



Halam Sub-tribes Clash

Why in News

People of Halam sub-tribes, who took refuge in Assam following **clashes with Bru refugees in north Tripura**, are returning to their village Damcherra in North district of Tripura.

- The **Brus came to Tripura in 1997** to escape an ethnic clash in Mizoram and started staying at six relief camps in the North District.



Key Points

- **Halam Sub-tribes:**
 - Ethnically, **Halam communities (categorised as a [scheduled tribe](#) in Tripura) belong to the Kuki-Chin tribes of Tibeto-Burmese ethnic group.**
 - Their **language** is also more or less **similar to that of the Tibeto-Burman family.**
 - Halams are also known as **Mila Kuki**, though they are not at all Kukis in terms of language, culture and living style.
 - Halams are divided into **several sub-clans** which are referred to as **“Barki-Halam”**.

- Major sub-clans of Halams are Koloï, Korbong, Kaipeng, Bong, Sakachep, Thangachep, Molsom, Rupini, Rangkhawl, Chorai, Lankai, Kaireng (Darlong), Ranglong, Marchafang and Saihmar.
- As per [2011 Census](#), their total **population is 57,210 and distributed throughout the State.**
- Halams live in typical "**Tong Ghar**" specially made of **bamboo and Chan grass**. Apart from plain land cultivation they still practice **Jhum cultivation** and depend on both the activities beside other substitute works.

▪ **Bru Refugees:**

- **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.
 - Damcherra is Tripura's last village before the inter-state boundary with Mizoram.
- 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.
- In January **2020**, the **Centre, the governments of Mizoram and Tripura and leaders of Bru organisations** signed a **[quadripartite agreement](#)**.
 - Under the pact, the Home Ministry has committed to incur the whole expenditure of settlement in Tripura.
 - A package was assured in the accord that each refugee family would get:
 - A plot, fixed deposit of Rs. 4 lakh, free ration and a monthly stipend of Rs. 5,000 for two years.
 - In addition, each family will also be provided Rs. 1.5 lakh to construct a house.

▪ **Related Issues:**

- The **northeast has had a history of ethnic conflicts** — not only between the "indigenous" and "settlers" but inter-tribe too — and issues could also arise within smaller sub-groups within the same tribe.
- The **decision to settle Bru Tribal People in Tripura could also throw up questions of citizenship, specifically in Assam** where a process is on to define who is indigenous and who is not.
- The move on the Brus **legitimises the settlement of foreigners under Citizenship (Amendment) Act** too, creating conflicts with the indigenous people as well as communities that settled earlier.
- It could also lead to **loss of space and revenue for other communities in Tripura**.
- Further, the inter-state border disputes have come under fresh focus after the recent violent clash on **[Assam-Mizoram border](#)**.

Way Forward

- Considering the present conditions of Brus, the state government should ensure that the **quadrilateral agreement is enforced in letter and spirit**.
- However, the same agreement which provides for resettlement of Bru refugees in Tripura **should be implemented keeping in mind the interests of non-Brus**, so that no conflict emerges between the Bru and non-Bru communities.

[Source: TH](#)

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