

Chapter Five

Chapter V

A Comparative Account of Socio-economic Conditions of Tibetans in India and Nepal

5.1. The Social profile and Economic issues of the Tibetan Refugees in accordance with the CTA Demographic Survey Report in India and Nepal

My research work is a comparative study of the socio-economic condition and political status of the Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal. So, in this chapter, I will present a complete summary of the Demographic survey report published by Planning Commission of CTA along with some information from the books and reports on the Tibetans and then compare it with my findings to show the actual conditions of the Tibetans in exile. I have also included some case studies in order to support my data.

The Central Tibetan Administration is an autonomous government of the Tibetan in exile. They keep in contact with all the Tibetan population all over the globe. The Planning Commission as mentioned earlier is a department of the CTA which makes plans and projects for its people as a Five Year Plan for their social betterment, economic and sustainable development. It publishes the annual demographic survey to document all the reports of the Plans. The Demographic Community information shows the characteristic of a society based on statistical data recorded from the respondents. The first Tibetan demography survey (TDS) was conducted by Planning Commission in June, 1998 to make a complete demographic and socio-economic data bank which was felt necessary for the efficient planning and sustainable development of the Tibetan community in Exile. Based on the survey, the Planning Commission publishes its Tibetan Demographic Survey (TDS) with the aim of presenting the findings of the overall developments programmes. This report also records the disputes and issues that have been made during the last fifty years in exile. It presents full information concerning the problems and grievances of the Tibetan refugees living across the globe (Commission, 2010).

There are about 22,060 Tibetan household in India, out of which 20,709 are normal and 1,351 are institutional. Households include a group of individuals who regularly live and eat together unless exigencies prevent them from doing so. According to the TDS survey of 2009, household are categorized as:

- i) Normal: Those concerning blood relations or non-related or may be both.
- ii) Institutional: Religious or Educational; which includes old age homes, and homes for destitute etc, Institutional household is categorized as ones which is formed exclusively, such as school-homes/ dormitories and monasteries where people live and eat together.

According to the reports of The Planning Commission, the total population of Tibetans outside Tibet is 127,935, out of which 94,203 lives in India and 13,514 in Nepal, 1,298 in Bhutan and 18,920 elsewhere. As per this accounts, the annual growth rate of Tibetans in exile is 1.96%. This report presents a clear indication that the Tibetan people are passing through the last phase of the demographic period where there is parallel decline in mortality rates. In India, Dharamsala has the largest population of Tibetans- 13,701, following Doeguling (9,847), Lagsam (9,229), Ladakh (6,769). In Nepal, the densest Tibetan concentration is in Boudha (4,846), next is Phakshing- Swayambhu area (1,867) and Samdupling (988) (Planning Commission, 2010).

To understand the economic standard and condition of any community and household amenities and ownership of property of a person is important. In case of Tibetans, the people living in agriculture based settlements own three or more rooms, along with the land. In the scattered communities and other non-agricultural settlements people are provided two or less rooms, especially where Tibetans live in rented houses in Indian cities. In Nepal and Bhutan, more than two third of households (approx. 70%) occupy 2 rooms. When it comes to private houses, 26% of the total houses are owned by Tibetans. 80% live in settlements or rented houses and 20% of the population lives in staff quarters. Most Tibetans live in rented houses and the others in settlement houses (CTA, 2010).

Majority of the Tibetans living in the Indian subcontinent have 4 members per household, which is termed as a “nuclear family” while Tibetans in Nepal have the highest average family size (5.1). Information has been collected from each household regarding the number of living rooms occupied by a household to understand the living condition and to study the degree of housing congestion. Half of the Tibetan households i.e, 58% of the population living in the Indian sub-continent occupy two or less than two living rooms. While 30% of households live comfortably with 3-4 living rooms, and 11% have more than five living rooms. The agriculture based Tibetan settlements have been provided with land and housing with two rooms or more, whereas in scattered communities and other non-agricultural

Tibetan settlements, majority of the households do not have more than two rooms, especially the rented houses in towns and cities. It has been estimated that 67% or more people live in less than two rooms particularly in camps or settlements.

As for the information regarding household amenities and availability of certain basic necessities such as running water, toilets, electricity etc, it has been pointed out that 75% of Tibetan households in India have access to drinking water and other facilities within their house premises and electricity is available almost all the time.

In Nepal it varies from place to place. The primary source of water is tap water or water pipes supplied by the government. No household has access to uninterrupted electric supply. In other respects, basic household items like television, fridge, computer, cell phones, etc. are owned by 90% of the people concerned in both India and Nepal. A quarter of Tibetans own two wheelers while some even have cars and some Tibetans in India own immovable assets such as land and houses, most particularly among scattered communities. Tibetans in Nepal secure only basic amenities like television, fridge, cell phones, etc. but no property in assets. According to the CTA report, most Tibetans in India make use of banking facilities (min. 77%) compared to Nepal which is disappointing.

According to the report, the total percentage of Tibetans in the aforementioned countries is on the decline. This is due to the decrease in the fertility rate among Tibetan women. Another reason shown is the migration factor. Here, the migration trend has been classified as both internal and international migration. The reason for internal migration mentioned is in order to pursue religious studies which accounts up to 14% in India and Nepal. The next reason for migration is for a better future, common among Tibetan men compared to women. According to TDS'09, out of an estimated 78% of the exiled population, about 52% among them are found to have migrated or changed their residence permanently, either for education or for better employment opportunities. It is common amongst educated youths and adults of all ages. Estimated trends show that there are as many as 68% of the adult population intending to migrate to foreign countries (Planning Commission, 2010).

Data indicates that young Tibetan women are more educated than their parents. They were brought up in relatively better economic conditions. They took a long time in building a career that delayed their age in marriage resulting in fewer children. The corresponding figures for effective literacy rates for males and females are 88.7 % and 74.4% respectively. Over four-fifths of the male population and about three-fourths of the female population in

exile are literate today. Still, there is not much improvement when it comes to specialized and professional education among them. When it comes to language proficiency, Tibetan men are more proficient in their Tibetan vernacular than Tibetan women. Besides this, Hindi, Nepali, English and other regional languages are spoken by them. Education among the Tibetans is sponsored by non-government organizations, funding agencies of the CTA and some are self-financed. Greater numbers of educational organizations are sponsored by various parties for women compared to men.

Carpet weaving is the main skill among Tibetans which is dominated by women compared to men. Earlier, economic activity was primarily agriculture which is now replaced by a major shift towards diversified tertiary sectors. Tertiary sectors include carpentry, music, *thangka* painting, driving, computer programming etc. There are as many as 36,755 non-workers which make up 34% of the total population out of which 15.5% are unemployed. The mindset, literacy level, knowhow and the external exposure of the present generation is different and higher from the previous generation. During this period of time many educated people had joined various NGOs and CTA affiliated organizations. Thus, steady growth is recorded in household activities and the informal industrial sectors (mainly sweater business and teaching profession).

Not all Tibetan refugees are directly benefitted from development projects and programmes of Planning Commission, CTA. It reports that Tibetans are the most alienated and vulnerable people in terms of external forces and hazardous elements. The Scattered Tibetan community faces many problems compared to institutionalized settlements. They are faced with problems like socio-cultural alienation, discrimination and identity crisis in the social arena. They have been victims to deadly diseases like HIV/AIDS/drugs/ substance abuse. They lack access to proper Tibetan education which is the source of major problems. As per the report, among Tibetans, the measuring amount of poverty is based on socio-cultural parameters rather than simple material construct. An individual or a family who does not have a material and socio-cultural capacity to achieve individual and collective aspiration is deemed as poor. The man-land ratio together with the lack of economic resources and human skill/ education makes this population vulnerable which makes them undergo internal change. In addition, they are placed in the most remote parts of India with little or no employment opportunities.

5.2. Life of Tibetan Refugees analyzed from Secondary Sources

Many researchers have done research on the Tibetan refugee communities in India. Almost all of these give a general description of their lifestyle and economic activities. In this section I have tried to refer such books so that the picture becomes evidently clear.

The Tibetan: Their life in Exile in India; a book by Mamta Desai & Manish Kumar Raha is based on social and economic change along with the ecological adaptation among the Tibetan refugees. The authors have attempted a comparative analysis with regard to the past and present socio-political history of the Tibetans refugees. The book discusses the Tibetan refugees in India as a whole, and their adaptation in this country (Desai, Mamta., Raha, Manish.Kr, 2011). According to this book, there are about 24 agriculture based settlements, 16 agro- based settlements and 10 handicrafts units and others lives in scattered settlements in various towns and settlements in India. However the given data does not match with the CTA report. Sweater selling business is one of the important economic activities among them. Besides, agriculture is the primary occupation, especially in South India. Many youths are engaged in various types of services. Some are doing business while in some places, people are engaged in agriculture with trained and mechanized farming practices at the same time; they are also engaged in the manufacturing and selling of woolen garments, carpets and other Tibetan handicrafts. The CTA operates some educational institutions up to the school level after which, they have to depend on Indian institutions for further education. In order to exercise the privileges of the government allotted facilities and reservation, Tibetans usually take up Indian citizenship which is of course a sensitive issue. It has been found that because of the citizenship card, some Tibetans are holding high and prestigious positions in the administrative sectors both in India and abroad. This has been mentioned in the previous chapters.

According to this book, 4% of income of the Tibetans comes from trade and business. Salaried employment includes services in the army, government sectors and teaching profession, which make up for about 3% of the household income, whereas agricultural and allied activities account for 26% of the total household income. Apart from this, Tibetan households rely on subsidiary sources of income, which include income from sponsorship, governments and foreign remittances. Furthermore, economically deprived households are either looked after by the government or are supported by sponsors from abroad. In some

areas, the economic conditions are far better than native Indian villages. Almost all the settlements are provided with primary and secondary schools, health center and co-operative societies. Education has been always priority of the Tibetan administration. Therefore, the literacy rate of Tibetans has reached 78% it and literacy rate of 99% in the age group between 19 and 25.

Even occupation mobility is distinct among Tibetan refugees. 70% per cent of traditional agricultural occupation has shifted to some form of business and trade, and other profession because of education. As a result, the tentative pattern of monthly income of each household has also changed.

In spite of a high percentage of literates among Tibetan youths, unemployment among them is evident or rampant, because of their refugee status. Youths with higher education along with professional training have lesser problems concerning employment, but educated youths with no vocational training have to face greater difficulties for employment. Hence, Tibetan youths prefer vocational training rather than higher educational degrees. For these reasons, getting a citizenship gets priority if not a compulsion. Also, at the same time, they are quite aware of the fact that getting a citizenship of any other country means a loss of their own identity. The authors of this book have clearly pointed out that the problem of unemployment among the Tibetan youth could have far reaching consequences on the Tibetan community as a whole in the future. Until and unless the Tibetan administration in exile is able to initiate a sustainable rural based economy in their settlements, the problem of Tibetan migration to other places will continue. The Tibetan Government in Exile understands the issue and trying to make the settlements economically sound and sustainable, according to the Tibetan demographic survey.

In report prepared by Institute of Defence studies and Analyses, New Delhi entitled “Tibet and India’s Security: Himalayan Region, Refugees and Sino-Indian Relations” 2012, throws light on socio- economic condition of Tibetans based on field surveys conducted in Dharamsala and Dehradun. It highlights that the socio-economic condition of Tibetans in these two places are satisfactory. Firstly, it has mentioned that there exists a good relationship between the locals and the Tibetans. They are influenced in many ways in terms of their lifestyle and dressing sense. There is free social mixing between the two groups. The cases of inter marriage has also been noted. In Dharamsala, youths are a little secluded from the local Indian youths as are seen more as foreigners, but in case of Dehradun, there is so much of

affinity and connection between them in terms of fashion, lifestyle, etc. Though, their political policy is maintained differently in both the places. In Dehradun, it has been mentioned that intermarriage between Sikh boys and Tibetan girls have been taking place but there is no record of marriage between a Tibetan boy and any Indian girl. In McLeodGunj, on the other hand, Tibetans are more interested in getting married to foreigners rather than the locals, so that they get a chance to migrate to western countries. A survey was conducted among four categories of people on the basis of their occupation i.e. those who work in different offices of the CTA, schools and workers of other organizations of the CTA. These workers get salaries ranging in-between 7,000 – 2,000/ Rupees. While the business categories belong to those who run Tibetan markets in cities. They sell woolen clothes, Tibetan attires etc., they also do seasonal businesses during winter. They purchase items from Ludhiana and sell mostly in Delhi. Others are engaged in catering services in restaurants or in internet cafes, photo shops or any other computer centers. Of late, there are many youths who are getting jobs in renowned hotels and bakeries like Taj, Hotel Rajdoot in cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Goa. This is because of the vocational training centre in Dehradun. In Dehradun, some youths work in catering and sales in shops owned by Indians (Report, 2012).

The Central Tibetan Administration shows contentment on the economic condition of Tibetans in exile but its people have different connotations regarding it. They opine that though their lifestyle is maintained, they lack financial security. They have no job security. Most of them survive on international charities and donations which come from the US, Canada, UK, Germany and France. If these donations stop, their lives will be critically affected. Regarding political situations, Tibetans of these two places think that there is a possibility of negotiation between the two parties i.e. the host countries and the Chinese authorities. Most youths want to achieve freedom before the inevitable demise of The 14th Dalai Lama, as they believe that there will be an intense power struggle in the structure of the political hierarchy in the Tibetan government in Exile. The third generation youths want to wage a liberation war from inside Tibet which could be more effective during important events involving China like The Beijing Olympics. Albeit, few Tibetans are of the opinion that Buddhism is the path of non-violence, therefore, a bloody war against China may hurt the sentiments of the Dalai Lama. This action might also harm India. So by going through this report it has been clear that, the economic condition of the Tibetans is quite similar in all places. Social status differs but there are diverse ideas, understanding and assumptions among the exiled Tibetans regarding the political status of Tibet and the Tibetans.

There are some other books like '*Tibetan Refugees search for Assistance*' by Dr. Anand (2012) and '*Social Mobility and Change among Tibetan Refugees*' by Monu Rani Gupta (2005). There are also some articles on the same theme like Little Lhasa, "Tibetans in Exile by Amina Muhtar (2011), Tibetan in Bylakuppe by T. Tarodi (2011). Since general picture presented by all is more or less similar I have not gone into separate discussion of each. The subsequent portion is based fieldwork and personal observations in India and Nepal.

5.3. Socio –economic profile and political issues of the Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal: A Comparative study

In this section, I have attempted to present the general description about their lives both in India and Nepal. This is basically on the basis of my field work and personal observation. I have compared my findings with the reports issued by The Planning Commission of The CTA. In the course of my study, I have also attempted to find out the answer to the questions such as: Does the programmes and plans made by The CTA have benefitted the refugees or not? Does a simple Tibetan refugee enjoy direct contact with the Tibetan administration? Are Tibetans leading a satisfactory life in exile? And most importantly, what is the perception among the Tibetan youths on the autonomy of Tibet?

Generally speaking, it was found out that Tibetans residing in camps or settlements are beneficiaries of every facility and development schemes allotted to them by the Government in Exile. Every settlement is under the supervision of a manager in a camp along with other staff members who are responsible for taking care of the camp. All detailed reports have to be sent to the CTA office annually. In the camp, people are allotted with housing, healthcare facilities and educational facilities for free. They are also given jobs inside the camp.

The CTA gives special attention to educate their community in order to make them self-reliant. Thus, Tibetan refugees are given free education till class XII in the Central School for Tibetans established by the Government of India with assistance from the CTA. After that, they may pursue higher education in colleges without the help of the CTA. There is the provision of granting scholarships to meritorious students in the university level from the government and sponsorships from foreign countries too. Few scholars even go abroad for higher education. Some reservation policies are also there by the Indian Government for the

Tibetan refugees in Indian institutions for higher studies. Many good students have benefitted through this scheme and are placed in good positions both in public and private sectors.

In every Tibetan settlement in India, Men Tsee-Khang (Tibetan Medical & Astro Institute) is responsible for providing health care. It is instituted in all the areas of Tibetan settlements and camps. It is a traditional method of curing diseases. For minor illness Tibetans use this method of treatment otherwise, they go to in local hospitals. And if in crisis, the CTA looks over all the medical expenses or else, they get free treatments from the local state government hospitals.

Tibetans in India are liable to get free rations from the Indian government. In fact, they are beneficiaries to most of the facilities that are granted to Indian citizens. The people living in camps have limited source of income compared to the scattered ones. They earn money by working inside the camp by rendering their services through their daily work where they are paid a salary on a day to day basis which is limited. Otherwise, few individuals earn their livelihoods by selling traditional Tibetan items in local markets. Some of them are retired personnel who receive a pension and employ themselves in some manual jobs inside the camp. At present, some of the educated youths have migrated to foreign countries for employment, who send back money to their parents. Almost every educated Tibetan youth aspires to travel abroad for a better livelihood. The administrative office of every settlement sends detailed reports to the CTA regarding everything, annually. Besides this, Tibetans have developed a good relationship and understanding with others, so they extend their help in maintaining and repairing roads and other premises from time to time. Tibetans have developed great rapport with the locals so they intermix with them in every social event in Darjeeling. More or less, Tibetans living in settlements have a content life. According to Sudeep Basu (Basu, 2018, p. 163) the perception of the locals on the economic status of Tibetans in the settlement is different. The local youths think that it is eyewash that Tibetans have limited access to resources. Actually, the Tibetans are well off because of the external assistance they receive as donations which give them edge over native people. They have jobs, ration cards, and are doing good business in Darjeeling. On the contrary, the old aged local inhabitants opine that Tibetans are very hard working and that is the reason for their economic success in Darjeeling area (Basu, 2018, p. 163).

Outside their camp, Tibetans mostly rely on entrepreneurship; hence, scattered Tibetan refugees in places like Darjeeling are more or less economically viable. In some areas, they

dominate even hill economy, particularly in the garment business and small hotel businesses. Tibetans are major contributors in the economy of Darjeeling. Moreover, all shops run by Tibetans are legally owned by them. Only a few shops are rented. They have their own house and business establishments. Though they are busy in their survival, they are well informed about their political condition and other issues like human rights violations going inside Tibet and they take active part in political activities organized by Tibetan organizations like protest movements and rallies. But at the same time, these people have affiliations in the local politics and they actively take part in local bodies. From my personal observation it was found that almost every Tibetans living in scattered communities maintain dual identity both as Indian citizens as well as Tibetan refugee. However, Tibetans living inside the settlement retain Refugees Registration Card till date. This means that they have single identity as Tibetan refugees.

In case of Delhi, the scenario is different. Being residents of the capital, they have to encounter many hurdles both in social and political life. They have to work hard for their livelihood. Business is their main source of livelihood. Running hotels, travel agencies, garment shops and seasonal garment business in different cities is common. They run their businesses in rented places, either owned by Indian citizens or by Tibetans living abroad. There are two places in Delhi, Maznu-ka-Tilla and Ladakh Buddha Vihara market where the majority of Tibetans live and run their businesses. These two places are famous in terms of Tibetan food and woolen clothes as well as from other fancy items. It attracts a lot of Delhites, especially young college going people. Here also the CTA representative office is present to look over all the problems and development works including the maintenance of their settlements and governing the people. Ladakh Buddha Vihara market has its own housing facilities allotted to them by the CTA, and market establishments are owned by the people. Tibetan youths who have attended good colleges in Delhi are much advanced compared to their parents. But socially they feel alienated and sometimes become victims of racial discrimination by the other Indians in Delhi according to the field survey.

Tibetans in Delhi are well informed and versed in politics. They have sound knowledge about the government and politics. Ambitious in their outlook they take full advantage of all facilities allotted to them both by the CTA and the Indian government. Many educated youths in Delhi work in multinational companies and others in the CTA representative offices but many of them have now migrated abroad.

In case of Chandragiri, Odisha, Tibetan refugees solely depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Maize is the main agricultural product. Besides this, floriculture and horticulture are also practiced in a small scale. Tibetans also travel to other cities to sell woolen garments in winter season. Since this is a settlement; the Tibetans here strictly retain their refugee status. There are five camps in Chandragiri which are looked after by the Tibetan government. One of the unique features of these camps is the cooperative society that functions like the lifeline of Tibetans living there. Besides this, they get all kinds of welfare schemes and assistance from the CTA.

Despite being situated in a backward area, these camps are well managed in a systematic manner. People are hard working and in fact, it was found that these refugees enjoy better living conditions than the natives of this village. In fact it was also found that the local people depend upon Tibetans for employment. They hire the locals to do manual jobs like cleaning, labour work, as well as in agriculture. The living condition and the houses are also better than the local people. It can be said that the economy of this place depends upon Tibetans. This is the reason why there is a kind of political stiffness and indignation among the natives and the Tibetans of this place. The second generations Tibetans are educated mostly here and render their services in different sectors of the offices in the CTA. The present generation youths are highly educated. It was found that the office bearers were the young, ranging from 25- 40 years of age. Many of the Youths from almost every household have migrated to foreign countries from where they remit money. As a result of which the houses in the camps are concrete and the people live in better conditions than in any other place. Remaining educated people either work in offices of CTA in different departments or practice entrepreneurship in and outside the state.

Coming to the political perception among the Tibetans in India, it was found out that only the first and the second generation group of Tibetans are keen on seeing their country free from China. They rest their full faith on the leadership of the Dalai Lama and His Middle Way approach and the guidelines of the CTA functionary. However, the perception of the Third generation or the existing youth is different. They show less faith in the Middle Way approach for Tibet's independence, though they have full faith and the Dalai Lama. They see no hope of getting any fruitful result out of continuous dialogues and negotiation with the People's Republic of China. They are very confused of their condition and feel frustrated about their refugee status. Therefore, every youth wants to migrate abroad to lead a better life.

As it is the economy and income of that determines the social and livelihood condition of any person, we can assume that Tibetans living in India are in a comfortable condition socially and economically. We can conclude by noting that these groups of refugees are much privileged than any other refugee groups, and are economically viable and have been satisfactorily adapted in the Indian soil. They are much obliged to the Indian government and the Indians for the hospitality.

In Nepal, the condition of the Tibetans is somewhat different from those in India. Tibetans have been residing since the initial days of their refuge. In spite of that, taking into consideration the economic condition and political crisis of Nepal as a country, Tibetans do not have a grounded life or proper conditions. They face many political and social restrictions within the country. The economy of Tibetan refugees in Nepal relies on carpet weaving, running small eateries, or shops owned by the settlement. Few people work as hired workers in the shops owned by Nepalese businessmen. Just because of the changing governmental policies and rule of law, Tibetans have limited access to economic as well as social resources unlike those residing in India. But of course, in both the countries, they receive the same amount of facilities and perks out of the plans and policies executed by the CTA to its fellow citizens, though the level of policy execution differs on the binding offices in these countries. It can be assumed that Nepal, which maintains close connections with China, keeps Tibetan refugees under surveillance where their social and political activities are rather limited. Further, Nepal is one of the poorer countries in Asia, which itself has many political and economic issues and internal challenges. In such a situation, it may not be easy for Tibetan refugees to live an easy life like that in India. Moreover, Nepal's proximity to China makes the situation even worse and difficult for them. The status and treatment of Tibetans from the Nepalese government is unpredictable, often depending upon the fluctuating relationship between Nepal and China.

Though Tibetans are not the real citizens of either of these countries and have been labeled as refugees, it is still evident that Tibetans are resourceful community in both in India and Nepal. They contribute in generous percentage when it comes to economy, particularly in the area of retailing, food, carpets and in tourism sectors too.

5.4. Case Studies:

The following case study will give an idea on their economic status and social condition of the Tibetans.

Case study I

Chunor Samdup is a 67 year old man who is the secretary to the office of the Central Tibetan Administration in the Phuntsokling settlement in Chandragiri, Orrisa. He had migrated to India at the age of seven with his parents. At first his family had stayed at Dalhousie and his parents had worked as labourers in the Kullu-Manali road construction.

Chunor recalls how horrible the journey was from Tibet to India. They came on foot leaving everything back in Tibet- their possessions, house, cattle, land and dear ones. They had struggled with poverty during the initial years in India and gradually the situation got better. Chunor got admission to a school at the age of ten. Later, he finished his graduation in commerce and shifted to Chandragiri with his family and joined his service in the CTA office where he is working since then. Many years of economic and social struggle finally made his situation stable. Now all of his three children are well settled. Two of his children are in foreign countries and one in Delhi who is a doctor in a private hospital. He has a leased land where he practices agriculture as a source of surplus income besides his salary. His expenses are mainly healthcare related. He is a self-sufficient and influential person in the settlement now. He is elated to serve his people in the settlement. He expressed that in no matter what environment his children grew up, he never noticed any cultural or religious change among his children. In fact, one of his children married a foreign national, yet her love and consciousness towards her fellowmen and culture is still intact. With time, they understood their situation as refugee and realized their responsibility towards their lost country. Chunor does not have an Indian citizenship but he has an Aadhar card. Being a secretary in the CTA office, he is more occupied with work concerning community welfare and organizes social events like health camps, distribution of clothes to poor local population, and helps people in case of calamities in nearby areas.

Chunor Samdup is deeply conscious of the issues concerning Tibet and the political developments in their government. He has a strong faith in the Dalai Lama and his middle way approach and believes that the Dalai Lama and his preachings would only be for the betterment of his people. He is highly obliged to the Indian government and its support towards Tibetans. He believes that peaceful dialogue between the Central Tibetan

Administration and China could bring autonomy back in Tibet. He further adds that if it does materialize, he will happily move back to Tibet.

Case study II

Tenzing Tshegh is a 25 year old girl in Chandragiri who has just finished her Masters in Economics from Chennai University. Tenzing Tshegh studied in a local Central School, up to the primary level. Then she studied in CST in Kalimpong till class XII, after which, she went to Chennai University for a Bachelor Degree. Despite being good at studies, Tenzing could not get a reservation or any kind of governmental stipend in academics because she did not have an Indian Citizenship card. She only retains RC. She never opted for an Indian Citizenship. She has completed her studies now, and hopes that she may find a decent job in the office of the Central Tibetan Administration. She believes that getting a job in the CTA office would be a great opportunity for her to serve her own people. Presently, she does not have ambitions of going abroad for a better future.

Tenzing's family has been living in Chandragiri from the beginning, though her father has established his business in Shillong. They have a one stored house with a courtyard at the front of the house at camp no. 1. in Chandragiri, Odisha. Her family income is dependent upon her father's business and some earnings come from maize production in a leased land. She has four family members in the house. Her father is a cloth merchant in Shillong. Her elder brother stays with her father and helps in the business. Her mother lives in Chandragiri and overlooks the responsibilities of agriculture and the house. Her younger brother is studying Science in Chandigarh University.

Their major expenditure is for the education of two children. Fortunately, there are no health concerns in the family. In case of illness, they go to the government hospital in Behrampur. Otherwise, they sometimes visit the local health-centre for minor illnesses. They have all household luxuries including television, fridge, cell phones and a motorcycle. In a way, her family is financially self-sufficient.

Tenzing admits that the attainment of education and making of friends among other communities in schools and colleges have influenced the moulding of their attitude. They often get attracted towards other cultures and lifestyles which are quite obvious and unavoidable. Their outlook towards life gets infatuated but ultimately they have to remain

under the domain of their own culture and religion. Tensing is not interested in inter-caste marriage and wishes to marry within her community. Tensing was an active member of The Tibetan Student's Association of Madras in her college days, but now she is no more a member of any association. She has deep faith in the institution of the Dalai Lama. She believes that the Middle Way approach would bring autonomy back to Tibet. Born in India, she considers India as her home but if Tibet gets her freedom, Tenzing would definitely visit her country once, though her plans to move back to Tibet would depend on the timing and situation at that point of time. Tenzing, despite being an educated Tibetan youth with a modern outlook, holds a strong faith in her religion and culture.

Case study III

Darjee Thinley Bhutia is a 60 year old man living outside the settlement in Sonada, Darjeeling. He runs a small tailoring shop where he sells self made jackets and track suits. He lives with his wife in a rented four room house. He has two children. His elder son is a media professional in Delhi and his daughter works for a private firm in Delhi.

Thinley came to India at the age of eleven with his neighbours. At first he lived in Bhutan and after staying there for about three years, he travelled to Mussorie and then again to Darjeeling. In Mussorie, he used to get ill often so he shifted to Darjeeling where his relatives had moved to. Since then, he has settled over there. He had set up his business through his hard earned money and savings. He struggled a lot in order to provide education to his children. Despite facing many economic problems, he was successful in educating his children in reputed North Point School in Darjeeling. Thinley expressed that he had understood the value of good education at an early age. Life without education would be worthless and full of problems, he worked hard for the education his children. Now he is happy and satisfied with the achievements of his children. He has become self-sufficient now. His children send him money.

Thinley has every basic necessity at home including a motor cycle for transportation. His expenditures only concern his daily expenses and healthcare. In case of illness he visits the local health centre and sometimes goes to a private healthcare facility in Darjeeling or Siliguri, in case of any serious health issues. They only get rations like rice, kerosene, wheat and sugar from the government fair shop. His family still retains RC. He is an active member of the Thumo Yathing Organisation in Darjeeling.

Thinly could still remember the suffering that he and his family had to go through while escaping to India. He recalled how people had carried large quantities of luggage on their back along with their babies. As the journey was tough, through harsh mountainous pathways, people began to fall ill and weak and therefore, one had to carry them on their backs, often with their swollen legs. His sisters and uncle are still in Tibet. He had once visited Tibet, way back in 1986, after nearly 30 years. It was a new Tibet as he noticed major changes in Lhasa and other places of Tibet, which now bears the look of a modern city with roads, buildings, amusement parks and hospitals unlike the previous one, which he left behind prior to 1959. Today he maintains contact with his sisters over telephone. He even meets his sisters in Nathula (Indo-China border in Sikkim) where he carries food grains, oils and other food items for his sister and exchanges gifts. On the other side his sister too brings Tibetan food and other items which may not be available here. These interactions among them provide great comfort to his heart. He feels as if he is in his own motherland spiritually, though not physically.

Case study IV

Pema Namgyal is a forty five year old restaurant owner in Kalimpong. He lives with his wife and two children in the town. He was born and brought up in Kalimpong. He does not have his own house. The restaurant which he runs is also on rent. He has set up his business with his own money. He and his wife work very hard to live and educate their children. Almost all his earning is spent on his children's education. He educated both of his children in reputed private schools of Kalimpong. At present, his daughter studies in St. Xavier's College, Kolkata and his son studies in Dr. Graham's Homes in Kalimpong.

Pema does not notice any cultural change among his children though they hangout with friends belonging to different cultural backgrounds. He feels that intermixing with the local people will not hamper their culture. He proudly claims that it is their upbringing which would never get uprooted at any cost. Pema being a resident of Kalimpong since his birth has adopted Indian citizenship. He sees nothing wrong in having the citizenship card as he opines that India is his first homeland. He has never been to Tibet, which for him is history now. Positively, he has a soft corner for his original homeland and wants to visit Tibet if he ever gets a chance. Yet he loves India as the country. His entire family has Indian citizenship cards. In fact, according to him, retaining a refugee card is problematic as it has to be renewed annually and for that they have to go through various inefficient offices. But if they

have an Indian citizenship card, they would live a hassle-free life. Because of this card his children could enjoy all governmental facilities. They get stipend in schools for their Scheduled Tribe status. Likewise, many other governmental facilities can be received if they are Indian citizens. It is because of this card, that his children's future could be secure. He is also a member of the Tibetan organization operating there. He participates in both electoral processes of India and the CTA. Pema being a Tibetan has full faith in the Dalai Lama and his teachings, and believes that one day through his blessing his motherland would be free.

By reading these case studies one can have an idea on how the life of Tibetan refugees revolves in India. While some Tibetans have an easy life, others struggle to lead a decent life. On the other hand some Tibetans maintain dual identity as Indians and Tibetans. Yet, somehow all have a deep faith in their culture, religion and their spiritual leader The Dalai Lama, and importantly, all Tibetans want to go back to their homeland i.e. "Free Tibet" once in their lifetime. What is particularly noticeable is that the Tibetan parents are fully committed to giving good education to their children. They themselves had experienced various hardship and do not want their children to experience the same.

A comparison of report prepared by the Planning Commission with the primary data collected from field points to the fact that there is not much difference in the social life of Tibetan refugees.

The political life and the status are much different in India and Nepal. Tibetans in Nepal have no political freedom or rights. Their economic opportunities are also very limited. Tibetan in India has limited political rights. Almost every Tibetan youth has Indian citizenship card. They get reservation in Indian top universities also. They are eligible to apply in all the administrative services as equal to Indian citizens. Recently in the advertisements of the Indian top civil services like Indian Administrative Services, Indian Polices Services and Indian Forest Services. It is mentioned that 'Tibetans refugees who have moved to India before January 1, 1962' are eligible to apply for such post⁹. In Darjeeling we can see that the Tibetans run good garments and hotel business. Their living standard is much better than the average native people. Even in Chandragiri, Odisha, it was found out that Tibetan refugees were actually wealthy than the local tribal population. They were the ones who hire the locals to do their household jobs. Almost in every house one member works abroad. So in the conclusion we can assume that Tibetans economic life is satisfactory than the native people in

⁹ timesofindia.com, 13th February 2020.

some places like Darjeeling and Chandragiri. But their social and political life varies according to their place of refuge.

References:

Basu, S. (2018). *In Diasporic Lands: Tibetan Refugees and their Transformation since the Exodus*.

Democracy, T. C. (2012). *Democracy in Exile*.

Desai, Mamta., Raha, Manish.Kr. (2011). *The Tibetans- Their life in Exile in India*.

Dr. Anand. (2012). *Tibetan Search for Assistance*.

Gupta. Monu Rani, (2005) *Social Mobility and Change among Tibetan Refugees*.

Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, (2012). *Tibet and India's Security: Himalayan Region, Refugees and Sino-Indian Relations*. New Delhi.

McConnell, F. (2009). Tibetan Democracy in Exile: The Uniqueness and Limitations of Democratic Procedures in a Territory less Polity. *Sociological Bulletin* , 115-144.

Planning Commission, C. (2010). *Demographic Survey of Tibetans in Exile & Tibetan community in Exile: Integrated Development Plan 2009-2013*.