



The Advocate: Kalpana Chakma

Kalpana Chakma believed that her people, the indigenous people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, have the same rights as everyone else. Read about how she stood up to power and her legacy.



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Once upon a time, in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, there lived a Supergirl named Kalpana Chakma. She belonged to a hill people called Chakma, who speak their own language and have unique traditions. They even have their own royal family!



In school, Kalpana noticed she was treated differently from her Bengali classmates. She was called names, put in the back of the classroom, and made to do all the hard work. This made Kalpana wonder why some people were treated worse than others based on their language or family. She thought about it for many days, but could not find a good

answer.



When she grew up, the injustices also grew bigger. Her people were not given the same jobs or land, and they were made to feel like unwanted guests in their own homes. Kalpana started to give fiery speeches in protest of this unfair treatment. Her people would go home after these demonstrations feeling powerful!



Kalpana was fearless in her demand for equal land rights and education for all communities. Then one day, she was too loud. A group of men came after Kalpana and her brothers. Though the boys escaped, she never returned.



Some time after, the hill people reached a peace agreement to protect their rights and to make sure that communities of different cultures and languages could live together in harmony. We do not know what happened to Kalpana, but we do know that she is an example of fearlessness and righteousness for all of us!



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