The ethnic problem is one of the major concerns in the world. Today, we live in a multi-ethnic political environment having diverse social and economic interests. Many states face ethnic upsurges which require very subtle political manoeuvres. The states ruled by the elites are not capable of fulfilling the interests of the minor groups. In every state, one group tends to control political and economic powers and they derive more benefits than the ones deprived of such powers. Very few states are homogeneous in population and one dominant group comes into conflict with other groups who demand shares of the state powers.

The South Asian countries are not free from such scenario as there are multi-ethnic groups exist. The north-eastern part of India faces similar problems as it is inhabited by the indigenous tribes with their distinct identities. Before the independence, these groups were living in isolation and a group then lived within itself. They were, more or less, satisfied with the homegrown products and interacted with other groups minimally. The situation changed with the independence. Now, the interactions are more intense and the interests clash very often to the detriment of the lesser tribes who could not face the competitions, political and economic. It is the root of the turmoil. A group, then think of their own interests and try to
mobilize themselves. The Reangs of Mizoram are no exception from the general process of such assertion. In Mizoram, they are a minor ethnic group living in the fringe area of the state and they consider themselves as a deprived tribe and also feel that there is no touch of economic and social development in the areas inhabited by them.

Being a student of Political Science, I am interested to know the roots of the ethnic problems of the Reangs of Mizoram. In this part of the world, we often find that there is ethnicized politics. The ruling class while formulate policies, they take into consideration, the class and group interests of a particular ethnic group. As a result, the group which is not benefited suffers from a sense of deprivation. They feel neglected and marginalized in the broader political scenario. The ethnic assertion is followed by some usual courses within the democratic system. First, they demanded representation in the assembly. When such representation is denied, the ethnic assertion becomes more intense and confrontational. The autonomous council is demanded and it turns louder in course of time. The violence often overtakes discussions to settle ethnic demands. The intensification of organized struggle witnessed violence and fight against the state. The violent situation leads to an awful result in the exodus of a large number of people from their hearths and homes.

A Reang prefers to be called as the Bru and he feels that as a
person in the community, he is politically and economically suppressed in the state. The elite among them are now aware of these suppressed conditions. The political conflict is the external manifestation of their suppressed feelings.

This assertion is not viewed with favour by the ruling elite in Mizoram as they feel that it conflicts with their socio—political and economic interests. After the turmoil started and no political settlement was found, thousands of Reangs left Mizoram and they are sheltered in the camps of Tripura. The conflict is not merely centred round a political demand, there are other questions of ethnic difference, educational backwardness, economic exploitation and religious and cultural incompatibility which are noteworthy.

_Bornali Bhattacharjee_