

Identity Politics: A Case Study of the Reang Democratic Party

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Abstract:

In the modern world, Identity Politics has become very popular. Almost every movement and struggle are based on the self-consciousness of Identity. Identity politics refers to political ideas and movements that focus on the concerns and interests of specific social, racial, ethnic, gender, or other identity groups. It entails identifying and organizing persons who have a common identity in order to address concerns and difficulties such as discrimination, inequality, and oppression unique to that identity. In Mizoram, the first political party was the “Mizo Union” which was established on 9th April 1946 based on the consciousness of Identity politics to safeguard the interest and to represent the Mizo. Since then, many political parties in Mizoram have been created for such causes such as the Hmar People Conference (HPC) to protect the rights of Hmar and to fight for the cause of the Hmar people. Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) later changed to Mizo National Front (MNF) for the autonomy movement of Mizoram. Hence, for the same purpose, the Reang Democratic Party (RDP) was created by the earlier educated youth of the Bru/Reang community for the cause of the autonomy movement in Mizoram. Hence this article analyzes the origin of the RDP. It also analyzes the working of the party and the role played by the Reang Democratic Convention party in the movement for Autonomous District Council in Mizoram.

Keywords: *Identity Politics, Reang/Bru Community, Political parties, Autonomous District Council, Reang Democratic Party, Hmar Peoples Convention, Mizo National Front, BJP.*

Introduction:

Identity politics is defined as politics based on a certain identity, such as race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, or social class.¹ The term also commonly used in the social sciences and humanities to describe phenomena as diverse as multiculturalism, the women's movement, civil rights, lesbian and gay movements, separatist movements in Canada and Spain, and violent ethnic and nationalist conflict in postcolonial Africa and Asia, as well as formerly communist countries in Eastern Europe.² In

the year 1979, Anspach first used the term 'Identity Politics' to describe action by individuals with disabilities aimed at changing both self- and society perceptions of people with disabilities.³

Identity politics in Northeast India

The Indian Northeast, sometimes known as the Northeast, is a varied and complex intricate of cultures, languages, and ethnic groups. The area, which consists of eight states (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura), has international boundaries with China, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. It is well-known for its magnificent natural beauty, but it has also long been a hotbed of identity politics, ethnic tensions, and separatist movements. Identity politics in the Northeast centres around the existence of various ethnic, tribal, linguistic, and cultural identities. These identities are deeply interconnected with the region's historical and political structure.⁴

Since colonial times, identity politics has served to construct the ground for group exclusion, resulting in numerous sorts of rifts, frequently imagined in binary terms: majority-minority, sons of the soil-immigrants, locals-outsiders, tribal-non-tribal, hills-plains, intertribal-intratribal. Given the strategic and sensitive border areas, low level of development, immense cultural diversity, and participatory democratic processes, social exclusion has resulted in perceptions of marginalization, deprivation, and identity losses, all of which have contributed to the strong foundation of brands of separatist movements under the guise of regionalism, sub-nationalism, and ethnic politics, most of which border on extremism and secession. It is argued that local people's anxiety for the preservation of culture and language, which often manifests as "narcissist self-awareness," and their demand for autonomy are not dysfunctional for a healthy civil society, but rather prerequisites for distributive justice, which no nation-state can ignore.⁵

To study the dynamics of identity politics in Northeast India, it is necessary to conduct a deep study of its historical context. The region's history is marked by a confluence of elements that have contributed to the emergence of identity-based politics. In the nineteenth century, the Northeast was subject to British colonial administration, which resulted in the creation of British administrative systems and boundaries. This colonial legacy had a significant impact on the region's political geography and administrative divisions. The British Missionary activities were permitted by the colonial rulers. The association with Christian missionaries, as well as the steady spread of education among the tribes and other communities, instilled self-esteem. This component is critical for comprehending the eventual emergence of ethnic

nationalism among the Naga, Mizo, and Manipur.⁶ The British supported the migration of labourers, traders, and settlers into the Northeast from various sections of India and even neighbouring nations. Many indigenous groups have been displaced and marginalized as a result of this population shift, causing tensions over identity, culture, and resources. The Northeast underwent administrative reorganization following independence. New states were formed, and borders were redrawn, frequently with little respect for the ethnic and tribal characteristics of the local populace. This intensifies ethnic tensions and identity-based issues. The Northeast is one of India's most ethnically and culturally varied areas, with various indigenous communities, each with its own language, culture, and traditions. This diversity has fueled identity politics as communities fight to protect and promote their individual identities.

Political Identity Movement in Nagaland.

Since India's independence many of the tribes in northeast India have been fighting for the autonomy movement due to various reasons mentioned above. The Naga were amongst the first self-conscious tribes who started the autonomy movement in the northeast based on identity. The Naga movement may be traced back to the foundation of the Naga Club in 1918, the first organization of its kind that gathered together the numerous Naga clans. When the Simon Commission visited Kohima, the Naga Club filed a memorandum requesting that the Naga Hills be excluded from the political reform proposal. It demonstrates that Naga tribes had developed a communal consciousness of Naga identity and solidarity. This led to the creation of the Naga National Council (NNC) in 1946. The goals and objectives of the Naga movement after 1947 gradually shifted and with the election of Phizo as president of NNC, the objective was to achieve complete independence. Thus, in defiance of the Constitution's Sixth Schedule, the 1951 elections to form district councils and the general elections in 1952 were boycotted. Violence, however, became widespread in 1954.⁷ Due to the wide spread of violence new state was created for the Nagas. The creation of the state of Nagaland in 1963 altered the context of the autonomous councils that were working in the other districts. Hopes were raised for elevating the status of the autonomous units into near or full-fledged statehood.⁸

Mizo National Front and Political Identity Movement in Mizoram

The emergence of Nagaland has prepared the path for the rest of the Northeast state to pursue greater autonomy through identity politics. The Mizo Union was one of the first organizations in Mizoram, founded in 1946 to promote the Mizo people's political and social welfare. On April 9, 1946, R. Vanlawma organized the young and educated people of the Lushai

Hills District for the first time in Mizo history. The new political group was first named "The Mizo Common People's Union Party." The party's name was later changed to Mizo Union. Mr. Pachhunga was elected as the party's first president. The main goals of the party were to abolish the chieftainship, provide better economic opportunities for Mizos in Mizoram, and unite all Mizo-inhabited districts under one governmental authority.⁹ The Mizo-educated youth desired elected representation in government. The Mizo Union was formed to protect villages from exploitation and to prevent unlawful extractions by leaders. It launched a boycott campaign against the Chiefs. It began as a nonviolent, peaceful effort in 1948. They warned the people not to obey the chiefs or pay their taxes. But violence quickly erupted, and the government became engaged on the grounds that it supported the chiefs' authority. The people were exhorted to disobey the government's and leaders' authority and join together in a full-fledged civil disobedience movement.¹⁰

On October 22, 1961, a new political party named the Mizo National Front (MNF) was created.¹¹ On February 28, 1966, MNF volunteers started an open armed insurrection against the Indian government, demanding Mizoram should be given independence.¹² Mizoram was established in 1972 after the Mizo Hills district of Assam was elevated to Union Territory. The Congress-led government then energetically pursued peace talks between the Central Government and MNF leaders. On June 30, 1986, the MNF leaders, the Central Government, and the governing Congress leaders of Mizoram signed the Peace Accord after months of negotiations. The Constitution 53rd Amendment Bill and the State of Mizoram Bill 1986 were enacted by Parliament on August 7, 1986. On 20 February 1987, Mizoram was elevated from the status of Union Territory to the 23rd state in the Indian Union, becoming the 23rd state.¹³

Hmar People's Convention Movement

In Mizoram, the Hmar are also one of the largest 'Zo' ethnic groups concentrated in Mizoram and Manipur. Despite having a sizable population, the Hmar's have only recently become politically aware; their first communal-based concrete political party in Mizoram, known as the Hmar People's Convention (HPC), was formed in 1986 to fight for the demands of the Hmar people living in the state of Mizoram.¹⁴ The new District Council was established on April 29, 1954. The Hmar's of Manipur welcomed the newly constituted District Council, expecting that their environment would be included within its bounds. The newly constituted District Council, however, swiftly recognized the already existent Lushai Hills, but the Manipur Hmar was left outside the boundaries and remained in Manipur. This was the beginning of the Hmar's discontent with the Mizo, as the Mizos had dashed their hopes.¹⁵ In

their desperation, the Hmar's created the Hmar National Congress (HNC) on July 3, 1954, which was later renamed the Hmar National Union (HNU) on December 5, 1958.¹⁶ Because the Hmar's were dissatisfied with the Mizo political leaders, they believed their expectations would never be met. The Hmar People Federation (HPF) was founded on June 15, 1977, by Hmar youngsters to advocate for a distinct district for the Hmar in Manipur, Tripura, and Assam. It gave birth to the Hmar People Congress in 1981.¹⁷

The agreement was reached in 1986 between MNF insurgent groups and the Government of India. The Hmar anticipate that this agreement will bring 'Greater Mizoram' by including all of the Mizo and their descendants' habitat areas. However, the new state of Mizoram inherited the former Union Territory (UT) of Mizoram's borders, excluding the Hmar sections of Assam, Manipur, and Tripura. The Hmar's were frustrated and felt led down. Their unhappiness spurred the foundation of the Hmar People's Convention, a political organization founded to fight for their demands through armed warfare. Initially, the idea was to unite all Hmars under a single umbrella. Mizoram Hmar met in Vaitin on October 19, 1985. 'Hmar Political Future' was the theme of the Conference. The meeting recognized that active political participation would be difficult without a political party. They then organized a conference at Sakawrdai on December 6, 1986. The Mizoram Hmar Association was renamed the Hmar People's Convention on December 18, 1986, with Laldinliena as the inaugural President.¹⁸ The main aim of the Hmar People's Convention was to attain the Autonomous District Council for the Hmar peoples and have submitted a memorandum to the Government of Mizoram as well as the Central government on several occasions.¹⁹

On July 27, 1994, the Government of Mizoram and the HPC signed a Memorandum of Settlement after 14 rounds of peace discussions, some of which lasted days. The HPC insurgency, which began with an armed confrontation on April 29, 1989, ended on July 27, 1994, when representatives from the HPC and the Mizoram Government signed an accord. The HPC insurgency ended with the signing of the Memorandum of Settlement. On August 27, 1997, the Sinlung Hills Development Council was formally established. On April 2, 2018, the Government of Mizoram, and the Leaders of the Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) signed the Sinlung Hills Council. The Sinlung Hills Council Act, 2018 (No. 6 of 2018), which came into effect on July 5, 2018, established the Sinlung Hills Council.²⁰

The Reang Democratic Party Movement.

The Bru/Reang are one of the tribes that reside in the Northeast Part of India and are mostly scattered between Tripura, Mizoram, Assam (Mostly in Cachar District), and Bangladesh (East Bengal). Reang (also Bru) is one of the Tripuri clans of the Indian state of

Tripura. They speak the Reang dialect of the Kokborok language, which is of Tibeto-Burmese origin and is known as *Kau Bru* locally. The Bru are known as "*Riang*" in the Indian constitution. The Reang, on the other hand, identified as "Reang" rather than "Riang," and they usually refer to themselves as "Bru," though the name "Reang" is used to identify the Tribe. The term "Reang" was inspired by the name of the most recent *Kaskau* (Community Chief), Reang Kaskau. There are 12 Clans/Panjis in the Bru or Reang Community: *Molsoi, Tuimui, Msha, Taumayakcho, Apeto, Wairem, Meska, Raikchak, Chorkhi, Chongpreng, Nouhkham, and Yakstam*. Due to their pre-agricultural level of technology, extremely low literacy rate, and falling or stagnant population, the Reang (Bru) of Tripura have been identified as the "Primitive Group" by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.²¹ According to Part XVII of the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, the Rieng (Bru) tribe is included in the list of Mizoram's Scheduled Tribes as one of the sub-tribes of the Kuki tribe. While the Kukis and Mizos are members of the Kuki-Chin Linguistic Group, the Brus are members of the Bodo Linguistic Group. As a result, the Tripura Brus are listed as a separate tribe under Sl. No. 16 of Part XV - Tripura of the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950.²²

It is believed that the Bru migrated from Shan State in Burma to Arakan Hills (Burma), and subsequently to Bangladesh. They moved from Bangladesh to the then Hills of Tipperah (Tripura) about the 14th century A.D. The presence of two Reang commanders (Raikchak and Raikshom) in King Dharma Manikya's army from 1465 to 1515 A.D. indicates that the Reang had settled in Tripura. According to legend, the Reang appear to have settled in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts under their ruler of Kachhok but were pushed away by mighty Maghsand. As a result, they migrated to the north for safety, settling around what is now Tripura.²³ Tripura has always been a multi-ethnic state, like the majority of India's Northeastern states. The Bru/Reang are among the 19 Scheduled Tribes of Tripura.²⁴ The Bru are Tripura's second most populous Tripuri clan, after only Debbarma. The Reang were Tripura's second largest Tripuri clan in 1971. In Tripura that year, the Reang clan accounted for 64,722 people. The Reang population was 56,597 in 1961 and 8,471 in 1951. Tripura had 165,103 Reang according to the 2001 census, and 1,88,220 in 2011. The Bru population is largely found in North and South Tripura.²⁵ At the moment, the Reang (Bru) communities can be found in twenty-eight out of fifty-eight blocks throughout eight districts of Tripura.²⁶

Bru Political Development in Mizoram:

Mizoram, with a land area of 21,087 km, had a population of 10,91,014 people according to the 2011 census.²⁷ Mizos constitute the majority of the people in Mizoram and the Bru and Chakma were minorities in the state. According to the 2011 census, Mizoram had 32,634 people, accounting for around 2.99% of the population.²⁸ The cause behind the drop in Bru On October 21, 1997, Mizoram's population was the subject of a communal dispute between Mizo and Bru. Almost 30,000 people have been displaced and are seeking sanctuary in the six relief camps in Tripura.²⁹ The Reang/Bru of Mizoram are primarily concentrated in four districts: Mamit, Lunglei, Lawngtlai, and Kolasib. According to the most current "Baptist Today" census of Mizoram's Brus population, there are 58,269 of them living in 80 different villages throughout the state. There are 11,350 Brus families in this population.³⁰ Damparengpui and Tuipuibari villages are the two main Bru/Reang concentration regions in Mizoram's Mamit district.

Despite having a sizable population, the earliest known political involvement in Mizoram was during the Union Territory (UT).³¹ As the Bru are known to be very primitive during those time and was given the representative during the UT. V Lalnunzira was the first nominated MLA from the Bru community, representing the Bru.³² Zoduha was the second nominated MLA representing the Bru community from 1984 to 1987.³³³⁴ In Mizoram, since its inception, only two MLAs have represented the Bru community. However, since the statehood, there has not been an MLA representing the Bru community to date.

The first civil society known as the Reang People Union was established in 1955 after the chieftainship was abolished. The Bru/Reang were influenced by the creation of the 'Mizo Union' by the Mizo societies. The President of the Reang People Union was Gobin Chondro. However, this organization was short-lived due to the inability of the leader to run the organization as well as the inability to gain mass support³⁵. The re-emergence of the political development and political awakening among the Bru community was during the 1990's. The first registered civil society of the Bru community in Mizoram was known as the Bru Socio-Cultural Association (BSCA). It was established on 14th December 1989 and was eventually registered in the year 1990.³⁶ It was during the early 90's the educated started having political awareness and wanted to enter the political arena. The Bru-educated youth met with the then Chief Minister of Mizoram Lalthanhawla and proposed to establish a political party mainly representing the Bru Community. However, Lalthanhawla suggested that they should establish association to mobilise the society and not a political party. As advised by Lalthanhawla, they

created Bru Socio-Cultural Association (BSCA) and the registration was also done immediately with the help of the then Chief Minister Lalthanhawla and presented one typewriter to the Bru leaders.³⁷ Along with the Type writer they were also given fifteen thousand to the Bru leaders.³⁸

The first office Bearer of the Bru Socio-Cultural Association (BSCA) were³⁹

Sl. No	Designation	Name
1	President	A Sawibunga
2	Vice President	Chawngzika Reang
3	General Secretary	A Romawia Reang

However, the Bru/Reang Leaders such as A Sawibunga, Chawngzika Reang and A Romawia Reang were not content with the work and function that could be done with the organisation that was formed and decided they should form a political party which would represent the community as a whole. With the Bru/Reang leader having this in mind they started working together for the formation of the Political parties in Mizoram. The Bru leaders such as Chawngzika and Sawibunga consulted the Bru/Reang leaders of Tripura and with their support, they proposed to form the first political party of the Bru/Reang community known as the Reang Democratic Party on 3rd October 1990⁴⁰⁴¹. The first office Bearer of the Reang Democratic Party (RDP) were:⁴²

Office Bearer of 1990 RDP.

Sl. No	Designation	Name
1	President	A Sawibunga
2	Vice President	Chawngzika Reang
3	General Secretary	A Romawia Reang
4	Treasurer	Zomarai Apeto
5	Financial Secretary:	M Kanglehha

In the year 1992 the Office Bearer of the Reang Democratic Party was changed and the new Office Bearer of the Reang Democratic Party were:

Office Bearer of 1992 RDP.

Sl. No	Designation	Name
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1	President	A Sawibunga
2	Vice President	Chawngzika Reang
3	General Secretary	A Romawia Reang
4	General Secretary	A Vanlalhruaia (A Christopher)
5	Assistant Secretary	Asiha
6	Treasurer	Zomarai Apeto
7	Financial Secretary	M Kanglehha

In the same year, the leadership was again changed to:

Sl. No	Designation	Name
1	President	A Sawibunga
2	Vice President	Chawngzika Reang
3	General Secretary	A Romawia Reang
4	General Secretary	A Vanlalhruaia (A Christopher)
5	Treasurer	Asiha
6	Financial Secretary	M Kanglehha

The objective of the Reang Democratic Party:

The Bru/Reang leaders of the time, including A Sawibunga, Chawngzika Reang, and A Romawia Reang, had high hopes. Chawngzika Reang, a member of the Ex Mizo National Army, had travelled extensively and even trained with the Chinese Army. Chawngzika Reang visited 15 villages in the Lunglei district after the MNF and the Government of India reached a peace pact. In 1987, he visited the Chhimtuipui and Sekulhkai areas, as well as Nghalimlui village, Bru's largest village at the time. He also spent time with Mr Dangia, a member of the Lai District Council (MDC) at the time. He also visited 24 Bru/Reang villages in the Aizawl district and spent a month there. Chawngzika Reang began planning for the upliftment of the Bru/Reang residing in Mizoram after witnessing their backwardness and dismal living conditions.⁴³ The Bru/Reang leaders believed that in order to fulfil the needs of the Bru/Reang. Bru/Reang must have the Autonomous District Council for the liking of Lai, Mara and Chakma in Mizoram. They argued that in order for this plan to succeed, Bru/Reang needed a representative in the State Legislative Assembly to advocate for ADC in Mizoram.⁴⁴ Having this in mind the leaders of the Reang Democratic Party have very specific and clear objectives to achieve.

1. To have a representative from the Bru/Reang community as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA).
2. To protect and preserve the Bru/Reang Community and to stand for the community as a whole.⁴⁵

Working of the Reang Democratic Party

The main purpose of the party was to have representatives from the Bru/Reang community. Hence they have organised several functions and activities to mobilise the population and to awaken the need for representatives amongst the Bru/Reang Community. Such activities are

1. Reang Democratic Party Assembly at Damparengpui Village:

During that time, Damparengpui was one of the largest Bru Village in Mizoram. Hence after the Bru/Reang leader met a prominent leader and politician from the state of Tripura such as Bajuban Reang (Ex MP of 7th, 8th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th)⁴⁶, Drau Kumar Reang, Kansiram Reang, Robindro Tripura and Nogendro Reang. The leaders of the Bru/Reang Community of Mizoram formed the first political party, with the support and approval from Bru/Reang leaders of Tripura and they also organised the first Reang Democratic Party Assembly at Damparengpui Village, where 1200 delegates from the whole of Mizoram, Tripura and Assam attended the program. Gouri Sankar Reang who was the Deputy Speaker of the State Legislative Assembly at the time was the chief guest of the assembly. The most important resolution that was passed in the Assembly was to demand for Bru Autonomous District Council in the western belt of Mizoram under the 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution.⁴⁷

2. District Conference.

The District Conference was conducted in the two largest Bru/Reang villages of Mizoram. The District Conference was held in Nghalemlui Village in Chhimtuipui District as well as Putluangasih Village, which was one of the largest Bru/Reang villages in Lunglei District at the time. This conference was conducted was by the leaders of the Reang Democratic Party to interact with the masses to expose the ideas of RDP and to gain mass support for the causes of the Bru/Reang Community and to popularised the need for an Autonomous District Council for the Bru/Reang.⁴⁸

3. Mass Mobilization for the cause of RDP

After the conference was done, the leaders of the Reang Democratic Party Leaders along with the party supporter visit many villages in Aizawl, Lunglei and Chhimtuipui District. The leaders of the party visited many Bru villages and organised program where the villagers

were gathered and informed the ideology of the Reang Democratic Party and to provide full support for the cause. They visited Bru villages in the Lunglei district such as Putluangasih, Zehtet, Buknuam and Mautlang Village. In Chhimituipui District they visited Sekulh range Bru/Reang Villages such as Zochachhuah, T Dumzau, Laitlang, Lunghauka etc.⁴⁹ For the mobilization of the Bru/Reang Bru community, the leaders have composed song and it was sang by Thumbairung who is now resident of Nghalimlui Village.

“ Tor nang sitho RDP rau. Jati no tuidu nai nkhe ye, Isor se gian rinang tho. Jati kau bauha nkhe ye ”

It means “Let the RDP grow and shine. To guide and foster our community, God please give us the wisdom, so that we will unite our community”. This song has united many Bru for the causes of the Reang Democratic Party and awakened the masses to the need for unity among the Bru in Mizoram.⁵⁰

4. Member of District Council election in Lai Autonomous District Council:

The Reang Democratic Party aspires to have legislators from the Bru/Reang community in the Mizoram Legislative Assembly. The leaders were dissatisfied with the formation of the Bru Social and Cultural Association (BSCA) and formed the Reang Democratic Party. Despite their goal of having a member of the Legislative Assembly, they also intend to have a member of the Lai Autonomous District Council. In 1992, three candidates ran for the RDP in the Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC). The candidates were Maturai Reang, Chondromohon, and Kehma Chondro. However, only Chondromohon was able to win the election from the Vathuampui MDC Constituency.⁵¹⁵² Upon winning the election, Chondromohon asked the Congress MDC to demarcate the MDC constituency for the Bru/Reang community and, upon agreeing with his term, he sided with Congress to form the government in the LADC.⁵³

5. Reang Democratic Party Merger to Bhartiya Jana Party:

The Leaders of the Reang Democratic Party played a very important role in establishing the Bharatiya Janata Party in Mizoram. As the RDP is not a recognised party, they realised that the best chance of securing MLA and uplifting the Bru/Reang Community would be joining an already recognised and stable party. Upon realising this, the leader wanted to join the Bharatiya Janata Party.⁵⁴ The leaders such as Chawngzika Reang, A Sawibunga, Asiha and Vanlalhruaia, visited Guwahati and met the BJP leaders and agreed to merge with the BJP.⁵⁵ On September 26, 1993, they submitted a merger proposal, which was accepted by the BJP and countersigned

by LK Advani on October 4, 1993.⁵⁶ The first BJP Chairman was A Sawibunga Reang, and the Vice Chairman was Chawngzika Reang. In the same year, RDP leaders contested as BJP candidates in the eight constituencies. A Sawibunga, Chawngzika Reang, and Vanlalhrauia are the Bru/Reang Leaders running for the BJP.⁵⁷ However, A Romawia, the RDP's leader, elected to contend as an Independent candidate. Unfortunately, none of the candidates were victorious, and C Vanlalrawna, the candidate, sought to become the President of the BJP Mizoram. However, this was strongly opposed by Chawngzika Reang, Vice President of the Mizoram BJP at the time. PL Chuma, a retired Indian Postal Service (IPS) officer, was named President of the Mizoram BJP in 1994 - 1995 on the recommendation of Chawngzika Reang.⁵⁸

Significance of the Reang Democratic Party:

The Reang Democratic Party was founded with the goal of mobilising the public and educating the Bru/Reang population. The primary goal is to have an MLA represent the Bru community. Since the party's founding, they have run for many positions, including Member of Parliament. Chawngzika Reang, Vice President of the RDP, is also running for Parliament. He was, however, not an RDP candidate, but rather an Independent.⁵⁹ Chawngzika Reang was the first candidate from the Bru/Reang community to contest for the seat of Member of Parliament (MP), finishing fourth with 4455 votes.⁶⁰ Romawia Reang was the first Bru/Reang candidate to run for the Legislative Assembly following the statehood. Chuankima Reang was the first candidate from the Bru/Reang community to run for office in Mizoram when it was upgraded to Union Territories (UT) in 1972.⁶¹

Despite having candidates from the Bru/Reang community from the time of Union Territories to the formation of Statehood, only two people from the Bru/Reang community have ever been represented in the State Legislative Assembly: Zoduha and Lalnunzira. However, they were nominated representatives only during Union Territories.⁶² Upon realising the condition of the Bru/Reang, the leaders of the time started realising the need for representatives and devising for the upliftment of the Bru/Reang community. With the formation of the Reang Democratic Party, they have taken the task of mobilising and awakening the masses. They realised the need for autonomy in Mizoram and wanted an Autonomous District Council (ADC) as Lai, Chakma and Mara communities. Having this in mind the Reang Democratic party contested 3 seats for the MDC in the LADC election of 1992. Out of 3 candidates they were able to secure 1 constituency in the Vathuampui MDC Constituency. Chondromohan was the first and only MDC to win in RDP's name. He sided with the Congress in return he demanded to demarcate the constituency for the Bru/Reang

Community⁶³. Sekulh Constituency has been reserved for the Bru/Reang Community and currently elected Lallawmsanga Apetow from Bru/Reang Community in the same constituency. ⁶⁴

Conclusion:

The Reang Democratic Party has played a significant role in awakening the masses. It could be noted that all the other civil societies that have ever existed and those that continue to exist today are greatly influenced by the creation of the Reang Democratic Party, like the MU for the Mizo in Mizoram which played a very important role in awakening the masses in the political sphere. Likewise, the HPC also played an important role in awakening the Hmar people. In Mizoram, the formation of the RDP has changed and shaped the political culture of the Bru/Reang Mizoram. It is very evident that from the above, the educated leaders of the Bru/Reang community wanted to uplift and gain some autonomy after statehood. Some of the leaders involved in the RDP are also returnees of the Mizo National Army (MNA) and had great expectations from the MNF to provide some level of autonomy for the Bru/Reang. Upon realizing no hope from the government, they started forming Political parties for the Bru/Reang and wanted to have representatives, through which they believed that they would put- up their demands such as the Autonomous District Council for the Bru/Reang community in the State Legislative Assembly. During the short existence of the party, they were able to win one seat in the Lai Autonomous District Council and it has been the one and only MDC Seat for the Reang/Bru Community till today. The RDP has influenced educated youths to form several organizations. One of the prominent civil societies that still exist today for the Bru/Reang community is the Bru Students' Association (BSA) established with the influence of the RDP. The RDP leaders merged with the BJP ended the Reang Democratic Party and leaders became candidates of the BJP in the year 1993. With the failure of the RDP to fulfil their objective. Later on, Bru National Union(BNU) was the one who championed the idea of ADC for the Bru/Reang in Mizoram along with the BSA. BNU eventually ended with ethnic violence between the Bru/Reang and Mizo in the year 1997. Hence, one can clearly say that in Mizoram, the RDP played a significant role in the awakening of the community. It was they who started the movement and pioneered the political development of the Bru/Reang in Mizoram.

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