

Bru (Reangs agreement)

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Source: IE

Manifest pedagogy: North east India is an hotspot for ethnic strife and conflict in India. We have to atleast have a basic understanding of the current conflicts and a decent understanding of the tribes living in these regions.

In news: Centre, Tripura, and Mizoram have signed an agreement with the Bru/Reang community on January 16, 2020 that promises to end their 23-year-old internal displacement crisis.

Placing it in syllabus: Internal security

Static dimensions:

- Causes of migration in 1997
- The ethnic conflicts of Mizoram and Tripura

Current dimensions:

- Tribals of Mizoram and Tripura
- Current settlement

Content:

The ethnic conflicts of Mizoram and Tripura:

- The Bru or Reang are a community **indigenous to Northeast India, living in Tripura, Mizoram, and Assam.**
- In Tripura, they are recognised as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).**
- About two decades ago, they were targeted by the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) and a few ethnic social organisations of Mizoram.
- They had demanded that the Bru be excluded from electoral rolls in the state.
- **In October 1997, following ethnic clashes, nearly 37,000**

Bru fled Mizoram's Mamit, Kolasib and Lunglei districts to Tripura where they were sheltered in relief camps.

- Since then, over 5,000 have returned to Mizoram in nine phases of repatriation, while **32,000 people from 5,400 families still live in six relief camps in North Tripura.**
- A meagre relief package was provided by the centre.
- They live in makeshift bamboo thatched huts, without permanent power supply and safe drinking water, with no access to proper healthcare services or schools.

Causes of migration in 1997:

- **Reang tribes were facing persecution** at the hands of the **majority Mizos** in Mizoram.
- The tension between the over six lakh-strong Mizos and barely 80,000-odd Reangs mainly aroused out of a **political demand.**
- The **Mizos were angered by an attempt by the Reangs (Bru) who united politically and asked for an autonomous council.**
- The **Joint Action committee (JAC)**, which comprises the Young Mizo Association and the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP or Mizo Students Federation), warned the Reangs of dire consequences.
- In the midst of the rising tension, a **Mizo forester was shot dead** allegedly by a fledgling militant group, the Bru National Liberation Front.
- The killing invited **retaliation by the Mizos who then burnt down about 70 Reang villages,** triggering the exodus of the Reangs out of Mizoram.

Current settlement:

- All Bru currently living in temporary relief camps in Tripura will be settled in the state, if they want to stay on.
- The Bru who returned to Mizoram in the eight phases of

repatriation since 2009, cannot come back to Tripura.

- A **fresh survey and physical verification of Bru families** living in relief camps will be carried out.
- In addition to the **Rs 600 crore fund** announced for the process, the Centre will implement a **special development project for the resettled Bru.**

- **Each resettled family will get 0.03 acre of land for building a home, Rs 1.5 lakh as housing assistance and Rs 4 lakh as a one-time cash benefit for sustenance.**

- They will also receive a **monthly allowance of Rs 5,000 and free rations for two years** from the date of resettlement.
- All cash assistance will be through **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** and the state government will expedite the opening of bank accounts and the issuance of Aadhaar, permanent residence certificates, ST certificates, and voter identity cards to the beneficiaries.
- Physical verification to identify beneficiaries will be carried out within 15 days of the signing of the deal.
- The **land for resettlement will be identified within 60 days**, and the land for allotment will be identified within 150 days.
- The beneficiaries will get housing assistance, but the **state government will build their homes and hand over possession.**
- They will be **moved to resettlement locations in four clusters**, paving the way for the closure of the temporary camps within 180 days of the signing of the agreement.
- Since Tripura is a small state, the **government would explore the possibility of diverting forest lands** and if

necessary, even reserve forest areas to grant the new entitlements.

Most residents of the camps, however, rejected the “**insufficient**” terms of the agreement. Around 328 families have returned to Mizoram, rendering the process redundant. The camp residents have opined that the **package did not guarantee their safety in Mizoram** and feared a repeat of the violence that had forced them to flee.

Tribals of Mizoram and Tripura:

In Mizoram:

- Any Mizo (Lushai) tribes – Lushai hills
- Chakma – Chakma Autonomous district council (ADC)
- Lai – Lai ADC
- Lakher – Mara ADC
- Kuki, Hmar tribes

In Tripura:

- Kokborok-speaking tribe
- Debbarma
- Jamatia
- Chakma
- Halam
- Mog
- Munda
- Kuki tribes