



## Bru Resettlement Issue

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### Why in News

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Recently, three organisations representing the Bru community have **rejected the sites proposed for their resettlement by the Joint Movement Committee (JMC)**.

- **Joint Movement Committee (JMC)** is an umbrella group of **non-Bru community** in **Tripura**. The JMC comprises the Bengali, Mizo, Buddhist Barua and some other communities.
- The three organisations included Mizoram Bru Displaced Peoples' Forum, Mizoram Bru Displaced Peoples' Coordination Committee and Bru Displaced Welfare Committee

### Key Points

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- **JMC's Actions:** On 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020, the JMC had submitted a memorandum to the Tripura government specifying six places in Kanchanpur and Panisagar subdivisions of North Tripura district for resettlement of Brus.
  - **Limiting the number of families:** Proposal of limiting the number to 500 families at most be settled in these places.
  - **Limited Resources:** They maintain that the State (Tripura) does not have enough space and resources to accommodate them (Bru).

- **Arguments by Bru Community Representatives:**

- This action of site selection by the JMC is completely unjustified as they were not a part of the **quadrilateral agreement**. Also the sites proposed by the JMC are unconnected by road and electricity and too far from hospitals, schools and other facilities.

The **quadrilateral agreement** was signed among the **Central government, State governments of Mizoram and Tripura and the Bru groups** in New Delhi in **January 2020**.

- They have insisted on resettling some 6,500 families in clusters of at least 500 families at each of the **sites of their choice** –seven in North Tripura district and five in the adjoining Dhalai district.
- They have also **rejected the demand for inclusion of four JMC members** in the monitoring team for the resettlement of the Bru, as they are having no connection or involvement in the issue of either repatriation to Mizoram or resettlement in Tripura during the last 23 years.

## Background

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- **Bru or Reang** is a community indigenous to Northeast India, living mostly in **Tripura, Mizoram and Assam**. In **Tripura**, they are recognised as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group**.
- In **Mizoram**, they have been targeted by groups that do not consider them indigenous to the state. In 1997, following **ethnic clashes**, nearly 37,000 Brus fled Mamit, Kolasib and Lunglei districts of Mizoram and were **accommodated in relief camps in Tripura**.
- Since then, 5,000 have returned to Mizoram in eight phases of repatriation, while 32,000 still live in six relief camps in North Tripura.
  - In June 2018, community leaders from the Bru camps signed an agreement with the Centre and the two state governments, providing for repatriation in Mizoram. But most camp residents rejected the terms of the agreement.
  - According to them, the agreement doesn't guarantee their safety in Mizoram.
- **The Centre, the governments of Mizoram and Tripura and leaders of Bru organisations signed a quadripartite agreement in January (2020)** to let the remaining 35,000 refugees who have stayed back to be **resettled in Tripura**.

The rehabilitation package offered included financial assistance of ₹4 lakh and land for constructing a house for each family.

## Way Forward

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The state government must ensure that the quadrilateral agreement is enforced in letter and spirit. However, the same agreement which provides for resettlement of Bru refugees in Tripura must also be implemented keeping in mind the interests of non-Brus, so that no

conflict emerges between the Bru and non-Bru communities.

**Source: TH**