

Facts and Figures of Bru Reangs

——— **The one who suffered for two decades** ———

by Rangaswamy. R

Bru-Reangs

The Brus, who are spread across Tripura, Mizoram and parts of southern Assam, are said to be the most populous tribe in Tripura. They are also known as the Reangs in Mizoram, as they are essentially ethnically different from the Mizos, and have their own distinct language and dialect Bru language which is of Tibeto-Burmese origin and is locally referred to as Kau Bru and thus form one of the 21 scheduled tribes of Tripura. While in Tripura their numbers stand at approximately 32,000, spread across six refugee camps in the state, Mizoram has as many as 40,000 Brus living in the state.

Becoming refugees in their own country

In 1995, following a clash between two Mizoram ethnic group regarding the state's electoral rolls, contending that the Bru tribe was not indigenous to Mizoram. This led to a movement led by the Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF), and a political one by the Bru National Union (BNU).

On October 21, 1997, in retaliatory ethnic violence taken place. The BNU, which was demanding an autonomous tribal district, claimed that 1,391 Bru houses in 41 villages were burnt down and several people were killed. A large number of Bru families fled to North Tripura. Thousands of families, with some 30,000 members, were given shelter in six relief camps in Kanchanpur and Panisagar subdivisions.

Places where they settled

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The way they living about two decades

The families living in the camps do not have access to necessities of life such as clean drinking water, sanitation facilities, electricity, etc. Individuals have to travel long distances to gather water for their families from the stream which was muddy. Most of the people resort to temporary toilets, with the bamboo enclosure or open defecation. Some of the households had solar panels, either self-purchased or provided by the Government owing to the absence of electrical connections.

Housing facilities-

The central rehabilitation package granted to the refugees living in Tripura includes Rs 5 per day to each adult migrant, Rs 2.5 to each minor, 600 grams of rice to each adult on a daily basis, three soaps in a year, one pair of slippers every year and a mosquito net every three years.

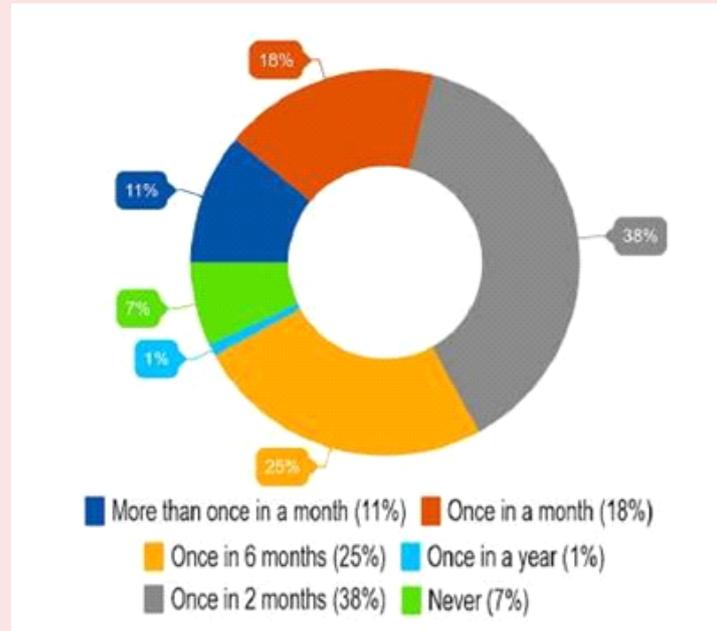
Sub-Division	Camp	Block Number	Cross Ventilation	Sufficient Lighting	Availability of Toilets	Availability of Electricity	Availability of mid day meal	Storage conditions of MDM supply
Panisagar	Hamsapara	A	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Hygienic
Panisagar	Kakhchangpara	C	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Hygienic
Panisagar	Kashkaupara	A	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Hygienic
Panisagar	Kashkaupara	A	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Hygienic
Panisagar	Hamsapara	D	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Hygienic
Panisagar	Kakhchangpara	C	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Hygienic
Kanchanpura	Hezzacherra	A	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Unhygienic
Kanchanpura	Ashapara	B	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Hygienic
Kanchanpura	Naisingpara	B	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Hygienic
Panisagar	Hamsapara	A	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Unhygienic
Kanchanpura	Ashapara	C	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Hygienic
Panisagar	Kakhchangpara	C	No	No	No	No	Yes	Unhygienic
Kanchanpura	Hezzacherra	C	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Hygienic
Kanchanpura	Naisingpara	D	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Hygienic



Health Care of their present condition:

The immediate medical attention in case of emergency were never available. They have to travel considerable distance to see a doctor. They have to go to Anandabazar for treatment of any sort. They have to take the patient to either Kanchanpur or Kailashsahar Hospital for getting medical attention. The journey is both strenuous and costly. They travel to Dasda Hospital to see a doctor, the local health centres as the doctors are hardly available there, local health centres sometimes attend patients with minor ailments.

In Naisingpara camp grumbled that in spite of frequent outbreak of gastroenteritis in the camp, the Government did not provide adequate medical facilities timely and sufficient medicines to tackle the situation. As a result large scale deaths occurred owing to that disease. Doctors from local hospitals visit their camps but lack of sufficient medications had made the situation absolutely critical.

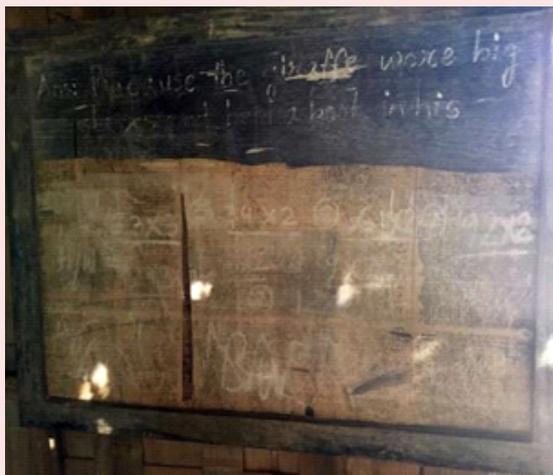


Frequency of illness in their family

Education for their Children:

The schools running in the camps are in deplorable condition. All the schools, whether NRSTC or private, lacked toilets, drinking water facility, and electricity. The classes are dimly lit, with the only source of lighting being natural sunlight. Basic infrastructure in schools was mostly found to be in abominable conditions. Schools lacked an adequate number of classrooms.

There was no proper demarcation between the classes. In some schools, around 3 to 5 grades were being taught in the same room using just one or two blackboards, simultaneously



Water and Sanitation:

- 98% of them do not have access to clean drinking water.
- None of them have "Pakka Toilets" built within their homes or their community. Most of them had temporary toilets, built beside their homes.
- There is no system for waste-disposal and as a result, daily waste is scattered across the camps, which might be leading to various diseases among the residents of the camps.
- Most of them defecate in open.
- Frequently many residents of the camps fell ill of Cholera as the water stream was severely contaminated. In a 2010 fire instance in 1 of the 6 camps of North Tripura where at least 320 houses made of bamboo and straw were reduced to ashes & almost 1800 people became homeless.

“New ray of hope” by the effort of Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah

Permanent solution has been arrived to this long standing issue of rehabilitating thousands of Bru-Reang people in Tripura and they can now look towards a bright future. Under the new agreement around 34,000 Bru refugees will be settled in Tripura and would be given aid from the Centre to help with their rehabilitation and all round development, through a package of around Rs 600 crores. These people would get all the rights that normal residents of the States get and they would now be able to enjoy the benefits of social welfare schemes of Centre and State governments. The settlement has been reached after detailed discussions held by Union government with the State governments of Mizoram and Tripura and the representatives of Bru tribes.

Under the new arrangement, each of the displaced families would be given 40x30 sq.ft. residential plots, in addition to the aid under earlier agreement of a fixed deposit of Rs. 4 lakhs, Rs. 5,000 cash aid per month for 2 years, free ration for 2 years and Rs. 1.5 lakhs aid to build their house.



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