had died in police firing was cremated right at the heart of the capital city, after the protesters had initially refused to allow the last rites. The protesters were running havoc on the streets of Itanagar. Roads were blocked and any vehicle seen moving were attacked. Internet services remained suspended while markets, petrol pumps and shops were closed and most ATMs were out of cash. The protesters also damaged the stage of the Itanagar International Film Festival which compelled the organisers to call off the film festival. The protesters demanded the permanent resolution of the PRC issue, resignation of the incumbent chief minister, unconditional release of the 40-odd detained protesters and transfer of the chief secretary.

The then Arunachal Pradesh BJP State President told The Indian Express, “this violence is definitely politically backed by the Congress as the government has already agreed not to table the recommendations and discuss the matter. It is an attempt to destabilise the BJP government in the state”.

Whereas, the State Congress told The Indian Express that “the violence signifies a total failure of the government and that President's Rule must be imposed in the state”. It was of the opinion that, how can the BJP blame the Congress? Who brought the bill to grant PRC in the Assembly? Who constituted the JHPC? Is there a Congress government now in Arunachal? The BJP is blaming the Congress to hide its own failure. The Army has been called in and mobile internet been banned. It later demanded for instituting a Judicial Enquiry Commission into the matter.

A detailed investigation by a commissioner level investigating committee was formed to probe into the incidents of violence in the state. Flouting the curfew imposed, the situation turned violent when the agitators set ablaze the private residence of the state's deputy chief minister and ransacked the office of the deputy commissioner in the capital. Shops and market establishments in Itanagar and Naharlagun continued to remain closed, as central paramilitary forces were sent to help the state government to maintain law and order in the curfew-imposed areas.

The indefinite curfew in Itanagar and Naharlagun, after stone-pelting by protesters led to injuries to 35 people, including 24 police personnel. The Army conducted flag marches in Itanagar and Naharlagun with dispatch of over 1,000 paramilitary personnel. The mob set afire many vehicles parked in and around the capital area and attacked the Itanagar Police Station and other public properties. Others marched through the streets vandalising public property and vehicles. Shopping mall and looting of valuables besides setting ablaze a market complex in Naharlagun went on.

The Union Home Minister appealed for calm and the Union Minister of State(Home) accused the Congress of instigating the protesters, saying the state government had clarified that it was not bringing a Bill on PRC but only tabling a report of a Joint High Powered Committee (JHPC) set up for it which meant the state government has not accepted it.

The BJP government said that the Congress instigated the non-APSTs in Lekang area to fight for the PRC and is now blaming the BJP. One of the ministers said that the two of the protesters initially killed were among those trying to attack the CM residence by breaking the barricades despite warning. It was also observed that apart from targeting public officials, the protesters threatened media personnel covering the protests, and attacked offices of student organisations like AAPSU.

Further, the state of Arunachal Pradesh is resisting granting citizenship to Chakma and Hajong refugees who fled to the state from erstwhile East Pakistan in the early 1960s. Most in the frontier state are of the view that granting of citizenship rights to the asylum-seekers goes against the very Constitution that protects them against migrations and their influence. Under various constitutional provisions, the predominantly tribal state enjoys special provisions under which the predominantly tribal state enjoys special protection against the settlement or influx of outsiders and alien culture. Outsiders, including Indian citizens, are neither allowed to possess land in the state nor are permitted to visit it without Inner Line Permits (ILPs). In 1998-99, when some of the refugees were given voting rights, the entire state rose in protest. The people of the state have challenged the Supreme Court order of 2015 asking the Centre to grant citizenship to the refugees by filing special leave petition in the apex court. The AAPSU too has filed a curative petition. The state is protected by the Constitution and any order to grant citizenship to the Chakmas and the Hajongs will go against the Constitution. The incumbent chief minister and the Union minister of state for home have sought for the protection of the interests of the state's tribal population guaranteed by the Constitution. Even if the government gives them the Indian citizenship, they can't be allowed to enjoy the constitutional protection given to the Arunachalese and stay back in the state alone as they can be distributed in the mainland.

The tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh are concerned that allowing and issuing of PRCs to the non-APST communities will pave the way of dilution and it will be against the provisions of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR) Act of 1873. The BEFR Act in fact has the basis of the system of Inner Line Permit (ILP) rule for the citizens of India and Restricted Area Permit(RAP) rule for the foreigners entering the state. It says that all non-residents and visitors to Arunachal Pradesh must get a permit to travel to the state and stay there. ILP and RAP rule are mandatory for all non-permanent residents and visitors to the state and the defaulters are penalized accordingly. Checking points and gates have been placed in various entry points in the state to cater to the requirements of this provision. There is provision of temporary ILP but that is only restricted to 15 days only. However, the contest among the APST is that even the temporary ILP is not a full proof system as there is no mechanism of checking or confirming if the person/s on temporary ILP has left the state or not, thereby fear of numerable settlements of illegal immigrants. The Inner Line Permit is an extension of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act 1873. The Britishers framed regulations restricting entry in certain designated areas. This was done to protect the Crown's interest in certain states by preventing "British subjects" (Indians) from trading within these regions. In 1950, the term 'British subjects' was replaced with 'Citizens of India'. Today, all non natives require the permit. This was done to protect the indigenous tribal communities of these states from exploitation.

The people of the state are of the notion that PRC will lead to easy flow and unwanted legal influx of non-tribals into the tribal territory and may in future have land rights and resources. It also may lead to unwanted and unwarranted acculturation leading to threat to their ethnic identity. The All Arunachal Students' Union (AAPSU) was in favour of the issue as these people were living in the state for decades. For AAPSU having PRC must not mean that non-APST communities need not take ILP for entering/living in the state/tribal land. The Joint High Power Committee (JHPC) formed by the state government to review the PRC demand process was represented to make it mandatory that the PRC is not treated as ILP.

A Joint High Power Committee (JHPC) was formed by the government of Arunachal Pradesh to review the issue of PRC and submit details of the same. The committee included senior politicians, student leaders, members of different communities, and others. The formation followed discussions and meetings in places like Changlang, Namsai, Tezu and other places especially the settlements where the demands of PRC was on high. It also included various stakeholders, elders and the grievances were taken into consideration to be placed in the state assembly for consideration. The committee was given the deadline of January, 2019 to submit a detail report under the chairmanship of senior minister of the state. While the final recommendation of the JHPC was to be ready, on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2018, the state chief minister in a public program in Vijaynagar suggested that the state government was looking forward in giving PRC to the non-APST communities of the state. At similar time the deputy chief minister of the state who also represents the Lekang Assembly constituency informed the media in a public gathering in Assam that the state government was going ahead in granting PRC as a “New Year gift” to the non-APST communities of the state. This also followed the statements, apart from other comments from the members of the JPHC, suggesting that the committee would recommend the grant of PRC to the 6 non-APST communities. In the meantime, the PRC demanding communities got the stimuli and they in large number intensified their demand for PRC. It was evident from undemocratic uprisings like the economic blockades of the national highway connecting Namsai in Arunachal Pradesh and Dirak gate in Tinsukia district of Assam. It was also seen in the Deori-dominated Mahadevpur, Arunachal Pradesh.

## Analysis

The Present geographical state of Arunachal Pradesh was nonexistent during the British rule in India. The Tribal people of the state lived an unorganised nomadic life. The British wanted to stop the influx to the Frontier Hill areas and to preserve the region with its unique cultural heritage than British Government wisely enacted the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873 (regulation 5 of 1873). This regulation required possession of ILP. The ILP system is implemented in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland even after Independence. The sole motive of the ILP system by and large is to protect the land and the people of the state of Arunachal Pradesh from being marginalised by outsider and socially excluded.

The present Arunachal Pradesh was known as North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) which was administered from Shillong and later became Arunachal Pradesh with Union Territory status. The boundary of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh was demarcated by the Bordoloi commission in the lines of segregating the Tribal and the Non Tribal. When Arunachal Pradesh statehood bill was passed in the year 1987, the government of the day did not have a careful look at the bill but it was presumed that state of Arunachal Pradesh is a 100% Tribal state. The settlement of non Tribal communities like Adivasi, Deori, Ahom, Kacharis, Mishings, Moran, Nepalese, Karbi etc within the territorial jurisdiction of the state of Arunachal Pradesh could be a historical fact but it is also a fact that the organisations like the All Arunachal Pradesh students Union (AAPSU) under various leaders, some of them reached the policy making position under various state Governments. They had demanded the removal of Non Tribal from getting any socio-political benefit under the state of Arunachal Pradesh. This is a legitimate demand and voices till this day. When we are protected by the inner Line Permit system and when the Boundary of the state was carved presumably in the line of tribal and Non tribal lands the matter of issuing Permanent Residential Certificate to the Non Tribal living under the territorial jurisdiction of Arunachal Pradesh will definitely open the floodgate for influx thereby defeating the intended purpose of BEFR 1873. If PRC is granted, the meager tribal population of the state will be pushed to the wall and minority status has to be demanded in future. This is the matter of future extinction and deprivation of the tribal people, emotions and political interest should take back seat and protection of the land and people of the tribal community should be above all.

There was a time when the AAPSU leadership in the state had played the role of political opposition, they had started the slogan like “Deoris Go Back”. Now this same Deoris with other Non APST community are demanding for PRC. It is well accepted that they are living within the territory of Arunachal Pradesh may be

before independence also but the question before us is how to stop the influx of communities having same nomenclature and surname from outside of Arunachal Pradesh? As far as my understanding goes, maintaining of dossier of the present family living inside Arunachal will not be a practicable model for issue of PRC. It will be a herculean task in due course of time to differentiate between the Adivasi, Deori, Ahom, Kacharis, Mishing, Moran, Nepalese, Karbi living within the territorial jurisdiction of the state of Arunachal Pradesh and those living in the other parts of the country. This will slowly and slowly encourage the influx inside the different parts of the state and may become another Tripura like situation. It is known fact that the Tribal people of the state are yet to economically and intellectually develop compared to the Non Tribals in the country.

The state Government needs to have a serious look at this issue and see that historical blunder is not committed, which the future generation of the state may not be able to correct but suffer endlessly.

Various organisations called for shutdown in Arunachal Pradesh to protest against the government and many wanted to keep the issue alive in the run up to the assembly elections in Arunachal Pradesh, which was due along with the 2019 Lok Sabha polls in April-May of the same year. JHPC recommendation initially was meant for correcting the blunder committed during the partition by Britishers especially relating to border issues.

The issue of PRC became the agenda of political fights and counter gains both by the governing BJP and the opposition Congress party.

Many APST communities of the state have the concern that the BJP-led government in the state is pursuing the issue for political ends at the cost of the ethnic locals or the son of the soil. Some bodies have supported giving PRC to non-tribals living in the state for a long time, with a caveat that it will only be used for educational and employment purposes. Congress and BJP leaders both say that the demand for PRCs is genuine, but they blame each other for the uprisings and loss of property and human lives.

It is also assumed that the basis of the movement against the PRC issue was based on less known ground realities of the JHPC report and the actual intension of the state government at that point of time.

In a span of just four days, three precious lives were lost, the private residence of the deputy chief minister in Itanagar and the office of a deputy commissioner, Itanagar were ransacked and burnt. The private residence of the sitting chief minister was attacked. Though the state government announced for not taking up the issue of PRC, yet the situation was grim for a long time.

The All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union (AAPSU) after a long slumber on the PRC issue, finally contended that granting PRC to few Non-APSTs populace settled in Lekang in no way would bring any harm to the indigenous populace in the state. However, on another stance it responded to the allegations of various organisations, societies and few of its federal units of being voiceless and compromised the issue for personal gains. As one of the member of JHPC It also said that the PRC will be issued only for educational purpose and that having a PRC will not granted them rights at par with APSTs.

The issue of granting PRC to Assam Rifles ex-servicemen settled in Vijayanagar, Changlang, has been a concern for they are demanding it on the basis of their service to the nation, however, such privileges cannot be extended to temporary settlers or Non-APST living in lease agreement at any cost as PRC is not a bounty to be distributed.

To ensure indigenous populace is not diluted, the JHPC must incorporate certain stringent preconditions that possessing a PRC will not confer any benefit or right to Non-APSTs at par with indigenous populace nor they can claim APST status at any point of time in the future.

The settlement areas or the notified land of both APST and non APSTs must be properly demarcated with proper demarcations and establishing police check post.



The Non-APST must not have any right to purchase land or claim property anywhere in the state, right of job quota or reservation in recruitment nor should be given Ration card or LPG card privileges in the state.

All the Non-APSTs possessing PRC must apply ILP to enter into the areas inhabited by APST. However, to issue PRC, there has to be full proof strategy to identify the genuine settlers who settled before the passing of reorganization of state Act and have been staying since the un-divided Assam and on the basis of their family tree and genealogy recorded by the state government to issue PRC. It will not be given to recent settlers.

## Executive Summery

It was assumed that all the fiasco is nothing but dramatics by few who are not for the progress its people but to politicize the matter which witnessed disasters in the society.

It appeared that there was much confusion over the issue, for instance, the accusations of the state government for violating Section 2 and 4 of BEFR, Act. In true sense, as per the BEFR act of 1873, the ILP provision/regulations can be modified or limit the notification to parts and groups by state government depending on educational and social backwardness.

At the end, I am of the view that the bottom line is since the tribal state of Arunachal Pradesh is in transition, the people of the state are still not ready for the amendment or changes in the BEFR Act, 1873. “There is still time and do not to alter the life rules of the tribals in their tribal native land”.

Source: Social Media



## References:

1. Abhishek Saha. The Indian Express, February 25, 2019 2:02:19 pm. Explained: Protest in Arunachal Pradesh and the politics over PRC.
2. Defence and Security Establishment. Fresh satellite images of the village, located on the banks of the river Tsari Chu were put out by NDTV .
3. Dinesh Sharma. February 27, 2019. Gorkhas of Arunachal Pradesh: Know a bit of their story, & history. One of the six non-APSTs involved in the ongoing PRC fiasco, the community deserves our nation’s gratitude, support and solidarity.
4. CENS, Delhi; PTI, Itanagar. Dec 22 2019. CAA.
5. G.G. Dwivedi Maj. General and P.J.S. Sandhu Maj. General. 1962 War-The Unknown Battles: Operations in Subansiri and Siang Frontier Divisions.
6. Jayanta Deka. Feb 23, 2019. What is the PRC issue in Arunachal Pradesh? A ready explainer. The News Mill
7. Kiren Rijju. BJP MP, Lok Sabha. Parliament Winter Session. 24 Feb 2019, 08:34 PM ISTPTI. “Arunachal govt. to not accept recommendations to grant PRC to 6 communities”.
8. Snehes Alex Philip.18 January, 2021 10:02 pm IST. PRC.

9. The Arunachal Times. February 5, 2019. The PRC issue and its consequences
10. The Arunachal Times. February 21, 2019. PRC to non APST is not harmful- AAPSU Itanagar.
11. Varrier Elwin, A Philosophy For NEFA, 2019.
12. Wikipedia. Google Search on 24 March 2021 at 8pm.

