

# **ETHNIC RELATIONS IN MIZORAM: A STUDY OF MIZO AND BRU IN MAMIT DISTRICT**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
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## DECLARATION

I, Lalengkima do hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record work done by me, that the contents of this dissertation did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to anybody else, and that this work has not been submitted by me for any other degree in other University or Institute.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Political Science.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	-	Autonomous District Council
AIADMK	-	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
BCC	-	Bru Coordination Committee
BDO	-	Block Development Officer
BJP	-	Bharatiya Janata Party
BLFM	-	Bru Liberation Front of Mizoram
BNU	-	Bru National Union
BNCI	-	Bru National Convention of India
BNLF	-	Bru National Liberation Front
BRU	-	Bru Revolutionary Union
BSP	-	Bahujan Samaj Party
BSU	-	Bru Student Welfare
BWAM	-	Bru Welfare Association of Mizoram
CADC	-	Chakma Autonomous District Council
CYMA	-	Central Young Mizo Association
DMK	-	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
ECI	-	Election Commission of India
HPC	-	Hmar People Convention
HPC (D)	-	Hmar People Convention (Democrat)
JAC	-	Joint Action Committee
LADC	-	Lai Autonomous District
MADC	-	Mara Autonomous District Council
MBDPF	-	Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum
MHIP	-	Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl ( <i>Mizoram Women Wing</i> )
MLA	-	Member of Legislative Assembly
MNF	-	Mizo National Front
MNREGS	-	Mahatma National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MoU	-	Memorandum of Understanding
MSU	-	Mizo Students' Union
MUP	-	Mizoram Upa Pawl ( <i>Mizo elder group</i> )
MZP	-	Mizo Zirlai Pawl ( <i>Student Wing</i> )
NEI	-	North East India
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization

OBC	-	Other Backward Classes
RDCP	-	Reang Democratic Convention Party
RDO	-	Rural Development Officer
RRC	-	Reang Refugee Committee
SHDC	-	Sinlung Hills Development Council
UT	-	Union Territory
VC	-	Village Council
VCP	-	Village Council President
YBA	-	Young Bru Association
YMA	-	Young Mizo Association

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The term '*ethnic*' sometime refers to a group of people having the same linguistic background; culture, religion, and in some cases having the same race. Many writers and scholars have tried to define the perfect meaning of ethnicity. But the common and most popular definition always end at the way individuals and groups characterize themselves on the basis of their language, race, and place of origin, shared culture, values, and history. In the meantime, many scholars regard religion, regionalism, language, and caste as important sources of '*the symbols of ethnicity*'.<sup>1</sup> Ethnicity is often identified with the ideas of primordialism based on descent, race, kinship, territory, language, history etc. It also refers to some form of group identity related to a group of persons who accept and define themselves by a consciousness of common descent of origin, shared historical memories and connections.<sup>2</sup>

When it comes to the word ethnicity it is likely to refer the African Nations, Middle East countries, South and East Asian and Latin American countries because these regions are the most conflicted areas based on ethnicity in the World. Ethnicity is a subjective perception of who belong to a particular group. Ethnic group members have their own social organizations, support a particular political party, live in specific areas of the country and associated with the same religious organizations. Ethnicity serves as a rallying point for mobilizing the

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<sup>1</sup> Deepa S. Reddy, The Ethnicity of Caste (*The George Washington University Institute for Ethnographic Research*). Source: *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 3 (Summer, 2005), pp. 543-584. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4150981> (Retrieved on: 1.11.2013).

<sup>2</sup> V. Bijukumar, Social Exclusion and Ethnicity in North East India, *The NEHU Journal*, Vol XI, No. 2, 2013, p.21.

members of an ethnic group to compete effectively for economic resources, positions in government and other social and economic institutions.

Likewise, ethnicity also plays vital role in the Indian Politics today in which there are a numbers of groups or party based on linguistic, religion or races. The Tamil Nadu linguistic base parties like Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and its political rival All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) have been the major players among the Dravidian parties since the mid-1960s. Since the 1967 legislative assembly elections, only the DMK and the AIADMK have formed governments in Tamil Nadu. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) the present ruling party in the Central Government is also mainly based its ideologies on religion as Hinduism. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is also another caste or race based political party which mainly stands for the Schedule Caste (ST), Schedule Tribe (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC). The Nagaland People's Front (NPT) of Nagaland and the Mizo National Front (MNF) of Mizoram stand for the preservation and development of their ethnic tribal identity.

These groups play numerous significance roles in the politics of regionalism as well as in State Politics. In almost every State in India, a society which has full of tensions is considered as less developed than a society having harmonised relations between different ethnic groups of that society. If conflict rise in the society, it is likely to block the way of development. Ethnicity is the basis of politics in North East India where regionalism is based on ethnic groups. The Politics of Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura and Assam have various ethnic groups namely, Khasi, Jaintia, Goro, Mikir, Bodo, Lai, Mara, Kuki,

Hmar, Chakma etc, play a vital role in North East India (NEI) politics. There are also a numbers of different ethnic tribes in the whole North East India whose activities include movement for separate autonomy or territory within the state for their ethnic tribe. This movement of separatism demanded separate state to their Government, and even worse some ethnic groups demanded a sovereign state to the Government of India.

The case of ethnicity in Mizoram is also very tragic which experienced the movement for independent Mizoram by the Mizo National Front (MNF) in the past 1960s. This separatist activities triggered violence like killing of innocent people, kidnapping and raid which were very popular during this era of ethnic movement in North East India (NEI). Ethnic issue had occupied an important scenario during the formation of Mizo Hills District Council (1952) under the administrative jurisdiction of Assam Government. There were some minor ethnic problems between the Lushai and other tribes like Ralte, Lai, Paite, Hmar, Chakma and Mara of Mizoram which led to armed conflict among them in pre-British period. But serious ethnic issues emerge only after the attainment of statehood in 1986.

From 1952 Mizoram had a separate administrative set up known as Lushai Hill District Council later renamed as Mizo Hills District Council under the jurisdiction of Assam. From 1952 – 1986 ethnic politics had already played vital role in the politics of Mizoram in which tribes like Mara, Lai, Chakma pressed the Government demanding a separate autonomy for themselves. When Lushai Hills attained Union Territory (UT) in 1972, there were three autonomous regions based on ethnicity which still functions today such as, Lai, Chakma and Mara Autonomous District Councils (ADC). It is from the late 1990s that other tribes of

Mizoram such as Bru and Hmar got the attention of the Government in which these two tribes demanded the creation of another Autonomous District Council (ADC) inside Mizoram.

Although the Paite, one of the sub-tribe in Mizoram demanded this kind of autonomy for their ethnic group however, violence is not yet exerted. The Paite leaders also refused to achieve their goal by threatening technique which should disturb Mizoram.<sup>3</sup> The activities of Paite tribe end with different memorandum submitted to the Government authority demanding the formation of Autonomous District Council but the demand was not yet resolved by the Government.

The questions of the Bru and Hmar are still unsolved and it is mainly a demand of setting up a separate Autonomous District Council (ADC), the Mara, Lai and Chakma are also not satisfied with their Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) and they demanded for the creation of Union Territory and higher political status. They could not succeed that they change the issue from time to time. The issue of Hmar was settled on 11<sup>th</sup> August, 1994 by the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) between Hmar People Convention (HPC) and the Government of Mizoram which led to the creation of Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC) for Hmar tribe.

The SHDC cannot be successfully created and it is still continuing as an interim body due to unsolved issue between HPC and Government of Mizoram. Those who are unsatisfied with the SHDC formed another militant group known as Hmar People Convention (Democrat) or HPC (D) which pressed the government to implement the SHDC more efficient and successfully. Till today the problems of

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Lalduhsaka, M.A. Department of Political Science, Mizoram University, (who belonged to a Paite tribe) on 12<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2014.

HPC (D) remain unsolved and sometime there were violence activities inside Mizoram and the government also took some activities to counter the militant groups.

By the end of 1990s the ethnic issues in Mizoram began worse when one of the ethnic groups (Bru) emerged on the political platform of Mizoram in 1997. The Bru are migrated from Shan State in Burma to Arakan Hills, then from Arakan Hills to *Maiantlang* (a hilly place in the then East Pakistan), and lastly to the Hills of Tipperah (present Tripura) during 14<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.<sup>4</sup> It is from Tripura that the *Reang* or *Riang* or *Bru* had an uprising against the Maharaja of Tripura and they fled to Mizoram. As per the record in 2000, there are around 400 villages inside Mizoram in the District of Mamit, Kolasib, Lawngtlai and Lunglei, but their population is only around 7000.<sup>5</sup>

Before attainment of statehood and when it was Lushai Hills District of Assam, there were one District Council and one Regional Council. But after the attainment of Statehood, there are three Autonomous Regions under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. These three Regions are then upgraded to the status of Autonomous District Councils which functions till today. Like these three Autonomous District Councils, the Bru desire to have a separate autonomy for their ethnic tribe under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Subsequently they submitted to the Parliamentary Committee on Petitions demanding autonomy for the Bru community of Mizoram in general and Mamit

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<sup>4</sup> Tribal Research Institute, A Brief Account of Riangs in Mizoram (Aizawl: TRI, 1986), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> L.T. Hrangchal, The Bru Crisis in a Nutshell (report for Mizoram Police in 2002 unpublished), pp. 1-12.

District in particular.<sup>6</sup> But the Government of Mizoram is still silent on this demand.

The civil societies of Mizoram strongly opposed to the demand made by the Bru. K. Lalzawmliana of a Forest Department employee, at Dampa Tiger Project, was killed by Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF) an armed wing of Bru National Union (BNU), while he was on duty. After this incident there was clash between the Mizo and Bru in Mamit District which led to the exodus of many Bru families to Tripura and Assam. The arm movement and violence spearheaded by BNLF is at ease for a short period by the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Government of Mizoram and BNLF on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2005. But the ethnic issue began to refresh in 2009 with the killing of 18 year old Mizo boy at Bungthuam village. It was said that another Bru militant group called Bru Liberation Front of Mizoram (BLFM) were involve in the killing which reactivated the tension between Mizo and Bru.

After this incident, the remnant of the Bru families in Mizoram migrated to Tripura for protection and lived their life in Six Relief Camps. The Government of Mizoram tries to repatriate those who took shelter in Tripura, and therefore, negotiation was initiated with Bru Welfare Association of Mizoram (BWAM) for restoration of peace and security in the Bru area. Due to this ethnic issue in Mamit District the Bru children cannot get regular education, further even Mizo who live in the Bru dominated areas live with fear of kidnapping and murder which threaten their social life.

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<sup>6</sup> Lalthakima, *Insurgency in Mizoram: A Study of Its Origin, Growth and Dimension* (A Thesis Submitted to the Mizoram University for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Unpublished), pp. 166-169.



There are four types of Bru people –

- 1) Those who are permanent settlers of Mizoram and refuse to migrate to Tripura on the eve of ethnic tension with the Mizo,
- 2) Those who migrated to Tripura and stay in the Relief Camps,
- 3) Those who are repatriated both by the Government programme as well as by themselves from the camps to Mizoram, and
- 4) Those who are permanent settlers of Tripura in Bru villages.

All these types of people have their own problems with social, religious, economic and political nature but their problems are all different from one another. All these problems are not same because social problems of the permanent settlers of Mizoram are different from the social problems of the people who stay in camps. Moreover, Tripura settlers and repatriated family also have their own problems.

Every ethnic issue is related with tension and conflict with regard to occupation, profession, social life, culture and tradition, religion and value system. Therefore, it is necessary to find solution for social problems for those who live in the society. Different Zo ethnic tribes fought against one another in pre - British administration and it hindered the overall development of society. There are some works on the ethnic issues of Mizoram but, there are not sufficient works both in quantity and quality on this specific issue. This work is undertaken on ethnic tension between the Mizo and the Bru; and it explores the ethnicity in general and ethnic tension and relations between them particularly in Mamit District. Therefore, it is imperative to have a deep and logic observation inside Mamit District because most of the Bru are living inside this particular district.

## Review of Literature

One of the earliest books regarding the Bru of Mizoram is *A Brief Account of Riangs in Mizoram (1986)*. This book contains all the information about the Bru, their origin, occupation, social, cultural life, customary laws, village administration, religion, dresses and ornament, dialect, and even information about health status. This book clearly shows the relation between Bru and Mizo in the western part of Mizoram in which the Mizo make use of the Bru labour in the field of Jhum cultivation and other hard work or labour work.

*The Tribes of Mizoram: A Dissertation (1994)* prepared and published by Tribal Research Institute of Mizoram, Aizawl is an important work on the brief introduction of the tribes of Mizoram. This book is prepared from empirical and qualitative data. Here, in this book, the similarity between the Bru and Mizo can also be located that both these ethnic groups had their own chiefs which run the day-to-day administration in their respective villages. But their difference is that the chiefs of Mizo are hereditary while the chiefs of Bru are elected and appointed by the villagers but the duration or term of the Bru chief are not fixed, they enjoy chiefship so long as the villagers agree to it or satisfy with the administration of their respective chief.

*Mizoram: Negotiating with Terror, Yet Again (2002)* which was published in SAIR (South Asia Intelligence Review), Volume 1 of No. 15, October 28, written by Wasbir Hussain, an Associate Fellow, Institute for Conflict Management, New Delhi & Consulting Editor, *The Sentinel*, Guwahati mentioned about the conflict and negotiation between the Government of Mizoram and the Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF). From this article it can be seen that the

Reang Democratic Convention Party (RDCP) pushed the Government of Mizoram in 1997 demanding a separate autonomy under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India for the Bru which can be regarded as the main reason of conflict between the Bru and Mizo. This article further focus on why the Mizo acted against the Bru.

Sangkima's book *Cross-Border Migration: Mizoram (2004)* is an edited book which contains a number of relevant articles which mainly deals with the migration of tribes in different states of North East India. One of the article in this book *Riang in Mizoram: Settlement and its Impact* which is a joint paper written by Lianhmingthanga and J.V. Hluna contain reliable information about the Bru of Mizoram. Unlike many other articles and books, this particular article deals with the relation and transformation of Bru with the Mizo in which there are some cases of inter-tribal marriages between the two tribes. It also further states that most of the Mizo in the western belt of Mizoram copied the Rieng's traditional method of harvesting paddy and jhuming cultivation. In this area the Bru with their hard working and strong labour force, the Mizo make use of their services not only in jhum cultivation but also in other hard and rough work.

*The Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers Therein (2004)* written by T.H. Lewin was one of the earliest books which deal with the different tribes of the Chittagong Hill Tracts containing the Tribes of Lushai (Mizo) and Rieng (Bru) of Mizoram and Tripura respectively. This is one of the foremost resources about the dwellers of these lands and the author himself was the administrator of these lands during British rule. This book was reprinted by Tribal Research Institute, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl in 2004. The author mentioned that the Reang of

Tripura is the wildest of the tribe in the Hill of Tipperah, and their former villages are located in the Kuki country which is said to be in the land of Bangladesh. Then the Reang slowly entered the Hills of Tiperrah.

*Mizoram: An Accord for Peace (2005)* which was published in SAIR (South Asia Intelligence Review), Volume 3 of No. 42, May 2, written by Bibhu Prasad Routray, Research Fellow, Institute for Conflict Management. It stated that the conflict between Mizo and Bru began with the killing of Mizo Forest guard by the Bru. This article further mentioned about the Peace talk between BNLF and Mizoram Government which began from 2001. Now the conflict with armed was at ease but still there was no granting of the demand by the State Government. Although there was a plan for the rehabilitation of the militant group and a plan for the repatriation of the Bru, there are still misunderstanding between the Government of Mizoram and Bru.

One of the earliest researches in the area of Bru issues in Mizoram was done by Lalthakima for his degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Political Science, MZU. Although the topic of this research was *Insurgency in Mizoram: A Study of Its Origin, Growth and Dimension (2008)* it contains much relevant information about the Bru of Mizoram. This thesis investigates the reasons of Bru migration to Tripura. The two reasons Bru migration were the fear of strong resolution passed by the civil societies of Mizoram like MZP, YMA, MUP, MHIP etc, and the fear of Mizo grievances which led them to burn and threaten the Bru houses and community. It is also mentioned that Bru Student Welfare threaten their own people to leave Mizoram for which they are trying to exploit violence means

to press their demand which led to the migration of a number of Bru family to Tripura.

Another interest report and information about the incident of 1997-2000s between Bru and Mizo was published by Asian Centre for Human Rights on 2008 with the title of *India Human Rights Report 2008: Mizoram*. In this report the Government of Mizoram refused to repatriate the Bru on the ground that not all of them were genuine residents of Mizoram and due to the opposition from the influential Mizo civil societies including Young Mizo Association (YMA) and Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo students union, MZP). Further this report claimed that the contention of the state of Mizoram is false in which by October-November 2007, the Mizoram Bru Displaced Peoples Forum (MBDPF) conducted an on-the-spot survey of 5,328 families residing in the six relief camps at Kanchanpur sub-division of Tripura. According to the survey of the MBDPF, 94.22% of the Reang/Bru in the relief camps has at least one document each, issued by the state Government of Mizoram.

*Mizoram: Minority Report (2009)* written by Paritosh Chakma in *Economic and Political Weekly* mentions about the different minority groups in Mizoram and their being excluded and marginalized by the Government of Mizoram from time to time. The article further mentions about the expulsion of about 30,000 Bru in 1997 from their villages as the example of negligence of the minority in Mizoram. Minority like the Bru, Mara, Lai, Chakma and Hmar etc do not have a chance of getting jobs under the State government because they speak different language. In order to have equal jobs with the majority or the Mizo, these minorities have to learn Mizo at least up to Middle School.

The true meaning of Bru, their settlement and detail uprising against the Maharaja of Tripura can be seen from the writing of Lincoln Reang *Interaction among the Tribes of Tripura in the Backdrop of the Formation of TTAADC in The North East Umbrella: Cultural-Historical Interaction and Isolation of the Tribes in the Region (Pre-History to 21<sup>st</sup> Century)* edited by Marco Mitri and Desmond Kharmawplang published on 2011. Many writers and scholars of different field and discipline opine that the term 'Bru' literally means 'man' but in this essay the author argues that the term 'Bru' does not refer to 'man' as has opined by some writers; in fact 'Bru' denotes the whole community. He further discussed about the situation of Bru in Tripura, their relationship with other tribes like the Lushai (Mizo), Kuki, Chakma, Garo and Khasi etc.

*Identity Issues in North East India (2011)* edited by Ruma Bhattacharya is a collection of articles written by different scholars. In this book the author himself contributed one article *Controversial Bru Issue: Brus of Mizoram in Tripura (1997-2010)* which gave us a brief account on the events of ethnic issues between Bru and Mizo from the very beginning in 1997 till 2010. The author talked about the first and second phase of this incident in which the first phase covers from 1997-2009. In this phase the Bru demand a separate autonomy to the Government of Mizoram. The second phase began from 2009 when there was another incident at Bungthuam Village which resulted in a fresh ethnic misunderstanding between Bru and Mizo. Hundreds of Bru family fled from their villages for protection in Tripura Refugee camps. Meanwhile in November 16<sup>th</sup> 2009, the Mizo NGOs' Coordination Committee comprising of YMA, MZP, MHIP, and MUP etc, decided to oppose the repatriation of Bru to Mizoram. This phase could be a period between 2009 till today.

A renowned journalist of Agartala Jayanta Bhattacharya wrote an interesting article *Report: Ramification of Conflicts in Tripura and Mizoram (2012)* which was published in Refugee Watch, 39 & 40, June and December containing the insurgency, ethnic conflict, internally displaced person in the state of Tripura and Mizoram. As for Mizoram, it mainly concerns with the Reang displaced person. There is minor difference with other written record; here the author claims that there are about 35000 displaced Reang in Tripura camps by early 2000 while other sources mention that about 39000 in six Relief Camps of Tripura, but the author himself had contacted and interviewed several displaced persons. Further the author mentioned about the interview between him and the Assistant General Secretary of Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF) regarding how difficult their life is in the Relief Camps of Tripura.

*Ethnicity, Conflict and Population Displacement in Northeast India (2013)* by Mridula Dhekial Phukan of Dispur Law College, Guwahati, Assam published in Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (AJHSS), Volume 1—Issue 2, August is another relevant article about the incident which took place on 1997 in Mizoram. It traced the beginning of Bru insurgency and the reaction with the Mizo. Here the numbers of refugee which took shelter in Tripura is difference from other sources, this article say there are about 35000 - 50000 Bru who fled from Mizoram to Tripura due to ethnic clash between Mizo and Bru on 1997.

*Riang in Mizoram and their Autonomy Movement (2015)* by Dr. John C. Lallawmawma, Asst. Professor of Government Kamalanagar College is a National Seminar paper organized by Department of Political Science, MZU held on 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> March, 2015. Here the presenter argued that in the case of repatriation going

on, some leaders of the Riang opposed repatriation plan accusing the government of Mizoram to have shown only haphazard treatment to them.

### **Research Limitations**

This study focuses only on Mamit District of Mizoram, but it also briefly analyses other ethnic tensions of Mizoram. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were extracted from field work but have limitations because of language problems, communication skills, social silence among Bru and of course lack of resources etc. The Bru have different dialect and most of them do not understand or speak Mizo language. When the sample selected from the population cannot speak Mizo language, it was difficult for the researcher to interact thoroughly with the people. In other word, language problem blocked the way to have an in depth study of the population. One important limitation which could differentiate the research result is that due to repatriation still going on, the response of the sample who had been resettled in Mizoram for 2 or more years may be different from those responses whose families are newly repatriated.

### **Importance of the Study**

When problem concerning social issues rises in any societies, it could be rectified through a particular scientific research. This research work is expected to describe the ethnic relations, tensions and find a solution to the present social issue. This study mainly highlights the relationship between Mizo and Bru. Moreover, the research work also critically examines the emergence of tension and conflict between Mizo and Bru. This study evolves with research result that suggests solutions to the contemporary tensions and conflicts between the Mizo and Bru as



well as to enhance a durable relationship among the two ethnic groups. This work would be a fundamental study for the future works on this issue.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Tension between Mizo and Bru in Mizoram as a whole began from the incident of 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1997 which resulted in the exodus of many Bru families to Tripura and Assam. As far as the demand made by the Bru is concerned, step cannot be initiated by the Government of Mizoram because Bru insurgent group known as Bru Revolutionary Army (BRU) indulge in violent and kidnapping activities. The Bru Welfare Association of Mizoram (BWAM) which was set up to take back all the Bru displaced person from Tripura also refused to move back to Mizoram and they also made several demand to the Government of Mizoram and to the Central Government.

Although the Government of Mizoram initiated its repatriation programme for the Bru people in 2010, most of the Bru people in Tripura camps do not cooperate with the Government's plan. Only a few who were agreed with the State Government are repatriated. To follow the Government's plan most of the internal displaced Bru at Tripura made several demands to the Government.

Their demands to the Central Government include increasing rehabilitation for the Bru repatriated family; ensure the recognition of their tribe as the tribe of Mizoram, to enrol all the Bru repatriated in the list of electoral roll of Mizoram etc. Due to the tensions and conflicts between Mizo and Bru, the economic and social life of the Bru people in Mizoram as well as in Tripura is negatively affected.

## **Methodology**

The research strategy is a qualitative one but quantitative sampling method was also used to select the require sample in the case of sample collection. Qualitative strategy was necessary because there is no specific census of the Bru population and using quantitative method was difficult, time consuming and too expensive. Both primary and secondary data were used during the research work. Primary data include observation and interview only, whereas secondary data include government records like gazette, assembly proceedings, state archives; and newspaper, magazines, journals, published and unpublished books etc....and other media related sources.

The field observation and interview were conducted between 5<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 in which Mamit was first visited and Zawlnuam, Rengdil, Bungthuam and so on. In the initial stage, video and audio recording system were intended to be used and yet, text recorded method was used and some images were also recorded to prove the facts. In the selected villages, not only the samples selected were interviewed but also the leaders of political parties, student and civil societies were also interviewed. From the civil society, leaders of YMA from selected villages and leaders of Young Bru Association are consulted and interviewed. The political institutions like Village Council (VC) member of each village and *Choudhury* (Bru village head) are also interviewed. The responses of each and every interviewee are recorded in a plain paper for analysis. The study is descriptive type of research in which the description and historical analysis of the population and research area included. The Primary data are collected for this research in which the information gives some solutions to the research problems which could be avoided by public policy or any other means.

*Technique and Tools:* Observation and interview technique were adopted during the whole research. A *structured observation* in which image recording method was adopted and it was also a *non-participant* observation. But sometime, a non-participant method is not sufficient and in some cases the researcher had to involve in their social life to understand their ethnic feelings and problems. Sometime it was also imperative to use participant observation to find out their relations with other ethnic groups in terms of occupation, social lifestyle and religious issue. It was decided that during observation the sample/population must not know that they were under observation, so that their real and true conditions, feeling about the research area could be recorded.

In the case of Interview method, data was recorded during the whole interview. Both the Mizo and Bru were taken as sample and interviewed because it was necessary to find out the relations, tensions and impact between them. Therefore, it is necessary to study both ethnic groups. There was a draft questions/schedule for the researcher but sometimes it was necessary to go beyond that draft. Questions like nature of ethnic relations, relations before and after the tension, suggestions to their problems, and any problems with Mizo/Bru in terms of religion, occupation and culture, major impact of ethnic tension were mainly asked to the respondents. One major problem with the interviewee was that the sample/respondent, especially the Bru people were afraid to respond some questions; therefore, sometime the researcher had to organize a group interview in which with other responses they were not afraid of the questions as well as the researcher.

In a group interview all interviewee express their ideas, opinion and feelings about the research area. In many cases, to have deep relation with the interviewee the researcher had to participate among them, such as, eating their food, drinking their tea and wine etc. The interview and observation method are easy, reliable and accountable because all the recorded data are easy to analyse and the result will be the same with other method.

*Sampling Procedure:* Sample selection is sometime very difficult because the selected samples are not at all convenient to interview; therefore the two types sampling technique was used. First, village sample was selected from the whole population (Mamit dist) by using Simple Random Sampling. For this method, source list was prepared which contains all the villages where the Mizo and Bru lived together for many years. The selected sample (villages) were Rengdil, Zawlnuam, Bungthuam, Mamit, Pathiantlang, Zamuang, Saikhawthir, Kawtethawveng, Bawngva and Uria Chora villages out of 42 mixed population villages. But observation was also held at Rengdil, Zawlnuam, Bungthuam, Uria Chora, Mamit, Persang, Kawrtethawveng, Dampui, Saikhawthlir, Chuhvel, Bawngva, Kawrthah, Zamuang, Yboh Chora, Santipur and Borai Villages. The mixed population village in which the Mizo and Bru lived together are shown in the next chapter, but all the mixed population villages are not show in the map.

In these villages construction of houses, social life with other, economic condition, involvement or participation in civil society, local administration, education and relations or co-operations of the Bru with other ethnic groups were mainly observed. Second, from the selected sample (villages) another sample was selected by using Judgement or Convenience Sampling, this sample selection was

taken during Observation of the Population. Then the sample selected through Judgement or Convenience Sampling was interviewed thoroughly and as mentioned earlier during the interview, notes were taken down during interaction with the sample/interviewee for further analysis.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are following -

- 1) To examine the ethnic relation between Mizo and Bru.
- 2) To examine the causes of ethnic tension in Mamit District.
- 3) To study and find out the impact of ethnic tension in Mizoram as a whole and Mamit District in particular.

### **Research Questions**

- 1) What was the nature of relation before 1997 incident and after the ethnic tension of 2009 between Mizo and Bru?
- 2) What are the causes of ethnic tensions in Mamit District?
- 3) What are the implications of the tension between the Mizo and Bru on Mizoram and Mamit District in particular?
- 4) What is the present status of the relations between Mizo and Bru in general?

The dissertation comprises of five Chapters as given below.

#### **1) First Chapter: Introduction.**

The introductory chapter contains review of literature, research limitations, and importance of the study, research methodology, research problems, method or technique of data collection, sampling

procedure, research type, research questions, and objectives of the study.

**2) Second Chapter: Profile of Mamit District.**

This chapter discuss brief profile of the research geographical area which is Mamit District and brief introduction of the population as well as description of ethnicity in Mizoram.

**3) Third Chapter: A historical Analysis of Mizo and Bru in Mamit District.**

This chapter deal with a historical analysis of the Mizo and Bru, their relation before the tension and the settlement of Bru in Mamit District.

**4) Fourth Chapter: Ethnic tension in Mizoram: An Analysis of Causes and Effect.**

In this chapter the research findings about the causes and effect or impact of the tension between Mizo and Bru in Mamit District are mainly discuss. It also contains the relation between Mizo and Bru after the ethnic tension of Mamit District in 1997 and 2009.

**5) Fifth Chapter: Conclusion.**

*Appendices*

*Bibliography*

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **PROFILE OF MAMIT DISTRICT**

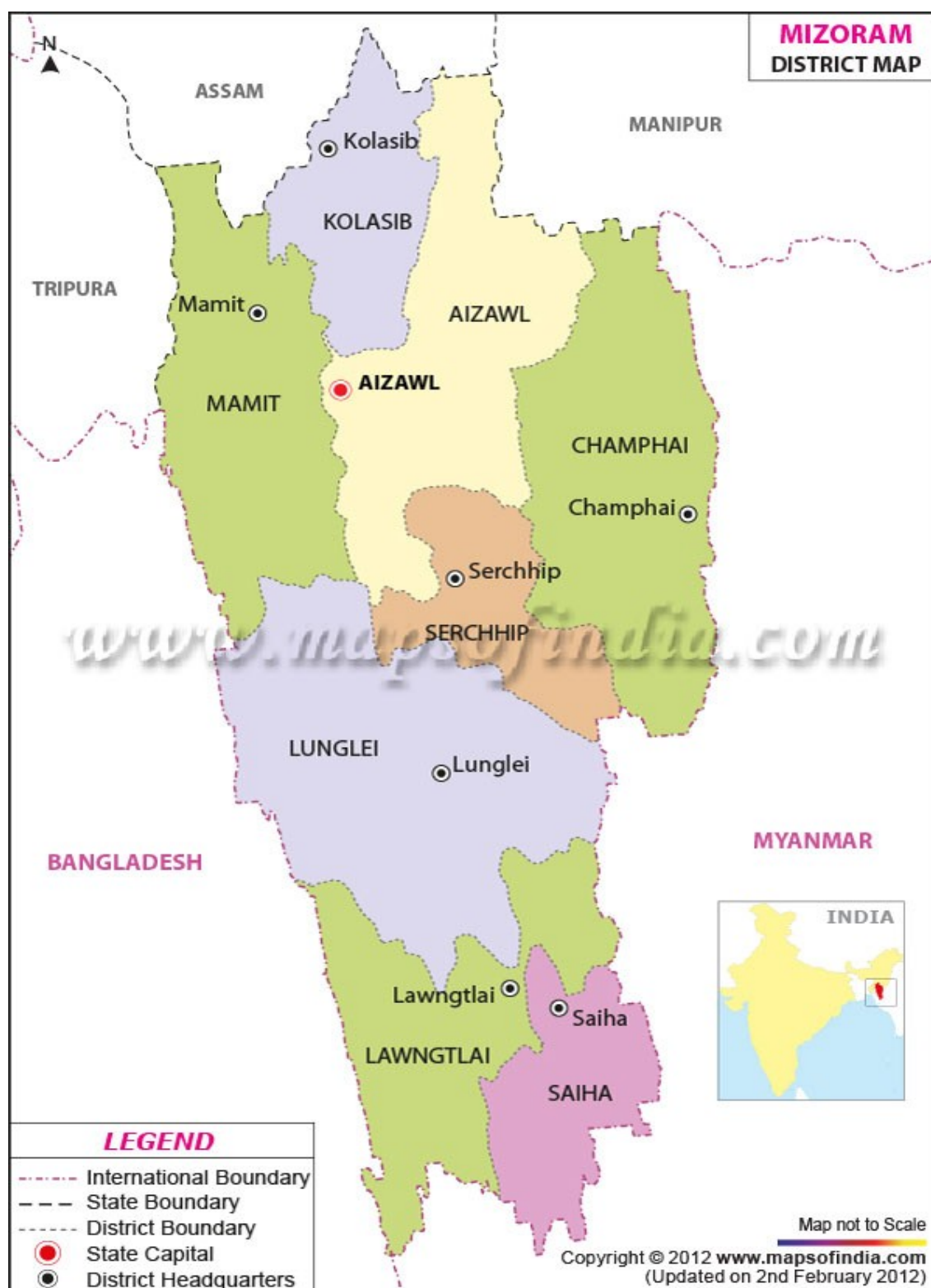
This research work presents the socio-economic and geographical profile of Mamit District and also presents a brief profile of the State in general. It also gives a brief profile as an introductory part of Mizoram in general. This chapter highlights Mizoram as one of the region which falls under ethnic problems in North East India (NEI). This chapter critically analyses the issues, problems and challenges of multi-ethnic state of Mizoram.

Mizoram, the 23<sup>rd</sup> state of India became a full fledges state within the Union India in 1986. Initially the state was divided into three districts, such as, Aizawl, Lunglei and Chhimtupui districts, that later in 1998 split into eight districts. The eight districts comprising the Mizoram state are Mamit, Kolasib, Aizawl, Champhai, Serchhip, Lunglei, Lawngtlai and Saiha. Moreover, Mizoram also comprises of three Autonomous District Councils (ADCs), such as, Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC), Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) and Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC). Out of these three Autonomous District Councils, the Lai Autonomous District Council is located under Lawngtlai District and use Lawngtlai town as its Headquarter. The Mara Autonomous District Council is located under Saiha District, and also uses Saiha Town as its Headquarter. The Chakma Autonomous District Council comprising part of Lunglei and Lawngtlai districts use Chawngte (Kamalanagar) as its Headquarter.

The Research field that is Mamit District of Mizoram share a national boundary with Assam and Tripura (near Langkaih River) and an international boundary with Bangladesh. The researcher also visited Tripura villages for field observation and interview. The majority of the population of Mamit District practiced agriculture as their major economic activities and source of income.



Fig. 1.1 District Map of Mizoram



Source: <http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/mizoram/mizoram.htm>

As stated in introductory chapter, most of the Bru in Mizoram are settled inside Mamit District which was a part of Aizawl District till 1997. Based on 2012 Census, Mamit District comprised of 83 inhabited villages. However, it is difficult to draw the exact number of villages where the Bru dominated inside the district as many villages have a mixed population which comprises of Mizo, Bru, Chawrei, Ranglong and in some villages Chakma are also found. Majority of the population in Mamit District are Mizo and other tribes are Bru, Chawrei, Ranglong and Chakma. In comparison to other tribes mentioned above, the Bru are more in numbers than the others. As far as the religion profile of the state is concerned, the state is dominated by Christianity (99.13 per cent). However, a few Muslims and Hindus are presence in Mamit District.<sup>1</sup>

Located in 23.9251 North Latitude and 92.4914 East Longitude, Mamit District was created by the Government of Mizoram Notification No.A.600III2II95-GAD dated 11.3.98. The new District started functioning from the 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1998 which was the date when the new Deputy Commissioner assumed office. In 2001, the population of Mamit District was estimated to be 62,785 and 82 per cent of the total population was living in rural areas. The town of Mamit itself is one of the smallest district headquarter when compared to other 7 district headquarters of Mizoram. According to the 2011 census, Mamit district has a population of 85,757, ranking 619<sup>th</sup> in India out of a total of 640 Districts.<sup>2</sup> Mamit District is situated in the western part of Mizoram. It is separated from Aizawl District by the Tlawng River which flows in the south-north direction and empties itself to the river Barak in Cachar District of Assam. It is a land locked

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<sup>1</sup> A Baseline Survey of Minority Concentration Districts of India: Mamit (Mizoram), (Ministry of Minority Affairs, Gov't of India and ICSSR, 2009), p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Official Website of Mamit District, retrieved on 11<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2015.

district/area and is bound by Tripura state on the West, separated by the Langkaih River, Assam on the North, Kolasib District on the north east, Aizawl District on the East; and Lunglei District on the South. The total geographical area of the district is 3025.75 sq. km.<sup>3</sup> In 2015, the district population reaches 98112 which generate 7.87% of the State Population.<sup>4</sup> It falls in the agro climatic zone of Temperate Zone.

The entire District is hilly terrain and is a part of the western extension of the system that links up with the ranges of Nagaland & Manipur in the north and Chin Hills of Myanmar in the east and ramifies from the sub-Himalayan Patkoi-Arakan Ranges. The terrains are crisscrossed by valleys and deep gorges where the rivers wend their ways to constitute its river system. For the compatibility of the Bru people who loves low places, fond of stream and river there are four major rivers inside the District such as, Teirei, Tut, Langkaih and Tlawng which run parallel to each other almost up to Bairabi. The other two rivers join up with the Tlawng at Chipui and Tlangkhang respectively. The river Tlawng in turn joins the river Barak in Assam and this is navigable up to Sairang during certain season of the year. The temperature varies between 10 degree to 24 degree Celsius in between winter and summer. The District receives abundant rainfall with an average of 2200 mms. It is heaviest during June, July & August. The winter is normally cold and dry.

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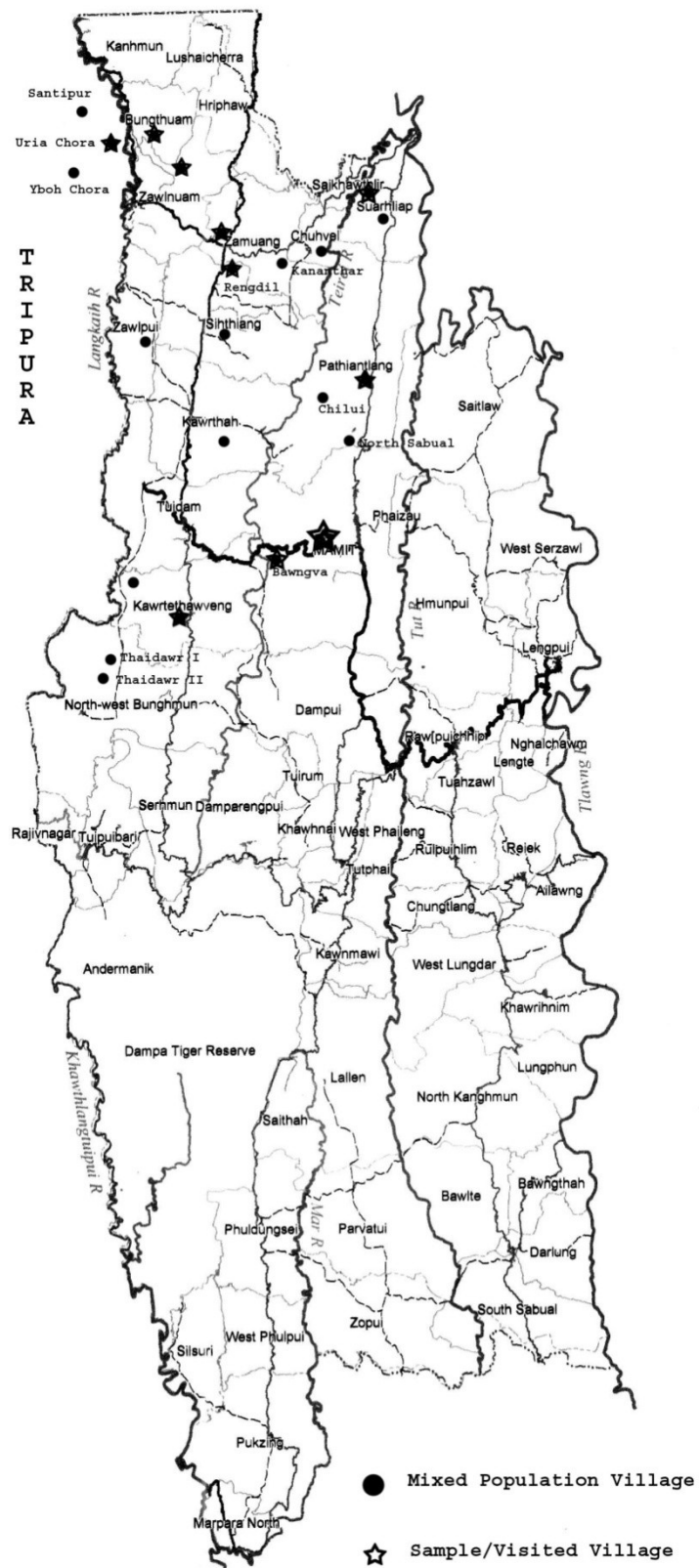
<sup>3</sup> Statistical Handbook of Mizoram 2010 published by Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Mizoram: Aizawl.

<sup>4</sup> Mizoram Economic Survey 2014 – 2015, published by Government of Mizoram, Planning & Programme Implementation Department (Research & Development Branch), p. 31.

Within the District there are various civil societies, such as, Mizo Zirlai Pawl (student group), Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizoram Upa Pawl (elder group), Mizo Hmeichhie Insuihkhawm Pawl (women group) etc. Various organizations and groups play an important role as an interest and pressure groups in the society. The main task of these organizations is to uphold and ensure peace and security in the society, to check and abolished robbers inside their respective villages, to eliminate all threat for the people, to cooperate with Government in various governmental policies or programmes and to deal with any social issues as necessary.

Like all the other 7 Districts of Mizoram the district is divided into three Rural Development Blocks viz. Reiek, West Phaileng and Zawlnuam respectively. The Deputy Commissioner maintains the administration within the district and Rural Development Officer (RDO) or Block Development Officer (BDO) take control of their respective Block. Inside each Block there are a numbers of Villages which the Block Officer are responsible to take care the day-to-day administration. There are three main Legislative Assembly Constituencies inside Mamit District, namely – Mamit Constituency, Dampa Constituency and Hachhek Constituency. Inside Mamit Constituency there are around 29 villages, in Dampa Constituency there are again around 29 villages and in Hachhek Constituency there are around 31 villages. These three Constituencies are also a part of Lok Sabha Constituency while amalgamated with the whole of Mizoram. According to the declaration of Mamit Deputy Commissioner, there are 20895 voters in Mamit Constituency, 16908 voters in Dampa Constituency and 22158 voters in Hachhek Constituency comprising the overall 59961 voters in Mamit District which was published on the Official Website of Mamit District, 2015.

Fig. 1.2 Map of Mamit District, Mizoram



The major economy of the District is based on Agriculture – allied activities. Paddy which is the staple food of the State as well as of the district populace is the main crop. Jhum or shifting type cultivation is the most popular type of cultivation that comprises the main source of agricultural products. The district is famous for Oranges and Hatkora fruits and Red Oil Palm plantation. Thereby, some families make use of it as their main sources of income. In some low places, villages like Zamuang, Rengdil, Zawlnuam, Bungthuam and Kanhmun betel nut plantation is very common in which the harvest is sold to the outsider, especially to Tripuri.

Bengalis from neighbouring state of Tripura often buy betel nut from Mamit District. Since betel nut production is a good source in these villages, it generates almost 80 per cent of their total annual income. Moreover, the major allied activity in the district is Animal Husbandry (piggery and Poultry). In the agricultural field, the majority of the population which is Mizo sometime makes use of other community labour forces for carrying heavy agricultural products. In this way, some Bru sold their labour to Mizo farmers and work in the field to earn their livelihood.

Zamindari System which was introduced in India by Lord Cornwallis in 1793, commonly also known as Permanent Settlement, is still very common in Mamit District.<sup>5</sup> However, the only difference is that all the Zamindars (owner of the land) do not have to share their products with any other superior powers as practiced in real Zamindari System of 1793. In fact, there is no higher authority in which the Zamindar (owner of the land) has to answer or accountable to any other

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<sup>5</sup> Rekha Bandyopadhyay, Land System in India: A Historical Review (*Economic and Political Weekly* Vol. 28, No. 52, Dec. 25, 1993), pp. A149-A155.

power. Most of the farmer in the district owned a vast land for cultivation and these rich farmers used to employ the Tripura Bengali and the Bru of Mizoram for cultivation purposes.

In other words, when a Bru farmer cultivated paddy or any cultivable crops in a land owned by a Mizo, the harvest is shared between the owner of the land and the Bru cultivator. These cases is very common inside the district because all the fertile land, cultivable land is now owned by the Mizo, there is not enough free land for the Bru to meet their satisfaction from the jhum products. Prior to ethnic tension between Mizo and Bru in late 1990s, many Bru farmers who owned a land for cultivation fled to Tripura due to fear of ethnic clash with the Mizo. Therefore, some Bru sold their land, property and all the sellable materials to the highest bidder. Therefore, as a result of ethnic tension, almost all the fertile lands are now belongs to the Mizo.

### **Meaning and Origin of the Bru Tribe in Mizoram**

Many writers define the term '*Bru*' simply means '*man*' but some scholars among themselves define the meaning of '*Bru*' not merely means '*man*' but it rather denotes the whole '*Bru community*'. The Bru are also called as '*Reang*' by the plain people especially in Tripura.<sup>6</sup> The Bru dislike the word Reang as the plain people used to call them and they want to change the nomenclature '*Bru*' instead of '*Reang*'. But in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Mizoram and Tripura the Bru are registered as '*Riang*'.<sup>7</sup> In various governmental documents of Mizoram they are still identifies as '*Reang (Bru)*'. So, many journalists and different people used these three terms interchangeably. But the Bru themselves made it clear that they

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<sup>6</sup> Hrangchal, *Op Cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 and List of Scheduled Tribes by *Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India*.

should not be called as Riang or Reang but they should be termed as Bru from now onwards.<sup>8</sup> The Bru outside Mizoram are still commonly known as Reang and in Mizoram, especially before their political uprising they are known to Mizo by the nomenclature '*Tuikuk*' which is regarded as a derogatory term by the Bru.

There was a story about the origin of the term Tuikuk in which one Mizo traveller saw a Bru man who was taking bath in the river and asked him which tribe/community he belongs. And as far as the Bru do not understand Mizo language and assume that the question might be what he was doing in the river. So the man replied the Mizo as '*Tuikung mi*' which means '*I am bathing*'. Since the word '*Tuikung*' is not familiar to a Mizo traveller and he heard it as Tuikuk and the word '*mi*' in Mizo happen to describe 'man', so the Bru are known to the Mizo as *Tuikuk*.<sup>9</sup> This nomenclature is used in Mizoram till the Bru themselves made a statement on that issue in 1992. However, till today many outdated Mizo identify them as *Tuikuk*. Before the Bru in Mizoram make any political development and uprising for their tribe, they want to change the nomenclature of their tribe in common and as well as in the list of Schedule Tribe list of Mizoram. But still today, it is not fulfil or achieve and the name of the tribe is still recognised as '*Riang*' in the list of Schedule Tribe of Mizoram and Tripura.

The Bru identify all the Mizo tribe as '*Skam*' just as the Mizo identify them as '*Tuikuk*'. Almost all the Bru dislike this term as an identity. On a contrary, no Mizo in western part never said or dislike with any word or any resolution with any kind about the Bru identify them as '*Skam*'. Sometime, the Bru also identify themselves as '*Tuikuk*' when interacted with the Mizo. During field interview and

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<sup>8</sup> "Riang ti tawh lovin Bru", *Mizo Aw* (Jan 28, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> Lalthakima, *Op Cit.*, p.156.



observation, the researcher recorded four times in which the Bru identify themselves as '*Tuikuk*'. Although the Bru regarded the nomenclature '*Tuikuk*' as a derogatory term but there was no incident, no clash or no issue except the resolution passed in 1992 to call themselves as Bru.

There are different tales about the origin of the Bru tribe but the most acceptable one is that as already mentioned in chapter 1, the Bru are migrated from Shan State in Burma and then they moved to Arakan Hills (Burma) and then to Bangladesh. From Bangladesh again they migrated to the then Hills of Tipperah (Tripura) estimated around 14<sup>th</sup> Century A.D,<sup>10</sup> and then move towards Zampui and Sakhan Hill Ranges slowly entering the then Lushai Hills. As far as they are not permanent settlers of any place, they used to move where they could meet their satisfactions of the jhum/agricultural products as well as low places for fishing.

The tribe of Bru is divided into two – Mualsui and Meska.<sup>11</sup> With the exception of few Bru, most of the Bru are multi-lingual. They speak Mizo, Bengali and also have a different dialect for their own, which is the main communication language within their community. The tribe of Mualsui and Meska are also called as *Malshui* and *Mechka* in which these two tribe are further divided into seven sub-tribe – those of Malshui consists of Malshui, Apet, Nakhyam, Champrong, Darbang, Sagarai and Reang; those of Mechka are Tui Muya Fak, Mechka, Charki, Musa, Rai Kachak, Takh Maiyachak, Waiyeram.<sup>12</sup> But there is another interesting view about the name of the tribe in which it is argue that the nomenclature '*Riang*' is one of the sub-tribe of Bru and the whole tribe is not divided into two but into thirteenth sub-tribes comprising of Molsoi, Meska,

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<sup>10</sup> Tribal research Institute, *Op Cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Tribal Research Institute, Rieng Chanchin (Aizawl: TRI, 1996), p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Chitta Rajan Dev, The Reangs of Tripura (*ISHANI*, Vol. 2, No 1, 2005), p. 1.

Raikchak, Chorkhi, Msha, Chongpreing, Toimui Yaphaoh, Tauma Yakchwo, Nouhkham, Wairem, Apeto, Yakstam and Riang.<sup>13</sup>

According to the Mr. Persen of a 60 years old Tripura Bru, the Bru tribe comprises of fourteenth sub-tribes like – Apeto, Msha, Chorkhi, Molsoi, Meshka, Toimoiyaphak, Noh Khan, Yak Stan, Chopreng, Rai Chak, Rai Son, Reang, Tawmayakchok, Wairem.<sup>14</sup> But from this sub-tribes, the elder of Uria Chora village claim that the Yak Stan clan has totally vanish and no one ever meet a Bru who belong to Yak Stan clan, Mr. Persen further stated that he has not meet any Yak Stan clan and also never heard it.

The language of the Bru community is called *Kau-Bru*, but others simply known their language as ‘Bru Language,’ because ‘*Kau*’ means language and ‘*Bru*’ here indicates the whole community/tribe, so *Kau-Bru* means the language of the Bru ethnic tribe.<sup>15</sup> The Bru tribe in Tripura and Assam are under the dominion of Bengali language which has been in use for many years, hence the Bru in these states acquires education in Bengali and most of them speak Bengali fluently along with their native tongue. Similarly, the Bru in Mizoram speak Mizo and their native tongue but some of the educated persons among them are multilingual who can speak English, Mizo, Bengali and their native’s *Kau-Bru*. Some Bru in Tripura also speak the newly *Kokborok* language which was developed for medium of communication in Tripura hill areas. However, in Mizoram context, few educated Christian Bru can read and understand the Bible written in *Kokborok* script.

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<sup>13</sup> Bru Tribe of India, (*bru tribes of india.weebly.com*) retrieved on: 3 Sep, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> Written by Tal Bong Joy who belong to Apeto sub-tribe of Bru in Uria Chora, Tripura during field work, dated 18<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Bru Tribe of India, *Op cit*.

It is believed by many scholars that Bru must be a close kin of the Kuki-Chin, as their dialect is closely related to the Austro-Asiatic family of language.<sup>16</sup> Even in the Constitution (Schedule Tribes) Order of 1950, the Bru are put under the clause named as '*Any Kuki tribes including.....*' which can be regarded as they may be close kin of Kuki tribe. Moreover, the political and social organization of the Bru is similar with those of kindred tribes of the North East India. Moreover, the Bru also do have head or chief called as the *Rai*, who is the supreme chief among the tribe. In their traditional practices the Rai was assisted in his administrator by some form of prime-minister, *Kachak*. With his ministers the Rai constitute a Supreme Council to supervise all the Bru administration. Institution like chieftainship was also practice in the Bru inhabited village, in which every village was administered by a village headman known as the *Choudhury* who is responsible for all the village day-to-day administration. But all these administration and organization began to defunct from around late 1940s.<sup>17</sup>

In Tripura Bru villages, there are still the village Choudhury who run their respective village administrative, whereas in Mizoram there is no village Choudhury. In Tripura, the Government recognizes this institution and also provide a designated seal to them. Although there are village Choudhury in Tripura but the office of Rai who integrated all the Choudhury was no more. All the Choudhury in every village met once or twice in a year to discuss different issues confronts by their community. One of the most important distinguish feature of village Choudhury is called '*Bichar*' which is a Court to them, if there is any

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<sup>16</sup> R.K. Samanta, The Reangs of Tripura: Socio-Cultural and Agro-Economic Changes (*Social Scientist*, Vol. 9. No. 5/6, Dec 1980-Jan 1981), pp. 44.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46-49.

disputes within the villagers, the Choudhury summon '*Bichar*' in which the disputed people, thereafter, a judgement is made according to their customary law.

At present most of the Bru are scattered into different regions like Bangladesh (Chittagong Hills), Mizoram (Lushai Hills) and Tripura (Hill Tiperrah). Their social system is based on Patriarchy in which the oldest male in the family is the head and authority of the family. In traditional practice, the family is integrated into the village by the headman (Choudhury) who enjoys power and authority in the village almost the same authority as the father in the family. The Rai in turn was heading the social hierarchy of all the Bru and in his office, integrated it with the political structure.<sup>18</sup>

Before the decline of traditional system of administration, most of the social disputes and differences are settled by the people of Kotordofa, which is by the Rai and Kasko/Kaskau of representative sub-tribe. Whenever a dispute arise between the member of the community, a meeting is summoned by the Rai in which the matters are to be settled according to their customary law, all the relevant argument are heard and then justice is done through the principle of natural justice.

The main occupation of Bru in Mizoram is based on Agriculture-allied activities. Like other tribes of Mizoram, the Bru practiced jhum or shifting cultivation, this process of cultivation is practiced mostly in the hill slopes once for a year and another plot of land is selected for the next year. All cultivable land around their villages is then used one after another in a cyclic order. The longer the land remain unused the more the fertile is the land. Due to the poor productivity of

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-54.

the land surrounding them, thereby poverty intensifies among Bru community and can be considered as the poorest tribal in Mizoram.<sup>19</sup>

Fishing and hunting are very common among Bru male. The usual method for fishing is very simple like catching, poisoning and trapping; it is said that they could catch a lot of fish from the stream or river with their bare hand. Hunting of wild animal is not only an important occupation for them but also considered as a sport activity among man, in which animals like deer, elephant, wild boar, goat and different birds are trapped and hunted down. As far as the Bru community are not live in a permanent and compact area which is mainly because of their agricultural activities, they do not interest and never imagined of cultivating vegetables, pisciculture (fish farming) and rearing many domestic animals. But they raised pigs and chickens which were necessary for their religious sacrifices in times of suffering from sickness; dogs for guarding their houses and for hunting purposes. The main diet among Bru is usually rice, but different kinds of reptiles like lizards, snakes are eaten and amongst these python's meat is highly esteemed.<sup>20</sup> They eat different kinds of meat but unlike other tribes of Mizoram the Bru refused to eat cat and dog, among wild animal Bear meat is also never eaten among the Bru. Alcoholic drink is associated in their life and socially recognized.

The tribe even today practice traditional belief by worshipping traditional gods, goddess and offer ritual to appease their gods and goddess. Due to many deities-gods and goddess the Bru religion is sometime known as polytheism and there is difference between the use of 'deities' and 'spirit' in which the former is used for referring to the objects of Bru worship to whom the Bru give personal

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<sup>19</sup> Tribal Research Institute, *Op Cit.*, p. 80.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

names, these deities are believed to have the power to bless, guard and save human beings as well as having power to harm, to disturb and trouble them; but the former which is 'spirit' was used to refer to the supernatural beings who are unnamed by the Bru and these spirits are believed to have the power to bless or harm the living beings of the human world.<sup>21</sup>

Besides all their traditional deities and spirit, the Bru adopted some of the Hindu gods and goddess among them are, *Durga, Ganesh, Kali, Krishna, Isawr, Mahadev* and *Rama* etc....are very popular which clearly show that the Bru are not originally worshipper of Hindu gods and goddess but due to the influence of Hindu religion they have adopted many Hindu gods and goddess as their own. Among their deities, '*Matai Katar*' is believed as to be the supreme deity to whom the Bru give their greatest reverence and it is considered as the origin of all other deities and source of all things.<sup>22</sup>

Different kinds of sacrifices are made by killing young pigs, chicken and goats as per the prescriptions and demands of their native priest. The performer of those sacrifices is called the *Auchai* and as far as the recipients of the sacrifice have no anthropomorphic forms, they have no established temple or shrine where their sacrifices are made.<sup>23</sup> In addition to this, places like bathing ghat, jhum fields and their borders, a junction of two paths, a stair-case of a hut, the outskirts of a village, a granary, a clean-rice container, a low and narrow junction connecting two hills or a place beneath a big tree etc are considered to be suitable places for conducting their sacrifices. With regard to all their socio-religious practices, the Bru and Mizo had many similarities in which the traditional custom and socio-

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<sup>21</sup> T. Vanlaltlani, *Tribal Religion: Mizo and Bru* (Aizawl: Mizo Theological Association, 2009), p. 147.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

religious practice of Mizo is not complete without the practice of sacrifice to which it was believed as to have the power to harm and bless human beings.

But with the influences of Christian missionaries, many traditional faith and belief are now condemned and are being abandoned. Many Bru have condemned their traditionalism and move towards the practices of new religion that is Christianity. The numbers of new Christian believers increase every year among them and they discard such kind of superstitions but there are still some people among them who are not totally free from their traditional belief system. However, till today, practices like sacrifices are very common among some Bru, including sacrifices during pregnancy and child birth, family sacrifices as prayer, petition and thanksgiving, sacrifices of propitiation and recovery to cure illness and diseases, sacrifices for public welfare.<sup>24</sup>

The traditional marriage system among Bru is simple and very much like another tribal of North East India (NEI). Usually in traditional customs and practices, their parent arranged their marriage in which the bridegroom or the brides do not chose for their spouse but their parents choose for them. Love marriage was rare among them in their traditional social system, but today most of them are now liberalize in their social, political as well as religion and culture. Unlike the traditional Hindu social system, there is no dowry system, child marriage is not allowed, widow marriage is permitted and widows are prohibited to wear ornaments before one year is passed after the death of their husbands; widow or widower are forbidden to participate any entertaining and enjoying programme or activity or attending such kinds of activities within one year of the death of their

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 181-189.

spouses.<sup>25</sup> After one year is passed remarriage is allow for widow or widower and monogamy is the present form or practice of the society.

### **Bru Ethnic Uprising**

North East India can be broadly refers as a multicultural society, inhabited by different ethnic groups, belonging to various religion, culture and custom. However, the existence of ethnic sentiment, ethnic consciousness, nepotism, political mobilisation and the tendency of separatism among ethnic groups is one of the major issue and problem in North East India.

Before Lushai Hills was upgraded to Union Territory in 1972, there was hardly any issue with ethnic politics with exception of politics of Lai, Mara and Chakma. After Mizoram attain full fledges state in 1987 the politics of Bru and Hmar became the important issue in Mizo politics because these two tribes began to have their political consciousness, and pressurize the Government of Mizoram by demanding a separate autonomy in line of Mara, Lai and Chakma ADCs. However, the failure of Government of Mizoram to meet their demands resulted in the out broke of violence movement, that further resulted in murder, abduction, arson, ambush in Mizoram. To name some activities, the first activity of the Bru ethnic group was the killing of Lalzawmliana at Damparengpui Tiger Reserve Forest on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1997 which was also the first cause of ethnic conflict between Mizo and Bru in Mizoram. All these activities began worse from 1990s, and different activities of the government may be regarded as the outbreak of violence between people in Mizoram.

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<sup>25</sup> Bru Tripura Vision, *Op Cit.*, & Chitta Ranjan Dev, *Op Cit.*, p. 3.



In the initial stage, there has not been any ill-feeling or problem from the Bru as a tribe as well as there was no restriction on their entry into Mizoram. Even from those who settle in Mizoram during 1940s, there has never been so aggressive voice from them, nor there were any ethnic based political consciousness or communal feeling in Mizoram. But gradually, an increase of Bru population and competition for opportunities among various tribes became a major problem. The political uprising based on their ethnic tribe began from 1990s. Formally the first organization, which stood up for the Bru people is the Reang Democratic Convention Party (RDCP) that was formed on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1990.<sup>26</sup> The formation of RDCP was an important landmark for the Bru because the root cause of different Bru issues today, especially the demand for Autonomous District Council (ADC) started from this event.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1992 the Bru Village Council and Bru Students' Union had a joint meeting at Tuipuibari and passed a resolution that the word '*Riang*' should not be used to identify themselves but '*Bru*' should be used from now on to identify their community.<sup>27</sup> This meeting also passed another resolution in which some of the small Bru villages inside Aizawl District must be group together for better administration and development, and they also made a proposal demanding developmental facilities from the Government of Mizoram.

On 17<sup>th</sup> March, 1992 some of the Bru academician had a convention at Agartala (Tripura) which was attended from different part of India and they formed a group called Bru National Convention of India (BNCI). This organization later visited different Bru villages in Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Manipur

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<sup>26</sup> John C. Lallawmawma, *Riang in Mizoram and their Autonomy Movement* (MZU Seminar paper organized by Dept of Political Science: 2015), pp. 3-4.

<sup>27</sup> "Riang ti tawh lovin Bru", *Mizo Aw* (Jan 28, 1992).

and Assam with an aim of upliftment for their ethnic tribe.<sup>28</sup> This new organization witnessed a warm welcome at every village that they visited from both in Mizoram and outside Mizoram. It was an important landmark for the Bru which gave challenges to most of the educated youth among them to utilize their skill and potential for the development of their ethnic tribe.

On 15<sup>th</sup> June 1993, the Reang Democratic Convention Party (RDCP) announced its intention and demand for Autonomous District Council for Bru under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India that was later revived by another organization known by Bru National Union (BNU). The serious ethnic conflict between the Mizo and Bru began from the formation of the Bru National Union (BNU) in 1994. Later on in 1995, Bru conference was held that passed a resolution deal with the re-enrolment of deleted Bru names from the list of electoral roll.<sup>29</sup> The 1995 Bru Conference also passed a resolution which dealt with the grouping of all small Bru villages into one Bru dominated village.

Again on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September 1997, the Bru National Union (BNU) held its first Conference at Saipuilui Village which was attended by some 400 delegates both from inside and outside Mizoram. This conference addressed issues regarding the development of all Bru people in Mizoram and Tripura. It was attended by all the Village Choudhury or village representatives from Mizoram and Tripura. The Conference again passed a resolution for demanding the creation of a separate Bru Autonomous District Council in the western part of Mizoram. However, the demand was strongly opposed by Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) of Mamit District and later by the whole civil societies of Mizoram. The then State Chief

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<sup>28</sup> "Bru National Convention of India", *Mizo Aw* (Oct 20, 1992).

<sup>29</sup> "Bru Conference", *Vanglaini* (Feb 10, 1995).

Minister Mr Lalthanhawla replied to the Bru demand of Autonomous District Council (ADC) and stated that Reang (Bru) do not inhabit a compact area in Mizoram and as such –

*“...they do not have the legitimacy to raise their voice for an ADC since most of them are aliens”.*<sup>30</sup>

In the same year (i.e. 1995) an armed wing known as the Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF) was formed with an objective to establish and achieve the goal of Bru people. The formation of BNU and its armed wing intensified tension between Mizo and Bru not only inside Mamit District but in the whole of Mizoram and creates feeling of isolation among both the tribes.

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<sup>30</sup> “The Reang refugees”, *Frontline* (Jul 18-31, 1998).

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **A HISTORICAL PROFILE OF MIZO AND BRU IN MAMIT DISTRICT**

There are around 80 villages in Mamit District in which 40 per cent of those villages are a mixed population. A mixed population means there are both a Mizo and Bru in the same villages. The villages where a mixed population is usually located near the Tripura-Mizoram state boundary in which the culture, custom and practices of social life are a diverse one with compare to the other part of Mizoram. Although there are two major types of ethnic group in the region, and before the formation of Reang Democratic Convention Party (RDCP) and Bru National Union (BNU), before the uprising of political consciousness among the Bru there was peace and normalcy in these regions but the situation got change from late 1990s.

The major area of research work critically focuses, first, the relationship between two ethnic groups - Mizo and Bru at Mamit district on the eve of tension and conflict between them. Second, how they cooperate with each other in terms of social, political and economic issues. Third, it also highlights the beginning and phases of conflict between them and the aftermath or effect of ethnic conflict and migration of Bru in neighbouring states and the policies, activities and process of Mizoram Government to repatriate Bru refugee.

#### **Bru Settlement in Mamit District and Merge with Mizo Society**

The exact time and place of Bru settlement in Mamit district as well as in the whole Mizoram is difficult and debateable due to lack of empirical evidence. A narrative told by VL. Ngheta of 65 years old in Zawlnuam village, states that the Bru settled in Mizoram in the early 1930s in which a Chief of Rengdil commanded

his son to establish a new village where his village occupy the land for orange cultivation. Accordingly, the chief's son got the permission to set up new village from the British Commissioner in 1938 and in the same year, with some Chawrei and Bru family, they set up a new village near Rengdil in which there were only about 20 houses in this village. By next year, celebration of the new village was held and named their village as '*Lokhichera*' which means a land of blessing because the land is fertile and all the cultivated crops is very good in this regions. This village is rechristened as '*Zawlnuam*' by the Mizo and is occupied both by the Mizo and Bru.

On that particular year, a Bru cultivator while burning his Jhum/Agricultural field just outside the outskirts of the new village accidentally burn down the whole village. This incident prove that there were some Bru in Mizoram – Tripura hill ranges, their numbers may not very much but they slowly contact the Mizo villages and slowly entering into Mizo society. Furthermore, the narrator claim that there are around 20 Bru houses in Zawlnuam village alone when he became adolescent period which was believed in 1950s and he also said that during this time the Mizo already identify them as '*Tuikuk*' but the Bru call themselves as '*Riang*'.

Another source claims that the Bru were settle in Mizoram from Tripura due to their uprising against the Maharaja of Tripura that took place during 1940s. Some of them were also known to have entered Mizoram directly from Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bangladesh) where numbers of Bru families are still settling today. It was said that in the year 1942 – 1943 there was a religious movement, some say an

armed rebellion of Bru in Tripura led by Ratnamani, an immigrant from Chittagong Hill Tract who declared himself as king and proclaimed independence.

When the leader of the movement grew popular and gained momentum, the Bru leader/chief – Rai got annoyed and jealous of it, and he reported upon Ratnamani's rebellious act of not willing to pay tax to the Maharaja. Since then, Ratnamani had to flee to forest with his followers and soon realizes that they would be arrested for their actions. However, Ratnamani convinced his followers to move eastward for protection. At last, Ratnamani was arrested and was punished to death at the Maharaja's Palace but his followers move to eastward just like their leader suggested it.

After the death of Ratnamani in Tripura, some of his followers during the rebellion went to Jampui Hills (located at Tripura-Mizoram border) and sought the help of K.T. Chawma Sailo, the chief of Sabual village (Now Sabual village is located inside Zawlnuam RD block within Mamit District).<sup>1</sup> Understanding all their problems and miserable conditions of their life, the chief of Sabual village wanted to help them by all possible means. Since then not only the followers of rebellious leader, but also many other Bru sub-tribe left their erstwhile settlement of Tripura and sought a new place in Jampui Hill with its adjoining areas of the then Lushai Hills, Assam and Cachar. This seems to be the beginning of Bru settlement in Mizoram, especially in Mamit District which began from 1940s. Although there are some sources which states that some Bru families are already settled in western part of Mizoram bordering the Chittagong Hills Tract before their settlement in Sabual village.

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<sup>1</sup> Lianhmingthanga & J.V. Hluna, *Riang in Mizoram: Settlement and its Impact in Sangkima's Cross-Border Migration: Mizoram* (Delhi: Shipra Publications, 2004), pp. 36-39.

Another secondary source claim that the Bru people in Mizoram had already settled at Mamit district in 1930s. There were some minor disputes regarding the land distribution between Mizo and Bru for Jhum/Agriculture fields, disputes regarding cultivation of crops within the reserve forests without their chief's permission, disputes regarding crimes between Mizo and Bru people, disputes regarding the settlement of Bru in Mizo villages. There was a numbers of application letters written by the chiefs of different villages requesting permission to create a new village with the Bru, to let the settlement of Bru people in their villages to the Superintendent of the then Lushai Hills. In addition to this, Lalkhuma Sailo of Bunghmun chief sent an application letter to the then Superintendent of Lushai Hills requesting to have Bru families in his village.<sup>2</sup> This application letter was dated on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1936 which proved that the Bru tribe had already settled in Mizoram in the early 1930s.

Before the Bru people leave their home in Mizoram, the average rate of their population is around 10 per cent of the total population in every village of western Mizoram. The percentage is measured by household, not by the real population. After the ethnic tension, the Government of Mizoram initiated the repatriated process which was ended on September 2015; there are only about 3 per cent houses from the total household in every village. Today, in some western villages the Bru are majority but in most of the villages, they are still minority group enjoying their life with the Mizo, Chawrei, Chakma and Ranglong. Though there are many Bru settle in Kolasib and Lawngtlai district after the tension, but most of them still live in Mamit district of Mizoram.

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<sup>2</sup> Letter submitted to the then Superintendent of Lushai Hills by Lalkhuma Sailo of Bunghmun chief. Retrieved from Mizoram State Archives on 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov, 2015.

## **Mizo – Bru Relations before Tension Rise Up**

The ongoing debate of Bru settlement is the major tension in Mizoram. Although, there are tensions and hatred between them but none of them are regarded as ethnic issue because it was only for a short period. Moreover, there are stories about the invasion of Bru villages in Tripura by some Mizo villages during the period of 1980s, but none of them were taken as ethnic issue, it's all ended in a short period. In other words, the Mizo – Bru relation before the tension of 1990s can be classify as Economic – Agriculture, Social Life and Political.

### **Economic- Agriculture Relations**

Though both Mizo and Bru in Mamit District mainly depend on agriculture, the practice of 'sell labour' to other field is very common among them. The Mizo used to employ Bru as manual labour to do all kinds of agricultural works such as, cutting of trees to harvesting paddy in the field, carrying and harvesting paddy in the field and some other works. However, since the Mizo and Bru lives in a mixed village do not work in their respective field alone but together to complete harvesting the agricultural products from the field. As far as the main occupation of the Bru is jhum cultivation and due to their hard work and skilful then increases the chance of employment in any kind of agricultural activities.

Like any other tribe of Mizoram, the Bru use sickle for harvesting paddy and with it they cut the rice plant which are then held and tied with its leaves at the stalk and left elsewhere in the field for drying. After two or three days, depend on the weather, they recollect all the dry bundles of rice and store them for threshing. The method of threshing is done by beating the bundles of rice one by one against the inside wall of a big basket called 'Kalang'. This method and process of



threshing is adopted by the Mizo in the western belt of Mizoram.<sup>3</sup> All this kind of cooperation and adoption of method between each other clearly show that the relation between them before the tension is good in which there was no hatred between them.

Till the end of 1990 there was not much private ownership of land, every village in Mizoram had their own reserve forest for cultivation of crops for one monsoon year. All the reserve forests belonged to the public and the farmers can choose wherever he/she may like for cultivation from the free reserve land. In terms of selecting agricultural land before any ethnic issue arise, the Mizo farmers had the monopoly or preference to choose wherever they like for cultivation. Thereby, the Bru farmers in their villages then choose their agricultural land wherever they like after Mizo farmers selected their land.<sup>4</sup> There were neither disputes nor any problems with the selection of the land between the people whether they belong to Mizo or Bru. This process and norms was practice till the end of 1990. After the ethnic tension almost all the Bru in Mizoram migrated to Tripura and all the available land for cultivation are belong to the Mizo.

People belonging to different ethnic groups enjoy peace, free and secure life in terms of economic and agricultural practices; they were neighbours, friends and close business partners to each other. All this secure life of the society may be due to economic relations between Mizo and Bru, but all of the situation changes after the serious tension between their communities.

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<sup>3</sup> Tribal Research Institute, *Op Cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with VL. Ngheta of Zawlnuam, Mizoram on 15<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2015.

## **Relations in Social Life**

In terms of social relationship, both the Mizo and Bru had a cordial social life prior to the emergence of tension. The Bru are simple and kind hearted, they have immense hospitality and benevolent towards to their guest. For instance, if they have a visitor or guests, fowls or other domestic animals are prepared for food in honour of their guests.<sup>5</sup> However, on a contrary, they are unable to show such kind of hospitality and generosity to their guest because of the poor condition of living in their villages.

When two different kinds of people live together in a close contact of the same village, mixing with one another – the result is that of inter-tribal marriage. Inter-tribal marriage between Mizo and Bru is practiced in some of the villages, mostly in a mixed population villages. Many Bru boys or girls got married with members belonging to other kindred tribes like Chakma, Mizo etc....<sup>6</sup> This kind of inter-marriage somehow gave a new advantages for both the two tribes in which there is a close relationship between them. During the field observation, the researcher witness one Bru lady who married a Mizo man in Zawlnuam village, enjoying a happy life and even their sons and daughters educated outside the state of Mizoram. In many villages, a Mizo man married a Bru women are practices and these couples do not have problems regarding the ethnic issues. But a Mizo women who married a Bru man is very rare, there may be a very few cases in Mamit district.

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<sup>5</sup> Tribal Research Institute, *Op Cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

The 35 respondent during interview comprising of both Mizo and Bru claimed that the social relationship between them before the tension was good in which they enjoy very peaceful and secure life the in western part of Mizoram. Whenever the civil society like YMA call for community services like sweeping the road between their village and neighbouring village, or any other public works etc.... for the benefit of their respective villages, the Bru also took part of it.

Based on the Mizo traditional practices, if there is a deceased in the village, all the man especially the unmarried gentleman voluntarily have to dig the burial ground for the deceased and in this work some of the Bru gentlemen also help the Mizo which in turn increase their relationship status between them. Most of the Mizo respondent, especially from the elder used to say that the Bru wine is stronger and taste good than the Mizo wine in which there is no bar or barrier, nor discrimination in drinking wine with the Bru.

There are three important things as a researcher observe during field interview and empirical evidence, they are – Buisu, Sandai and Saphun. The word Buisu and Sandai are the Bru term while the word ‘Saphun’ is a Mizo term. These three things are practiced by traditional Bru society till today; sometime both the Mizo and Bru enjoy it. But due to poor condition of living, all these ceremonies could not practice as the same with before the tension and conflict between Mizo and Bru. These are important ceremonies in a way of living to make a truce to establish a friendship and close relationship between Mizo and Bru.

Buisu is a festival celebrated by the Bru to please their gods for the blessing of one year for agricultural products, their health and peaceful life in the society.<sup>7</sup> Usually it was held from the end of March till the first week of April every year. Sometimes it lasted for more than one month; there is no fix for its duration but it usually depend on the people's happiness. During this festival, the people made different sacrifices to their gods and Goroiya dance is the main event of this festival, people gathered in the street and most of them made donations in terms of money, domestic animals and agricultural products for public dinner. Before it was celebrated, all the men in the village prepared for this festival, wine, food, animals and all the materials necessary for the festival are collected. Sometimes there are problems and street fights among the drunkards not only between the Bru themselves but also with the Mizo. This festival was held by every Bru villages in Tripura and Mizoram as well as all the Bru people in a mixed population village of Mizoram.

As already mention, the festival was held every year and sometime the Bru people invited some of their Mizo friends to participated in their program, to drink their wine, to eat their food and to dance with them.<sup>8</sup> This festival is an important landmark for relationship between two people, no ethnic problems in terms of religion, social life, political or economic was heard before the tension between Mizo and Bru in Mizoram. When the Mizo in Mamit district participate in the Buisu festival organize by the Bru people, the Mizo were usually welcomed and this increase the level of relations between them. During this festival, both the

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Mr. Persen of Uria Chora, Tripura on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Mr. Biaktluanga of Zawlnuam, Mizoram on 15<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2015.

Mizo and Bru in a mix population village enjoy it without any disputes or hindrances between them.

Sandai is a ceremony to establish friendship between Mizo and Bru, usually it is practiced only by man to strengthen the relationship between Mizo and Bru. The word Sandai literally means '*let us be friend forever*'. In these cases both the Bru and Mizo man invited all their relatives, fix the date for ceremony and brought wine which would be exchanged between them and drink it. At least one domestic animal is necessary to complete the ceremony in which domestic blood (usually pig) is paint to their neck by Okchai (Bru Priest). After that, the meat of domestic animal would be shared to both friends as well as to all their invitees. After the ceremony was completed, the two man become friend for the rest of their life. In many cases, this truce of friendship lasted not only one generation but also till the end of their third generation.

During the field visit, the researcher met one respondent from Kawrtethawveng village whose father made a truce of friendship (sandai) with one Bru man in 1980s. Those Bru families who made Sandai with the Mizo were not afraid to stay in Mizoram even all their relatives leave Mizoram with fear of ethnic violent between Mizo and Bru.<sup>9</sup> However, this kind of cooperation is very rare after the ethnic tension between Mizo and Bru in Mamit District.

Thereby, Sandai shows that the social relation between Mizo and Bru before the tension is very prosperous, in which both Mizo and Bru families had a close relationship. In other words, those Bru families who made a friendship truce (Sandai) with the Mizo before the ethnic issue hardly migrate to Tripura in 1997 as

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with Mr. Chhuan tea of Kawtethawveng, Mizoram on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2015.

well as in 2009 events. Those Bru families still reside in Mizoram and they never face any problems whether it is ethnic issue or any other with the Mizo.

The word Saphun is a Mizo term which means a clan or tribe transformation into another ethnic group or society. It is a ceremony, a ritual which link with religion, custom, tradition, social practices. The system of Saphun is very old in which it was practiced in ancient Judea land of Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Damascus and Jerusalem. According to the Christian Bible, if any tribe or clan wanted to merge with Juda society, if one wanted to live like Juda or behave like them he had to follow all the religious, social and traditional norms of Juda in order to transform himself as a Juda. In fact, he has to follow all Judaism, and he must reject all his birth right about his ethnic norms and traditions. Similarly, according to Mizo traditional practices if anyone belonging to other ethnic groups wanted to merge himself into a Mizo society, he must follow all the necessary norms and ceremony as prescribed by the person/family to which he would merge into.<sup>10</sup> After the completion of Saphun ceremony, he is now likely to be a Mizo or should be considered as a Mizo, he can use a Mizo name as his name as well as for his children and all his next generation would automatically became from a Mizo family.

As the time passes, the norms and practices of Saphun in Mizo society gradually changes in order to the wishes of the performer. According to the modern practices of Mizo society there are some formal ceremonies to complete this ritual. The first one is that both the party, whether it is between Mizo and Bru,

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<sup>10</sup>Mizo Hnam Dan (Mizo Customary Law) 2006 (Mizoram Gazette Extra Ordinary No. Vol. XXXIV Aizawl Wednesday 6.4.2005 Chaitra 16, S.E. 1927 Issue No 66), pp. 20 – 23.

or Mizo and any other ethnic groups had to agree it.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, they fix the date to perform all necessary functions and, thirdly the man who is going to merge himself into Mizo society have to bring a domestic animal for dinner on the fixed date. However, there is no fix in the quantity and its quality of the domestic animal but depends on the will of the performer. By the time they perform the function, both the party invite all their relatives for witnesses and dine with them. After the ceremony was completed one should follow all the religious and social norms, procedure of the Mizo society and he can also inherit the surname to which he was merge into it.

Generally, in the case of Mizo and Bru relation only the Bru usually have an option to merge into a Mizo society, but a Mizo who transform into a Bru society is never heard. This transformation process is very common before the ethnic tension in which there is average of three cases in every sample village. Like Sandai (friendship pact) a Bru Saphun families live a secure and peaceful life even after the ethnic tension broke up between Mizo and Bru. For instance, in 1997 and 2009 issues, these Saphun families hardly migrate and they told their relatives as well as their neighbour that they would not migrate to Tripura because they considered themselves as a Mizo. Even the Mizo in the western Mizoram regarded and treated them as their fellow Mizo. There are no problems between them in terms of ethnic or any other issues because they were now both belong to one ethnic group which is 'Mizo'.

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<sup>11</sup>*ibid.*, pp. 20-22.

## **Religious Relations**

Although there are some minor issues in religious belief and practice among the Mizo and Bru, but they were not much serious problems before the tension. From all the respondent 60% claimed that there are no problems in religion with Mizo and Bru before the ethnic issue rise up, while another 40 percent had no comment on this issue. Five respondents one each from Zawlnuam, Rengdil, Mamit and two from Uria Chora said that there were no problems in religion between Mizo and Bru before the tension. Thereby, they do not have any serious issue in which the Bru perform whatever they wishes to please their gods and the Mizo also made different church ceremony as a Christians. In fact, both the Mizo and Bru practice their respective religious activities according to their will without interfering each other.

Although both ethnic groups live in a religious harmony but two respondent from the Bru community claim that sometime the Mizo miscreants and some drunkards seems to destroy their ritual places, and sometime when a Bru people made some sacrifices to their gods like foods, milk etc.... these Mizo drunkards and miscreants seize those sacrifices and ate them. But due to all these activities there were no further problems between Mizo and Bru, sometime some of the Bru were angered to the Mizo for such kind of activities but it did not last long.

It was the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram (Synod) who sent for the first time an Evangelist of Thangzawna, Lalhleia and Ronghilhlova in 1949 to preach the Gospel among the Bru.<sup>12</sup> Through the missionaries, the Bru people began to learn the

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<sup>12</sup> Road Map I (Aizawl, Government of Mizoram: Dept of Home, 2009), p-2.



social life as well as the religious life of Mizo people and the educated youth among the Bru rise up for the development and try to uplift their people.

According to one Bru gentleman in Mamit who converted into Christian and elected as Kohhran Upa (Church elder) and ordain such designation in 1991 that there were no problems with the Mizo and Bru religion. There are also many evangelists among the Bru community whose main aim was to abolish the Bru traditional religious belief system and to convert all Bru community into Christianity by peaceful and gradual means but not by force and violence. All those Bru preachers of Christianity and evangelists strengthen the ethnic relationship between Mizo and Bru in the whole Mizoram. But due to tension and migration there are not much new preachers of Christianity among the Bru people because all their lives and society change by the 1997 incident.

Thereby, we can make an inference that the tension and conflict between Mizo and Bru has undermined Bru consciousness towards Christianity. However, 80% of Bru community in Mizoram are Christian.<sup>13</sup> Their numbers are likely to increase in the future because those Bru villages in Tripura – Mizoram border accepted to introduce Christianity for their sons and daughters, their village head also reserve land for construction of Church but most of the elders in these villages still belief in their traditional practices. It is claim by their elders that they are now belong to Hinduism and it will be likely for the rest of their live but their sons and daughters should embrace Christianity and that is why they welcome Christianity in their village.<sup>14</sup> Although majority of the elders practice Hinduism, however, it is

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<sup>13</sup>Interview with Mr. Berama of Mamit, Mizoram on 13<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2015.

<sup>14</sup>Interview with Mr. Persen of Uria Chora, Tripura on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2015.

believe that most of new generation of Bru would be Christianised due to tremendous influence of Christian Missionaries.

### **Relation in Political Issues**

Not only Mamit district but also in Lunglei and Kolasib district, a numbers of Bru are enjoying a peaceful life before the outbreak of 1997 incident. Since the Bru population plays a pivotal role in winning MLA election in some constituencies like Kawrthah, Zawlnuam and Phuldungsei etc. Different political parties compete and try to use Bru populations as a vote-bank during election. During field observation, an intellectual from Bru community stated that if the Bru did not migrated to Tripura with fear of ethnic violent with the Mizo, by the 2013 Assembly election, they would likely have an elected Bru MLA in Mizoram Legislative Assembly. In fact, the Bru in Mizoram are almost in a position of decision making process but unfortunately migration changes their socio-political situation.

The different organization, convention, party and association formed by Bru community from 1990s have tremendously changed the political, social and economic conditions as well as the relations between Mizo and Bru not only in Mamit district, but also in Mizoram as a whole. The tension and conflict between them is clearly the outcome of Bru political consciousness in Mizoram, but the immediate causes of conflict can be regarded as the killing of one Mizoram Forest Guard/Game watcher in 1997. The year 2005 marked an important solution to the Mizo-Bru problems in which a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Bru underground movement and the Government of Mizoram but the

situation got worse, tension and conflict refresh in 2009 with the killing of one Mizo boy.

Western Mizoram was once a peaceful and secure society in which all ethnic groups enjoy freedom and fraternity. Before there was any ethnic tension, every villages of Mamit District adopted Village Council (VC) administration which functions till today, except in Aizawl Municipal Council. However, to establish a strong relationship between Mizo and Bru, the Village Council member of western Villages adopted a policy of inclusive technique in which there was at least one Bru member representative in the VC of every village.<sup>15</sup> In some cases when there were no Bru to represent their community in the Village Council election, the elected Mizo member appointed one Bru member to represent their whole community in the Council. This inclusive policy was not practiced in every village but it was introduced in most of the western villages and generally it depends on the wishes of the village head/VCs. This inclusive policy strengthens the relationship between Mizo and Bru inside Mamit district in which the Bru feel themselves as they are in a position of the decision making process, but it was only practicable before the out broke of ethnic tension between them.

When the Reang Democratic Convention Party (RDCP) and Bru National Union (BNU) was form in 1990 and 1994 respectively. This main aim of this organization was the creation of a separate autonomous council for Bru in the western belt of Mizoram. However, the Government of Mizoram responded stroking off 17,000 Bru names from voters list in 1997 to prevent any political

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<sup>15</sup>Interview with Mr. F Rokima of Zawlnuam, Mizoram on 16<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015.

voice made by the Bru inside Mizoram.<sup>16</sup> But prior to this activity the BNU had already made a resolution which demanded the re-enrolment of Bru in voter list whose name are being deleted from the list of Mizoram Electoral Roll in 1995.<sup>17</sup>

Firstly, RDCP attempted to demand Autonomous District Council on 1990 and when BNU had its first Conference at Saipuilui Village in 1997, the attempt made by their predecessor (RDCP) was then passed as a resolution. This resolution can be regarded as the beginning of real tension between Mizo and Bru in Mizoram as a whole because the resolution demanding Autonomous District Council for Bru was strongly opposed by MZP, MHIP and YMA. The formation of Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF), an armed wing of Bru on the same year made the situation got worse because this organization is purely an armed wing whose main aim is to achieve the demand made by the BNU by means of violence activities.

### **Mizo – Bru Ethnic Phases of Tensions and Conflict**

As already stated above, the first action which triggered tension between Mizo and Bru was the formation of Reang Democratic Convention Party (RDCP) and Bru National Union (BNU) which demanded Autonomous District Council (ADC) in western part of Mizoram and the revision of list of electoral roll in 1994-95 by the Government of Mizoram that apparently deleted many Bru names who later claimed as they were the original inhabitant of Mizoram. In the earlier phases of tension, Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) and Young Mizo Association (YMA) sharply reacted against the demand made by the Bru, especially the MZP in replying to the BNU demand stated that –

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<sup>16</sup>Jagdamba Mall, *The ethnic cleansing of Hindu Reangs in Christian Mizoram* (Lokayat: 2011).

<sup>17</sup>"Bru Conference", *Vanglaini* (Feb 10, 1995).

*“If the Reangs wanted to divide or disintegrate Mizoram further, it would be better that they go away. The resolution demanding Autonomous District Council (ADC) could not be accepted by MZP. If the Reang go ahead with their plan, the MZP was ready to fight against such a demand. Mizoram is the only land Mizos have and it could not be lost to foreigners or other communities”.*<sup>18</sup>

It was the MZP of Mamit who first, officially reacted against BNU demand in their meeting at Rengdil village on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 1997. Even before the incident of 21<sup>st</sup> October 1997, numbers of Bru had already migrated to Tripura which clearly show that there was already a movement among the Bru.<sup>19</sup> But the first ever recorded news of Bru migration from Mizoram to Tripura was on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1997 which was just after a meeting of MZP Mamit District held at Rengdil.

It was reported that there are around 200 members of Bru community who fled their homes at Rengdil on 15<sup>th</sup> October and the Government of Mizoram and Government of Tripura had talks on this issue at Damcherra (Tripura) in which the Government of Mizoram had agreed to take back all the 300 refugees from 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1997.<sup>20</sup> The main causes of this migration was not known, even the news reported that it may be the strong statement made by the MZP of Mamit headquarter against the demand made by the BNU on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1997. But unexpectedly, on 23<sup>rd</sup> October news regarding the killing of Lalzawmliana, an employee of Mizoram Forest Department was heard all over Mizoram which later identified that the incident was on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1997 at Damparengpui Tiger Reserve Forest.

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<sup>18</sup> Jayanta Bhattacharya, Report: Ramification of Conflicts in Tripura and Mizoram (Refugee Watch 30 & 40 June and December: 2012), p.57.

<sup>19</sup> Hrangchal, *Op Cit.*, pp.5-7.

<sup>20</sup> “Mizoram agrees to take back Reang refugees their homes”, *Highlander* (Oct21, 1997).

So, the Government decision to take back 300 Bru refugees could not be implemented because of this situation. Two other persons who associate Lalzawmliana namely – Ngaihawma and Jutendro were also missing, and on the 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1997 the Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA) President T. Sangkunga and over a hundred volunteers leave for Mamit district to search the missing two persons.<sup>21</sup> On the same day it was identified that the new arm wing, Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF) was responsible for the killing of Lalzawmliana. Later it was realized that this newly organization was formed on the same time with BNU. Due to this incident some angry Mizo burnt down some Bru houses at different village in Mamit district and the news reported as ethnic clash between Mizo and Bru.

After serious tension and conflict was ease for a little, the Government of Mizoram and Tripura tried to solve the problems of Bru in which the then Home Minister of Mizoram Mr. Liansuama visited North Tripura and carry out a talks with his counterpart in Tripura Mr. Somar Chowdhury in Tripura. During this visit, the Reang Refugees Committee (RRC) submitted their demands to the Home Minister and those demand contain the enrolment of Bru in the electoral roll, provision of security and relief to the people affected by the recent incident, and the setting up of Autonomous District Council for the Bru.

The decision regarding the demand of Reang Refugees Committee (RRC) was taken on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 1997 at the Cabinet Meeting in Aizawl headed by the officiating/in charge of Chief Minister Mr. J. Lalsangzuala in which the Government of Mizoram rejected all the demand of Reang Refugees Committee

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<sup>21</sup> "Lalzawmliana buried in Aizawl", *Highlander* (Oct24, 1997).

(RRC) except security and relief to the people affected by the recent incident which will be taken up for consideration in the phase manner.<sup>22</sup> It was clear that some Mizo miscreant threatened the Bru families in Mamit district after the 21<sup>st</sup> October incident and burnt down some of their houses. In this connection the Police detained 8 persons of Kawrtethawveng for further questioning.

In 1998, many incidents like arson, kidnapping, extortion and ambush took place within Mamit district but fortunately, there was no homicide activity till 2009. The BNLF was popularly accused of responsible for committing many crimes on several occasions like extortion of money from 2 Mizo women on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1998; attack on Mizoram police near Tuipuibari on 27<sup>th</sup> March, 1997; issuance of notice to pay tax which was addressed to VCP Zawlnuam; issued of quit Mizoram notice to their own community etc.<sup>23</sup> There are also many allegations made by the Bru against Mizo in which the Mizo police personnel together with YMA and MZP members raped 27 Bru women, killed 35 Bru, kidnapped 8 Bru and destroyed 28 Temples/Mandirs. But all of these allegations were found false that the Home Minister said that it was investigated upon and there was no such kind of incident. The then State Chief Minister Lalthanhawla on July 1998 said that the Bru do not have any Temple or Mandir as claimed by them in which it is impossible to destroy 28 Temples/Mandirs; but some houses were burnt by the Mizo youth in retaliation for the killing of Lalzawmliana in which the police took action and arrested 39 person and registered cases.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> "Mizoram Reject Reang Demands", *Highlander* (Nov 4, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> "3001 Tuikuk returned but to go back to Tripura", *Highlander* (July 23, 1998).

<sup>24</sup> "Reangs should co-exist with other citizens", *Frontline* (July 18-31, 1998).

## **New Government and New Initiative**

By the year 1999, the new government of Mizoram came up with the new method, solution and initiatives to solve the Bru problem in Mizoram. Although the Congress government headed by Mr. Lalthanhawla had a serious talks with the Bru leaders but none of them could solve their problems. The then Mizo National Front (MNF) Home Minister Mr. Tawnluia came up with the news on August 1999 that all the Bru illegal infiltrator/migration whose name had wrongly been enrolled as voters have now been corrected and deleted from electoral rolls. The new government not only deals with the illegal infiltrators but also taken care of the original residents of Mizoram. This government also made a statement which welcomed the returned of Bru families whose names are enrolled as legitimate voters in Mizoram.<sup>25</sup>

On the eve of Parliamentary elections in Mizoram in 1998 it was said that there are around 2493 Bru voters who left their homes in Mizoram and there are only 923 Bru voters in Mizoram who have not left Mizoram. As for those who left Mizoram – their names were deleted from electoral rolls as per the direction issued by the Election Commission of India.<sup>26</sup> Although before the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1997 incident it was said that the Government of Mizoram deleted as much as 17,000 Bru names from voter list of Mizoram, but the delete of 2493 Bru voters is the first official deleted of voters from the electoral rolls in Mizoram. It is already mentioned that in 1995 the BNU had already demanded the re-enrolment of Bru names in electoral roll which made it clear that the direction made by Election Commission of India in 1999 to remove migrated Bru names from the list of

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<sup>25</sup> "Mizoram Reangs who are in Tripura refuge camps are welcome to returned", *Highlander* (Aug 27, 1999).

<sup>26</sup> "Names of Reang Voters who left Mizoram are deleted from E/roll", *Highlander* (Sep 14, 1999).



electoral roll was not the first time which deleted Bru names in voter list. The Lok Sabha election of 1999 was boycotted at Damchhora on Tripura – Mizoram border by those Bru whose names were deleted from the electoral roll of Mizoram and the Bru submitted a memorandum to Governor of Tripura as well as to the Presiding Officer at Kanmun Polling Station demanding the re-enrolment of Bru names in the old list of electoral rolls.<sup>27</sup>

From 1997 to 2000 there were a lot of BNLF activities which include armed robbery, abduction, ambush, extortion of money etc. To deal with all this problems and insecurity in Mizoram the Government took serious initiatives from 2000s and held different talks with the Bru leaders. The first round of talks started on November 1997 between the Government of Mizoram and Reang Refuge Committee (RRC) which did not produce much of the positive actions/impact for both parties. The second round of talks held at Aizawl on August 1998 was also flop because the Bru leaders demanded a political status while the Government of Mizoram insisted that the purpose of talks was to discuss about the returned of Bru to Mizoram.

By the year 2000, the BNLF emerged as the representatives of Bru community who held talks with the Government of Mizoram and on February 2002 the third round of talks between them was held at Aizawl. In this third meeting between BNLF and Government of Mizoram a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was presented by Government of Mizoram for discussion. The BNLF who presented their 10 points demand for consideration in the on-going talks said that the draft MoU will be examined and studied by the BNLF high

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<sup>27</sup> "1198 Reang voters boycott the 13<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha polls", *Highlander* (Sep 27, 1999).

command.<sup>28</sup> This third talk is the beginning of peace settlement between Mizo and Bru.

The fifth round of talks was held on May 2002 in which three representatives of Bru Welfare Association of Mizoram attended the meeting and in this talk the Government of Mizoram insisted that the repatriation of Bru from six relief camps could not be implemented until and unless the BNLF lays down arms and eschews violence activities inside Mizoram.<sup>29</sup> In the meantime the Government of Mizoram told the BNLF leaders that they are not ready and willing to set up a separate either Autonomous Council for Bru community or the Bru Area Development Council in Mizoram.

Different talks, meetings and dialogues were held between Government of Mizoram and BNLF leaders in which the final stage of talks was held on April 26<sup>th</sup> 2005 meeting between Government of Mizoram and BNLF was held in which the final draft of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between them. The MoU was signed on behalf of Mizoram by the then Chief Secretary Mr. H.V. Lalringa and Home Secretary Mr. C. Ropianga; from the BNLF it was signed by Mr. Surjyamani, President of BNLF and Mr. Solomon Prophul Ushoy, the General Secretary of BNLF. The MoU is expected to bring out peace and harmony between Mizo and Bru not only inside Mamit District but also in the whole area of Mizoram. It was also expected to pave the way for the rehabilitation and formal repatriation of Bru families who have fled to North Tripura due to ethnic tension and violence in Mamit District from 1997.

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<sup>28</sup> "Govt – BNLF talks held in Aizawl", *Highlander* (Feb 5, 2002).

<sup>29</sup> "Mizoram Govt – BNLF talks in Aizawl today", *Highlander* (May 23, 2002).

The MoU signed between these two parties mainly include repatriation of Bru refugees in Tripura, amnesty to all BNLF cadres in Mizoram and in neighbouring states, to change the nomenclature 'Reang' to 'Bru' in the Schedule Tribe list of Mizoram and lay down all arms and ammunition by the BNLF to the Government of Mizoram etc. After the signing of MoU both the Government of Mizoram and BNLF took their respective part according to their agreement which was enshrined in the MoU but there are numbers of Bru in the relief camps at Tripura who were unsatisfied with the agreement made by the BNLF as well as the actions taken by the Government of Mizoram under the plan. Those who do not satisfy with MoU agreement in the Camps organize another militant outfit group known as Bru Liberation Front of Mizoram (BLFM) in 2002. The newly organization was formed when the Government of Mizoram and the BNLF were on their way for the second round of talks. Many cadres who did not willing to make agreement with the Government of Mizoram left the BNLF.<sup>30</sup> This new arm wing again involves in abduction, killing and violence activities mainly inside Mamit District.

Meanwhile the erstwhile member of BNLF urged the State Government to repatriate their families as soon as possible from the Tripura Camps because the BLFM cadres threatened to harm them. The former General Secretary of the erstwhile BNLF Mr. Solomon Prophul Ushoy expressed his idea that –

*“We are worried about our family. On the August 4, we received an extortion letter from the BLFM demanding Rs 5 lakh. Since we have no money to give to them, we are afraid these people would take action against our family members*

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<sup>30</sup>Lalthakima, *Op Cit.*, p. 179.

*most of whom are still in Tripura in refugee camps under the atmosphere of threats”.*<sup>31</sup>

The BLFM and other minor factional groups expressed their ambitions that their main aim was not to achieve violence or harassed the government but to get the same treatment as the government recently treated the BNLF with a warm welcome.

Accordingly, Government of Mizoram sent delegations to held talks with these factional groups and by 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2006 the Bru Liberation Front of Mizoram (BLFM) surrendered their arms and all their cadres to Mizoram Government at Naisingpara Camp. The formal surrender ceremony was held at Tuipuibari and Damparengpui on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2006 in which 798 members of Bru Liberation Front of Mizoram (BLFM) surrendered to the Government.<sup>32</sup> Out of 798 surrendered rebels, 397 are encamped at Damparengpui and the rest are accommodated at Sidon and Tuipuibari villages. The state Government gave Rs 40,000/- to each of the rebel along with one year free ration, plus compensation for each of the surrendered weapon.

Although there was a new Bru militant group but there was hardly any violence activities as expected by many people. However, on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2009, the murdered of Zartzokima of 18 year old boy was killed by unidentified criminals at Bungthuam village which triggered the discontentment of many Mizo youth in Mamit district against the Bru community. This incident refreshes the ethnic tension and conflict between the two ethnic groups who had established peace and

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<sup>31</sup>“Kidnap drama runs into complications”, *Highlander* (Aug 23, 2005).

<sup>32</sup>“HM to formally welcome home-coming BNLF rebels”, *Highlander* (Oct 26, 2006).

normal life in Bru inhabited areas by the signing of MoU on 2005. Due to this incident at Bungthuam village a numbers of Bru houses were destroyed which compelled them to fresh migration to Tripura and Assam; as much as around 700 houses were burned because of the actions taken by Mizo youth.<sup>33</sup> It was believed that another arm wing called Bru National Army was responsible for the incident at Bungthuam village that was why many Mizo of Mamit district react strongly against the Bru community.

In the meantime, the Government of Mizoram following the agreement of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2005 with the BNLF decided to initiate the formal repatriation and the first task of repatriation which is the preparation of the so call 'Road Map' was complete in 2009. Although there are minor issue regarding repatriation which already started from the very beginning in 1997, but a serious and formal repatriation was only initiate by the Government of Mizoram in 2009.

Thereby, to address the displaced persons problem in Tripura a Mizoram Bru Displaced Peoples Forum (MBDPF) was established in around 2008 with Elvis Chorkhy as its President, A. Sawibunga as its General Secretary. Under the guidance and initiatives of the MBDPF, a series of bilateral as well as tripartite talks was held for the repatriation of the displaced Bru in Tripura.<sup>34</sup> But unfortunately, the incident at Bungthuam village altered the situation again in which there was discontentment among the Mizo civil societies against the Government of Mizoram. The Mizo NGOs' Coordination Committee comprising

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<sup>33</sup>Jayanta Bhattacharya, *Op Cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>34</sup>Dr. Ruma Bhattacharya, *Controversial Bru Issue: Brus of Mizoram in Tripura (1997-2010)* (New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House: 2011), pp. 78-81.

of Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZIP), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) and Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP) decided to oppose the repatriation and said –

*“Refugees should not be taken back unless and until Brus shun violence”.*<sup>35</sup>

It is the civil society who gives direction to the Government in terms of repatriation and resettlement of Bru in Mizoram.

Till today, the problems between Mizo and Bru is not totally fixed in which there are still abduction and extortion of money, threatened of the villagers with violence by some factional groups of Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF). In the first half of April 2013 Bru National Liberation Front (Joinarama faction) intimidated Mizo villages in Hailakandi District viz., Cachar Zion, B. Tlangnuam, Hachhek, Teltlang, Kahrawt and Tlangpui villages giving letter to each family demanding Rs 1000/- each from them. Besides this, the militant group also verbally talks to each village headman over the phone telling them to keep record of which family pays and which not.<sup>36</sup> All these issues increase tension and insecurity between Mizo and Bru, especially for the villagers who settle in the Bru inhabited areas inside Mamit District.

### **Phases of Migration and Repatriation Issues**

As already mentioned above, the main causes of Bru migration to Tripura was ethnic tension and the fear of ethnic violence between them and the Mizo. There are two hypotheses which deal with the reason of migration in 1997 in

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<sup>35</sup> “Fresh Exodus Deepens Bru Crisis”, *The Sentinel* (Nov 19, 2009).

<sup>36</sup> “Bru militant group demands money from Mizo villagers”, *The Mizoram Post* (April 29, 2013).

which – the Bru leaders visit some of the Bru inhabited villages and told them to leave Mizoram so that they could employ violence means to pursue their goal which is the setting up of Autonomous Council under the Sixth Schedule for Bru.<sup>37</sup> It was also the demand of the Bru National Union (BNU) conference at Saipuilui Village on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September 1997, that was strongly opposed by MZP of Mamit District in their meeting at Rengdil on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1997. The MZP meeting threatened many Bru families at Rengdil village in which on the next day 15<sup>th</sup> October the first ever Bru migration in Mizoram due to ethnic tension was started, over 200 Bru comprising of 87 families fled their home to North Tripura where they expected to have shelter and security.<sup>38</sup>

There are many sources and materials available regarding the numbers of Bru displaced persons in Tripura in 1997 and 2009, but all the sources mentioned different numbers. Some said that the numbers of Bru migration following the ethnic conflict in 1997 was about 35,900; some said that it cross 37,000 and none of them are properly repatriated till 2009. But the fact is that there are numbers of families who fled to Tripura and some of those families also moved back to Mizoram with or without the help of Mizoram Government but another group of families fled again in 2009 due to Bungthuam village incident. The following paragraph will mention the facts and figures of Bru migration from 1997 and their repatriation from 1998 till 2015.

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<sup>37</sup>“Govt says Tuikuk must withdraw false allegations against Mizos”, *Highlander* (July 23, 1998) & Hrangchal, *Op Cit.*, pp. 1-4 & Lalthakima, *Op Cit.*, pp. 170-173.

<sup>38</sup> “Over 250 Reangs fled Mizoram”, *Highlander* (Oct 21, 1997).

The first migration which led to fled over 200 Mizoram Bru to Tripura was the first ever record/news of Bru migration from Mizoram in the year 1997. In the initial stage, they are not identified as ‘refugee’ because it could not be considered as a serious ethnic clash between Mizo and Bru, except Rengdil resolution passed by MZP of Mami District. The incident was then announced on All India Radio, Shillong as *‘Violence between ethnic groups which forced 300 Brus to take shelter at Khedacherra’*.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile the Government of Mizoram agreed to take back all the displaced Bru from Tripura. This was the first attempt to repatriate the Bru and this decision was taken at the official meeting of both Mizoram and Tripura Governments at Damcherra. All 300 displaced Bru are expected to return to their home by 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1997.<sup>40</sup>

Following the decision taken by the Government about 30 members of Bru did returned to their home from Tripura, but unexpected news about the murder of Lalzawmliana altered the process of repatriation. When the news came up, Mizo youths from different villages mainly consisting from Rawpuichhip, Dampui, West Phaileng, Bungmun, Serhmun, Kawrtethawveng, Tuidam, Kawrthah and Rengdil met together at Tuipuibari and passed a resolution that –

*‘All illegal settlers of Chakmas and Brus should leave Mizoram within one week in general and those within Tuipuibari areas within twenty four hours in particular’*.<sup>41</sup>

Not only this resolution but also the actions taken by the Central YMA to search the two missing persons who associate Lalzawmliana has intensified the numbers

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<sup>39</sup>Lalthakima, *Op Cit.*, p. 172.

<sup>40</sup>“Mizoram agrees to take back Reang refugees their homes”, *Highlander* (Oct 21, 1997).

<sup>41</sup>Lalthakima, *Op Cit.*, p. 172.



of migration to Tripura. According to different sources, the displaced Bru in Tripura crossed 8113 by 1997 incident.<sup>42</sup>

Meanwhile, the then Home Minister of Mizoram Mr. Liansuama and his counterpart in Tripura Minister Mr. Samar Chowdhury met on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1997 at Vanghmun (North Tripura) to discuss the process of repatriation. Therefore, they arrived at a proposal for Bru repatriation from Tripura which would begin from 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1997.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, about 500 people have so far been repatriated on 3<sup>rd</sup> November and more people are scheduled to be repatriated on the next day. This is the first official repatriation undertaken by the Government of Mizoram and Tripura in which the Government ensure security, free ration and rehabilitation to those families who were repatriated. One of the hypotheses seem to be true from the viewpoint of the general public and the Cabinet Ministers regarding the exodus and migration of Bru from Mizoram to North Tripura were engineered by certain few individuals who have misguided the people and frightened them into fleeing their homes.<sup>44</sup>

By 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1997 the total number of Bru who moved back to their home from Tripura was 595 families comprising of 2375 members in all when the Government call off the process of repatriation, more than 3000 have decided not to come back to Mizoram at present situation.<sup>45</sup> For those who returned to their Mizoram, the Government of Mizoram grouped them into four zones and each zone has been placed under the charge of a gazette Police Officer for their safety and security as well as for their local administration. Due to the unstable and

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<sup>42</sup>"Repatriation of Reang refugees", *Highlander* (Nov 4, 1997).

<sup>43</sup>"Reang refugees to return to home", *Highlander* (Nov 3, 1997).

<sup>44</sup>"Reang repatriation process go slow", *Highlander* (Nov 6, 1997).

<sup>45</sup>"595 Reang families returned home", *Highlander* (Nov 13, 1997).

insecure condition of Mamit District because of the activities taken by BNLF, many Bru families who moved back to Mizoram again fled their home. As on July 1998, the Home Minister claimed that as many as 3001 Bru have so far returned to Mizoram and the government provide them free ration for two weeks, Rs 1000/- to each person for rehabilitation but most of them again decided to move back to Tripura.<sup>46</sup>

As already mentioned, the Government of Mizoram and Bru leaders, militant outfit especially BNLF and later BLFM had different talks from 2000s to ensure peace and normalcy, as well as to resume the repatriation process. During these talks 2000-2005, different Bru militant outfit was formed due to their dissatisfaction with Mizoram Government. To name some, the Bru National Army, Bru Liberation Front of Mizoram and many minor factional groups was form to pursue their interest. As far as the condition in not fixed yet, there are still some families who re-migrated to Tripura and their number had crossed about 35000 members in seven camps – Naisingpara, Ashapara, Hazacherra, Kaskaopara, Khakchangpara, Hamsapara, and Kaskau camp. To help the government in terms of the process of repatriation Mizoram Bru Displaced People Forum (MBDFR) and Bru Welfare Association of Mizoram (BWAM) was formed by some Bru educated leaders. Due to the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Government of Mizoram and BNLF in 2005 as well as BLFM in 2006, the Government ensures to initiate the repatriation as soon as possible with free rations, security and rehabilitations.

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<sup>46</sup>“3001 Tuikuk returned but to go back to Tripura”, *Highlander* (July 23, 1998).

Meanwhile, much of these peace process and normalcy have been complicated due to intense involvement of civil society. But when the Government of Mizoram was on the eve of hold peace with the BNLF and issues regarding repatriation and signing of MoU was arise, another problem appeared from the civil societies and on 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2005 major NGOs of Mizoram had a joint meeting which critically reviewed the Government's decision to repatriate Bru people from Tripura. The joint meeting of NGOs comprises of YMA, MHIP, MUP and MZP, it was hosted by Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA) at their hall in Tuikhuahtlang, Aizawl. The meeting came up with a few suggestions to be forwarded to the State Government which include –

1. Mizo families in Sakhan hill range (Tripura) who have been displaced by the Bru militants should be treated as refugees by the Mizoram State Government with accompanying benefits as are being admissible to Bru refugees.
2. Proper identification of Bru of Mizoram origin from amongst the inmates of Tripura camps for actual repatriation should be done on priority basis.
3. Suitable places for location of Bru families in Mizoram should be made prior to their repatriation and that repatriated Bru families should be encouraged to live with other residents of Mizoram and not in a compact area as may be carved out for Bru people and.

4. The 1995 voters' list should be used for identifying where or not the person being repatriated from Tripura is a proper resident of Mizoram.<sup>47</sup>

In the initial stage of implementing MoU the Government of Mizoram intended to place 500 Bru families at Tuipuibari, Damparengpui, Tuirum, Bungmun and Rengdil villages, 300 families will be placed at Thaidawr and Zamuang village while Tumpanglui village accommodate 400 families. The government's decision and intention was opposed by the Joint NGOs of the State and again on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2006 the Joint NGOs of Mizoram drafted a memorandum and submitted to the Chief Minister of the State. The memorandum further expressed that –

*“The State government intends to group the Brus of not less than 300 families in one village according to the wishes of the Brus. However, this can cause demographic imbalances and we are strongly against this as we feel that this can jeopardise the security of Mizo people and the peace of the state as a whole”<sup>48</sup>.*

Furthermore, the NGOs demanded that the Bru should not be repatriated until and unless the Bru militants stop violence activities inside Mizoram. They made it clear that –

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<sup>47</sup>“Major state-level NGOs review Bru issues”, *Highlander* (April 6, 2005).

<sup>48</sup>“Govt-NGOs clash over Bru repatriation”, *Highlander* (Jan 30, 2006).

*“Unless the Bru Liberation Front of Mizoram stop terrorist activities like kidnapping and extortion of money inside Mizoram repatriation of Brus would only mean we are taking back underground militants”<sup>49</sup>.*

According to the suggestions made by the Joint NGOs of Mizoram, the State Government started implementing the MoU and the first road map for repatriation was prepared and complete in 2009, but due to the incident at Bungthum village the repatriation could not be proceed because of the protest against the repatriation made by the Joint NGOs of Mizoram. The Joint NGOs stated that if the government goes ahead with their plan of repatriation, they should use 1995 electoral roll as to identify the original/genuine settlers of Mizoram so that only the legitimate voters of Mizoram could be repatriated. As per the suggestions made by the NGOs, the Government of Mizoram and MBDPF work together to identify the genuine citizens of Mizoram but later the process of repatriation made another problem.

By the 2009 Bungthum incident about 5500 displaced Bru tribal took shelter afresh in adjacent North Tripura, but this entire displaced tribal returned to Mizoram on May 2010 following official assurance of security by the Government of Mizoram.<sup>50</sup> Anyway, formal repatriation begun from 2010 in which the Government of Mizoram repatriated the displaced Bru in Tripura to Mamit and Kolasib District. This repatriation is the outcome of MoU signed in 2005, the process is divided into batch/phase wise in which the 1<sup>st</sup> batch was started from November 2010 till it reach the 6<sup>th</sup> batch on June 2014. The latest batch which is 7<sup>th</sup> batch was begun from June 2015 and end on September 2015. The following

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<sup>49</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>50</sup>Jayanta Bhattacharya, *Op Cit.*

table will show the detailed repatriation, how many members, adult, minor and families have been returned so far.

**Table 1.1**  
**Number of Bru Repatriated in Mamit District till 2015.**

Sl. No.	Batch Wise	No. of families	Adult	Minor	Total No of Population
1	1 <sup>st</sup> Batch (2 <sup>nd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> Nov, 2010)	53	215	62	277
2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Batch (19 <sup>th</sup> Nov, 2010)	48	158	59	217
3	Self-repatriated (between 20 <sup>th</sup> Nov, 2010 – 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan, 2011)	221	750	311	1061
4	Self-repatriated (between 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan – 28 <sup>th</sup> Feb, 2011)	60	187	103	290
5	3 <sup>rd</sup> Batch (12 <sup>th</sup> Apr – 19 <sup>th</sup> May, 2011)	280	1155	445	1600
6	Self-repatriated (between 20 <sup>th</sup> Feb – 22 <sup>nd</sup> June, 2011)	137	526	148	674
7	Self-repatriated (between June, 2011 – March, 2012)	134	565	175	740
8	4 <sup>th</sup> Batch (26 <sup>th</sup> Apr – 7 <sup>th</sup> May, 2012)	7	28	13	41
9	5 <sup>th</sup> Batch (30 <sup>th</sup> Sep – 9 <sup>th</sup> Oct, 2013)	103	438	207	645
10	6 <sup>th</sup> Batch (17 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> June, 2014)	197	698	324	1022
11	Self-repatriated (between March, 2012 – 17 <sup>th</sup> June, 2014)	69	301	97	398
12	Self-repatriated (after 6 <sup>th</sup> Batch)	249	917	356	1273
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1558</b>	<b>5938</b>	<b>2300</b>	<b>8238</b>

Source: Government of Mizoram, Home Department (retrieved on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2015)

These are not the only repatriated families in Mizoram, but there are around 8573 members only resettled in Kolasib district till May 2015. The overall repatriated members till May 2015 which is the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> batch repatriation is 16811, besides the government had already begun the 7<sup>th</sup> phase/batch of repatriation from June 2015. Now, there are two types of repatriation – formal and self-repatriation; the former consist of those displaced persons of the Tripura relief camps who are willing to return to Mizoram with the help of Government in terms of transportation, facilitation and security in their way to Mizoram. This process had somehow faced different problems in which some Bru leaders in the camps

persuade their people who already decided to return to Mizoram, sometime they threatened those people and sometime they block the road to Mizoram in which the government provide vehicle for repatriation are on their way to home.<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, the self-repatriation means those families or persons in the camps who are willing to return to Mizoram and those who are selected by the Government of Mizoram secretly sneak out from the camps without the knowledge of their camp leaders so that they could return to Mizoram safely without any disturbances from their leaders. These self-repatriated families later report to Government authorities to claim the rehabilitation and assistance of Rs 85000/-to each repatriated family and for the allotment to their respective villages.

The following table show a detail process and number of repatriated family in Kolasib district. This repatriation is retrieved from the Government of Mizoram which contains numbers of Bru repatriated families from the first batch of repatriation till the end of the last repatriation. The last repatriation was called off by the Government of Mizoram on September, 2015 in which no single person was reported for identification. Further direction regarding the Bru repatriation and assistance are still going which would be issued by the Central Government.

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<sup>51</sup>Adam Halliday, Close to 500 Bru families return to Mizoram on their own from Tripura relief camps (The Indian Express: 2015).

**Table 1.2**

**Number of Bru Repatriated in Kolasib District till 2015**

<b>Method/Style of Repatriation</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Detail No. of Population</b>	
Self-Repatriated	03.01.2011 – 20.12.2012	No. of family	15
		No. of adult	41
		No. of minor	22
Self-Repatriated	21.12.2012 – 13.05.2015	No. of family	64
		No. of adult	221
		No. of minor	114
Self-Repatriated	During 6 <sup>th</sup> Batch (17 <sup>th</sup> to 21 <sup>st</sup> June, 2014)	No. of family	17
		No. of adult	69
		No. of minor	40
Self-Repatriated	After 6 <sup>th</sup> Batch till Sep 2015	No. of family	32
		No. of adult	111
		No. of minor	52
<b>Total No. of Population</b>	<b>(adult + minor)</b>	<b>670</b>	

Source: *Government of Mizoram, Home Department* (retrieved on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2015)

The above table show the numbers of Bru returned to Mizoram in Mamit District including from the first batch to the sixth batch. According to different secondary sources available, no one is willing to return to Mizoram on the 7<sup>th</sup> phases of repatriation because the leaders of different camps demand more money for rehabilitation and enough land for their settlement in Mizoram. As per the issue of agreement made by the Government, each repatriated family is to be given Rs 85,000/- and the government authorities will allotted them to their respective villages in Mizoram. But the arguments made by the Bru leaders was clear that the rehabilitation money is too less so that they are not able to maintain their life after return to Mizoram.

They also demanded that those families who returned to Mizoram must be group together in the same village in not less than 500 families in one village with the deployment of security personnel or Special Police Forces. They also claim that the free ration given to them is too meagre to settle in Mizoram, besides the proposed time is the same time for jhuming/shifting cultivation which creates



problems for the Bru. The leaders also claimed that the Government must not use the list of 1995 electoral roll for the identification but they should use any government documents for identification.<sup>52</sup>

Meanwhile, the Government of Mizoram as well as Tripura and the Central Government had already made a tripartite talk on 30 January, 2015. In this tripartite talk they agreed to take back all the original settlers to Mizoram; after the 7<sup>th</sup> phase of repatriation is complete the two States Governments as well as the Central Government agreed to close down the repatriation in which those who refuse to move back to Mizoram will be deleted from the list of electoral roll. It was also agreed that those who refuse to move back to Mizoram will be allowed settling in North Tripura and the Central Government will cease the entire package regarding facilitation and rehabilitation process to the Bru in terms of money or any other sources.<sup>53</sup> This decision was informed to the Supreme Court who is monitoring the process of repatriation and the apex court had already agreed to this agreement and decision.

As per the order of Supreme Court, the Seventh Phase/Batch of repatriation was initiated from 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015 at different camps in North Tripura. In this phase the identification of the genuine settler of Mizoram was taken the first priority to repatriate the Bru by the Government of Mizoram and till the end of July 2015; four camps have so far been investigated – Naisingpara, Hamsapara, Kaskau and Khakchangpara but no one is willing to turn up for verification and identification process.

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<sup>52</sup>“No Bru repatriation till demands are met: Bru Displaced People’s Forum”, *North East Today* (Aug 28, 2015).

<sup>53</sup>“Roadmap ready to repatriate Brus: Mizoram Home Minister”, *The Mizoram Post* (March 26, 2015).

By the end of September 2015 the Government of Mizoram announced its intention to cease all the repatriation process and said that the 7<sup>th</sup> Batch will be the last repatriation for the Bru. The Government of Mizoram had already drafted a Roadmap IV for repatriation and rehabilitation of Bru refugees. However, the delegates/agents of Mizoram Government initiated the identification process from June to September 2014 which was the first task for repatriation but no single family turn up for identification.

Hence, the number of Bru family(s) repatriated during the last or 7<sup>th</sup> Batch repatriation is 'Nil'.<sup>54</sup> As far as no single family was reported for repatriation, the Roadmap IV was not able to implement it and it was belief that the Bru people demanded more rehabilitation in terms of funds and free ration, security etc.<sup>55</sup> Different sources mentioned that there are differences in ideologies between Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF) and Bru Coordination Committee (BCC) in terms of last repatriation. Some sources also said that there are rumours and some threat within the Camps which hindered the last repatriation.

As per the tripartite talk decision held on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 between Central Government, Mizoram Government and Tripura Government, the repatriation process was now ended. But still, there are a large numbers of Bru people lodge in the Six Relief Camps of Tripura. By 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 another tripartite talk was held at New Delhi to discuss the Bru issue whether they would implement their former decisions/resolutions which was passed on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 or they would find another way/solutions to the Bru problems. The former

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<sup>54</sup>Right To Information (RTI) answer sought by the researcher and replied by the Deputy Commissioner, Mamit District: Mamit on 13<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2015.

<sup>55</sup>"Bru Chungchang Supreme Court-ah Hriattir", *Vanglaini* (Sep7, 2015).

tripartite decisions states that if the Bru do not comply with the Government proposal on the 7<sup>th</sup> Batch repatriation, then those who do not comply will be allowed to settle in Tripura and the Central Government will stop all the rehabilitation process in terms of fund or any other means.<sup>56</sup> But the last tripartite talk on 14<sup>th</sup> September agreed that before they make any decision it is necessary to make consultation with Mizoram Bru Displaced People Forum and Bru Coordination Committee. The Ministry of Home Affairs in this talk said that if there are any problems or issues regarding the last repatriation, it is necessary to make investigation before they make any decisions.<sup>57</sup>

### **Actions Taken by the Civil Societies during Social Tensions**

To prevent further tension and conflict between the Mizo and Bru in the western society of Mizoram, the Mizo and Bru people have to have good cooperation. During the tension and conflict of 1997 and 2009, not all of the Bru people are afraid of the Mizo. Likewise, not all the Mizo in the western Mizo societies are afraid of all the Bru people. In fact, although there was a serious tension and conflict between them, but still there was some relation and cooperation in terms of business and economic activities.

The economic and business activities like selling of Jhum products by the Bru to Mizo people, buying of domestic animals like pigs, dogs, goat, chicken etc from the Bru people by the Mizo are still practice between them. But there was three times which hindered all these activities between them which were also designed to prevent further tensions and conflict. This issue was known by the

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<sup>56</sup>“Road map ready to repatriate Brus: Mizoram Home Minister”, *The Mizoram Post* (March 26, 2015).

<sup>57</sup>“Bru Pawl Hnih Ngaihlan Zawh Hmasak Rawt”, *Vanglaini* (Sep 16, 2015).

society as the *Non-intervention Programme* which was designed by the Joint Action Committee (JAC) of Mizo societies.<sup>58</sup> The Joint Action Committee (JAC) comprising the YMA, MUP, MHIP, MZP of western villages initiated this programme in 2008.

One important issue is that there is an economic cooperation between Zawlnuam and Tripura Bru Settlers, Kanhmun and Tripura Bru Settlers, and Bungthuam and Tripura Bru Settlers. The main issue of this cooperation is in terms of alcoholic liquor, domestic animals, transportation, food products etc. During and after tension occur, these three villages continue business cooperation between Mizo and Bru. Most of the respondent both from the Bru and Mizo sample claimed that it was the Bru people who suffer more of the Non-intervention Programme. During this Process of Non-intervention, members of the JAC voluntarily checked the Tripura – Mizoram border villages whether if there is any connection, cooperation between Mizo and Bru. Sometime, these voluntary workers had to do their duty for the whole night.

The first Non-intervention programme was only initiated within Zawlnuam village area in which the JAC consulted their Bru village neighbours as well as Bru locality within Zawlnuam village not to intervene each other in all social, political, religious and economic aspect. The Bru people also agreed to the proposal made by the JAC of Zawlnuam village and the programme was started on September, 2008 which was mainly to prevent all the possible threats to their society. During the operation of this programme, no Bru people intervene in the Mizo society, no Mizo people talks and met any Bru people, no economic cooperation, and no

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<sup>58</sup>Interview with Mr. J. Malsawma of Zawlnuam, Mizoram on 15 Oct, 2015.

political and social relation. Both the parties are detaching themselves from the other society. The first programme only lasted for a few months in which both the Mizo and Bru people suffer on their own especially in terms of economic cooperation.

When Zarzokioma (17 yrs) of Bungthuam village was killed by the suspected Bru Revolutionary Union (BRU), the whole western Mizo society was angered against all the Bru people. Immediately, the JAC action plan was to re-initiate the Non-intervention Programme not only in Zawlnuam village, but also in Kanhmun to Zawlpuoi Village area. This programme begun from 13<sup>th</sup> Nov 2009 which was the date of Bungthuam incident and it lasted for one year. The interviewee also told the researcher that there was a problem of implementing the programme as some Mizo drunkards always tried to contact the Bru people in search of local alcoholic liquor which was usually sold by the Bru people.

The third Non-intervention programme was triggered by the killing of one Bengali employee at Bungthuam Mizo Farm and the programme was started in the year 2013. But due to different problems made by the some Mizo businessmen, it was call off after one month. During the third Non-intervention Programme all the transport from Zampui Hill Ranges of Tripura to Aizawl was blocked, the JAC awaits for apologize word from the Young Bru Association (YBA) which never came. However, the JAC stop their process of Non-intervention due to strong pressure from the Mizo of Zampui Hill Ranges as well as from the Mizo businessman and farmers. The Programme could not be implemented for long term because the Mizo farmers could not find their desire labour forces from the Bru people both in Tripura and Mizoram.

### **Elaborating the Types of Bru after Social Tension**

Despite a little dissimilarity in socio-economic, cultural and religious life of both Mizo and Bru, the prevailing constant fear among the minority Bru has tremendously impact the socio-economic life of the Bru. As far as issues rise up between Mizo and Bru in Mizoram, there were fears of conflict, violence, arson, extortion, kidnapping on both side of the people. But the Mizo, as a majority group seems to master that fear and there was not much impact on their social lives. In the case of Bru community, due to fear of conflict and violence there was migration, repatriation and re-migrated to Tripura. From this issue rise up the Bru people are separated or differentiated themselves into three types of groups and there are already one group of Bru people who established their social life even before this ethnic issue.

When the researcher asked every interviewee, every sample that – Is something happen to those who refuse to leave Mizoram on the eve of tension or in 1997 and 2009 incident? The popular answer received is that there is no violence, no issue, no threat, and no nothing happen to them. So, what happened to the potential threat made by the Bru leaders if there was no action taken against these people? Or What if this was all just a rumours that there was no such thing at all, if it is just a rumours there would be no leaders to take actions against these people. An average of three to five families in every sampled village refused to leave their home in Mizoarm.

It is decided to identify those Bru who refuse to leave their home as the '*Permanent Settlers*'. All these permanent settlers proved that all the Bru people are not force by violence or threat to leave Mizoram by the Mizo in western belt. It

is clear now that if the Mizo people or the civil societies forced all the Bru families in Mizoram to leave their home there would be no Bru left to be a '*Permanent Settlers*' in Mizoram. It depends on the choice of the Bru people whether to leave Mizoram by their own will, neither it was not by force nor violence. In fact, there were some violence against the Bru in some villages which were also reported by local newspapers, but this violence did not include or affected all the Bru people.

The second people, those who choose to leave Mizoram are grouped as '*Bru in Camps*'. According to the above paragraph, all of the Bru people are not forced to leave, there are few people who leave their home due to fear of violence, but most of them are migrated without knowing the reason or cause of their migration. It depends on their own will to leave Mizoram; most of them did not know the cause of their leaving during that time. It was also said by them that they left because their neighbours and relatives are leaving. In initial stage, there are a few 300 Bru lived in Rengdil village who migrated to Tripura.<sup>59</sup>

The numbers of displaced persons increase after the killing of Lalzawmliana and it continued till the signing of peace agreement with the Mizoram Government. As far as the repatriation could not proceed due to the killing of Zarzokima of Bungthuam village in 2009, the Bru migration to Tripura increased and as on 2010 it was claimed by many journalists that their numbers reached around 39,000. From all of the Bru in six Relief Camps of Tripura, many people had agreed to move back to Mizoram which constitute the third types of Bru people. Although there are numbers of families repatriated but most of them, say 2/3 of the

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<sup>59</sup>"Over 250 Reangs fled Mizoram", *Highlander* (Oct21, 1997).

total population are still lodge in their camps. Those who refused to repatriate and choose to live their life in a Relief Camps are grouped under the '*Bru in Camps*'.

It was the initiative of the Bru underground militant group like BNLF and BLFM with the Government of Mizoram to repatriate all those Bru people who spent their lives in a relief camps. Later the Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum and Bru Coordination Committee initiated and ensure the proper implementation of repatriation process. The Government of Mizoram with Bru leaders had many talks regarding the preparation of the so call Road Map for repatriation and so far there are four (4) Road Map produced by the Department of Home, Government of Mizoram.

Under the guidance of the Bru leaders as well as the Government agencies the last repatriation processes was finished and call off on September 2015. The Government report stated that the total figure of Bru repatriation along with the self-repatriated families stood at 1277 families numbering 6749 adults and minors as on 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2015.<sup>60</sup> These repatriated families are now identify and will be called as '*Repatriated Bru Families*' which constitute about 1/3 of their population in the Camps.

Lastly, there are around 10 villages in Tripura-Mizoram border mainly occupy by the Bru people. It is difficult to examine the exact numbers of Bru villages in Tripura because the research geographical area is only concentrated within Mamit district, but the researcher visited Uria Chora as a village sample located in Tripura bordering with Mizoram by Langkaih River. These Bru dominated villages had a deep and rigid cooperation with the Mizo of Tripura-

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<sup>60</sup> Report State Level Core Committee (Aizawl: Government of Mizoram on 27<sup>th</sup> Jan 2015).



Mizoram border villages. All these Bru villages are almost connected with the relief camps made for the displaced Bru refugees, but some of the camps are a little far from these villages.

The Bru in Tripura villages constituted the fourth types of Bru people and will be termed as '*Tripura Bru Settlers*' and according to claimed by them that hardly make any problems or troubles or issues with any Mizo in Mizoram as well as in Tripura. In Tripura where the six Relief Camps is located and where the Bru dominated villages is located, there are some Mizo villages nearby, namely, Zampui Hill Ranges and Sakhan Hill Ranges. It is said by the Bru of Tripura settler that there is no problems or any ethnic issue between them with the Mizo of Tripura settlers.

Now, there is a huge difference among these four types of Bru people in which there are hidden tensions between them. The tension is mainly concentrated between the Tripura Bru Settlers and the Bru in Camps on the one hand, and between the Permanent Settlers of Mizoram and the Bru in Camps on the other. The Bru in Camps who still lodge in the Camps according to their will committed many crimes against the Mizo and also to the Bru of Permanent Settlers in Mizoram and Tripura Bru Settlers as well. The main issue which causes problems between the Mizo and Bru and which would likely to continue in the near future is that the Bru in Camps mainly depends on the Governmental rehabilitation facilities only and they do not have the desire to work in the field to earn their livelihood. In fact, those who stay in the Camps need not to work in the Jhum field or any laborious work to earn some money because the Government produce all kinds of their needs like free ration, free utensils, free clothing, free housing facilities etc.

As far as they do not have to work hard to improve their economic conditions, they have more time to spend, they have more leisure time than the rest of the Bru people like Bru in Mizoram (repatriated and permanent) and Bru of Tripura Settlers.

Due to enough leisure time they always scattered in the forest or jungle searching for all available resources to convert into money like bamboo, teak and timber, crabs and fishes, and any kinds of eatable materials to sell in the open market.<sup>61</sup> In this case they do not hesitate to commit crimes such as robbing, fishing in the fish pond without the permission from the owner, harvesting the jhum products at night without the knowledge of the cultivator etc.<sup>62</sup> Although this people committed these crime against the Mizo and the rest of the Bru, but when it is against the Bru it was never actualised into serious tension or conflict.

When these kinds of crimes are committed against any Mizo in Mizoram, the civil society as well as the whole Mizo villages indiscriminately accused all the Bru whether they are Permanent Settlers, Bru Tripura Settlers, Repatriated Families or the Bru in Camps. In these cases, all the Bru people are the victims of crime committed by the Bru Camps people. If there is any such crimes against the Mizo, they used to said that “*Tuikuk ho*” in alleging all the Bru community which increase hatred against all the Bru people. Thereby, it also increase the already tensions between them.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Interview with Mr. Chhuan tea of Kawrtethawveng, Mizoram on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2015.

<sup>62</sup>Interview with Mr. Tal Bong Joy Apeto of Uria Chora, Tripura on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2015.

<sup>63</sup>Interview with Mr. Persen of Uria Chora, Tripura on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2015.

In fact, most of the Bru respondents argued that the Permanent Settlers and the Tripura Bru Settlers accused the cause of the present tensions between Mizo and Bru is because of the Bru in Camps. There are hidden tensions, hidden hatred between the Bru Camps people and the rest of the Bru community in Mizoram and Tripura. To easily identify the types of Bru people who had differences in their behaviour, social lifestyle and ideologies they are divided into four types. This classification is mainly base on their activities, relations with the Mizo, social life and economic condition. Four types of Bru are given in the following points.

- 1) *Permanent Settlers* – Those people who did not leave their home and choose to stayed in Mizoram on the eve of tensions.
- 2) *Bru in Camps* – Those persons who migrated to Tripura due to fear of ethnic conflict and violence with the Mizo.
- 3) *Repatriated Bru Families* – Those families who migrated to Tripura and spent their lives in the Camps, but agreed to move back to Mizoram with or without the help of the Government.
- 4) *Tripura Bru Settlers* – Those Bru villages in Tripura and according to their claim to have a deep and rigid cooperation with the Mizo of Mizoram as well as of Tripura.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ETHNIC TENSION IN MIZORAM: AN ANALYSIS OF CAUSES AND EFFECT**

The previous chapter studied the profile of Mizo and Bru in Mamit district in terms of the socio – economic relation as well as political and religious relation. Before the emergence of Mizo – Bru ethnic tension and repatriation, the socio – political scenario was regarded as peace and prosperity, and it was also quite different with compared to the post – ethnic scenario. The current chapter studied the causes and effects of ethnic tension and conflict in Mizoram. The first section of the current chapter discusses the causes of Mizo – Bru ethnic tension in Mamit District. The second section of the current chapter also studied the effect or impact of ethnic tension and conflict in Mamit District in particular and Mizoram in general. The third section of the chapter mainly dealt with the ethnic relations between the two ethnic communities after the emergence of ethnic tensions. The third section of this chapter also studied the present status of relation between Mizo and Bru in Mamit District in particular and Mizoram in general.

After a long process of talks, negotiations and committees with some remaining issues, like demand for Autonomous District Council (ADC), the repatriation of Bru people in six Relief Camps was ended on September 2015. Since there was no single family repatriated in the last or 7<sup>th</sup> batch of repatriation, the total numbers of Bru repatriated remain the same with the 6<sup>th</sup> batch of repatriation. Therefore, the total figure of Bru repatriated in the whole Mizoram along with the self-repatriated families stood at 1277 families, numbering 6749

adults and minors as on 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2015.<sup>1</sup> This chapter mainly deal with the objectives of the research and will also critically analyse the primary data. The causes of ethnic tension, its impact or consequence and challenges in the multicultural society of western Mizoram and the present status of relationship between Mizo and Bru in Mamit District will be analyse in this chapter.

### **Causes of Ethnic Tensions between Mizo and Bru in Mamit District**

Every ethnic issue is based on sentiment towards particular ethnic community. Moreover, political consciousness plays an important role to break out tensions and conflicts. In the case of Mizo and Bru in Mamit district of Mizoram, the important issue started from the political and social consciousness among the Bru people who fought for their ethnic community. In the initial stage they only want to change the nomenclature '*Bru*' instead of '*Tuikuk*' as the Mizo identify them. Then, slowly they gain more political and social consciousness which drove them to fight for the preservation of their ethnic feeling like custom, culture, traditional practices, social lifestyles, religion, language and of course the Bru tribe. Religion is one of the most important tools for the Bru to gain political consciousness not only in Mizoram, but also in Tripura.

The simple hypotheses regarding the causes of tension between Mizo and Bru in Mamit district was that the Bru people demanded Autonomous District Council (ADC) in western part of Mizoram. To ensure the achievement of their demand they set up an underground or an armed militant group. The leaders of the community told their people to leave Mizoram as soon as possible so that they

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<sup>1</sup> Report State Level Core Committee (Aizawl: Government of Mizoram on 27<sup>th</sup> Jan 2015).

could pressurize the Government to achieve their goals and objectives with extreme and violence means.

The above hypotheses are not exactly proof but it was observed during field visit that some of them are true. It was true that in a conference at Saipuilui Village held on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1997 the Bru people demanded the creation of Bru Autonomous District Council (ADC) in western part of Mizoram. This conference is the main cause or the beginning of serious ethnic tension between Mizo and Bru, not only in Mamit district but also in Mizoram as a whole. This conference cause ethnic tension in which the Mizo, especially the civil societies like Young Mizo Association (YMA) and Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZIP) totally opposed the demand to set up of new Autonomous District Council (ADC) body within Mizoram. There are facts behind this story which was the stand point of the civil societies in Mizoram. The three Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) in Mizoram such as Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC), Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC) and Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) came into force in 1972 enjoying 18 subjects each under the State Government.<sup>2</sup> Out of these MADC and LADC are bifurcated from the erstwhile Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in 1972 but Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) is a new body which was set up without the consultation of any Mizo political leaders.<sup>3</sup> Since the Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) was constituted by the Central authorities without the consent of Mizo people, the civil societies as well as the politicians and political actors of present era hesitate to create or form any other separate autonomous body inside Mizoram. Political leaders and civil

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<sup>2</sup> Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, Autonomous District Councils and Panchayati Raj Institutions in North-East India (Dialogue July – September: 2005, Volume 7 No. 1).

<sup>3</sup> "Reang should co-exist with other citizens", *Frontline* (July 18-31, 1998).

societies in Mizoram strongly opposed to constitute any new Autonomous District Council (ADC) whether if it is for Bru, Hmar or Paite community/tribe.

When the Bru made their demand in 1997 and even before the killing of Lalzawmliana a forest game-watcher at Damparengpui Tiger Reserve, there are already a hidden tension between Mizo and Bru in Mizoram, especially between the Mizo civil societies of Mamit district and the Bru in western Mizoram. The already tension which was ready enough to explode or break up did exploded after the killing of Lalzawmliana. This cause of tension was proof during field observation in which the Mizo society rejects all kinds of separatism whether if it is territorial, geographical or political administration within the jurisdiction of Mizoram Government. It seems that this rejection will continue in the future so long as the Mizo society is believe itself to administer.

It was also all known that the Bru people set up militant outfit whose activities threatened the western people as well as the Bru people who refuse to migrate on the eve of tension. There are Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF), Bru Liberation Front of Mizoram (BLFM) which signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Mizoram in 2005 and 2006 respectively. Bru Revolutionary Union (BRU) also known as Bru Revolutionary Army (BRA) still operates after the signing of MoU between the Government of Mizoram and the BNLF. In 2009 these new outfit killed Zarzokima (17 yrs) of Bungthuam village which altered the then ongoing peace process. Although the peace and normalcy was almost restored with the agreement between underground militant groups and Government of Mizoram, the Bungthuam incident altered all the peace process between Mizo and Bru which was on the eve of reconciliation.

Tensions transform into conflict, conflict was changes to clash by the news, clash then transform into ethnic suppression of the minority by the Mizo majority.

The causes of migration and further tension seem to be organized by a few Bru leaders who played their role without the consent of their whole community, but threatened them to leave Mizoram. Different secondary sources as well as primary sources indicate that most of the Bru people in Mizoram on the eve of tension and conflict did not know the real cause of tension between them and the Mizo. It seems that they just follow the order of their leaders and they afraid of not to follow the footsteps of their neighbour.

In other word, when some of Bru families in a particular village fled their home with or without knowing the reason of tensions with the Mizo. Then, those who did not only know the reason but also hesitate to have problems with their Mizo friends and neighbour have to follow the other by fleeing their homes to Tripura whether if it is night or day. It was also mention in many newspapers that the Bru exodus was engineered by certain few individuals who have misguided the people and frightened them into fleeing their homes.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, to worsen the situation or to intensify the tensions with the Mizo the underground militant group committed many crimes against Mizo. It was on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1998 that the President of Bru National Union (BNU) issued a 'Quit Mizoram Order' to all the Bru in Mizoram.<sup>5</sup> All these activities established a potential threat to the people of both parties which causes ethnic tension. The demand of ADC is the main causes of tension. Other issues like the migration, crime committed by the Bru militant like killing, arson, ambush, extortion and

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<sup>4</sup> "Reang repatriation process go slow", *Highlander* (Nov 6, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> "3001 Tuikuk returned but to go back to Tripura", *Highlander* (July 23, 1998).



kidnapping increase the tensions. When the situation got worse like killing of Lalzawmliana and Zarzokima in 1997 and 2009 respectively, the intensify tensions then transform immediately into ethnic conflict and clash between Mizo and Bru.

During the field observation and interview most of the respondent, especially from the Mizo community responded that it was the Bru leaders who visited the Bru villages in western Mizoram and frightened them and told them to leave Mizoram as soon as possible. Therefore, numbers of the Bru families lodge in the Relief Camps migrated at night which clearly shows that they took necessary actions by migrating by the time they heard the news or the voice of their leaders. Their fear did not hinder, feel hesitate or delay them to take any action of migration even at night.

### **Impact of Ethnic Tension and Conflict**

The first and foremost impact of social tension, ethnic conflict and social instability is the problems with economic and moral transformation. Economic problem here mainly imply the shortage of income, food problems and health issue. Moral transformation means the overall feeling of the people slowly transform into the way which they would never wanted to happen to them. In other word, the people slowly converted themselves into another lifestyle, they change their way of living by adopting new social lifestyle which they have never imagined to happen to them.

In terms of Negative and Positive impact, positive issue is less rather than negative impact. Another impact or consequences may include political in which the society face problems like election procedure, political instability, peace and security and different assistance funds or any kinds issued by the Government. The

impact of tension and conflict is mainly measured from economic, religion, political, social, culture like custom and tradition. Measurement is taken by the method of observation during field visit in which both the Mizo and Bru are observed.

*The Cost of Ethnic Tension and Conflict:* The impact of ethnic tension and conflict between Mizo and Bru may be classified as – Social, Economic, Political & Governance, Education. The first negative impact of ethnic tension and conflict between Mizo and Bru is the political instability. This problem is mainly face by the Bru alone, not the Mizo. When the Bru people demanded Autonomous District Council (ADC) in 1997, the first attention that the Mizo civil society had towards it was the numbers of Bru voters in Mizoram. Accordingly, many Bru names were deleted from the list of electoral roll in Mizoram. In any Assembly or Parliamentary elections majority of the Bru in the Camps were unable to cast their vote, thereby, in other words, were unable to exercise their political right. There are around 3416 Bru voters in Mizoram on the eve of tension in 1999 and around 2493 voters those who fled their homes are deleted as per the directions made by the Election Commission of India.<sup>6</sup> Although the Government took different initiatives to re-enrol them as Mizoram legitimate voters and also there are many repatriated families, but still not all of them are able to cast their vote because the restoration of their life in Mizoram is not yet complete in terms of political and economic. On the eve of ethnic tension the numbers of Bru voters decreased immediately which weaken their political condition which is likely the general will of the Mizo civil societies.

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<sup>6</sup> "Names of Reang voters who left Mizoram are deleted from E/Roll", *Highlander* (Sep 14, 1999).

*Political and Governance Impact:* During field observation, the researcher was told by a number of Mizo old persons (not sample) that if the Bru did not migrated to Tripura there will be a Bru political leaders, politicians in Mizoram, or may be member of Legislative Assembly. However, it cannot be actualised due to Bru exodus from Mizoram to Tripura. Thereby, at this moment they are not in a position of decision making in the State. In fact, their numbers in Mizoram does not make any difference to change the present political game. Although those who are newly repatriated families have access to free rations, but all of them do not enjoy Governmental schemes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS), Food security etc.

In every visited/sampled village the researcher was told by the Bru repatriated families that in times of election whether if it is Village Council or Legislative Assembly election, the candidate have tried to please them to get their votes. At Zawlnuam village a Bru repatriated families living in a temporary hamlet said that the candidates of every party, in every election told them that they if the Government do not produce them proper electric connection to every household, they would give them a solar source of electricity or solar electric lamp for street lights as well as for every household purpose. But after election, or when the candidates were elected no proper solar plates, sources were found inside the repatriated localities. There is only one solar plate installed in Zawlnuam Bru repatriated locality at the street, but not in every household.

As for the case of *Repatriated Bru Families* when the Government implemented its plan for repatriation, some of the Bru families did not get assistance from the Government as soon as they are repatriated which make them

to live in a temporary hut or hamlet. In some villages there are two or three families comprising around 10 to 20 members with children in one house. Usually, the newly repatriated families before they get Government assistance used to live with their relatives in one house which resulted in the lack of everything. Although the Government gave them assistance in terms of land for construction, Rs 80000/- funds for Jhum/Agricultural implementation and housing materials but they said that the funds is too meagre or insufficient to start a new life. As far as the funds do not meet their satisfaction, it is imperative to live two or three families in one house and most of their land given to them for construction of houses is not permanent, there is no passed document by the Government authority for land which is given to them.

*Economic Impact:* In terms of economy, most of the Bru confronts lot of economic problems with regard to food habit, drinking facilities, housing and tolls for implementation of their jhum/shifting cultivation. The things which made the conditions difficult were that those families who migrated to Tripura on the eve of tensions are easily moved back to Mizoram before the 2009 Bungthum incident with or without the help of the Government. Then those who moved back to Mizoram again returned to Tripura with fear of ethnic clash and some of them are convinced for repatriate. This re-migration and re-repatriate cause unstable conditions, they suffer in terms of shortage of food, clothing, housing pattern, drinking water which in turn affected their life expectancy. In other word, their re-migration and re-repatriate again and again affected their health and medical conditions.

One important thing which upset the Bru people after serious ethnic tension is that the Bru labour rate/wages is very low. In general or in the whole of Mizoram, the daily labour wage is fixed as Rs 300/- per day, sometime it reaches Rs 350/- as on the year 2010 – 2015. But in western Mizoram part the labour wage for a Mizo labour is same as Rs 300/- or Rs 350/- per day while it is Rs 250/- for the Bru labour. It is Rs 250/- for the Mizoram Bru labour, but it is Rs 200/- per day only for the *Tripura Bru Settlers* in which the Mizo employer always find for the cheapest labour force which in turn decrease the job opportunity for the Mizoram Bru people. In fact, the Mizo farmer, cultivator, businessmen, employer in construction or any kind always opted for the cheapest labour from *Tripura Bru Settlers* which effect the scarce of jobs for the Mizoram Bru. Almost all the Bru in Mizoram do not know the reason for this cheap or low labour rate for them.

Due to unstable social condition both in Mizoram and Tripura, there is not enough time to practice agricultural work. Sometime the Bru people had to leave Mizoram, sometime had to move back to Mizoram, in all their lives they have to ever ready to face any ethnic issue which make them to spend no time for jhum/agricultural works. No jhum/agricultural works means no Agricultural products, no products means no economic independence, no economic independence means depend on one or two resources, in their case the assistance from the Central Government or some Mizo businessmen only. If the Central Government stop all the rehabilitation and assistance in terms of free rations, cloths and funds, their lives would be very miserable.

*Impact of Social Life:* Due to fear of violence and conflict with the Mizo, the Bru people were unable to celebrate their traditional practices like *Buisu*. In fact, the ethnic tension with the Mizo has affected the social life of majority Bru which makes them to abandon their customs, traditional practices like sacrifices to their gods and goddesses. All these changes in their lives were not of their choice, but it is an imperative to do so as to survive in the society. According to the claims made by their leaders it is very uncomfortable for them to have a jhum fields to improve their economic conditions because all their lands now belongs to the Mizo.

Almost all the *Bru in Camps* people who migrated to Tripura sold their vast and unused land on the eve of tension which put them into their present conditions of landless for Jhum activities. So, it is easy to understand why they have to abandon almost all their traditional practices, the simple answer is that it is their poor economic conditions which make them imperative to enhance their social life compatible with the modern Mizo society. Though it is not their wishes to lose some of their traditions, but it is necessary to sacrifice their traditions like *Buisu* to save their resources.

It is said by many witnesses and those repatriated families that the life in the Six Relief Camps of Tripura is miserable in terms of health care and socio-economic condition. Those families in the Camps hoping their lives to get better if repatriated themselves choose to move back to Mizoram with or without the help of Government, but their lives in Mizoram is not better than they expected or rather than the Camps. In all the visited villages during the field observation, the Bru families are located in the same locality of a village. In other word, the repatriated families in every village are located in a remote, outskirts of a village in which they

were allotted by the Government authorities. In some of these villages the Bru people do not have access to the Public water distribution system, no electric connection in their house, no proper toilet for their locality. Before they were repatriated they were expecting to have all kinds of formal and regular facilities which other citizens had already enjoy.

In three sampled villages, the main sources of water for these people is a temporary Lake and Well made by themselves which is unclean and not good enough for their health. Due to the insufficient and unclean sources of water supply, they easily caught up some popular disease like cholera, common cold, diarrhoea and malaria etc. When they sick or suffered from such kind of diseases like small pox and diarrhoea, it is difficult to get assistance by themselves due to lack of resources which resulted in a short life term. As far as the Government do not produce them electricity, they have to depend mainly on firewood/fire light at night because the kerosene oil distribution by the Government is not effected or include to them. Improper housing structure and lack of clothing also did affect their health care in which disease like malaria is very common among them.



**Fig 1.1**

**A temporary Well made by the Bru people that lies beside an ordinary pond which is the main source of water for the Repatriated Bru Families in Zawlnuam village.**



(Picture taken by the researcher at Zawlnuam Vengthar locality on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2015)



Another impact of the tension which affected both the Mizo and Bru is the unstable condition of social life or turbulence society. The society of the west Mizoram region was in a condition of threat and unrest violence which threatened the people of both Mizo and Bru. Some interviewee who witnessed the incident of 1997 and 2009 said that no Mizo women or no Bru women alone did not go to forest or jungle to work in jhum fields due to fear of violence. Children are told by their parents not to play too far away from their home due to fear of kidnapping and killing. Crimes like arson, extortion and threat from the Bru underground militant groups is very common which frightened the Village Councils of western villages. Even today after the society is not free from such kinds of potential threat, robbing is still very common among the people of Mamit district. Many farmers and cultivators seems hesitate to have a jhum fields because they could not protect their land at all time and when they could not visit their land, all their hard work are always being stolen by some Bru miscreants usually from the *Bru in Camps* people.

The entire sample in Tripura village (*Uria Chora*) had claimed that the positive impact or consequences of the migration of Mizoram Bru to Tripura is that the Bru people are no more minority groups in the region of Tripura – Mizoram border, Zampui and Sakhan hills ranges. Before the time of tension in Mizoram between Mizo and Bru and before no Bru family migrated to Tripura due to fear of ethnic clash and violence, the Bru villages in Tripura suffered a lot in terms of minor ethnic issues from the Tripura Bengali who comprises of majority in the Tripura – Mizoram border, Zampui and Sakhan hills ranges. In other words, the Tripura minority Bru suffers all kinds of political, social, economic and religious discrimination from the Bengali majority groups. But all these situation changes

after the migration of Mizoram Bru to Tripura in which the Bengali do not comprising the majority but the Bru themselves are the majority group. Now, the Bengali people are fewer than the Bru and they seem afraid of the Bru people in all cases of social issues.

*Educational Impact:* Education is the main hindrances of development among the Bru people. Before the emergence of tension and conflict between the Mizo and Bru, numbers of Bru children attended schools in the same institutions, learning the same syllabus, and of course gain the same educational consciousness with the Mizo children. But after they flee to Tripura, proper implementation of education is difficult; in some cases it is impossible because they always move from one place to another due to fear of ethnic clash and conflict from the Mizo people. Since no proper education was imparted to their children, the numbers of Bru literacy rate is still very low both in the Tripura Camps and in Mizoram. And as far as most of them were illiterate, they are easy to shake their mind set and easy to control them with some little enthusiasm by their leaders.

Due to their ignorant conditions in terms of educational consciousness, some persons among themselves claimed that their leaders were corrupted and used their people for the sources of income.<sup>7</sup> Some educated among them also said that their leaders were rich because they used to divert all the Governmental assistance facilities and sold them for their own benefit. But their educational system changed a little bit after repatriation in which all their children got proper education in Public School as well as in Anganwadi.

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Village Choudhury of Uria Chora, Tripura on 19<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2015.

The uneducated youth and adult also affected the socio – political consciousness of their lives. They do not have the capability to think further to improve their livelihood, they only care for their present condition, they never think for their future. However, there are some families who are very advanced in education than the rest of the community. One gentleman in Uria chora (Tripura) got one solar plate which he bought from the Bru in Camps people and he told the researcher that almost all the Bru families in the Camps got one solar plate each from the Central Government. But due to their short vision, they have less capacity to think their future, they always sold some of the materials which would make them to live comfortable in the Camps. It is not just solar plate, but it also many other materials provided by the Central Government which were to be used to abolished their miserable life.

*Positive Impact:* There is not much positive impact of the ethnic tension and conflict between the Mizo and Bru but for the Bru people alone there is one positive implication which holds the integration of all Bru tribe. There is one hypothesis from the interview respondent that on the eve of ethnic tension, the Bru Conference at Saipuilui village intended to set up a big Town at Tripura which would be the capital for the Bru people. Their main aim was to drove out all the Tripura Bengali settlers from the hill area and rule all these lands because the Bengali are superior in all aspect of social life. To mobilise their people the leaders had to organize some kind of activities to move their people to Tripura. Likewise, the Bru underground movement threatened the social life of western villages which in turn angered the Mizo civil societies as well as the Joint Action Committee (JAC). To counter the Bru militant forces the Mizo civil societies and Joint Action

Committee (JAC) had to organize different meetings and passed strong resolutions which frightened the Bru people and led them to flee Mizoram.

The merit of their migration is that they grew more stronger than ever before and they were now able to drove out all the Tripura Bengali settlers from their land because they were now the majority. Their lives may be difficult, they may suffer loss and scarcity of economic resources; but it is this conflict which integrates them into one social platform and fought together against all kinds of threats for their society.

### **Relation between Mizo and Bru after Tension and Present Status of Relation**

When an interview question regarding the present status of relations was asked to the selected sample most of the respondents (say 78%) claimed that the present ethnic relation between Mizo and Bru is better before the tension. But some respondents also said that the status of their relation was better before the tension because the aftermath or impact of tension increases the hidden tensions within the society. It was also claimed by the respondent that the *Bru Repatriated Families* detach themselves from the mainstream of Mizo society in which the relations is differ due to ethnic issue but there is no difference between the Mizo and the Bru *Permanent Settlers* of Mizoram. A little detachment may be because they are newly repatriated in and they feel a bit of strangers within their locality. Most of the respondent both from the Mizo and Bru people believed that this little difference in relation, little detachment and feeling of isolationism will be avail within five or ten years. But it may not avail if there is any incident, event of regarding ethnic issue, feeling and activities between them.

The only remaining problems which could increase tension between them and is yet to be resolve or could not resolve by the Government is the popularity of robbing, thieves and culprit. But this problems or crimes are only committed by the *Bru in Camps* people which is the only reason why the tension and conflict is not yet broke out because the general Mizo people in the western villages have the knowledge that those crimes were committed by the *Bru in Camps* people, but not the Mizoram Bru people (both permanent settlers and repatriated families). But if there is any new issue, the Mizo as well as the *Repatriated Bru Families* are likely be ready to face any kind of tension and conflict between them.

Although the entire Bru respondents claimed that if there is another ethnic tension, incident or event, conflict or violence between them, their families would not return to Tripura at all cost. Some respondents told the researcher that the repatriated families do not return to Mizoram with their whole family member. They left some member of their family in the Camps for insurance and for dependent in which if there is any other issue which would make them to flee from Mizoram again. It is clear that those who refuse to migrate to Tripura on the eve of tension would not flee their home in Mizoram whether if there is any new issue or not because their life and culture, economic condition and even their religion is now strongly bond with the Mizo society.

The case of Saphun and Sandai strengthen the relation between Mizo and Bru after tension and conflict. But one important thing is that in every village the Bru houses are not located within the local area or locality of Mizo houses. In other word, most of the Bru houses in every western village are located in one place comprising one locality and in some villages their houses are constructed on the

outskirt of the village. This construction of house and neighbouring pattern with the Mizo reveal the true nature of ethnic relation after the tension. Relation is good as claimed by many respondents but the detach locality for the Bru, the separate house construction type for the Bru clearly show that their relation is partially good. If their relation is good as claimed by them, there would be no separate locality for the Bru people. But again this is their free will and not force by the Mizo because most of the Bru people chose their construction place in which they decided to live in one locality to enjoy all the available tradition and practices together.

Although there is a difference with the locality pattern or procedure but the Mizo and Bru children play together in the society, listened and sung a Mizo song together. All the means of communication between them is a Mizo language which of course increase the feeling of fraternity and integrity as one society. To have more relations and connectivity, the leaders of civil societies in western villages had an unusual idea in which they made the Bru people participate in the Mizo Civil Society, especially in Young Mizo Association. In Zawlnuam village there is two localities mainly dominated by the Bru people and the leaders of YMA stratifies these localities as a part of Zawlnuam YMA branch. The YMA leaders further named their locality as Khuangchera Section and Zampuimanga Section respectively after the name of traditional Mizo hero in which one Bru respondent is appointed as the Finance Secretary of Zampuimanga Section. This inclusive policy slowly abolished the ethnic feeling and there is a hope within their former leaders that this ethnic feeling will perish and will convert them into Mizo society. This inclusive policy is witnesses at all sampled villages.

**Fig. 1.2**

**A Mizo gentlemen and a Bru lady talk together beside Langkaih River, Mizoram-Tripura border**



(Picture taken by the researcher at Bungthuam (Mizoram)-Uria Chora (Tripura) border on 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct, 2015)

The social relation between Mizo and Bru reaches in a new era after tension in term of security and civil societies. The Mizo civil society tries their best to *Mizoise* them but somehow the Bru themselves detach from the Mizo hoping that there could be another issue. Before there was no serious ethnic tension to the society, there was cooperation in term of business in food products, cooperation in security and any threat to their society. The Mizo civil society leaders of the western villages claimed that before 1997 there was a good cooperation in terms of selling liquor, food products and domestic animals. If there was any crime committed by the Bru against the Mizo or crimes committed by the Mizo against the Bru, the civil societies of both the parties work together to find out and punish the culprit.

Sometime the selling of liquor by the Bru to Mizo made several problems like robbing and unstable social life. The Joint Action Committee (JAC) of the western villages intended to remove the selling of drugs, alcohol or any other intoxicating drinks from their society to prevent the popular crimes. The first action which the Mizo leaders must initiate is to consult the Bru people to cooperate them in their intention to remove such kinds of crimes and intoxicating drinks from the society. On this case, the leaders of civil society told the researcher that the Bru people always obey the request made by the Mizo leaders and no Bru people sold their liquor to any Mizo. But this entire situation seems to change after the tension and conflict between them in which the Bru people does not comply with request of the Mizo leaders, nor the Bru people quit their jobs in selling liquor to the Mizo drunkards.



As already stated in the previous chapter, the *Permanent Settlers* and *Repatriated Bru Families* are very different in relation with the Mizo. Being the newly repatriated with the feeling of strange, the Repatriated Bru Families had less relation than the Permanent Settlers. This difference in relation pattern with the Mizo is because of the difference in the living condition between them. The Permanent Settlers being refused to migrate to Tripura had more chances than those who flee Mizoram in terms of land settlement for construction of house, housing pattern, jhum products, education, political development, and overall a better chance to improve their life condition. These changes in living condition altered the system of relation with the *Repatriated Bru Families* which in turn gave them a more chance of social relation with the Mizo society.

The difference in relation between the *Bru in Camps* people and *Tripura Bru Settlers* with the Mizo is very attractive. Usually, when one committed any crime at outside the state boundary in which he/she resides or if someone committed any crime at another state which he/she do not belong, legally speaking the state civil society do not have authority nor power over that culprit or guilty person. But it does not apply in the case between Mizo and Tripura *Bru Settlers*. The researcher witnessed five Bru in Uria Chora (Tripura) who had gone fishing in Mizoram using the technique of poisoning the river which is against the rule and law of the Mizo civil societies. By the time the civil societies found out that crime, five Bru gentlemen from Uria Chora village had already reach their village and already sold their fish which was caught from Mizoram by poisoning.

One of the most interesting issues is that the Mizo civil societies have power over the Langkaih River which is the Tripura State boundary. In fact, the civil societies have power to punish the culprit over the Tripura Bru Settlers. When the five persons from Uria Chora who poisoned the River in Mizoram was found out, the civil societies told them to pay Rs 3000/- each which they should submit it to the President of Bungthuam Young Mizo Association (YMA). Although the culprits hesitate to pay their fines, they are afraid of accusing them as responsible for the deterioration of ethnic relations with the Mizo. Finally, they pay all their debts to the President of Bungthuam YMA without making any further complaint.

This kind of information and cases shows that the relation between the Mizo and the Tripura Bru Settler is good or we can say that it had never been gone bad. But the only problem in terms of ethnic relation is between the Mizo and Bru in Camps people who eagerly search for committing crimes like robbing in Mizoram.

*Ethnic Transformation versus Mizoisation:* Although there were numbers of cases like Sandai and Saphun which is the main tools and technique for transformation of Bru culture into Mizo society, this cases increase after the tension was changes with Government repatriation programme. This is not a forceful transformation but it is a choice, will of the transformer. Gradually it would take two to three generation to complete. Different scholars and writers under Social Sciences discipline had already used the term '*Mizoisation*' to identify this process. But sometime it is derogatory for the tribe like Paite, Hmar, Mara and Lai in which it is

only perceived as a Lushai centric.<sup>8</sup> In this transformation process Sandai (friendship pact) and Saphun is the means of conversion into a Mizo society, religion, culture and tradition. This kind of cases is happening throughout Mizoram but the case of Bru is different in which those who transform by Saphun means they accepted the Mizo community, lifestyle and tradition and it is the choice of the people.

There is a difference of transformation system between the *Permanent Settlers* and *Repatriated Bru Families*. The former is seems to be a free will, a free choice transformation while the later can be regarded as a push towards Mizo society by the civil society to remove their ethnic feeling. The *Bru in Camps* people and the *Tripura Bru Settlers* are the only people who are free from transformation and the process of *Mizoisation*.

To conclude the present status of relation, there is no further threat or danger as claimed by many writers and media; there is no further serious ethnic tension but a little hidden tension which is mainly cause by the crime of the *Bru in Camps* people. It may also be said that numbers of Bru, let say most of the Bru people in the Camps wanted to repatriate but the fear of their leaders prevent or block them from programme of repatriation. Some of the respondents also mentioned that if the Government cease all the rehabilitation and assistance funds to the Bru refugees, most of them would be likely to repatriate in Mizoram by themselves. The primary data, especially observation data indicates that if the Bru did not fled Mizoram they may be in a position to participate in the decision making process of State Government.

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<sup>8</sup> Roluahpuia, Political Turmoil in Mizoram: Resolving the Hmar Question (Economic & Political Weekly: 2015). Stable URL: <http://www.epw.in/reports-states/political-turmoil-mizoram.html>. Retrieved on 17 Nov 2015.

### **Role of the Civil Society on Bru Issue**

The civil society mainly comprises of Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP) and Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP). There are two different student wings known as the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) who comprises the elder organization in which the Mizo Student Union (MSU) is the younger organization. Lately, the newly student organization of Mizo Student Union (MSU) also play active role as a civil society in different socio-political issues of Mizoram. All these organizations had different sub-headquarters at all eight districts of Mizoram in which Aizawl is used as their main Headquarter. The main task of these groups/organizations is to fight for their interest in which sometime they pressurize the Government and also are known as pressure groups. They not only fight for their interest but also fought for the interest of the Mizo people in which all the threats in Mizo society are countered by them.

As already mentioned in the second chapter, it was the MZP of Mamit district that firstly reacted against the demand made by the Bru people. Moreover, it was also the YMA and MZP who made several resolutions rejecting the demands of the Bru in which the state Government could not supersede the will of these organizations. It was these civil societies who demanded the removed of all Bru voters from the list of electoral roll in Mizoram which the Government reject it. But later due to the directions made by the Election Commission of India some Bru voters who left Mizoram are deleted from the electoral roll of Mizoram.

Again, it was the role of the civil societies who decided to implement the policy of Non-intervention between Mizo and Bru. When the ethnic tension and conflict reach its zenith, it was the civil societies who stood up for preservation of peace and security in the society. They voluntarily checked all the sensitive societies to counter all kinds of threats for the society whether it was caused by a Mizo or Bru people. As far as the usual objectives of almost every voluntary organizations in Mizoram is to preserve the Mizo culture and custom, ensure peace and security in the society, there can be no serious threats which would evolve within the Mizo society. In other words, all the social threats and instability are vanquished by the civil society in which it is likely to be a free social threat society.

In the initial state of Bru repatriation, the leaders of Bru community demanded that they should be repatriated in one village and all of them in the Six Camps would be repatriated. The civil societies felt that it would not be wise to group them in one big village and all of them in the camps are not a genuine resident of Mizoram. In this case, the civil societies opposed the Government intention to repatriate the Bru into one big village and the Government also processed according to the suggestions of the civil societies. Accordingly, all the repatriated families are put in them at different villages to live with the Mizo and other minor ethnic tribe. In many cases, some of them are repatriated at the erstwhile villages where they are settled before they fled to Tripura. In other words, some of them are put at their former villages where they lived their life before ethnic tension rose up.

Who are the people to repatriate? This was another problem faced by the State Government in 2005. The civil societies came up with suitable suggestions in which the Government should use the 1995 electoral roll to identify those who

would be repatriated.<sup>9</sup> This suggestion was rejected by the Bru leaders but the Government extended its identification process by adding the ration card issued by the Mizoram Government as a criteria and tool for identification. Accordingly, the repatriation process was initiated from 2009 till 2015. Again, all the persons, families in the camps are not repatriated, only those who have identification documents suggested by the civil societies have the legitimacy to re-settle in Mizoram.

When the last repatriation process was ended on September 2015, the Government is likely to stop all its rehabilitation and assistance for the *Bru in Camps people*. But the Election Commission of India (ECI) issued an order to Mizoram Government to held electoral roll summary revision process in Tripura six Relief Camps. The order of ECI was strongly opposed by the civil societies in which they claimed that those who refuse to repatriate in the last repatriation process should remain in the camps. The civil societies do not understand the action of the ECI which is electoral roll summary revision in the camps because none of Bru people showed up for identification process in the last repatriation. The civil societies believed that most of the Bru people choose to stay in Tripura that is why they refused the Government last repatriation process. They also stated that if they choose to stay in Tripura there is no need to held electoral roll summary revision in the camps and they intended to block the way of the Government agents to revise this electoral roll.

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<sup>9</sup> "Major State-level NGOs review Bru issues", *Highlander* (April 6, 2005).

Accordingly, on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2015, the civil societies assemble at Mamit town and try to block the agents of the Government whose main task is to revise electoral roll in Tripura camps. The Agents of the Government who are trying to conduct a Summary Revision of electoral roll were blocked at Mamit by the group of civil societies on 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2015. There was a counter attack between the Police forces and the civil societies in which the Police forces try to clear the road where the people made blockage. The Government officials demanded to the leaders of the civil societies to let them go three times, but the civil societies did not comply and reject those demands. The Government officials returned to the DC office around 4:30 pm in which the talks and attempted to pass the blockage lasted during the whole day. The civil societies divided themselves into three groups at three places to block the way to Tripura.

As a result, no further programme could be implemented due to different obstacles made by the civil societies, the agents of the Government inform the Election Commission of India (ECI) about their problem. Meanwhile the leaders of civil societies sent a group of delegations to ECI to resolve the issue. Still today, there are no further directions or order from the Central authority as well as from the ECI on Bru electoral roll summary revision issue.

To sum up the current chapter, the causes of ethnic tension between Mizo and Bru in Mizoram can be regarded as the ethnic consciousness among the Bru people in late 1990s. The ethnic consciousness can also be regarded as the implication of Christianity among the Bru people which imparted modern education among the Bru tribe. Since ethnic consciousness was imparted to the Bru culture, movement for the development of their tribe is an imperative task for the

Bru leaders. The formation of Reang Democratic Convention Party (RDCP) and Bru National Union (BNU) which demanded Autonomous District Council (ADC) within Mizoram may also be regarded as the beginning of ethnic tension between the Mizo civil societies and the Bru people. The ethnic tension between Mizo and Bru had tremendous impact on the Bru socio-political, economic, education, health, religious and culture. The present status of ethnic relation between Mizo and Bru can be seen as partially well, but sometime ethnic due to some Bru miscreants, ethnic relations almost transform into serious tension and conflict.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

To sum up the research work, the main objectives of the study are to find out the causes and impact of ethnic tension and conflict between Mizo and Bru in Mizoram. The objectives also deal with the critical analysis of the ethnic relations between Mizo and Bru before the tension and conflict broke out. It continues its analysis after the tensions as well as the ethnic relations after the Bru people migrated to Tripura and restore their lives in Mizoram. To find out all these issues, a field observation and interview was conducted at Rengdil, Zawlnuam, Bungthuam, Mamit, Pathiantlang, Zamuang, Saikhawthir, Kawtethawveng, Bawngva and Uria Chora villages. The field study was commenced on 5<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 and was completed within the same month, which was 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2015. The Primary data are carefully analysed as below.

The origin of the Bru tribe is yet to be finalized but most of the secondary data indicates that they are the Arakan (Burma) origin. From Arakan hills they migrated to Bangladesh and then slowly entered the Hills of Tiperrah (Tripura). During all these period, they were presided by their traditional chief called the *Rai* and it was in Tripura which made them slowly abandon their traditional social administrative system. In Tripura they were under the guidance of the Tripura Maharaja in which they protested against the Maharaja that made them to leave Tripura and headed for the then Lushai Hills.

The meaning of *Bru* simple means *man* but the Bru themselves claimed that it means the whole Bru community. In Tripura, they are known as *Reang* and this nomenclature is still impressed on the list of Schedule Tribe in Mizoram and Tripura. The Mizo in Mizoram identify them as *Tuikuk* which is regarded as a derogatory by them. The Bru themselves also claimed that the tribe are further divided into 14 sub-tribes such as Apeto, Msha, Chorkhi, Molsoi, Meshka, Toimoiyaphak, Noh Khan, Yak Stan, Chopreng, RaiChak, Rai Son, Reang, Tawmayakchok, Wairem.

The traditional Bru religion is known as Hindu by many writers and journalist but there are many differences from the practice of Hinduism. According to their traditional practices, there are many sacrifices to please their gods and goddess. Most of the Bru in Mizoram are now converted into Christian due to the influence of various evangelists sent by the Presbyterian and Baptist Church of Mizoram. Inter caste marriage is very common among the Bru in which the Mizo gentlemen marry a Bru lady are witnessed in almost every visited village. But a Bru gentleman marry a Mizo lady is very rare.

The primary and secondary data were analyzed and compared in which the former data which was extracted from an interview at Zawlnuam village claimed that the Bru tribe entered the western Mizoram in around early 1930s. But the secondary data extracted from the written application of Bunglemun chief to the then Superintendent of Lushai Hills claimed that the Bru tribe settled at western Mizo villages in 1936. The comparison between the primary and secondary data indicates that the Bru tribe enter the then Lushai Hills in around 1930 – 1935.

Many writers also stated that the Bru people settled in Mizoram only after they had a religious outbreak against the Maharaja of Tripura in 1942.

Although there are some minor issues like invasion of Bru villages by some Mizo villages but they were only local issues which never created any further serious tensions and conflicts. There were no serious ethnic grievances, tensions and conflicts between the Mizo and Bru in Mizoram till the end of 1997. The formation of Reang Democratic Convention Party (RDCP) in 1990, the formation of Bru National Union (BNU) in 1994 was an important landmark for the Bru tribe which broke up ethnic consciousness for the Bru people. The Mizoram electoral roll revision in 1993 – 1995 and the Bru National Union (BNU) conference in 1997 at Saipului village were regarded as the beginning of serious ethnic consciousness and the emergence of ethnic tension between Mizo and Bru in Mizoram.

The Reang Democratic Convention Party (RDCP) was the first ever organization who intended to demand and achieve an Autonomous District Council for the Bru people. Later, the Bru National Union (BNU) revised this demand and formed the Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF) which is an armed wing to achieve the goal of BNU. The demand of BNU which was the formation of Autonomous District Council for the Bru people in the western part of Mizoram was strongly opposed by the MZU meeting at Rengdil on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 1997. On the next day, 15<sup>th</sup> October around 200 Bru from Rengdil village migrated to Tripura which was before the killing of Lalzawmliana. Then, the first activity of the BNLF was the killing of Lalzawmliana on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1997 that triggered serious ethnic conflict between the Mizo and Bru.

The main issue of this ethnic problem between Mizo and Bru in Mamit District is the demand raised by the Bru leaders which was to change their tribe nomenclature into *Bru* instead of *Tuikuk* in Mizoram. Furthermore, in terms of Government repatriation programme, the Bru leaders also demanded a two years free rations to each repatriated families, security deployment for every repatriated villages which the Government had already achieved. Moreover, the overall Bru people claimed that the Rs 80,000/- assistant funds for repatriated families is too meagre in which they demanded to increase up to Rs 100,000/- for building up their new lives in Mizoram.

The demands raised by the Bru leaders are not yet achieved by the Government but a free ration of one year was given to every repatriated family with Rs 80,000/- for construction of their house. Although there was minor repatriation on the eve of conflict in 1998 but the first formal repatriation was initiated after the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of Mizoram and Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF). This MoU was signed in 2005 which paved the way for the restoration of Bru lifes in Mizoram but due to the 2009's Bungthum incident the repatriation was postponed to the next year.

The migration of Bru people began from 1997 and it continue till 2009. During these periods there was migration and self-repatriation in which the Government of Mizoram initiated some minor repatriation process. After the signing of MoU between Mizoram Government and Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF) in 2005 and with Bru Liberation Front of Mizoram (BLFM) in 2006 respectively, the serious ethnic tensions entered a new era. The repatriation of Bru

people made tensions ease for a short period but the demands made by the leaders of the *Bru in Camps* people create some minor ill feeling among the Mizo. As far as these demands are not yet achieve by the Government of Mizoram, there are a hidden tensions between Mizo and Bru within Mizoram and in Tripura.

By 2010, the first batch of repatriation was initiated and continued till September 2015, which was the seventh batch/phase of repatriation. There are 1277 families comprising 6749 Bru people repatriated till the last batch out of around 37,000 refugees in the Camps. As far as there was no single family was repatriated in the last batch, the civil societies believed that the Bru people choose to stay in Tripura. The civil societies on November 2015 also opposed the order of Election Commission of India to conduct a summary revision of electoral roll in Tripura Bru Camps.

It was decided that Mamit district shall be the study area because most of the Bru people reside within Mamit District. But there are numbers of families living inside Kolasib, Lunglei and Aizawl district. The geographical area of Mamit district is 3025.75 sq.kms comprising around 80 villages and those of 40 per cent was a mixed population village. Within the district there are Tlawng, Langkaih, Tut and Teirei Rivers which would be suitable for the Bru people. The entire area of Mamit District is located in a low place and fishery, betel nut and Red Oil Palm plantation is the main sources of income.

There are two different sources about the settlement of Bru in Mamit district. The first one is that when the Bru tribe had a religious uprising against the Tripura Maharaja, they told their problems to the chief of North Sabual village on 1942. The North Sabual (Mizoram) chief agreed to help them at all available

means which is regarded as the beginning of Bru settlement in Mizoram. The other source claimed that the Bru people had already settled in Mizoram before they had a religious uprising against the Tripura Maharaja. To prove this fact there is numbers of an application letters demanding to resolve the Bru problems, demanding the settlement of Bru families in Mizo village, written by different Mizo chiefs to the then Superintendent of Lushai Hills.

The interaction between Mizo and Bru had tremendously impact the socio-cultural life of the Bru people. In fact, due to the Bru people entered Mizoram and lived inside Mizo village, their social life was gradually transformed and there was ethnic relations in terms of economic, political, social, and religion. This ethnic relationship slowly entered a new phase in which the socio – political consciousness among the Bru people altered ethnic relation between Mizo and Bru in Mizoram. The ethnic relations can be classified into three parts such as relations before the tension, relations during the tension and conflict, relations after tension and conflict or present status of relation.

The agricultural or economic relations before the tension mainly indicate the selling of Bru labour forces to Mizo farmer/cultivator. The Bru people are hardworking, tough and skilful in agriculture/Jhum field, this has attracted many Mizo farmers to employ them to carry heavy agricultural products. In social relation, a friendship pact called Sandai and a Bru festival called Buisu strengthen the ethnic relation between Mizo and Bru. Saphun is the term used by Mizo which is used as ethnic transformation tools from another ethnic groups into Mizo custom, culture, society and tradition. Saphun is very common between Mizo and Bru in which the later was slowly transform into Mizo society by Saphun process.

In terms of political and religion, there was no discrimination and exclusion between the two in which the Bru people can perform all their religious ceremony without any hindrances from the Mizo society and in turn the Mizo politicians used them as a vote bank during elections.

The ethnic relations during social tensions and conflict can be regarded as one of the worst case of ethnic relation in Mizoram. Both the Mizo and Bru people fear of themselves and no Bru women or no Mizo women alone were able to go to forest or their jhum field. To suppress the hidden fear and tension, the civil society implemented a policy of Non-intervention programme. This programme was initiated for the first time in 2008 and continues till 2013. During this unstable social condition, the civil societies prohibit all kinds of communication and cooperation with the Bru families, persons, villages with the Mizo society. The Non-intervention programme could not be implemented any further because of the complaints made by the Mizo businessmen as well as by the Zampui Hill Ranges (Tripura) Mizo villagers.

After the serious tension and conflict was over, there are four different types of Bru people such as the *Permanent Settlers* of Mizoram, the *Bru in Camps* people who migrated to Tripura due to fear of ethnic conflict and violence, the *Repatriated Bru Families* are those who migrated and decided to move back to Mizoram and start a new life there, and lastly the *Tripura Bru Settlers* who are neither Mizoram Bru nor the Camps people, nor the repatriated one but they are the permanent settler of Tripura Bru villages.

Thus, the Bru in camps or camps people altered the ethnic relations between Mizo and Bru after tensions and conflict. There are hidden tensions between Mizo and *Bru in Camps* people, in which the later never hesitate to commit such crime in Mizoram like robbing of cash or kind, fishing at Mizo fishpond without the permission from the owner, harvesting jhum products without the knowledge of the Mizo farmer etc. All these kinds of crimes increase hatred of Bru people by the Mizo society. But the Mizoram Bru and *Tripura Bru Settlers* never committed such crimes as they used to claim that due to the *Bru in Camps* people all their pride and honesty were lost to Mizo people and they feel ashamed of it.

As already stated in the third chapter, ethnic conflict between Mizo and Bru in Mamit district was started by the end of 1997 following the killing of Lalzawmliana by Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF) at Dampa Tiger Reserve Forest. The tensions continue till the killing of Zarzokima in 2009 at Bungthuam village by Bru Revolutionary Union (BRU). The MNF Government initiated the peace talks with the Bru militant groups in which the Congress Government in 2008 continued this peace talks. As in 2005, the Government of Mizoram and the BNLF signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and by the next year the Bru Liberation Front of Mizoram (BLFM) and the Mizoram Government also signed peace treaty.

After the settlement of peace pact with the militant groups, the process for repatriation of Bru displaced people in Tripura was initiated. To help the Government in repatriation process, the Mizoram Bru Displaced People Forum (MBDPF) and Bru Coordination Committee (BCC) was also set up by the Bru



leaders. The Government of Mizoram prepared a Road Map for rehabilitation of Bru people which contain details about the rehabilitation, infrastructure, and assistance etc for the repatriated families.

From analysing the different data, the causes of tensions between Mizo and Bru can be regarded as the ethnic consciousness among the Bru people. Due to their ethno – political consciousness the Bru people formed an organization like Reang Democratic Convention Party (RDCP) and Bru National Union (BNU) which fought for their ethnic uprising. Later, the formation of Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF), Bru Liberation Front of Mizoram (BLFM) and Bru National Union (BRU) to achieve their goals did intensify the ethnic tensions. The activities of these militant groups in turn created the ethnic conflicts between Mizo and Bru which cause to flee of as much as 37,000 displaced Bru in Tripura.

The main impact of this ethnic tensions and conflicts can be classified into Social, Political & Governance, Economic, and Education. In terms of social impact, the Bru as well as Mizo people suffered the tensions and conflict. During social tensions their society were not stable due to fear of ethnic conflict and violence, children are told by their parent not to play too far away from their home. Activities like kidnapping, killing, arson, ambush and extortion are very common in the society which threatened the social life. After the repatriation process, the social lives of Bru repatriated families in Mizoram were very worse because they were not in a position to construct a comfortable house and infrastructure.

Moreover, the scarcity of available jhum/agricultural lands for agricultural products had deteriorated; the economic conditions of the Bru people are very unsatisfactory. The Mizoram Government could not produce enough land for their agricultural practice in which the staple food of the Bru tribe which is rice production is also unsatisfactory. Moreover, as they are not independent in agricultural products, they could not carry out properly or implement all their traditional practices like Buisu which was the main tools of social relations before the outbreak of tensions and conflicts.

The social tensions and conflicts also affected the education of the Bru people. All Bru adults who migrated to Tripura due to fear of ethnic conflict and violence are uneducated. But their children got formal and regular education after tension and restoration of their lives in Mizoram. As far as most of the adult Bru are uneducated, they are easy to shake their mind and easy to convinced them by their leaders.

The uneducated youth and adult also affected their political consciousness in Mizoram in which the politicians in Mizoram used them as a vote banks in elections. The Member of Village Councils and politicians in Mizoram do not pay serious attention to the Bru people in which all the political assistance are not available for the Bru people. Most of the respondents from the *Repatriated Bru* claimed that the Government of Mizoram and political parties of Mizoram never care for their socio-economic development in Mizoram.

During the tensions, the civil societies can cooperate with the *Tripura Bru Settlers* to find out and prevent any further crimes by the Bru in Mizoram. In fact, the civil societies had the power to find out and punish any culprit in Tripura. To make use of this power over the Langkaih River (Tripura), the civil societies could also prevent all illegal migrations and infiltration in Mizoram. But to achieve this prevention process, the civil societies have to make a good relation and cooperation with the *Tripura Bru Settlers*.

The issue of illegal migration was one of the major problems for Mizoram which later causes social tension and political instability in western Mizoram. As believed by many Mizo in Mizoram, the illegal migration and infiltration also did cause the formation of Chakma Autonomous District Council. To check the future or upcoming illegal migration and infiltration, the role of the civil societies is very important because it is the civil societies who know to protect its culture, traditions, customs and ethnic identity by all means.

The civil societies had a great role to play in bringing peace, security and cooperation with the Bru people. If the civil societies in Mizoram had agreed to cooperate with the *Tripura Bru Settlers*, the numbers of crimes committed by the Bru people in Mizoram could likely to reduce crimes and misunderstanding. The illegal Bru migration and infiltration in Mizoram will be another social problem in Mizoram. If the Central Government stop all its rehabilitation and assistance in terms of funds and other resources, most of the *Bru in Camps* people will be likely to repatriate themselves without the consent of Mizoram Government. To prevent such kind of further issues, the Mizo civil societies have to establish a strong social relationship with the Bru civil society in Mizoram as well as in Tripura. Only

through this way, the further or upcoming social and hidden tension can be prevented.

The Bru people in Mizoram as well as in Tripura had already formed their own civil society known as the Young Bru Association (YBA). If the civil societies in Mizoram agree to make a close relationship with Young Bru Association, such crimes like robbing, arson, extortion, fishing at fishpond without the permission of the owner, harvesting jhum products without the knowledge of the Mizo farmer etc could be reduce and prevent from happening.

The role of civil societies towards the *Repatriated Bru Families* and the *Permanent Settlers* of Bru in Mizoram is also another important role. Now, the leaders of the civil societies tries to remove ethnic feeling among the Bru people by participating them as a separate sections in Young Mizo Association (YMA). This inclusive policy must be continuing without fail to establish strong social ties between the two parties.

To prevent the ethno – social tension and conflict, the Mizo civil societies did great tasks during social instability. The role of the civil societies will be responsible for the prevention of any further ethnic tension and conflict in Mizoram. If the civil societies in Mizoram are given more space to play stronger role and full support from the people, it would prevent the further emergence of social problems whether if it is ethnic issue or any other problems. The role of the civil societies during social turbulence is remarkable and significant in promoting peace, security, cordial relation and a stable society.

It is the task of the Government to support and co-operate the civil societies of Mizoram in case of such inclusive policies to remove ethnic feelings and issues between the Mizo and Bru in Mizoram. Again, it is the task of the Government to give directions to its agencies and employee not to make any discrimination on grounds of ethnic, race, caste, culture, religion, tradition and custom among the Mizo and Bru. If the Bru minority ethnic group in Mizoram feel of exclusion on grounds of Government's activities and policies, it will be difficult for the civil societies as well as for the Government itself to implement any inclusive policies.

## Appendix 1

Letters submitted by Lalkhuma Sailo, Bughmun chief to the then Superintendent of Lushai Hills demanding the settlement of Bru families in his village.

(29) To the Superintendent

Lushai Hills

Kapu. Khamgaih takin, ka dil hi  
mi lo ngaih tirah sak ang the  
Ka ram chhung dangkaih phai ah.  
Tukukh in, anam mi han dil a  
Hrangphunga serhmun dalbung-  
tukkalh. Ngurhantanga Karkhak  
than kungakengdil Hrangkhunga  
Hripkha. Hing to path han an nei  
hlam a an tha hle in ka hriha  
Ka duk ve em em a  
Kapu Khamgaih takin, tukukh  
anam tir theik na  
thei la ka laum



g thu an

Lalkhuma, Sailo,  
Lal Bughmun

15.12.1936

To Lufth  
Lan

AFO

## Appendix 2

RTI answer sought by the researcher regarding the number of Bru repatriated families during the 7<sup>th</sup> Batch.

**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER  
MAMIT DISTRICT : MAMIT**

\*\*\*\*\*

No.J.11011/88/2014-DC(M) : Mamit, the 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.

To,

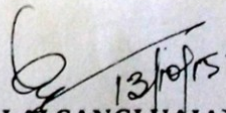
Mr.Lalengkima,  
Chhiahtlang Venghlun  
Serchhip District, Mizoram.

Subject: Reply to information sought under RTI Act, 2005

Sir,

In replying to your queries regarding information about the latest Bru repatriation (7<sup>th</sup> Batch) which was held between June – September, 2015, I hereby inform you that during the 7<sup>th</sup> Batch Bru repatriation no single family turn-up for repatriation, hence number of Bru family(s) repatriated during the 7<sup>th</sup> Batch repatriation is 'Nil'.

Yours faithfully,

  
(C.LALSANGLUAIA)

State Public Information Officer  
&  
Sub-Divisional Officer (Sadar)  
Mamit District; Mamit.

### Appendix 3

RTI answer sought by the researcher regarding the number of Bru repatriated families from 1<sup>st</sup> Batch to 6<sup>th</sup> Batch.

**No.J.11027/1/2015-HM (BRU)/RTI  
GOVERNMENT OF MIZORAM  
HOME DEPARTMENT**

\*\*\*

*Dated Aizawl, the 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2015.*

To,

**Lalengkima,**  
s/o C. Pawlliana,  
Venghlun, Chhiahtlang,  
Ph : 9612307804.

**Subj. : Information under RTI Act, 20 5.**

Sir,

In inviting a reference to your RTI Application dt.13/8/2015 on matters relating to Reang (Bru) Repatriation, please find enclosed herewith Abstract of Reang (Bru) Repatriation from Tripura to Mizoram – Batch Wise repatriation as on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2015. It may be mentioned that Final Report in respect of the 7<sup>th</sup> Batch of Repatriation which is ongoing could not yet be ascertained.

*Enclo: As stated.*

Yours faithfully,

*Rthwale 25/8/15*  
**(R. LALTHAZUALA)**

SPIO & Deputy Secretary to the Govt. of Mizoram,  
Home Department.



# ABSTRACT OF REANG (BRU) REPATRIATION FROM TRIPURA TO MIZORAM

## **BATCH WISE AS ON 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2015**

• Mamit Dist :

Sl. No.	Batch Wise	No. of Families	Adult	Minor	Total No. of Population
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1 <sup>st</sup> Batch (2 <sup>nd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> Nov., 2010)	53	215	62	277
2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Batch (19 <sup>th</sup> Nov., 2010)	48	158	59	217
3	Self-repatriated (between 20 <sup>th</sup> Nov., 2010 – 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan., 2011)	221	750	311	1061
4	Self-repatriated (between 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan – 28 <sup>th</sup> Feb., 2011)	60	187	103	290
5	3 <sup>rd</sup> Batch (12 <sup>th</sup> Apr., – 19 <sup>th</sup> May, 2011)	280	1155	445	1600
6	Self-repatriated (between 20 <sup>th</sup> Feb., – 22 <sup>nd</sup> June., 2011)	137	526	148	674
7	Self-repatriated (between June, 2011 – March, 2012)	134	565	175	740
8	4 <sup>th</sup> Batch (26 <sup>th</sup> Apr., – 7 <sup>th</sup> May, 2012)	7	28	13	41
9	5 <sup>th</sup> Batch (30 <sup>th</sup> Sept., – 9 <sup>th</sup> Oct., 2013)	103	438	207	645
10	6 <sup>th</sup> Batch (17 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> June, 2014)	197	698	324	1022
11	Self-repatriated (between March, 2012 – 17 <sup>th</sup> June, 2014)	69	301	97	398
12	Self-repatriated (after 6 <sup>th</sup> Batch.)	249	917	356	1273
		<p><i>Note: Disbursement of rehabilitation assistance is underway and the number of families out of 249 families reported may or may not decrease depending upon the ability by concerned families to submit Tripura Ration Card. Final report is awaited from DC, Mamit.</i></p>			
<b>Total =</b>		<b>1558</b>	<b>5938</b>	<b>2300</b>	<b>8238</b>

• Kolasib Dist. :

Self-repatriated from 21. 12. 2012 upto 13. 5. 2015:

(a)	No. of families	::	64
(b)	No. of Adults	::	221
(c)	No. of Minors	::	114

**SELF REPATRIATED (DURING 3. 1. 2011 TO 20. 12. 2012)**

(a)	No. of family	::	15
(b)	No. of Adult	::	41
(c)	No. of Minor	::	22
	<b>Total population (b+c)</b>	::	<b>63</b>

	Date	
5-		

**SELF-REPATRIATED (DURING 6<sup>TH</sup> BATCH)**

(a)	No. of family	::	17
(b)	No. of Adult	::	69
(c)	No. of Minor	::	40
	<b>Total population (b+c)</b>	::	<b>109</b>

**SELF-REPATRIATED (AFTER 6<sup>TH</sup> BATCH)**

(a)	No. of family	::	32
(b)	No. of Adult	::	111
(c)	No. of Minor	::	52
	<b>Total population (b+c)</b>	::	<b>163</b>

Tripurite talks  
on Jan 30, 2015

Note:

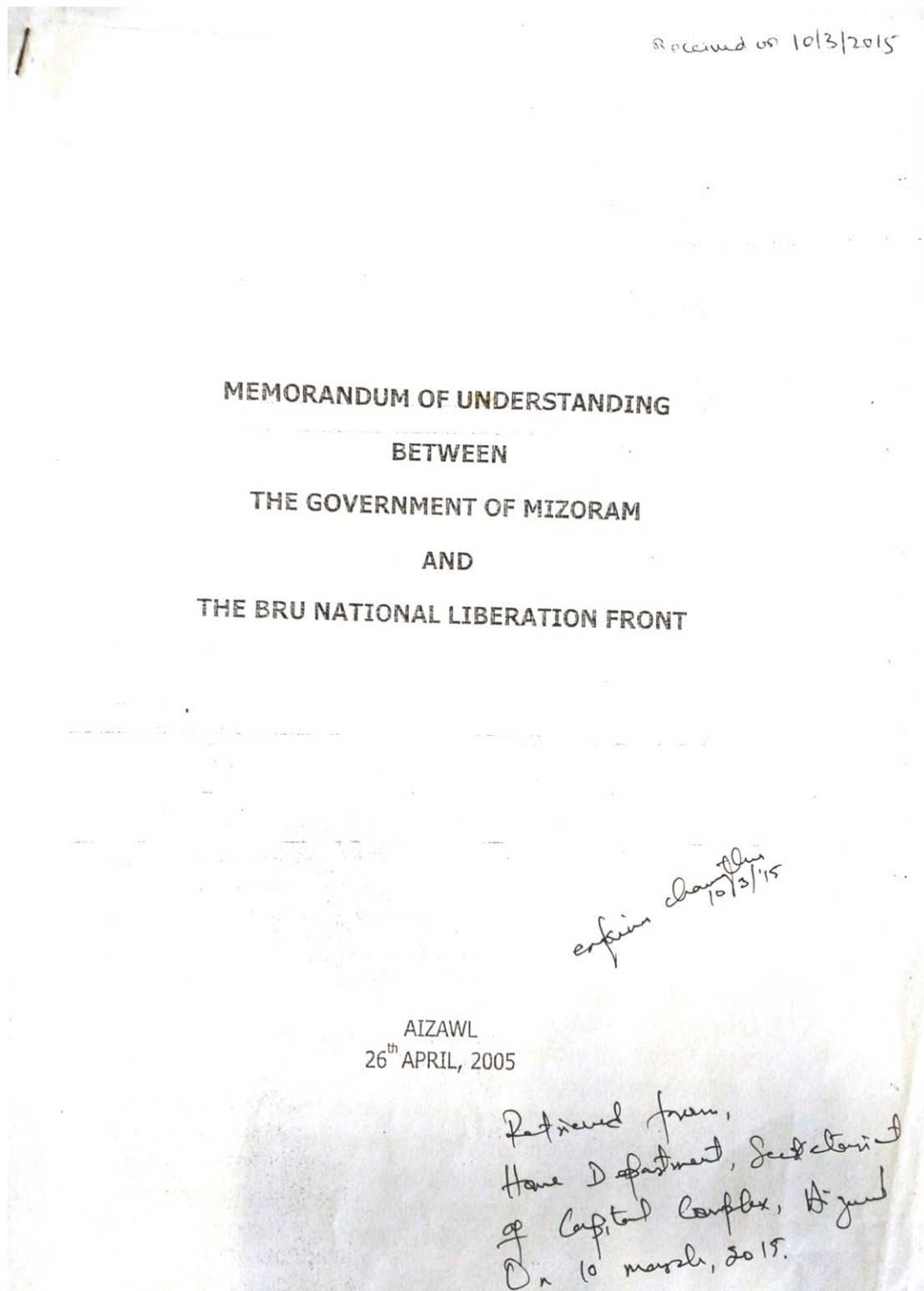
Disbursement of rehabilitation assistance is underway and the number of families out of 32 families reported may or may not decrease depending upon the ability by concerned families to submit Tripura Ration Card. Final report is awaited from DC, Kolasib.

**PROGRESSIVE TOTAL MAMIT & KOLASIB)**

(a)	No. of family	::	1558+64	=	1622
(b)	No. of Adult	::	5938+221	=	6159
(c)	No. of Minor	::	2300+114	=	2414
	<b>Total population (b+c)</b>	::	<b>8238+335</b>	=	<b>8573</b>

#### Appendix 4

Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Mizoram and Bru  
National Liberation Front (BNLF) on April 2005.





**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN  
THE GOVERNMENT OF MIZORAM AND  
BRU NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (BNLF)**

Following political movement of the Bru National Union (BNU) for setting up of an Autonomous District Council in the areas predominantly inhabited by the Bru Community in the Western belt of Mizoram in 1997, and in the wake of local tension following the death of a Forest Game-Watcher in the hands of suspected insurgents at Persang village, a large number of Bru families of Mizoram left their homes for Tripura in the month of October, 1997. Several Bru families joined them later in 1998. They were treated as refugees by the Government of Tripura and the Government of India and were lodged in 6 different camps. The Brus in the camps faced many hardships in spite of Central assistance being provided to them. The Government of Mizoram being fully aware of the pathetic condition of the Brus in the Refugee Camps took several measures to bring them back. However, due to formation of an underground group namely, the Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF) who resorted to armed insurgency, the Government decided to engage in talks before repatriating the Brus. Leaders of Bru Welfare Association of Mizoram (BWAM) and some of the Church leaders were approached to act as intermediaries between the Government and the BNLF. Their efforts resulted in the Government and the BNLF holding several rounds of talk. The first meeting was held in Aizawl on 7.9.2001.

In a Memorandum dated 18.4.2001 submitted to the Government of Mizoram, the Bru National Liberation Front demanded creation of an Autonomous District Council under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. In their Memorandum, another 9 different points of demand were listed. These demands were discussed in the first meeting. Representatives of the Government of Mizoram rejected the demand of the BNLF for Autonomous District Council that was later replaced with demand for a Regional Council. During the later round of talks when the BNLF were informed of the Government's

*Deang*

*SP*

*idling*

contd...2/-

non-acceptance of such demand, the BNLF in a Memorandum dated 12.8.2002 slightly changed their stand and demanded a Bru Areas Development Council. However, after several rounds of talk, in the 9<sup>th</sup> round held on the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2003, the demand for Bru Areas Development Council was dropped and replaced with a Bru Development Corporation.

The BNLF were informed that a joint Meeting of the representatives of all Political Parties, NGOs, Former Legislators' Association of Mizoram and leaders of Churches (MKHC) was held in the Office Chamber of the Home Minister on 25.7.2001, and in that meeting, it was resolved that the BNLF should first lay down their arms and thereafter, the Government of Mizoram will take necessary steps to bring back those genuine Mizoram Brus now living in Refugee Camps in Tripura. The BNLF were also informed clearly that there could be no discussion on any demand of a political nature. The 10<sup>th</sup> round of talks was held during 29.1.2004 – 13.2.2004. In this meeting, the BNLF, keeping in mind the problems faced by the Bru Refugees in Tripura Camps and the need for restoration of peace in Mizoram particularly in the Western belt, ultimately agreed to drop all the aforementioned Political demands and accepted the Special Development Project which the Government of Mizoram had prepared for development of the Western belt of Mizoram covering all the Bru settlements.

Most of the Bru refugees, prior to their departure for Tripura, were living in the three districts of Mamit, Kolasib and Lunglei. As such, the Government of Mizoram felt that the Bru refugees should be repatriated to their original districts. This task is to be entrusted to the Deputy Commissioners of the three Districts who will each form a committee to select suitable places for their resettlement.

After the conclusion of the 12<sup>th</sup> round of talks, the Government of Mizoram and the BNLF have reached an agreement as follows :-

1. The BNLF agrees to lay down all their arms and ammunitions and come over ground to lead normal life as law-abiding



citizens. The Government of Mizoram on its part agrees to take back genuine Mizoram Brus from Tripura Refugee Camps.

2. With the signing of the agreement and immediately after laying down of their arms and ammunitions, the BNLF shall stand automatically dissolved and shall cease to exist.
3. The BNLF will make a complete inventory of all their arms, ammunitions and other equipments and submit the same to the Government of Mizoram. Formal ceremony of laying down of arms and ammunitions and other equipments will be held at Tuipuibari in Mizoram.
4. After signing this agreement, the BNLF will neither recruit new members nor assist any other insurgent or underground outfit in the form of weapons, money or other assistance directly or indirectly.
5. Rehabilitation and Resettlement of the BNLF returnees and their family members will be carried out as per scheme prepared separately. The BNLF returnees will be accommodated at Tuipuibari Rehabilitation Camps for a period not exceeding three months.
6. The Government of Mizoram will grant amnesty to all those BNLF cadres having criminal cases inside the State. It shall also request other neighbouring State Governments to do likewise in respect of those BNLF cadres who have been convicted and are kept in jails outside Mizoram.
7. The Government of Mizoram will take steps for changing 'Reang' to 'Bru' in the Scheduled Tribe List.
8. After the BNLF lay down their arms and join the mainstream, the State Government will take all necessary steps to accelerate the pace of development in the Western Belt of Mizoram covering all Bru settlements. The Special Development Project will be implemented depending upon

contd...4/-

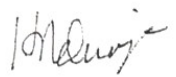
the quantum of financial assistance received from the Central Government. The Government of Mizoram shall continue to work for the socio-economic upliftment of the Bru people living in different districts of Mizoram.

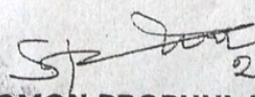
9. The scheme for reception, rehabilitation and resettlement of the repatriated Bru refugees will be implemented after the BNLF lay down their arms.
10. The Government of Mizoram agrees to take necessary measures for inclusion of eligible Bru voters in the Electoral Roll with due process of Law after they are resettled inside Mizoram.

The Government of Mizoram and the Bru National Liberation Front have accepted the above points on this day of 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2005.

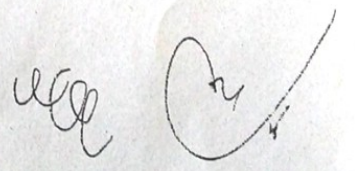
  
26/04/05  
( SURJYAMONI )

President,  
Bru National Liberation Front.

  
( H.V. LALRINGA )  
Chief Secretary,  
Govt. of Mizoram.

  
26/04/05  
( SOLOMON PROPHUL USHOY )

General Secretary,  
Bru National Liberation Front.

  
( C. ROPIANGA )  
Secretary, Home Department,  
Govt. of Mizoram.



## Appendix 5

RTI answer sought by the researcher regarding the number of recorded crimes committed by the Mizo against Bru, and recorded crimes committed by Bru against Mizo during ethnic tension and conflict of 1997 and 2009 respectively.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE  
MAMIT DISTRICT : MAMIT : MIZORAM  
\*\*\*\*\*  
NO.SP/MMT/CRM/47/15/12411  
Dated Mamit, the 12<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2015

To,

The Dy. Commissioner,  
Mamit District, Mamit.

Subject:- RTI on matters relating to Bru.

Ref. :- No.J.11011/88/2014-DC(M)/ dt.24.9.2015.

Sir,

With reference to the subject and your letter referred above, I am furnishing the required information on matters relating to Bru sought by Lalengkima of Venghlun, Chhiahtlang, Serchhip District under RTI Act, 2005 as per Crime Record maintained by this office as follows:-

1. Kum 1997-ah Mizo ten Bru in an tihchhiatsak zat, Mamit District huam chhung bik:-  
Ans:- 111 Houses.
2. Kum 2009-a Mizo ten Bru in an tihchhiatsak zat, Mamit District huam chhung bik?  
Ans:- 393 Houses.
3. Mizo ten Bru an thah zat, 1997 leh 2009 kum huam chhung bikah, Mamit District chhung bik:-  
Ans:- 1) Kum 1997 - NIL  
2) Kum 2009 - NIL
4. Bru emaw Bru helhoten Mamit District chhunga Mizo-te an thah leh ruk bo zat, Kum 1997 atanga Kum 2014 inkar bik:-  
Ans:- 1) Thah zat - 2 persons.  
2) Rukbo zat - 13 persons.
5. Kum 1997-a Bru Mizoram chhuahsan zat leh Kum 2009-a Bru Mizoram chhuahsan zat, Mamit District huam chhungah:-  
Ans:- He zawhna chhanna hi Police record-ah a awm lo.

Submitted for favour of information and necessary action please.

Yours faithfully,

15  
12/10/15  
12-10-15  
12/10/15  
(C. LALNUNMAWIA) MPS  
SPIO / Superintendent of Police  
Mamit District



## Appendix 6

Name of different Bru tribes written by Tal Bong Joy Apeto, a Bru gentlemen at  
UriaChora village (Tripura) on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.

18/10/15

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| ① A Peto —                          | Tal bong joy APeto<br>Kum: 26.<br>Village: Uria Chora.<br>State: Tripura |
| ② Msha —                            |  |
| ③ Chokho                            |  |
| ④ Mol Soi                           |  |
| ⑤ Mesh ka                           |  |
| ⑥ Toi moiyaphak                     |  |
| ⑦ Nohk Kham                         |  |
| ⑧ Yak Stan —                        | Totally abolished  |
| ⑨ Chop teng                         |  |
| 10/ Rai Chak                        |  |
| 11. Rai Son                         |  |
| 12. Leang                           |  |
| 13 Tare maiyak Chok. (Tavmaiyakdau) |  |
| 14. Wai sem.                        |  |

## **Appendix 7**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STATE LEVEL CORE COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS**

**THE W.P. (C) NO. 1/2005 FILED BY AKHIL BHARTIYA KALYAN  
ASHRAM ETC ~VS~ GOI & ORS IN THE HONBLE SUPREME COURT &  
W.P. (C) NO. 694/2007 FILED BY**

**ASIAN INDIGENOUS & TRIBAL PEOPLES AND ORS VS.STATE OF  
MIZORAM & ORS.ALONG WITH MHA LETTER NO.4/11/2011-NE.II;  
DT. 16.1.2015 REGARDING**

**ACTION PLAN FOR THE RESUMPTION OF REANG (BRU) REPATRIATION  
FROM TRIPURA TO MIZORAM, ETC CHAIRED BY CHIEF SECRETARY,  
GOVERNMENT OF MIZORAM**

**Venue : Chief Secretary's Conference Room.  
Date & Time : 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 (Tue) @ 11:00  
hours.**

Shri Lalmalsawma, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Mizoram presided over the meeting. After welcoming the members, the Chairman informed the meeting of recent developments on **W.P. (C) NO. 694/2007 FILED BY ASIAN INDIGENOUS & TRIBAL PEOPLES AND ORS VS. STATE OF MIZORAM & ORS.** which was conveyed by Shri Pragyan Pradip Sharma, Standing Counsel, Mizoram to the State Government and **MHA LETTER NO. 4/11/2011-NE.II; DT. 16.1.2015** on the issue wherein the State Government has been directed to come-up with a detailed Road Map for repatriation and rehabilitation of Reang (Brus) in Mizoram. A photo copy of the above letters was circulated amongst the members to elicit response.

After a brief introductory remarks from the Chair, the Chairman invited Shri David H. Lalthangliana, OSD, Home to highlight the present position on the Reang (Bru) repatriation and rehabilitation. OSD, Home informed the members that as per Road Maps prepared for Reang (Bru) repatriation and rehabilitation, the State Government has initiated appropriate measures despite stiff resistance and opposition from the leaders of Reang (Bru) migrants. The process was initiated on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2010 and the 6<sup>th</sup> batch of Reang (Bru) repatriation was carried-out between 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2014. And that the total figure along with the self-repatriated families stood at 1277 families numbering 6749 adults and minors as on 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2015. These repatriated families have been resettled at Mamit, Kolasib and Lawngtlai Districts. He further stated that all the repatriated and self-repatriated families have been fully rehabilitated with financial assistance sanctioned by Ministry of Home Affairs. Further, OSD, Home Department informed that necessary reports on the repatriation *with a request to take appropriate steps on the demand for extension of the period of free ration to 2(two) years, enhancement of cash assistance from Rs. 80,000/- to Rs.1,50,000/- and allotment of fund for procurement of land for their resettlement etc had been conveyed to Ministry of Home Affairs on 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2014 in order to facilitate a successful repatriation process in future vide letter No. J. 15011/18/2011-HM.*

The Chairman also invited the Deputy Commissioner, Mamit District to update the meeting on the latest position concerning the repatriation and rehabilitation of Reang (Brus). Shri K. Lalthawmmawia, Deputy Commissioner, Mamit District informed the members that Rs. 7.87 crore Grant-in-Aid sanctioned vide MHA F. No. 07/32/97-NE-II; Dated 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 has been utilized for the repatriation and rehabilitation of Reang (Bru) migrants for the 6<sup>th</sup> batch. He stated that after the conclusion of the 6<sup>th</sup> batch the number of self-repatriated families who had reported themselves to the Deputy Commissioners, Mamit and Kolasib Districts is 435 and 30 families respectively. The process of verification of their eligibility to avail rehabilitation package is being carried out. He further averred that Rs. 7.87 crore Grant-in-Aid sanctioned by MHA for 669 repatriated families and if the same is utilized for rehabilitation of 465 self-repatriated families from Mamit and Kolasib District, the balance fund available for assistance from Rs. 7.87 crore would be just sufficient to facilitate their requirements and adequate balance will not be available to continue the process of repatriation after disbursement to these self-repatriated Reang (Brus) families. *Therefore, in conclusion, the Deputy Commissioner, Mamit District stated that preparing Road Map for the continuation of the repatriation has been chalked-out if it has to be initiated as directed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, besides, the urgent requirement of fund. And as mentioned by OSD, Home, if MHA cannot meet the demands of the displaced Reang (Brus), the exercise would again be a futile process.*

The Chairperson invited the Joint Director, FCS&CA to update the meeting on the latest stock position on free ration for the repatriated Reang (Bru) families. Shri Andrew HVL. Dika, Joint Director, FCS&CA informed the members that the request of the State Government to the Department of Food and Public Distribution, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Government of India vide Home Department Letter No. J. 15011/5/2011-HM; Dated 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2014 to extend the period of allocation of food grains for free ration has still not been complied by the Department of Food and Public Distribution leaving minimal balance for free ration. Further, if the 465 self-repatriated Reang (Bru) families from Mamit and Kolasib District are found genuine on verification and if the State Government has to continue the process of repatriation as directed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, urgent allocation of free ration is required for a successful repatriation. In conclusion he also stressed that the inclusion of the carrying charge component of free ration in future sanction for repatriation and rehabilitation of Reang (Bru) migrants and also requested urgent reimbursement of past carrying charge of free ration as incurred by the Department.

After the above report from Joint Director, FCS&CA, the Chairperson then opened the agenda for wide discussion and thorough deliberation on the issue. After which the following resolutions were made –

1. Since the order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the Writ Petitions did not mentioned the approval of the new demands made by the Reang (Bru) leaders i.e. –

- extension of the period of free ration to 2(two) years,
- enhancement of cash assistance from Rs. 80,000/- to Rs.1,50,000/-

The meeting is of the considered view that if the demands including the other demands of the Reang (Bru) leaders are not met by MHA, Govt. of India future repatriation and rehabilitation exercise is bound to fail.

It was resolved that the matter shall be brought up again by OSD, Home in the meeting called by Joint Secretary, NE, MHA on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 to enable the State Government to prepare a concrete Road Map for the repatriation and rehabilitation of Reang (Bru) migrants as directed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

2. With regards to the submission made by Deputy Commissioner, Mamit District regarding urgent requirement of fund for the continuation of the repatriation and rehabilitation process, it was resolved that the matter shall be submitted by OSD, Home in the meeting called by Joint Secretary, NE, MHA on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 to enable the State Government to prepare a concrete Road Map for the repatriation and rehabilitation of Reang (Bru) migrants.

3. Depending upon the Grant-in-Aid sanctioned for repatriation and rehabilitation of Reang (Bru) migrants by MHA for the continuation of the process, It was also resolved that the Department of Food and Public Distribution shall be requested to urgently allocate free ration before the process of the repatriation. It was further resolved that MHA shall be requested to include the provision for carrying charge of free ration in the Grant-in-Aid and to urgently reimburse the expenditure incurred by the State FCS&CA Department in the past for carrying charge of free-ration when the same is finalized and submitted by State's FCS&CA Department. It was also agreed that this should also be submitted for deliberation in the meeting called by Joint Secretary, NE, MHA on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 to enable the State Government to prepare a concrete Road Map for the repatriation and rehabilitation of Reang (Bru) migrants as directed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court.
4. Pursuant to the submission made by ShriK. Lalsawmvela, CE (Roads), PWD regarding the settlement of repatriated Reang (Brus) in the land acquired for NH-44A at New Eden, Mamit District. It was requested that Rs. 5,000/- per family may be given towards their resettlement and necessary permission be obtained from MHA, Govt. of India to meet the assistance from the balance from Rs. 7.87 crore sanctioned by MHA, Govt. of India.

It was also resolved that this should also be submitted for deliberation in the meeting called by Joint Secretary, NE, MHA on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 to

enable the State Government to prepare a concrete Road Map for the repatriation and rehabilitation of Reang (Bru) migrants as directed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

5. After necessary clarifications, allocation of fund, free ration, etc in the meeting called by Joint Secretary, NE, MHA on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 to enable the State Government to prepare a concrete Road Map for the repatriation and rehabilitation of Reang (Bru) migrants as directed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. It was resolved that a joint meeting should be convened by DM., North Tripura with representatives from the Government of Mizoram and the Reang (Bru) leaders in Tripura by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of February, 2015 to chalk-out course of action as per the direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

***Sd/-LALMALSAWMA***

*Chief Secretary to the Govt. of  
Mizoram.*



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**Interview – Name of respondent, Address, Designation (*if any*), Time**

Mr. Berama (Bru) Mamit Lungsir Kohhran Upa on 13<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (7:15 a.m) at Mamit.

Mr. VL. Ngheta (Mizo) on 15<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (11:00 a.m) at Zawlnuam.

Miss. Durtlangmawii (Bru) on 15<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (2:30 p.m) at Zawlnuam Vengthar.

Mr. Biakltuanga (Mizo) on 15<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (8:00 p.m) at Zawlnuam Vengpui.

Mr. J. Malsawma (Mizo), ex-YMA Group President on 15<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (9:30 p.m) at Zawlnuam Vengpui.

Mr. Rammuana (Bru) on 16<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (6:00 a.m) at Zawlnuam Vengthar.

Mr. Lalhlimpaia (Mizo), present YMA President of Thuampui on 16<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (11:00 a.m) at Thuampui.

Mr. F. Rokima (Mizo) on 16<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (8:00 p.m) at Zawlnuam.

Mr. Hmarsanga (Mizo) on 17<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (9:00 a.m) at Bungthuam.

Zarzokima's Mother (Mizo) on 17<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (10:00 a.m) at Bungthuam.

Mr. Lalthafamkima (Mizo), ex-President of Bungthuam YMA on 17<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (7:18 p.m) at Bungthuam.

Mr. Persen (Bru) on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (11:30) at Uria Chora.

Mr. Tal Bong Joy Apeto (Bru) on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (1:25 p.m) at Uria Chora.

Mr. Kamlova (Mizo) on 21<sup>st</sup> Oct 2015 (10:00 a.m) at Kawrtethawveng.

Mr. Chhuan tea (Mizo) on 21<sup>st</sup> Oct 2015 (7:30 p.m) at Kawrtethawveng.

Miss Darkungi (Mizo) on 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct 2015 (8:15 a.m) at Bawngva.

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Mr. Okchai (Bru) on 26<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (11:00 a.m) at Saikhawthlir.

Mr. Bawihpuia (Mizo) on 27<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (12:30 p.m) at Rengdil.

Miss Chhandami (Mizo) on 28<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 (10:00 p.m) at Zamuang.

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Highlander – Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2002 (VOL XXVIII/26)  
Highlander – Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2002 (VOL XXVIII/116)  
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The Mizoram Post – Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 (VOL 10, Issue 329)  
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Highlander – Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November, 1997 (VOL XXII/211)  
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Highlander – Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2005 (VOL XXXI, 177)  
Highlander – Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2006 (VOL XXXII, 222)  
Highlander – Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2006 (VOL XXXII, 20)  
Vanglaini – Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2015  
Vanglaini – Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2015