

## Summary and Conclusion

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In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Tibet by virtue of its location got involved in the geopolitics of the three powerful nations surrounding it viz. Russia, Great Britain and China. In course of time Great Britain had to leave India and Russia also following its revolution lost interest in Tibet and it was only China that remained to claim control over Tibet. The political developments following the 1910 revolution and overthrow of the Manchus in China and ultimately the proclamation of the Communist government under Mao Tse Tung ultimately culminated into the Chinese takeover of Tibet and the subsequent flight of the Dalai Lama to India in 1959. This initiated a flow of Tibetan refugees to India and Nepal and to some extent in Bhutan. This was followed by the Cultural Revolution in the 'Land of the Lamas' when 'reforms' were initiated by the Communist regime of China to alter the religious tradition of Tibetan society to convert it into a modern secular society. The cultural attack followed by a full-blooded political assault resulted in the escape of even more Tibetans from Tibet. The flight of the Tibetans has been continuing till date.

At that critical moment, India government ensured all possible assistance to accommodate the Tibetan refugees. It allotted land to establish many refugee settlements by leasing land in the states of Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, South Sikkim, West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Odisha. Now, about 75% of the Tibetan refugees in India reside in settlements and remaining others in scattered community amongst Indian mainstream population. Indian Government also allotted land to establish their Autonomous Government in Exile which is known as Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh. For education of the children schools were set up in different parts of the country close to the Tibetan settlements.

The second destination of Tibetan refugees from early 1950s onwards was Nepal. They established camps primarily in the Himalayan border regions of Western Nepal such as Mustang, ethnic Tibetan kingdom of Nepal as well as in Nubri and Solu Khumbu with the assistance of UNHCR, the Swiss government, the Australian Refugees Committee and the International Committee of the Red Cross society. By the early 1960s, the Nepalese government provided the Tibetan refugees with land in regions like Chialsa in Solu-Khumbu, Tashi Palkheil, Dhorpatan and Jawalakhel with the help of the United Nations High

Commission for the Refugees. Same year, the Swiss International Organisation set up the Tibetan handicraft centers in Nepal which became main source of livelihood. Thereafter, with the assistance of non-governmental organizations, they built roads, homes, schools and hospitals. With time more settlements came up in the places like Jawalakhel, Boudha, Swayambunath and Jorpatani in and around Kathmandu; Jampaling, Paljorling, Tashi Ling and Palhkeil in the Pokhara region; and Dhorpatan, Chialsa, Chsirok, Shabrus, and Lumbini in the northern regions of Nepal. Even though the CTA exercises supervision over the refugees in both the countries, there is a stark contrast between the socio-economic and political condition of Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal. This dissertation is a comparative study of the refugees in these two countries and the political considerations determining the same.

This thesis is a comparative study of the social and economic life and the political status of Tibetan Refugees in India and Nepal where they have settled mostly. It is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is the **Introduction** where we have introduced the basic theme of the study along with the research objectives and questions. The statement of the research objectives has been introduced after an extensive literature review. Books on the Tibetan issue are many but I have discussed only those which seemed to be directly relevant to my dissertation. These can be broadly divided into three groups. i). literature related to the Tibetan history from which the Tibetans derive their argument regarding their political status. ii). The concept of Refugees, Diaspora and identity are discussed as a “Community” for an understanding of the Tibetans. I have referred to many books that are available on the Tibetan Refugees and India, China and Nepal relationship as the secondary source. The area of my field work includes Darjeeling, Sonada, Kalimpong, New Delhi (Manju-ka-Tilla and Ladakh Buddha Vihara), and Chandragiri in Odisha and Jawalakhel and Syambhunath in Nepal. iii.) Research Methodology. As for the methodology of the work, I have relied on both primary and secondary sources. I have used interview, sampling, snow ball sampling, observations and the narratives as my primary sources. This chapter also includes the limitations of my research.

The second chapter “**Tibetan Refugees in India and Nepal, the Legal Status, Social and Political Traits**” is based on secondary sources. In this, I have discussed The United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees and its policies and laws applicable for the protection of the refugees in general. The Policies of host countries in India and Nepal are discussed in details. The laws and policies ruling the Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal are different. India is not

party to the 1951 Convention relating the Status of Refugees or its Protocol. It has only accepted fundamental principles of refugees' law and of refoulement. All of them are regarded as 'foreigners' and the rules are subject to change because it deals with them case to case.

On the other hand, Nepal is too not party to Refugees Convention but it guarantees certain rights to the refugees like equal protections, religious freedom and protection from expropriation of property. The freedom of expression, of movement and right to acquire or own property however are not allowed to them. Nepalese laws simply regard them as 'aliens.

The Registration card is mandatory in both the countries as an official proof of being an acknowledged immigrant by the respective governments. This card also makes them liable to certain basic rights. The legal policies over Tibetans in India have remained same over the years. While in Nepal, Government policies have changed or have become harsher since 1990s curtailing most of the basic human rights of the Tibetans. This is due to the political equation between Nepal and China. The second half of this chapter discusses the Tibet – China relationship in historical perspective as a result of which Tibet lost its independence to China. Finally it also briefs the social customs and cultural traits of the Tibetans as a whole.

The third chapter “**Tibetan Refugees in India; Their Socio- economic Conditions and Political Status**” and the fourth chapter “**Tibetan Refugees in Nepal, their Socio-economic Conditions and Political Status**” These two chapters are purely based on fieldwork. The detailed interpretations of data on the socio-economic conditions and their political mobility and awareness among the Tibetans in India and Nepal have been described in detail with the help of charts. In India Tibetan refugees' economic life is dependent upon entrepreneurship or on business ventures. The scarcity of land makes them dependent upon small business ventures be it Kalimpong, Darjeeling or Delhi. They have been sustaining their livelihood on carpet business and handicrafts, running small shops selling souvenirs, Tibetan food items, incenses, running internet cafes and the restaurants. Less educated Youths work in private sectors like in hotel industry and in shopping malls in India. Few Tibetan youths are working as doctors, teachers and others are into other Indian government services where Indian government has provided them with reservation. Seasonal sweater business is common everywhere in India. Chandragiri in Odisha is entirely dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. They grow maize, fruits and flower. Tibetan refugees in India are satisfied with the government treatment upon them and express their gratitude with much pride.

But in Nepal in absence of any governmental schemes and reservation for them; the entire Tibetan population is dependent on either business or work in private sectors. They take license in the name of Nepalese citizens as ownership of private enterprise is not allowed for them.

What is interesting is that in India, a large number of Tibetan youths have acquired Indian Citizenship. This is because Indian citizenship entitles them many privileges that they cannot claim as refugees. Not only the renewal of the RC from time to time is botheration for them but it also restricts their travel abroad. In the absence of job opportunities in India, it is common for the Tibetan youths to migrate to the USA and Europe in search of a better life. Even in Chandragiri, in heartland of India it was found that almost all families have their children in different parts of India and abroad. This is even more common in places with more scope and exposure like in New Delhi. Tibetan diaspora has now become a global citizen. But it is not to say that they have given up their Tibetan identity. They are bound together as Tibetans by their common identity and aspiration. Even without a homeland with geographical territory they are held together by their nationalism. They have built their identity as a “Tibetan” with the common indicator of religious force and traditional customs.

Chapter five” **A Comparative Analytical Report of Socio-economic Condition of Tibetans in India and Nepal**” will discuss about the Central Tibetan Administration and analyze it critically. Tibetans are recognized as one of the most successful refuge groups in the world because of the towering personality of the Dalai Lama and the Government of Exile set up in Dharamsala. The CTA (Tibetan government) runs like any other democratic government. Its primary organs is Cabinet or *Kashag* under which there are others organs like Planning Commissions, Tibet Policy Institute, Tibet Justice Commissions, Tibetan Parliament in Exiles, the Department of Home and the Department of Information and International Relations. The Planning Commission of the CTA often makes plans and policies which they execute in the Tibetan settlements in India, Nepal and Bhutan. This department also conducts demographic survey to find out the results of their policies and find out whether their people has been benefitted or are deprived of their development policies. It is understandable that CTA is in obligation to show that the Tibetans live in poor conditions to show their plight and collect sympathy from the international community. So, the second half of this chapter will analyze the demographic report published by the Planning Commission and compare it with the data collected during the field work. This comparison is

an attempt to find out the exact conditions of Tibetans and find out its rationality in accordance with the CTA report. CTA exhibits that the Tibetans are deprived of many rights and amenities but the actual picture is different according to my study. It was found out that Tibetans have better and satisfactory life in India. They lack employment opportunities compared to the growing percentage of educated youths but that is same with the common Indian youth. But in Nepal, the scenario is different. Tibetans are socially adapted but then, their economic opportunities and civil and political right are nil. In order to support my data, I have mentioned few case studies too.

The last chapter or sixth chapter “**The Geopolitical Nexus between India, Nepal and China**” is also based on secondary sources where I have written about the India- China, China -Nepal and India -Nepal relations. This chapter will explore the political nexus between the three countries and its imbroglio which would affect the political status of Tibetan refugees in the host countries.

The Tibetan issue is turning out to be very complex and unpredictable. The attempts to arrive at a consensus over the status of Tibet vis a vis China has failed and there seems no hope for a free Tibet in the near future. Notwithstanding the worldwide support for the Tibetan cause; not a single nation has come out openly in support of Tibetan independence from China. CTA has been working with five year strategy for returning to dialogue with China and preparing for a fifty year struggle if needed with the Middle Way approach as political means to realize the Tibetan dream. Dalai Lama has climbed down from the demand of total freedom and now proposes the Middle Way i.e autonomy within the Government of China. His towering personality binds all the Tibetans together, yet not all and especially the youths are happy about His giving up of the demand of complete freedom and demand of mere autonomy. The Tibetan Youth Congress has expressed its reservations regarding this . It is difficult to predict the possible turn of events in His absence in the future. The position and functioning of the CTA from India and the issue regarding the reincarnation of Dalai Lama may turn to be incomputable after the demise of Dalai Lama. The role of the Government of India will be crucial in that eventuality and this will naturally impact on the status of the Tibetan refugees. India’s policy towards the Tibetans is bound to the country’s relation with China. The same is true of Nepal as well. In spite of historical relations and huge trade relations between India and China there are boundary problems between the two and it often erupts into confrontations as it did in 1962 followed by some more minor skirmishes in both Eastern and Western Himalayas. The confrontation is ongoing in the Ladakh sector and in the

context of this problem with China, India, in order to put pressure on China, is already giving space to the CTA to voice its opinion regarding Chinese policy towards Tibet and also highlighting the role of the Tibetans in the Indian army. It is difficult to predict how India will act in the case of any outbreak of anti Chinese movement among the Tibetan youths from the soil of India. China however has managed to bring Nepal into its fold through economic investments and some agreements. Tibetan refugees are already living under restrictions in Nepal with little political freedom. China has already assured Nepal's support in case of any challenge to China's control over Tibet from among the refugees. These issues and the political compulsions of both the countries are discussed in the sixth chapter.

Over the years China has turned Tibet into a modern nation through its overall development programmes like construction of railways highways, roadways, hospitals, industries, modern agricultural systems and a modern education system. All these developments, China hoped, would assimilate the Tibetans in the modernisation process and the Tibet issue would be gradually forgotten. But this strategy seems to fall short as issues of Human Rights violations and environmental destruction cases are coming up. The series of self immolations in Tibet is an indicator of the grudge that the Tibetans continue to bear against China. So in such a situation, China falls under various assumptions and in a complex situation.

The political uncertainty naturally brings in the questions of Dalai Lama's reincarnation. Identification of a reincarnation is now highly politicized as was seen in case of the Panchen Lama. Already the Chinese government has expressed unusual interest in choosing the next Dalai Lama and claimed its right to do so. It also warned that "if Delhi disregards the appointment of the new Dalai Lama then, it may adversely impact the Sino-Indian ties"<sup>16</sup>. Dalai Lama Himself is ambiguous about His reincarnation and has left the decision upon His people. Stepping down from His decision to not to be reincarnated, He has now stated that 15<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama would be born outside Tibet but did not, outside China as 15<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama has to continue the work of the present one (www.bbc.com, 2015). Both the parties have taken lessons from their past experiences over the issues of Panchen Lama's reincarnation in 1995. Henceforth in future, there is a possibility of a conflict over the issue of two Dalai Lamas; one of Chinese and another born in India or elsewhere. Therefore, the role of India and other parties cannot be ignored. Hence, this might further deteriorate the India China relationship.

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<sup>16</sup> Times of India, Kolkata, dated 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

As for the Tibetan refugees, they might settle down in India permanently and refuse to go back even if settlement concludes between the two parties. In that case, they may pose a hindrance to good relationship with China in the long run. On the other hand, Tibetans could take advantage of sympathetic attitude of Indian government towards them. The Tibetan radical organizations could use Indian soil to wage freedom struggle against China. China is already trying to win over a section of Tibetan monks through bribes. The *Karmapa* himself is not above suspicion. All these hypotheses may jumble up with the border problems between the two countries.

The illegal entry of Tibetans into India in recent times is also a concern for India's security. It has been reported that in between 5-16 January 2006, around 8,600 Tibetans had entered India during the *Kalachakra Tantra* in Amravati, Andhra Pradesh. Similarly in the same month, thousands of Tibetans arrived in India to attend Karmapa's ceremony in Bodhgaya (Stobdam.P, 2009). Some Tibetans in India have been reported to have become involved into scandalous illegal activities like money laundering, border smuggling, smuggling of wildlife products, rare artifacts and antiques (Stobdam.P, 2009). Numbers of Tibetan religious monuments have been destroyed by Chinese inside Tibet. As a result, many replicas of those destructed monuments are being built up in India and Nepal. There are 208 monasteries and 17 nunneries with additional 6 cultural centres for the study of spiritual Tibetan traditions in India (Analyses, 2012). Particularly in the Himalayan regions like Darjeeling, Sikkim and Kalimpong as well as in the western Aravalli range. So such construction practices of Tibetan monuments with the help of foreign aid and support is debatable especially when their Government in Exile wishes to remain refugees here and return back. India should take more concern to find out the sources of their capital flow.

Thus considering all this it may not be wrong to say that the Tibetan issue and presence of Tibetan refugees may pose a security threat to India in the future.

Both India and Nepal had provided shelter to the Tibetans on humanitarian ground and they have also adapted to their new life accepting India as their second home. However, the complexity of the issue involves security risks for India particularly in the context of the already existing border problems between the two countries. No one is sure about the turn of events in the future but there is always the possibility that the refugees may become a soft power in the hands of India or they may even wage a war of independence from the soil of their second home. It is difficult to say how India and also Nepal will mould their refugee policies in that eventuality.

