



DISCOVER INDIA PROGRAM 2018

Exiled

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work incorporated in this report entitled “*Exiled*” submitted by the undersigned Research Team was carried out under my mentorship. Such material as has been obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

Recognizing the presence of a large number of Tibetan refugees in India and the existence of the Tibetan-Government-in-Exile in Dharamshala, this study sought to understand the ways in which Tibetans in Dharamshala experience their existence as *refugees*- for the Indian administration- and *citizens*- for the Tibetan administration. Using a hermeneutical phenomenological approach, the purpose of the study was to describe, analyse, and interpret the experiences of Tibetans as grounded in their everyday realities. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were carried out with 67 members of the Tibetan community, representing both civilians and officials of the Tibetan administration. The data thus collected was then analysed for patterns of experiences in line with our two research goals: to develop a complex and nuanced account of what it means to be a Tibetan refugee-citizen in Dharamshala, and to explore the differences between older and younger Tibetans. Our study found that there was an evident disparity between the responses recorded between the older and the younger generations when interviewed. The responses conclusively were consistently diplomatic with regard to India, and their own administration. The question of citizenship was also discussed, with the possession of an RC being a factor for loyalty shown to Tibet. The comparison between holding the Indian citizenship and possessing an RC book was also looked into. The research ends with more potential research ground which was beyond the scope of the study conducted.

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CHAPTER 1

I am born refugee.

I have three tongues.

*The one that sings
is my mother tongue.*

*The **R** on my forehead
between my English and Hindi
the Tibetan tongue reads:*

RANGZEN

Freedom means Rangzen

Tenzin Tsundue, *Refugee*

1.0 Introduction:

The primary aim of this study is to map the lived experiences of the Tibetan refugees residing in Dharamshala, India. Tibetan refugees have been living in exile in India since the occupation of Tibet by China in 1950. Dharamshala has significance on account of being the abode of the Dalai Lama, the spiritual head of the Tibetan Buddhists, and the seat of the Tibetan-Government-in-Exile. Through a series of interviews of Tibetan residents in Dharamshala, a study cumulating the various responses regarding their lives in India were collected. Over a span of five days, the group collected Tibetan samples scattered throughout McLeod Ganj. This research focused on a few aspects, focusing primarily on the Tibetan perspective of the situations. Questions mainly targeted their journey to India, their adaptation to the country, their relationship with the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and the Indian government. Future aspirations for Tibet as well as the individual participation of each Tibetan

was discussed. Officials of the CTA and some NGOs were also interviewed regarding their efforts on keeping order, and Tibetan culture alive within the community. Since this study is regarding the lived experiences of a community, a critical analysis of the conflict itself has not been done. The aim is to reflect common Tibetan experience, and to provide insight into what it means to be a Tibetan refugee in India.

1.1 Historical Overview and Geographical Information

After almost seventy years of being occupied by China, Tibet remains shrouded in ambiguity and misconceptions. Her monumental history and ongoing crisis has been shadowed over by other simultaneous events in the contemporary world. Since the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950, Tibet has not only been severely displaced from her historical origins, but her crisis has also proved to be a cataclysmic element in Indo-China relations.

Tibet's roots can go back to the neolithic times. Situated firmly between China and India for thousands of years, most Tibetans still associate their home with the ancient plateau, which shares its borders with China, Nepal, Bhutan, India, and central Asia. Tibet initially consisted of multiple nomadic tribes spread throughout the plateau, which eventually consolidated into a single power and established their own monarchy. Tibet was an independent empire until the invasion of the Mongols in 13th century, after which Tibet was seen as a province of China by the Yuan, Ming, and the following Chinese dynasties. For reasons that will be discussed later, this misconception held by China proved to be a crucial reason behind the invasion of 1959. Post the Chinese invasion, Tibet's political boundaries disintegrated.

For centuries, Tibet acted as a buffer zone for the ancient civilisations of India and China. As a result, Tibet has often been used as a bargaining chip for diplomatic relations between the two nations. To understand Tibet's impact on India, one needs to also understand Tibet's historical context along with its impact on the government and the citizens. Thus, in order to understand the stance of the Tibetans living in exile, the researchers aim to unravel this conflict along with its implications through systematic study.

While exploring the topic, our literature review- as discussed in chapter two- took the review of Tibet's history as a starting point. This enabled us to traverse through its historical origins and allowed an understanding of its geostrategic position as well as putative importance for its two giant neighbours- India and China. Thus, in the process of making sense of the Chinese occupation of Tibet and the ensuing Tibetan crisis, we also dealt with the significance attached to Tibet by China and India. In the subsequent parts of the literature review, we then focused on Tibetan refugees' formal position in India, and their experience of homelessness. We ended our literature review with an understanding of the functioning and role of the Central Tibetan Administration (the Tibetan-Government-in Exile) in the lives of Tibetan refugees in general.

After a thorough appraisal of the existing literature, further, we identified two gaps in the literature that informed the aims and objectives of our research. Along these lines, we decided to focus on the lived experiences of Tibetan refugees in Dharamshala as they negotiate their existence as refugees (for the Indian administration) and citizens (for the Tibetan administration). We also identified the lack of literature on the experiences of different generations of Tibetan refugees as an additional gap. Being informed by the aforementioned two gaps, finally, we formulated our research statement, research questions, aims and objectives, research methodology, scope and rationale for our study- discussed separately under their respective headings in the current chapter. We end the current chapter with a set of identifiable limitations of our research project.

1.2 Operational Definitions:

For the sake of enhanced comprehension, it is worthwhile to note down the following definitions before delving into the research questions and strategies. These operational definitions are used throughout the study, and as such, are listed here to clarify the specific meanings and contexts within which such terms are used.

- Government in exile: a government temporarily established on foreign soil following the occupation of its own territory by another authority.

- Refugee: a person who flees to a foreign country or power to escape danger or persecution.
 - Settlement: the act of going to live in a new place where few people have lived before, or the place where people have come to live.
 - Citizen: a person who was born in a particular country and has certain rights or has been given certain rights because of having lived there.
 - Exile: the condition of someone being sent or kept away from their own country, village, etc., especially for political reasons.
-
- Asylum: protection or safety, especially that given by a government to people who have been forced to leave their own countries for their safety or because of war.
 - Tibetan Government in Exile: The Tibetan Government in Exile is formally known as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). The CTA is the government that has not been formally recognized by China. Its main aim is to provide welfare for the Tibetans in exile, who have become refugees in Dharamshala, India. The CTA is located in Dharamshala and provides all Tibetan refugees living in the area and around India, education and cultural services.
 - Lived Experience: This draws from the philosophical tradition of phenomenology and refers to the focus on human experiences in their pre-reflective state, privileging the meanings they make for themselves out of their experiences as lived and experienced in their everyday existence.

1.3 Research Statement:

The research being conducted can be summarised with this statement,

“To study the lived experiences of being refugee-citizens of the Tibetans-in-exile in Dharamshala”

1.4 Research Questions:

The study is based on the following research questions:

1. How do Tibetans-in-exile in Dharamshala negotiate being both refugees (for the Indian administration) and citizens (for the Tibetan administration) at the same time?
2. Do they find any tension between the two modes of being? If yes, how do they resolve such tensions?
3. What are the specific ways in which they experience being a refugee?
4. What are the specific ways in which they experience being a citizen?
5. How does the Tibetan-Government-in-Exile engage with their citizens?
6. What are the expectations of the Tibetan community from their host government (Indian) and elected national government (Tibetan)?
7. Are there differences between successive generations of Tibetans in terms of how they relate to Tibet? If yes, what explains such differences?

1.5 Aims and Objectives:

With these questions in mind, the following aims and objectives could be identified:

1. To understand how Tibetans-in-exile in Dharamshala experience being refugees
2. To understand how Tibetans-in-exile in Dharamshala experience being citizens
3. To compare and contrast the lived experiences of the newer generation and older generation of Tibetans-in-exile.
4. To further understand Tibetan refugees' perception of India as a host country.
5. To examine the role the Tibetan Government-in-Exile plays in the lives of the Tibetans in exile

1.6 Rationale:

India plays host to the largest number of Tibetan refugees in the world. Yet, it is neither a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees nor its 1967 Protocol. Keeping that in mind, we decided to explore the lived experience of Tibetans living in exile in

India. We wanted to find out how Tibetans make sense of their continued existence as refugees in a country that is no party to obligations towards refugees under international law. Related to this was also our desire to learn how the relationship between India and China impacts the lives of Tibetan refugees.

Secondly, the study sought to understand the existing relationship between the Tibetan community in Dharamshala and their Government in Exile. By speaking to officials from the government, representatives from Tibetan NGOs, and the larger Tibetan community, we hoped to learn how Tibetans in Dharamshala experience being citizens, what the community expects from their government and how far the government has been able to fulfill such demands.

Lastly, the study also sought to chart the divergences of experiences of Tibetans belonging to different generations. Since there is little existing scholarship on the issue, we hoped to highlight how different generations of Tibetans experience being refugees/ citizens, what expectations they have from the Indian and Tibetan governments as they pertain to their refugee/ citizen status, and what hopes they nurture for the future. It was our aim to generate insights on not only how different generations of Tibetans experience their refugee/ citizen status but also what explains such differences.

1.7 Scope:

The study's immediate goals revolve around collecting and analyzing the lived experiences of the Tibetan people living in exile, with the intention of deriving the impact of the displacement of Tibetans on their daily lives. To that end, people of Tibetan origin were asked to share their experiences in India through semi-structured open-ended questions.

Our analysis focused on examining the influence of the refugee/ citizen status given to the Tibetan people, and how it has affected their everyday existence as first and second-generation citizens. The contextualization of terms such as "administration" and "government" through research is also a rudimentary goal. The firsthand information of the project was

limited to the data collected from the Tibetan population present only in Dharamshala. Data about other Tibetan settlements, that are spread out across the country, was derived solely from the literature present in public domain. Further, the research method focused on in-depth interviews aimed at uncovering the meanings Tibetans attach to their existence; the scope for generalizing the study for other Tibetans settled elsewhere, therefore, remains limited. Additionally, the dynamics of the relationship between Tibetans and Indians were outside of the scope of the study, and as such, remain unexplored.

1.8 Research Methodology:

1.8.1 Sources

The study makes consistent use of both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources, in the form of official white papers released by the Chinese government, and responses to such documents by the official Tibetan administration were used before the field-work to inform our understanding of the issue. We also made use of memoirs written by Tibetans themselves to acquaint ourselves with the experience of being refugees before heading for Dharamshala. Primary data was then collected through semi-structured life-world interviews (Kvale, 2007) from 67 members of the Tibetan community within Dharamshala.

The research also made liberal use of a wide range of secondary sources. Initially, an attempt was made to explore Tibetan history and the Tibetan crisis with a keen eye on Tibetan, Chinese, and Indian perspectives. Books, journals, newspapers, official websites of the Tibetan-Government-in- Exile and of local NGOs were further surveyed to conduct a wide review of literature and identify the existing gaps in the literature, discussed more in detail in chapter two. Secondary sources were also consulted after the fieldwork to enhance our understanding of some of the issues that cropped up in the field.

1.8.2 Research Method

The exploratory nature of our study demanded that we use a thoroughly qualitative method. To that end, the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, as explicated by van Manen

(1990), was deemed to be best suited for the study. Contrary to other conventional hypothesis-oriented and problem-solving research methods, a phenomenological approach privileges generating richness of understanding and uncovering nuances. In the words van Manen (1990: 4), it is “a human science which studies persons”- as opposed to ‘subjects’- and is centred around the “study of the lifeworld” (van Manen, 1990: 9), situating people in a world as they experience it in its everydayness. In effect, then, our research method draws from phenomenology (description of lived experiences of the target group) and hermeneutics (interpreting those experiences via “texts” and narratives) (van Manen, 1990: 25). In other words, this inductive, descriptive study is interested in exploring and understanding the experiences of Tibetans of being refugees and citizens and uncovering the meanings the Tibetans-in-exile attach to the said categories through experiential accounts anchored in their everyday lives.

Informed by such insights, additionally, the study attempted to follow the six methodological guidelines provided by van Manen (1990: 31- 32):

1. choosing a phenomenon that was of serious interest to the researchers
2. investigating it in its lived, experiential form rather than its conceptual variety
3. reflecting on the relevant themes within the domain of the phenomenon
4. describing the phenomenon through the act of writing and rewriting
5. possessing a strong orientation towards the phenomenon
6. consideration to the whole as well as the parts

1.8.3 Sampling Method

The interviewees were chosen according to purposive, non-probability sampling. In accordance with the chosen hermeneutical phenomenological method of the study, two criteria were imposed on the selection: first, the participant had to possess the experience of being a Tibetan refugee, and second, the participant had to be willing to talk about that experience. In accordance with the stated aims and objectives of the study, a conscious attempt was made to interview different generations of Tibetans. Additionally, on account of limitations of

language- barring a few instances where translators could be found- the rest of the interviews were carried out with those who could communicate either in English or Hindi.

1.8.4 Interviews

The interviews took place in McLeodganj, Dharamkot, Bhagsu, and Dharamshala between 1- 5 October. In total, we interviewed sixty seven people including officials from the Tibetan administration, representatives of NGOs, and Tibetan civilians engaged in a wide variety of professions- as teachers, small business owners, daily wage earners, restaurant owners, unemployed youth, and so on. On average, the length of each interview ranged from twenty to thirty minutes. Two semi-structured questionnaires prepared according to the guidelines provided by Kvale (2007) were used to interview Tibetan civilians and officials respectively. Each interviewee was informed about the study and their consent sought before the interview took place. They were also informed that their consent was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw if they so desired. The interviewees were then asked specific questions about the meanings of being a refugee and a citizen, their interactions with the concerned governments, and their aspirations for the future. The responses were recorded in either audio or video format with the prior permission of the interviewees; they were offered the option of remaining anonymous as well.

1.8.5 Data Analysis

The interviews collected through field-work were first transcribed. Interviews conducted in English were transcribed verbatim; Hindi interviews were translated into English in the process of transcribing them although utmost attempt was made to keep them as close to the original as possible.

The recordings and transcriptions were then consulted multiple times to reflect upon their structure of meanings and identify the common themes for analysis. Attentive listening, therefore, was a vital part of the research as it is instrumental in the process of uncovering the meaning of lived experiences. The transcripts were then analysed in detail as part of chapter three.

In terms of analysis, the focus has been on generating comparisons rather than generalizations. We looked for patterns of experiences among our interviewees and analysed them thematically. As part of our research goal, we also devoted attention to explicating the differences between different generations of Tibetans.

1.9 Results

When analysing the data collected from the interviewees, it was observed that the older samples were significantly more passionate about the cause as compared to the younger samples. This was an assumption that was made before the onset of the field work - since the beginnings of the conflict was closer to the older generation's lifetime - and it was confirmed based on the results that were received. The details divulged also varied depending on the age of the sample, as it was observed that the older Tibetans were more enthusiastic to talk about the conflict and their experience.

While responses regarding the conflict still showed some variety, when asked about opinions on the Indian government and society, responses were oddly curt and similar. Nearly all the samples mentioned that they were satisfied with the Indian community and had no qualms against them. Very few of the interviewees were willing to elaborate on their relationship with the Indians, and an even small percentage of that spoke about conflicts between the two communities in the past. What was noticed, however, was the popularity of certain conspiracy theories within the Tibetan community. A few samples mentioned that many Tibetans believe that previous incidents of riot-based violence between the Tibetan and the Indian community are because the Chinese government sends people with violent thoughts across the border. While the credibility of these theories remains uncertain, it is worth noting the reluctance the Tibetans showed in mentioning hostile facts to Indian researchers.

Another interesting result we cumulated was the overall preference of the southern Tibetan settlement over the northern ones. People were more satisfied with the facilities provided in the south, but often returned to the north in order to be more involved in Tibetan culture and society. There are strong efforts being taken in order to preserve Tibetan culture,

with students educated in Tibetan schools being urged to return to the settlements in order to teach once they are educated themselves.

Lastly, the role, or lack thereof, of religion will be discussed. Following the yielding of political power from the Dalai Lama, the backlash from the Tibetan community was soon replaced with acceptance for the new functioning of the government. This study confirmed that whether an individual Tibetan is religious or not, the presence of the Dalai Lama is vital to every member of the community. As a result, our questionnaires eventually discarded a few questions regarding the religion of any interviewees, as the unquestionable loyalty offered to the Dalai Lama made it seem unnecessary.

1.10 Limitations

One of the biggest limitations of the study could be attributed to the inability to communicate in Tibetan. The language of the Tibetan people is Standard Tibetan. Although most of our interviewees had working knowledge of either English or Hindi- and in a few fortunate instances, volunteer translators were readily available- our lack of knowledge of Tibetan had the effect of limiting our access to those Tibetans who knew neither English nor Hindi. This was especially true for some of the older members of the Tibetan community, who we approached for interviews but could not do so on account of the language problem. Another aspect under the same barrier was that as Indian researchers, the information we received from the samples were relatively more limited. The reluctance of the Tibetans to be open with unknown researchers also played some role in this.

The second limitation is on account of the duration of the field-work. Since the journey to and from Dharamshala had to be done in seven days, we could spend only five days in the field. Although we tried to make up for lost time by dividing ourselves into three groups, the ability to spend more time in the field could have given more depth to our research and enabled us to talk to more members of the Tibetan community. The time constraint, in this case, had an effect on our final sample size.

The rest of the limitations could be attributed to our research method. Being exploratory and qualitative in nature, our study can provide no significant statistical insight. Besides, since the field work was carried out in Dharamshala alone, the sample is not representative of all Tibetans-in-exile in India, let alone all over the world. It is also worth noting that our chosen research method, valuable in generating in-depth understandings of the lifeworlds of Tibetan refugees in Dharamshala, is not amenable to generalizations. As an interpretative study, therefore, the findings in the study are more tentative than absolute. Like other studies based on the phenomenological approach, then, our study cannot claim to generate problem-solving policies; it draws its appeal from its ability to provide rich-insights about its object of analysis instead.



(A closed shutter of a shop in McLeod Ganj.)

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Introduction

The newly formed People's Republic of China (PRC) invaded Tibet in October 1950 and continues to occupy it to this day (Heath, 2005). Though nearly forgotten by global citizens as an autonomous state, its significance to both India and China is unquestionable. The land of Tibet lay between India and China, with Nepal to the south and central China to the north. Burma was to the west of Tibet, and the Himalayas acted as a geographical border to the sub-continental land to the south. Until the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950, Tibet had kept China and India geographically and culturally apart for thousands of years. It could be said that Tibet acted as a link between China and India, and the significance of that linkage is crucial to understanding the relations between India and Tibet before the 20th century.

2.2 History of Tibet and the Tibetan Conflict

To understand Tibet and her relations, one must understand her history first. Though there are archaeological evidences dating back to 21,000 years ago, showing the initial migrations to the Tibetan plateau, their populations were largely replaced by immigrants from Northern China around 5000 years ago. Native Tibetan texts attribute the *Zhang Zhung* culture as the first wave of Sino-immigrants to the Tibetan plateau. Though an imperial monarchy was not yet established in the plateau, the *Zhang Zhung* culture remained a dominant source of power until the 7th century. Despite the presence of a dominant society, it is important to note that the Tibetan Plateau was not yet united under any particular power. The majority of the inhabitants were part of nomadic Tibetan tribes, and were referred to as "savages" in numerous historical Chinese texts predating the 7th – 8th centuries. By the beginning of the 7th century, the Yarlung dynasty had established its dominance and consolidated most of the nomadic tribes. Though the origins of the Yarlung dynasty leans towards mythological bases more than factual ones, the dynasty is said to have gained momentum through the next few centuries and established itself as a power by the 9th century. Relatively powerful, the influence of the empire stretched till the reaches of Mongolia and Bengal.

This period was also marked by the gradual spread of Buddhism from India into the Tibetan Plateau during the 800s. Though the religion was opposed by the common masses of Tibet at first, once the king of Tibet began endorsing the religion it was accepted by the masses relatively quickly. This was marked by the event of the king signing an official document allowing for the support and propagation of the Buddhist faith. A meeting between the Chinese and Tibetan people was held again in 821 to reaffirm the treaty and the borders that were drawn in lieu of their new common religion. The inculcation of Buddhism rapidly led to the renaissance of the Tibetan empire, despite the 10th century being marked with political animosity and rebellions against the royal families and warlords among the masses. This quickly led to the decline of the Yarlung dynasty, keeping the empire in a constant state of turmoil.

By 1240, the empire of Genghis Khan had made its way towards Tibet, and by 1249, Tibet was firmly under the control of the Mongols. Though the Mongols were of superior authority and maintained structural and administrative control, Tibet retained her religious and regional political power. It wasn't until the rule of Changchub Gyaltzen that Tibet was able to gain its independence, China following soon after. However, this independence was short lasted. When the power of the Mongol Empire grew, so did its hold over the entire Asian continent. With the emergence of the Dalai Lama during the period, Tibet was able to remain amicable with China and the Mongolian empire with their knowledge on Buddhism. After the birth of the 4th Dalai Lama in Mongolia, relationships grew much stronger and far more spiritual than before. Following the death of the Yuan dynasty was established as the ruling power for both Mongolia and China by Kublai Khan. Hence, Tibet was automatically under the control of the Yuan dynasty until the 14th century, when Tibet regained independence. The decline of the Yuan dynasty led to the ruling of Tibet by successive families for nearly 400 years, until the arrival of the Dalai Lama. The Ming dynasty did little to impose direct rule on the plateau, despite never retracting its claim of Tibet being a part of the dynasty itself.

The first Dalai Lama was born 1391, during the Ming Dynasty. Following this, successive Dalai Lamas began gaining momentum until the end of the Ming dynasty. The third Dalai Lama assisted the then leader of all Mongol tribes (by the Southern Chinese borders) and

Altan Khan with his pursuit of spirituality. This event restored the relations between Mongolia and Tibet and eventually led to the slow spread of Buddhism throughout Mongolia.

Under the rule of the fifth Dalai Lama, the Tibetans were offered a golden seal of authority by the Manchu turned Qing dynasty. The documents were written in Manchurian, Chinese, and Tibetan. However, upon further inspection of the translations of the documents, it was found that the Tibetan document was inaccurately translated and the seal led to the subordination of Tibet by the Qing dynasty. This marks the beginning of the Chinese conflict with Tibet, with the hegemonic idea that Tibet belonged to China taking root within the authoritative figures. Though the life of the fifth Dalai Lama was marked by political strife throughout, it also established the role of the Dalai Lama as an essential factor in Tibetan politics. While the Qing dynasty collapsed in 1912, the Dalai Lama retained his functions as a political and spiritual leader. The conflict between China carried on until the direct invasion of Tibet by China in 1950, which will be discussed later in the paper.

To truly understand the conflict, one has to go back to the core of Tibet's history. It starts with Prince Songtsen, a prince who was - according to the belief of the time - semi-divine. He rose to the throne at the mere age of thirteen after his father, the earlier *tsenpo* (king), had been poisoned. He asserted his authority following the execution of his father's assassin, successfully ridding his territory of immediate possible threats. Songtsen's rule oversaw two decades of peace between China and Tibet through his marriage alliance. This period was also characterized by increased trade with the Chinese, along with initial incorporation of Buddhism. These changes led to the formation of the Tibetan script.

Songtsen stepped back onto the throne after the untimely death of his son. But during the last years of his life, he managed to come into direct military conflict with India, while China had developed good relationships with the ruler, King Harsha. In 648, Chinese envoys to India were attacked by a new Indian warlord after the death of King Harsha. One of these envoys having escaped to Tibet, returned with an army of Tibetans in order to secure some of India for Tibet. The generations following Songtsen accepted a peace treaty from the Empress

Wu of China, securing a tsenpo on the throne once more. Having become a mighty empire, Tibet forged alliances with the Arabs while expanding their empire towards central Asia. During this time, the Tang Dyansty, saw a decline in power. These events coincided with the enthronement of Trisong Detsen, an influential figure of Tibetan society who foresaw campaigns aiming to recapture the silk route. With great success, that period of Tibetan history is marked by the Tibetan conquest of the Chinese capital, as well as the occupation of the silk route.

Since 750, there have been records of border conflicts between China and Tibet. Under the rule of King Trisong Detsen, an army of 200,000 people attacked Ching-chou. Chinese forces continued to try and prevent the advancement of the Tibetan people, but to no avail. The Tibetans soon reached the Chinese capital of Ch'ang-an. The Tibetans claimed China and declared a new year in lieu of a new ruler. After many years of rule, the treaty of Ch'ing-shui was formed between Tibet and China in 783 to form official borders between the two nations. Tibet formed relations with many nations, even fighting alongside the Siamese troops in 778 against China. While many international archives do claim to have records of Tibet's active military attacks, Tibetan sources only vaguely mention any conflicts with other countries (Shakabpa, 1967).

The reign of Trisong Detsen did not only mean reclaiming the Silk Route and more treaties with the Chinese empire, but also of Buddhism re-entering the kingdom of Tibet. Buddhism was used as political tool preceding Detsen's empire, but did not gain much importance until his reign. He adopted the religion into Tibet, despite strong anti-Buddhist feelings running through the empire. This was caused by an earlier incident in Lhasa regarding Buddhism, due to local citizens having not trusted the influx of monks brought in by the queen regent at the time. Although the *tsenpo* may not have achieved peace in his time, he brought back Buddhism as a religion, and an empire that could be equal to their neighbours. His contributions served as a catalyst for Tibet's future events.

The Tibetan Empire eventually fell. Entering the Era of Fragmentation, the Tibetans gradually lost their empire to the Chinese. Despite the treaty with the Tang dynasty, who

eventually came back into power, they could not manage to keep their conquests. They were defeated by the Tangs, who rebelled before rising up and taking back the important cities along the Silk Route. Eventually, towards the end of the ninth century, the Tibetans retreated to the Tibetan Plateau.

In the 1950s, Chairman Mao made an announcement to the Tibetan people, telling them that if Tibet were to aid China in its need for natural resources, then China too would give Tibet the people that they need (Smith, 2010).

Until the Chinese invasion in 1950 causing the Dalai Lama and many others to flee the nation, the Tibetan government was functioning as a two-tiered feudal government: the top being the Dalai Lama and the bottom being the *Tsidrun* and *Kudrak*, which are monks and aristocrats. Religion had formed as the foundation of Tibet and its government, with all of its official leaders being religious leaders (Sangay, 2003). In the absence of the Dalai Lama, the prime minister would assume control over civil and religious matters and tend to national affairs, while the executive council that would tend to national affairs, both of which would have to be signed off by the Dalai Lama before execution (Shakabpa, 1967). However, commoners say the Lama was more of a religious figure with little to no power in the control of land and such matters. The Lama's attempts to teach English in schools or to modernize the armed forces was shut down by the second tier, as they were known to be opposed to reform (Sangay, 2003) This was the structure and form of the old Tibetan government until 1956, when the Autonomous Region of Tibet was set up by the Chinese Communist Party.

In 1903, the Chinese government had gained much power and began to close in on Tibet. With more and more Chinese troops in Tibet, the bloodshed too, grew quickly. From the slaughtering of monks to the looting of monasteries, the Tibetan government was forced to ignore these acts of aggression for the Dalai Lama's personal safety, as he was still on Chinese land. The involvement of the British Empire eventually led to the permanent involvement of India in Tibetan relations.

Warren Hastings, the Governor- General of British India in 1774, made the first resolute attempt to build commercial and diplomatic relations with Tibet. While this forward policy paid dividends, China was reluctant to come in direct diplomatic contact with British India, and was subsequently indifferent to the budding diplomatic and commercial relations between British India and Tibet.

The Younghusband Mission, sent to Tibet by Lord Curzon in 1903-04, was originally a commercial mission. The purpose of this mission was to negotiate trading rights and settle some minor border disputes. As a result of the mission, a settlement was reached, guiding relations between the two countries for the following four decades. In 1910, with the help of a British trade agent, the Dalai Lama was forced to leave Tibet and go to India as China was growing more and more aggressive towards him and his position. After many failed attempts to come to a peaceful withdrawal of Chinese troops from Tibet, the Lama then decided to halt any further negotiations with the Chinese empire. Meanwhile in Lhasa, Tibetan homes and treasuries were pillaged and destroyed, the Tibetan police quickly replaced by the Chinese and even the Dalai Lama was being declared as deposed (Roberts, J. B. 2009).

As the Tibetan people refused to cooperate with any of the Chinese officials, the Chinese quickly requested the return of the Dalai Lama to Lhasa, even offering to restore his titles. Soon, Tibetans were returning from parts of India and attacking Chinese soldiers in Tibet. Slowly, they were able to claim small parts of Tibet (Shakabpa, 1967). After being blocked into Lhasa by Tibetans, the soldiers offered to surrender if they could be let back into China. The Dalai Lama agreed, thus beginning negotiations. He was able to return to Lhasa in 1913. Many more meetings were held between Tibet and China under the mediation of the British. This was in an attempt to reestablish the treaty and reaffirm Tibet's status with China.

In 1949, the Chinese Communist Regime had established its control over all of China. Soon after, Radio Peking had announced that Tibet was a part of China. They claimed to want to free Tibet from the foreign imperialists, a point that was strongly opposed by the Tibetan government, who denied any claim was made. On September 9th 1951, several thousand Chinese troops arrived in Tibet under the name of the Chinese Liberation Forces, thus

beginning the oppression of the Tibetan people. For the first time in the history of Tibet, there was famine throughout the region. In 1951, Beijing overthrew the Tibetan government and established control over them, forcing a change to the old order. The Marxist and Communist ideals imposed by Mao's regime were not outright resisted by the Tibetan government initially, as the Lama saw Buddhist ideals in concepts of concern for the oppressed and compassion. However, the Lama's attempts to aid the oppressed and poor of Tibet was shut down by the Chinese government. As the rule grew stricter, Tibetans began to protest the new Chinese rule. Tibetans gathered to protect the Dalai Lama, setting up defensive posts around Norbulingka. On March 17, 1959, the Dalai Lama escaped from Tibet to seek refuge in India along with 80,000 other Tibetans (Shakabpa, 1967). A large number of Tibetans have since been living in exile in India, Nepal, Bhutan, the United States of America and Europe.

2.3 Current State of the Conflict

The current state of the conflict is best explained through the examination of the official white papers released by China, and the CTA's response.

A white paper released by the Information Office of the State Council of The People's Republic of China in 2011, outlines the sixty years since they liberated Tibet. The paper, a purely Chinese perspective on the ongoing conflict, goes through three stages: the need for the liberation of Tibet, the development that has taken place since, and the historic achievements due to the development since the liberation. The paper is a comprehensive way to understand China's perspective on Tibet and the current state of the conflict.

The white paper states reasons why Tibet is a part of China. One of the many reasons was history. Tibet is known to share a rich history with China. Its history is volatile with conflict, ultimately resulting in the exchange of culture, blood relations and languages. Apart from archaeological findings that show close connections between Tibet and the Han in these respects, there are Chinese accounts of the Yuan Dynasty incorporating Tibet into the central administration and the emperors of the Qing Dynasty granting honorific titles to the 5th Dalai Lama and the 5th Panchen Lama. When the Qing Dynasty was overthrown and the Republic of China came to power, the provisional constitution clarified China's sovereignty over Tibet.

The white paper also explicitly states, “No country or government in the world has ever acknowledged the independence of Tibet” (“Sixty Years Since Peaceful Liberation of Tibet”, 2011).

The Communist Party of China (CPC) also takes immense pride in the development they recorded in the white paper. Since the liberation of Tibet, there has been development in all spheres- political, social and economical. The abolition of feudal serfdom and the bringing out of the 17th Article-Agreement is credited with this development.

Another more recent white paper released by China called ‘Tibet’s Path of Development Is Driven by an Irresistible Historical Tide’ (“Tibet’s Path of Development Is Driven by an Irresistible Historical Tide (full text)”, 2018) talks about the Middle Way Approach proposed by the 14th Dalai Lama. It claims that the Middle Way Approach is simply to split China. It is seen as a politicised term coined by the ‘Dalai group’.

To summarise, the white papers offer historical evidences regarding where Tibet belongs as well as the development that Tibet has been through after the liberation of Tibet. The white papers released by the Chinese government are an insight into its perspective.

In response to this white paper, the Central Tibetan Administration released a statement emphasizing the legitimacy of the Dalai Lama’s power, the historical evidence for Tibet being a part of China, and the Middle Way approach. The paper scathingly mentions that without the Dalai Lama, the Chinese Communist Party has no way of keeping their power over Tibet. The Party’s insistence that the Dalai Lama reincarnate is interpreted as a need for the Party to turn a spiritual resource of Tibet into a political tool (Shonu , n.d). They reject every historical evidence provided, quoting Chinese scholars while saying that Tibet was never under the power of the Tang Dynasty or the Qing Dynasty, and that the idea of China wasn’t conceptualised till 1912 when the Republic of China was formed.

The Middle Way Approach is acknowledged once more. It is said that the Middle Way approach is the solution that both Chinese and Tibetans agree upon but the Party refuses to acknowledge this. Instead, it claims that the approach is a disguised form of ‘Tibetan Independence’ and that the aim of the middle way approach was to create a ‘state within a

state'. The response paper states that the aim of the Middle Way Approach is not to 'split' China apart but to retain autonomy of Tibet.

The CTA now believes that dialogue is the only way to overcome these hurdles and move forward with the issue of Tibet. They reiterate the desire for a single autonomous administration. They state that the self-immolation of Tibetans is not being encouraged and China's aid is backhanded and not for Tibet's benefit but for China's.

They end by reiterating the benefits of resolving the Tibet issue for China. They claim that bridging the gap between India and China which would lead to peace in Asia, and that Tibet would become a model for Hong Kong, returning confidence to the minority group of Hong Kong regarding China. This could only increase China's global soft power.

White papers released by the Chinese Government and the response by the Central Tibetan Administration provides a present day view on the ever present conflict. The conflict is still as strong as the day it started, with more elements being added now. Areas such as religious beliefs, international relations are sensitive topics brought to light by these documents and shows just how far they are from resolving the issue. With no hopes of negotiation on the part of either party and the differences in claims about history and development, not to mention that neither party could be an impartial source, the papers are nothing more than a cursory update on the conflict.

2.4 India's Foreign Policies

Since India hosts a large number of Tibetans in exile- our current object of study- it is imperative to understand how India looks at the Tibetan conflict in terms of its foreign policy objectives, and what position Tibetan exiles hold in India. To understand the impact of Tibet's presence on India's policies, one must understand how the foreign policies are structured with respect to the Indian system of law and order. The government of India had maintained semi-autonomous diplomatic relations under the British rule, and was a founding member of both the League of Nations and the United Nation. India's government devoted a small section of

ministers to foreign policy after independence, supervised by Nehru personally. With foreign policies subject to global dynamics, India sought to maintain relations with the global dominant power of that time. Since independence, India's policies have been structured to win her more allies than enemies, often focusing on common grounds between nations to build relations on. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, India not only improved her relations with the west (particularly the US), but also developed a new policy for the East Asian countries - 'Look East policy'. The primary objective of this policy was to encourage cultural, historical, and ideological links between India and other east Asian countries in order to pursue economic and industrial advancement. Although one might argue that this policy was developed in order to compete with China on the terms of influence on other Asian countries, it has done much to relieve the tensions from Sino-Indian relations after 1961 war.

This policy resulted in the opening of the Nathula Pass for trade in 2006 for the first time since the war had ended. Though the relations between the two nations are relatively peaceful, factors such as the presence of the 14th Dalai Lama in India continue to keep the tensions between the nations high. Since both nations are boosting economies, they are not only codependent on each other for trade, but also severely competitive over natural resources in underdeveloped nations. However, efforts to keep Sino-Indian relations amicable cannot be denied from both sides. In 2003, India officially recognized Tibet as a part of China, while China did the same with Sikkim as a part of India in 2004. The 'Look East policy' has been carried on to its successive foreign policy developed by Narendra Modi's government - 'Act East policy'.

India's foreign policies are flexible and subject to current affairs. Policies towards all foreign nations maintain India's economic interests over other ambitions, an aspect which makes the presence of Tibet's spiritual and religious in India problematic for her relations with China.

2.5 Role of Tibet on India's Foreign Policies

Geographically speaking Tibet is rather well set off. It plays the role of a buffer state and holds significance to both countries. Tibet was able to waive off a majority of foreign because its topography consists of undulated ground whose elevation ranged from 4000 to 17,000 feet. Its peculiar geography reduced foreign interest. This topography also facilitated the Indo-Tibetan interaction.

The rise of Buddhism in the 9th century AD played a large role in turning Tibet into the pacifist society it is today, which led to the nation's high dependency on external military to fight off foreign threats. Tibet's geographical significance made it important to China. China was bent on annexing Tibet and assimilating it into its own borders. For several years- before and after the British invasion of India- China pined for Tibet.

China, however, was never strong enough to maintain a hold over the Tibetans. Post Indian Independence, China continued to demand for Tibet. However, the refugees were not ready to leave India or give up their land. India's then president corresponded with the Chinese officials and an agreement was reached. On January 1st, 1950, China declared Tibet as an independent unit (Zhao, 1996).

However, as the ruling power in China changed, so did the political outlooks and needs of China. This led to China's renewed inclination towards taking the Tibetan territory under their wing. The people of Tibet however refused to settle for this and continued to demand for their liberation. Chinese motives were highly criticized by countries across the globe. China's actions attracted global response. Finally, in 1959, refugees fled from Tibet and sought refuge in India. Among these refugees was Dalai Lama, the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet (Alexandrowicz-Alexander, 1954).

Tibet never accepted Chinese rule due to its stark difference in culture and livelihood when compared to China. Since Tibet did not recognize itself to be a part of Chinese rule, this caused several uprisings by the Tibetans who felt oppressed by Chinese leadership. When the large-scale revolt by the Khampa Tribesmen- including 80,000 monks- took place in 1959 against the Chinese authority, it was evident that the revolt enjoyed widespread support among the Tibetan masses. China suspected that India played a role in the revolts and thus suspected

the Indian Parliament of siding with the Tibetans. The revolt motivated and convinced the Dalai Lama to escape to India. This was one of the primary reasons for the Chinese attack on India in 1962.

“December 1991, the question of Tibet and Beijing's status in Tibet still prevents China and India from improving relations further and potentially threatens (Zhao, 1966).”

After the Dalai Lama took refuge in India, there was no official contact between him and the Chinese Authorities till 1979 (Pokharna, 2009). The Tibetans refused to give up their autonomy to the Chinese rule. Therefore, the Dalai Lama proposed the ‘Middle Way Plan’, which calls for a democratically elected executive and legislature along with a wholly independent judicial system, which would imply that the Communist Chinese rule in Tibet would lose its authority.

The animosity and distrust, as well as the conflict between China and Tibet, have greatly affected Indo-China relations.

China’s interest in Tibet also partly springs from the large deposits of mining grounds and resources found in Tibet, such as copper, boron, iron, magnesium, cobalt, lead, gold, uranium, arsenic, antimony, graphite, lithium, silver, chromium, and several other mineral resources. This plays a huge role in the state’s wealth and power and perhaps accounts for its disinclination towards Tibet’s autonomy as well.

2.6 Legal/ Formal Status of Tibetan Refugees in India

It is important to understand India’s stance on refugees at a macro level before getting into the technicality of the legal status of Tibetans in India. India is neither a part of the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to Status of Refugees nor is it a part of the 1967 Refugee Convention and Protocol. This indicates that from the beginning, India has not taken part in too many conversations relating to refugee status. This does not necessarily mean that India has no obligation towards refugees. They are still bound by several policies and declarations which have been either been adopted or ratified by India. Documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Declaration of Territorial Asylum, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child fall under this

category. Most of these declarations and conventions apply to citizens as well as non-citizens of a country who recognise these conventions. There is no specific law for refugees in India and the legal obligations which a refugee is entitled to are similar to that of any other foreigner in the country. They follow the recommendations of Article 21 of the Constitution of India which concerns protection of life and personal liberty (Bentz, n.d.).

In the Tibetan case, India has adopted the Order Regulation Entry of Tibetan Nationals into India formulated in 1950. This document describes the required legal processes to be followed by Tibetan nationals who've come to seek asylum in India. First and foremost, they are required to obtain a permit from the officer in charge of the police post in the Indian - Tibetan front. Tibetan nationals are also required to obtain a certificate of registration to prove they are foreigners residing in India. Refugees who entered before 1959 were given a temporary status while those who entered India post 1959 were rewarded long term status. In the year 2002, the government launched a scheme through which Tibetan nationals were allowed to enter India only after obtaining a Special Entry Permit (SEP), which is issued by the presiding officer at the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu, and this allows entry of Tibetans only from two places- Sonauli in Uttar Pradesh and Raxaul in Bihar (Bentz, n.d.).

Registration Certificates are mandatory for all Tibetans entering India as well as Tibetans who are born on Indian soil. The certificate is issued for a period of one month upto one year depending on the status of the individual. All Tibetans in India are required to renew their certificates at least once a year. The Immigration department remains largely unclear about the status of Tibetans residing on Indian soil. Tibetans are given two options by the government. Indian laws let legal foreigners in the country apply for citizenship if they have stayed in the country for over 12 years. Tibetans can either apply for citizenship after 12 years if they have been legally living in India or keep their Tibetan Nationality status alive and reside in India with the help of a SEP. There have been efforts to extend the validity of the a Registration Certificate from 1 year to 5 years (Shonu, 2017). Political pressure from countries all over the world has not made an impact in changing the government's stance on refugee status in India. The Indian government considers the ratification of treaties of 1951 and 1967

as impracticable politically because they are believed to put India in a vulnerable position in the political ecosystem of Asia.

India's inability to provide a clear stance on refugee status can also be attributed to the fact that it is still a developing nation with multiple other problems. Basic amenities are not provided to its own citizens, an additional burden of refugees would further hamper the situation in India. India's own experience of the partition in 1947- with its millions of refugees- also seems to inform its stance as well. Another important point to note about India's undefined stance is its inability to create any jurisdiction for refugees. There is no law pertaining to entry and survival of refugees in India. India faces a lot of criticism from the international community as the government recognises refugees as mere foreigners. This is considered a major violation of human rights by governments across the world (Kaur, n.d.).

With respect to the Tibetan Nationals and their legal status in India, there is a long way before this complex situation can be solved. Several case studies have been conducted which suggest that the only way forward is to establish a law for refugees which will provide a legal framework to refer to while dealing with cases of refugees. The first step towards this change would be India's role in ratification of several important international treaties. Due to the lack of clear guidelines, there is widespread confusion regarding a refugee's legal status in India. The Order Regulation Entry of Tibetans has provided some relief for Tibetan nationals as this gives a little more recognition as compared to refugees from other countries residing or hoping to reside in India. This does not change the fact that Tibetans still face legal problems to a great extent due to the fact that the Indian Government does not recognise Tibet as an Independent State. India has, however, allowed the existence of a Tibetan government-in-exile based in India. The said government in exile claims to represent all Tibetans spread throughout the world, and is currently headed by Prime Minister Lobsang Sangay. The next section of the chapter explores the conditions under which the government for Tibetans in exile came about and its functioning.

2.7 The Tibetan Government in Exile

2.7.1 Historical Precedents

Historically, the Tibetan government was run by the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader for the people of Tibet. In the absence of the Dalai Lama, the *Tsongdu* (National Assembly) appointed a *Gylastab* (Regent). The government was structured in a dualistic manner. Two Prime Ministers were appointed; a *Silon* (a common man) and a monk. The administration was also divided into two parts: civil and religious. The common man appointed by the Prime Minister would govern over the civil aspect of administration whereas the monk would oversee the religious administration. National and private issues were attended to by the *Kashag* (Council), which was the chief executive body that attended to matters of civil administration. The basic functions of the council were to study the issues that had been passed on to them from the Dalai Lama and the Prime Ministers, and to provide valuable feedback regarding the issues. The Council also had control over an extensive range of governmental activities, as their opinions were instrumental in the appointment of other government officials such as governors, executive officers and district officials.

The administrative body was divided into seven departments: Educational, Political, Military, Finance, Judicial, Economic and Foreign. All departments except Finance were headed by one common official and a monk, following the system of dual governance. As for the religious governance, the religious part of the government was attended to by *Chikyap Khenpo* (Lord Chamberlain) who was also responsible for the private treasury of the Dalai Lama as well as the forest department. He was assisted by *Turngyik Chemo*, which was a body of four monks. This Council, could present its views on religious matters to the Dalai Lama through the office of the Prime Minister. The *Turngyik Chemo* and the *Tsepon* were held regularly to discuss matters of political and non-political importance. The Council also presided over meetings of national importance with the National Assembly and most of the time their decisions would get passed on to the Dalai Lama without alterations or revisions. They had to be passed on through Office of the Prime Minister.

2.7.2 Current Functioning of the Tibetan Government

The Tibetan Government in Exile was established by the Dalai Lama in 1960. The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) was instituted in the northern region of Mussoorie. The CTA is recognized by Tibetans all over the world as their solitary and legitimate government. Education has always been a top priority for the CTA alongside rehabilitation of refugees and restoring the freedom of Tibet. In preparation for a free Tibet, the CTA has built its style of governance on the system of modern democracy, a significant change from their previous, religion centred government. **On September 2, 1960, the Tibetan Parliament in-exile came into being. In 1990, the number of Tibetan Parliament workers was increased to 46 members allowing for further democratization.** The members had to elect a Council of Ministers, or the *Kashag*, who were answerable to the members of the Tibetan Parliament. This paved the way for the establishment of the Tibetan Judiciary known as the Supreme Justice Commission.

The Tibetan Government in exile then moved from Mussoorie to McLeod Ganj in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh. The reasons for this shift were due to factors such as similar topographic conditions, former trade relations with the people of Himachal Pradesh, and the vast population of Buddhists in Dharamsala and its adjoining areas such as Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur (**The Office of Tibet - Pretoria, n.d**).

While the CTA may possess the qualities of a free democratic government, the structure will cease to exist in the event of Tibet's liberation. In his paper 'Guidelines for Future Tibet's Policy and Basic Features of its Constitution' 1992, the Dalai Lama stated that the current government would be dissolved as soon as Tibet gains freedom. After this, the CTA's power would be transferred to a transitional government headed by the interim-president. As described in the paper, the first general election will be held within two years of the interim-president coming into power, after which he will hand over power to the new popularly elected government. The Tibetan Government in Exile follows a constitution known as 'The Charter of Tibetans in Exile'. The constitution was drafted in 1990 by the Constitution Redrafting Community. This charter is the law governing the Tibetan people in Exile. The charter was unanimously passed after several deliberations on June 14, 1991 by the 11th Tibetan Parliament in Exile. It was approved by the Dalai Lama on June 28, 1991. As given on the official website

of the Tibetan Government in Exile “The Charter professes to adhere to the universal Declaration of Human Rights as specified by the United Nations and to provide to all Tibetans equality before the law, enjoyment of rights and freedom without discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race, language and social origin.” It also states that “all Tibetans will strive to bring about future Tibet comprising the whole province of *U-tsang*, *Do-Toe* (Kham) and *Do-Mey* (Amdo) as a democratic, federal, republic state and a zone of peace.”. However, due to the position of the Tibetans as individuals living as refugees in another nation, it is ultimately the host country’s laws that are held supreme. Instead, the Tibetan charter acts as a subset, in which it must exist within the laws and regulations of the Indian government (The Office of Tibet - Pretoria, n.d).

The Tibetan Government in Exile implements the Integrated Development Plans, made by the Planning Commission under the Tibetan Government in Exile. These plans are made to set out long term as well as short term goals for the Tibetan community in Tibet, as well as those in exile. For the community- in-exile, plans are implemented on a micro level with short term plans in order to provide them with education and improving the socio-economic background. At the macro level, the Integrated Development Plans aims to preserve, protect and provide in order to keep Tibet’s history, diversity and culture alive and relevant.

The Tibetan Government in Exile has gone through a series of changes in order to put forward the best version of governance possible with the given circumstances. The government of India has allowed the Tibetan diaspora in India to follow their own constitution as long as the rules put forth by the Indian constitution are being followed as well. The sources available to public access about the functioning of the Tibetan Government in Exile and its history provide a wholesome understanding of the working of the government with the chain of command and the departments and their duties being made clear to the public (Administrative Structure of the Central Tibetan Administration and Livelihoods of Tibetans in India, Chapter 3, p.g-58-60).

2.8 Experience of Tibetans in Exile

The Tibetan government in exile has strived to revive Tibetan culture, and has created and administered a cohesive and productive community underpinned by a strong and growing civil society, which would be proved by the establishment of a new government based on

democracy. When future generations of Tibetans examine the Tibetan exile experience, they will point to the institutions developed in exile as the single most important element that ensured the survival of Tibet outside the plateau.

At first, the living conditions in India were a drastic change from the conditions in Tibet. “Many died in the campus, and the initial heavy and poorly paid road work with primitive tools took an additional toll” (Michael, 741). Moreover, the climate in the Indian plains and jungle was deadly for people from the high mountain valleys. “In one compound, almost half of the 2,000 Tibetan monks died during the eight years the camp was used” (Michael 741). Soon, the organization of a Tibet polity in exile commenced. To settle Tibetan refugees—at least 80% of whom were farmers or nomads—was one of the first objectives of the Dalai Lama. He “persuaded the Indian government to provide areas of uncultivated land of several thousand acres each in several states and regions of India where, with Indian help, the Tibetans were given ownership of about an acre per person” (Michael 741). Today these settlements have become not only self-sufficient, but financially prosperous by developing arts and crafts centers, stores, restaurants, workshops and garages (Michael 742). Tibetan crafts have become very fashionable in India, and with their traditional interest in trading, Tibetans have sold their wares—sweaters, socks, and caps in strong colors—at good profit in Indian market towns all over the country.\

Religion plays a vital role in the daily life of Tibetans. Within the settlements are newly built temples and monasteries. The monks who fled to India brought with them at least some books, religious objects, and art treasures. (Michael 742). However, monastic life has been incisively changed. Aside from studied and religious services, monks and nuns worked in the fields allotted to the monasteries to provide for their own food. They also work as craftsmen and artists, so that they share in all phases of the life of the nation (Michael 742).

To carry this cultural and ethnic unity into the future, the most important concern of the Dalai Lama and his advisors has been the education of the young generation. Education for the young generation is very important for preserving the traditional Tibetan culture. According to Samphel , “in exile, Tibetans have not only rebuilt monasteries but have opened

secular institutions of learning, research, and training in the fields of traditional Tibetan medicine, astrology, language, painting, metal and wood crafts, sculpture, and performing arts”. There is no denying that these efforts have enabled the Tibetan people to maintain the integrity of their culture and spiritual heritage.

According to Mrs. Pema Gyalpo, younger sister of the Dalai Lama, “most young Tibetans here, aged twenty to thirty, have been educated in India and their cultural point of view has naturally been influenced by this environment. But in early childhood all of them experienced the suffering of the escape; it has left a very dominating mark on their personalities. They feel keenly the importance of preserving our identity, why we left and what we wanted to save” (Frecesca). All over Asia, religious ways of life are facing keen competition from the West. The Tibetan communities have not been entirely exempt. The loss of the Tibetan identity now is a big issue within the Tibetan community. The influence exerted by India and western countries are diluting their concept of homeland. However, many writings testify to the fact that Tibetans living in exile have successfully countered assimilative tendencies due to the continuity of Dalai Lama’s leadership in exile and the preservation of old tradition by old generation who fled from Tibet with Dalai Lama to India. For example, “The *chang ma* singing at weddings, the goldsmith who drinks his everyday tea out of an elaborate silver and porcelain goblet worthy of the aristocrat in old Lhasa, the heavy felt boots and wool chuba worn right through Indian summers are the ways that are revered as fundamental to the continual distillation and disciplining of categorical purity” (Basu 236). For this study, the attempt is to understand Tibetan experiences of living in exile forms the core of our project.

2.9 Literature Gaps

In the process of refining our research, we found two broad gaps that our research would seek to address. First, we found that although much of the scholarship on Tibetan refugees focus on Tibetan culture and identity (especially, the role of religion in shaping Tibetan identity), other aspects of its identity remain relatively less explored. Thus, we look at Tibetan refugees as occupying the unique position of being both a *refugee* and a *citizen* at the same time. Through semi-structured life-world interviews conducted during our field work in Dharamsala, we seek to understand their lived experiences of negotiating between the two

categories- refugees for the Indian government and being citizens for the Tibetan government in exile.

The second gap that the research seeks to address is the gap between different generations of Tibetans. Currently there is a generation of Tibetans who have lived in Tibet and those who were born in India and still identify as Tibetan. There is no data that explored how opinions and ideals may have changed from generation to generation. Our research hopes to fill these gaps. We also encountered a few rudimentary literature gaps, such as the lack of information on other existing governments in exile, statistical variances in Tibetan and Chinese documents, and the general political bias as a result of all the existing literature coming from politically biased nations.

In the next chapter, the findings from the field-work in Dharamsala as they relate to the two aforementioned gaps and described and analysed.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 The Introduction:

With the information our group had amassed on the Tibetan people and their situation, our group departed for McLeod Ganj on the 29th of September 2018. The focus of our research had shifted to the lived experiences of the Tibetans in Dharamsala by the time we left for field-work, and we were aiming to gather a sample that is vast enough to derive conclusive facts about the general experience of the Tibetans we had encountered. This chapter will focus on the proceedings and exper of our field-work conducted in McLeod Ganj, followed by a thorough analysis of the data we collected from our research.

We were to take a train from Mumbai to Delhi, and then take an overnight bus from Majnu ka Tila, a well-known Tibetan settlement in Delhi, till McLeod Ganj the following day. Due to time restraints, we restricted our study to Dharamsala only. We arrived at McLeod Ganj around 6am on the 1st of October and settled into our hostels for the week around 7am. After refreshing themselves, the group departed for a transit walk collectively, and split into a further three sub-groups at the main square of McLeod Ganj. Perhaps the first misconception that was cleared was the assumption that the Tibetans would be reluctant to talk about their situation with respect to their personal lives. However, a majority of our interviewees were open enough to talk about their (or their family's) journey from Tibet and their life in India.

Our group had prepared three separate questionnaires for the Tibetan community – one for the locals, another for the NGO officials, and the last for government officials. Over the course of five days, we interviewed 22 local women and 25 local men. The questions mainly targeted their journey to India, their experience as living as a refugee, their opinions on the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), and their political aspirations for the future of Tibet. The questions also tried to focus on how actively is a Tibetan citizen involved in the affairs of the Tibetan government. While the locations of the members of Tibetan NGOs and parliamentary members were relatively fixed, by the third day our group was running out of

the required sample in McLeod Ganj. Due to limited geography, our group had to outsource to Dharamkot and Dharamsala in order to find more local samples. We also found a significant percentage of our sample through snowball sampling, and by approaching unknown buildings. Locals often recommended other possible interviewees and locations to the groups. The first two days were almost entirely devoted to collecting local samples, and a few interviews of Tibet-run NGOs, such as Tibetan world. Almost immediately, our group members noticed very evident similarities between the answers of most of the samples when asked general questions about their thoughts on the Indian government or their inputs on the relationship between the Indian and the Tibetan community. The depth of such parallels will be discussed in the following chapter.

The third and fourth day had the sub-groups attend the talks by the Dalai Lama. Both the talks were part of a series of teachings to a Taiwanese group about Buddhist philosophy, elaborating on the concept of the self and the illusions it inevitably leads to. Though a majority of the talks were not directly relevant to the theme of our study, it certainly provided insight to the reason behind such eerily similar responses. The Dalai Lama stands on a pedestal with God-like reverence for a majority of the Tibetans around the world, with many of our samples citing his presence in India as a reason for the Tibetan settlement present in the country. As a result, religious questions were removed from our questionnaires as we soon realised that the role of the Dalai Lama in the Tibetan community has transcended the line between the religious and the non-religious.

A few of our samples gave us anecdotes about the conflict between the Tibetan and the Indian community in Dharamsala in 1991. While those who readily provided the information were few, they told us about the riots against the Tibetans had led to violent acts on both sides of the community. As a result, our questionnaires began to inculcate more questions about possible conflicts within the community since a majority of the population adamantly maintained that the relationship between the two communities has always been cordial and peaceful.

Questions regarding the political views of our samples became more frequent as well. There was a stark contrast between the kinds of answers we received, wherein the interviewee was either extremely well informed about the current affairs of Tibetan politics, or they chose to remain out of it entirely. Thus, the disparity between the answers was quite wide.

This chapter will thus elucidate on the data we gathered from our diverse sample and attempt to breakdown a rough outline of what it means to be Tibetan in India through their lived experiences.

For the ease of explanation, the research has been split into four categories. The Journey, The Experience, The Government and The Everlasting Conflict. Three of these four categories are mentioned in this chapter.

3.1 The Journey:

Each Tibetan's story begins with the journey made from Tibet to India. Whether it be their grandparents who made the journey or themselves, it has been rooted as the beginning of their story. When the Dalai Lama left Tibet in 1959, there was a mass exodus of people from Tibet to India. These refugees undertook the journey from Tibet to India, through various routes. People in our sample mainly came into India through Nepal or by directly crossing the Himalayas. Their need to undertake this journey rose out of the need to follow their leader as well as survival. Many came to India in the hopes of escaping the oppressive Chinese government, which had been bearing down on them for years now. They came to India to gain a better life for themselves and their children, they came seeking escape from the Chinese oppression.

There are two groups of people whose journeys have been analysed. There are those who came from Tibet and there are those who were born in India, and whose parents or grandparents made the journey. There was a consensus between both groups on how the

journey was, it was long and strenuous, almost traumatizing for some. The journey was often described a perilous one and that they are more than content to be safe within the territory of India. The groups further showed diversity in their openness to talk about the experience or stories of the same.

One group did not respond to follow up questions in more than single words. Whilst the other half of the group provided elaborate descriptions of their journey, and a small section of people did not have much to share since they were too young to recall much of their personal experiences. People spoke about how they chose to sleep through the days and continue their journey in the night in order to avoid attention of any sort. They mentioned the intense periods of starvation and the scarcity of food. They spoke about the lack of other resources too, due to the abrupt abandonment of their villages. They could carry little to nothing of their personal possessions, with them. They travelled in groups across the border. Parents who found difficulty in escaping themselves, sent their children across to India with relatives or anyone willing to provide aid. Often children were illegally snuck out of Tibet and into India. Those who travelled with family often shared experiences of being separated from family due to several reasons including separation at the border, or death. Their stories also gave us insight on how most described deaths during the journey were due to starvation, disease or exhaustion endured by the travellers.

On reaching India, they were sent to settlement camps across the country. Mussorie, Orissa, Ladakh, Sikkim, and Karnataka were all places which became the primary grounds for the Tibetan settlements to flourish on. Over the course of the years the Southern settlement - Bylakuppe and; the Northern settlement - Dharamsala became the most populated and popular. Dharamsala, however, lost a bit of its population due to the heavy commercialization that took place in the area. This resulted in McLeod Ganj becoming the heart of the Tibetan Settlement. One could say the Tibetan to Indian ratio was almost 8:2, respectively.

More conversation revealed that the journey from their original point of arrival to Dharamsala was also long and spread over a period of time. Several refugees entered India and settled down at their place of arrival. They worked for years as road workers in Kashmir,

miners, the agricultural sector and so on till they earned enough money to relocate. Thereafter, upon entering into Dharamsala the main occupation for most became the concept of setting up a shop of any kind. The original architecture of the small shops along the sides of the roads, on almost every road, is seen to still exist. The sample also revealed that most of them only work as shop owners and some of these shop owners have had the shop in the family for years. However, this did not mark the end of their struggles.

The sudden change in their immediate environment, not only in the sense of people but also climate, took a toll on them. They found it difficult to accustom themselves to the sudden heat onset and lack of the extremely cold climate they were used to. The food made little to no sense to them. The concept of dal and rice were too foreign, due to diversity it possessed in comparison to their original diet of lighter food and lesser masala and Indian flavours. Few interviewees expressed their small yet significant struggle getting accustomed to the food in India. The sudden adaptation that was required of the Tibetans along with the lifestyle change which took place affected their productivity, thus driving a lot of Tibetans towards poverty.

The Tibetans in exile have braved the perilous journey from Tibet to India in order to give themselves a new life in India. They came to India hoping for a chance to build a life in the hopes that they would one day return to a free Tibet. The conflict is still ongoing. The Tibetans in exile still cannot return to their homeland without risking their freedom and safety. The refugees still have hope.

3.2 The Experience:

The main aim of our research was looking at the lived experiences of the Tibetans in exile. Through our research, we looked at several aspects of their experience. We looked at the administration and the effect they had on the Tibetans in exile, the changes they experienced in Dharamsala, the relationship with locals, citizenship and their experience with the Indian government.

The Tibetans in Exile with a registration certificate or RC card had mixed reviews on citizenship. Their RC card provides them with the identity of a refugee, in essence they still belong to Tibet. They are tied to the Central Tibetan Administration. Many of these refugees were offered Indian citizenship. Their reasons for turning down citizenship revolved around a sense of belonging to their own country. They say that they are Tibetan at the end of the day and not Indian, so why would they become Indian citizens? While most agree that they have lost their country, they still live with the hopes of returning to it someday, which keeps them from accepting Indian citizenship despite the added benefits it would procure them. Some call themselves too old to accept Indian citizenship. They say that they will live with the RC because there is no point for them to, in their old age, become a citizen just to obtain the added benefits. There was also the issue of maintaining culture and community for some. They believed that the Tibetan community was reducing in size, with people leaving to go to the USA or Europe in order to pursue other opportunities. They were scared that them taking on an Indian citizenship would mean that the Tibetan community would grow even smaller and the culture would be lost. While these people exist, there are those who want Indian citizenship, or would take it up if offered. Their reasons for this were extremely different. Having an Indian passport means that travel becomes easier. With an RC, travelling is not really an option due to the difficulty in obtaining visas.

Furthermore, registering for the RC as well as renewing it is thought to be a very inconvenient hassle by most Tibetans who hold it. It was described as a lengthy and tedious process by many. Being able to travel means more opportunities in terms of education and jobs. It means being able to make a better life for themselves. Having an Indian passport also means that they have the chance to buy property. They are trying to build a life for themselves on the notion that they have lost their country. Most say that if there is no hope for freedom in Tibet they will accept Indian citizenship got better opportunities. The wish to hold dual citizenship was a popular opinion, with every single one of our samples stating that they would like to go back to Tibet, if only for a visit.

Despite a majority of the sample size being reluctant to accept Indian citizenship, most had very positive remarks about the Indian government. Many mentioned how indebted they

were to the government for offering equal opportunities in educational fields. For instance, the affiliation of TCV to the CBSE board as provided the Tibetan students with the same qualifications that Indian students require for further studies. Some interviewees expressed the desire for more support from the government in terms of more lax property laws and greater travel freedom, but the general opinion remained positive. Despite the general positive opinions of the Indian government, the CTA incited varied responses. While a majority of the interviewees were enthusiastic about the CTA's efforts to preserve Tibetan culture, many felt that they could do more for the current employment statuses of the Tibetans. The street vendors on the lanes of McLeod Ganj spoke about the confiscation of their shops by the authorities, with little to no support extended to them to maintain a livelihood. Many had no comments about the CTA due to a lack of knowledge about their proceedings.

Despite the efforts to preserve Tibetan culture, Indian culture has inevitably affected Tibetan culture in minute ways. Most of the interviewees spoke about the contrast between the Tibetan and the Indian community's culinary differences. Many of the samples had spoken about the difficulty they faced in adapting to local staple food items, such as dal rice. A few also mentioned that they often eat dal rice with their Indian friends for more inclusivity in social circles. However, samples have agreed that their food has started adding relatively more spice in their traditional dishes due to the culinary influence from their Indian neighbours. Another change would be the adoption of the Hindi language by the Tibetan locals for easier communication. As a result, some of the older interviewees expressed their fear of the Tibetan language declining, as younger children are starting to show more proficiency in Hindi or English than their native languages.

The pleasant weather at Dharamsala was very important to the comfort of the Tibetans residing there, as they are genetically better suited for the mountains. The mass exodus that arrived in India in 1959 lost scores of people due to the extreme heat found in the plains of North India, as Tibetans were simply not used to the heat and there were not enough resources to prevent widespread heat burns and dehydration. The Tibetan settlement in McLeod Ganj prefers Dharamsala to the other settlements in India due to its cool weather, and the former peace one found in the location. Due to the rising popularity of Dharamsala as a tourist spot, a

few Tibetans cited the increasing presence of foreign and Indian tourists as disrupting some of the peace that one could find there previously. Many Tibetans feel that their settlement in McLeod Ganj will continue to deteriorate over the following years.

The driving force behind the long continued presence of the Tibetans in Dharamsala is the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Tibetans are nomadic by nature, and many mentioned that if the Dalai Lama passes away, the Tibetans will also move away from Dharamsala. Most of our interviewees stated that they feel blessed to live so close to their *Guru*. Most were initially unhappy with his decision to step down as leader and handing over leadership to a civilian, Lobsang Sangay. However, over time they have come to terms with the decision that the Dalai Lama has taken. They rationalise it with the understanding that His Holiness has a long term plan in mind, and that the situation has changed. One interviewee said that he was glad that the Dalai Lama stepped down, as he could concentrate on his religious duties.

Ultimately, every Tibetan experiences their exile differently, but there are numerous similarities at a surface level. The desire to go back to their country, the need for better opportunities, and their restricted mobility on a global scale is something that affects all of the Tibetan inhabitants. Most call India their “second home”, but admit to feeling displaced from the interior of Indian societies as well. The Tibetans have created home away from home. A truly difficult task having suffered a loss so big, so suddenly. Their experience in their new home, however temporary it is, is something worth talking about. From having their own administrative system to keeping alive their culture while so susceptible to the influence of another, their experiences have shaped them to be the people they are today, strong, resistant and hopeful.



(Missing persons posters put up all around McLeod Ganj. The posters detail the disappearances of people involved in the conflict.)

3.3 The Government:

Our on-field research required us to question our interviewees about their opinions of the government as well as question the officials about their opinions on the Indian locals and the governmental relations in respect to the Tibetan population in India. The response in this field too; was at extremes. People either had an opinion of the government or they chose to not indulge in any such conversation.

When analysing our research, we looked at our data from three specific perspectives. The first perspective we looked at was the relationship between the Central Tibetan Administration and the Indian locals of McLeod Ganj. When asked about the locals, the

government officials chose to highlight only that aspect of their communication which shows the cordial and well maintained relationship. When the question was put forth, the reply from the officials was seen to be more in terms of the workings of the Central Tibetan Administration than what it is really like to communicate as a Tibetan settled there. According to them, there was a rather lack of real contact/ communication with locals on a daily basis, thus limiting their thorough insight on how well the relationships are. The CTA lacks a degree of jurisdiction over the locals thus further limiting contact between the two. This, therefore, plays a role in the lack of communication or relationship between the government and the locals, in the eyes of the government.

However when the same was seen from the perspective of the Tibetan locals, the answers further fell under three categories. The first being that the respondents had a very neutral or no particular opinion at all, the second was the generic simple ‘the government is working well, it is good. There are no problems’, the third category of answers were locals who had something to say about the government. On the first day of on-field work, one of the three subgroups learnt that the government does provide some sort of benefits to the locals. One of the interviewed locals (Nyima) revealed that he is very happy with the government and has no issues with them, a primary factor for this liking towards the government probably stems from the fact that the government pays the education fees for one out the two kids that the interviewee has. Thus, factors like these helped encourage the positive relationship between the two parties in question. Similarly as more of the locals were interviewed it was learnt that a good portion of our limited sample was very happy with the government. They voiced their thoughts about how well preserved the culture and religion is. How even though the people are living far from their homeland, their government had helped make it feel as much as ‘home’ as possible. Ngina Bhat, a member of the Central Tibetan Administration, upon being interviewed, mentioned that the Prime Minister has been making active efforts to make sure the architecture of the upcoming CTA buildings have a larger tibetan touch to them, this move could most possibly be in efforts to further preserve the Tibetan culture. Such reasons make the people believe that had it not been for their government, they would not know this kind of success. The Tibetan locals believed that a sense of success was achieved by every Tibetan and this success would not have been seen had the government not so efficiently divided itself

into departments and set up order among the people. The people also expressed their happiness at the idea of having excelled educationally, economically and health wise in the past few years. Over the course of the years, health centers which were only seen in Dharamsala, started up in almost every settlement. Another aspect of the Tibetan life in India which the locals are grateful to the government for.



(The Tibetan Literary Archives hold small possessions that have been smuggled out of Tibet. They have been labelled and kept safely.)

In order to understand the relationship the Central Tibetan Government had with the Tibetan locals, one has to look at the two varieties of responses we received to the questions regarding the government. Officials said that the democratic participation had increased over the years within the community.

The Tibetans modelled their government after the Indian Constitution after the Dalai Lama ceded power to the CTA. Although this political change incited negative responses from the

Tibetans initially, the community soon made their peace with the decision taken by their spiritual leader.

One of our interviewees', Lopsang Wangchuck, revealed halfway into the interview that he would be unable to give any opinions or thoughts on the Central Tibetan Administration not due to a lack of knowledge but because of the fact the he was in service to the government right now.

This however, doesn't mean that there is only love and acceptance for the government in the hearts of the locals. A few shop owners expressed their dissatisfaction over the fact that the government wishes to control the number of shops lining the streets. Their method of removing these street side shops is not appreciated since it leaves the locals unemployed for periods of time. This places undue stress on the Tibetans in exile due to their pre-existing financial problems. The respondents voiced that they would really appreciate the CTA to be a bit more understanding towards them rather than just shutting their shops and rendering them unemployed.

The second aspect looked at the relationship the Indian Government maintained with the CTA as well as the locals in Dharamsala. It was seen that the interaction taking place between the two significant governing bodies not only in Dharamsala but across all Tibetan settlements was a rather need-based relationship. The responses were from the opinion of the locals and officials. Among the officials we introduced, Dhardon Sharling (a member of the parliament), provided a lot of information regarding the Tibetan view towards the Indian Government. She confirmed what we had learnt pre-field: that the main office for the Tibetans was actually located in Delhi which played the role of the head office. The Indian media also helped Tibet's cause by bringing their plight to the international forum and helped increase awareness in the unfair treatment of these people. The Tibetans also believe in the fact that the democracy has managed to succeed for so long with the help of the government, that they can manage to continue to do so even in current times. The officials also mentioned that they felt no discontent or negative emotion towards the Indian authorities since it is purely because of them that the Tibetans get any sort of freedom. As long as they live within the laws and

regulations set forth by the Indian Government, they can continue to live a safe and free life. This makes them only respect India and its people more.

When the locals were questioned about their opinion on the Indian Government, most had the same answer. The first and primary area of contact a Tibetan had with the Indian Government is when Tibetans wish to acquire a registration certificate, or what they refer to as the RC Book. It is a form of documentation which is provided to Tibetans in place of the Indian passport, due to their refugee status. One interviewee, who was a part of the Youth Congress, mentioned that most of their movements cannot go through till they receive permission from the Indian Government. A majority of the answers once again took extremes of not having a specific opinion or largely appreciating and respecting the Indian Government. The locals identify the functionality of 'Swaachh Bharat' not only in Indian dominated areas of the country but also among most Tibetans since Tibetans and Indian celebrate festivals together with no discrimination or prejudice. The successful working of government policies which were able to root themselves into the system further showed the people the compatibility of the two different authorities.

Sonam, an interviewee, mentioned that the Indian government did something rather significantly helpful. The Indian authorities helped the Central Tibetan Administration set up a branch for education which was then identified as the Central Tibetan School Administration. This section specifically aimed at educating the Tibetan children in these settlements. The education laws of India helped India in setting up a working system for the Tibetans as well. Acts like these along with the continuous efforts to preserve and maintain the culture and religion of the Tibetan people, appealed to them greatly.

Tibetans also expressed their immense appreciation for the amount of help the Indian Government provided in helping the Tibetans set up their settlements and acquire any resources for which the need was felt. However, it does not stop the Tibetans from feeling like India is more responsive to the needs of the Chinese and how to counteract their policies rather than the Tibetans. They feel a sense of detachment from not being able to explain their plight to anyone other than fellow Tibetans. This resulted in the youth feeling the need for some sort of

support groups or systems which the Tibetans can approach and express themselves without feeling unheard.

This brings us to some disparities between the two parties. There was a slight conflict in responses, wherein, one party suggests that the Indian government provides no help to the Tibetans financially nor does it allow the Tibetans to have the right to buy/own land in India. The allowance to stay on Indian soil, however, makes it easier for the Tibetans to compromise on their land purchasing and owning rights. Whereas, the other party mentioned that the Indian Government does provide help financially.

In terms of understanding the relationship the Central Tibetan Government had with the Tibetan locals, there are two aspects to the answer. Officials said that the democratic participation seen before and now in regards with the Indian locals had increased over the years. From the time of the Dalai Lama stepping down from his position in the political world, Tibetans adopted the Indian style of governance; a democratic system. Even though initially this political idea was something that upset the Tibetans, a decision of their Leader, His Holiness The Dalai Lama, was not something they could disregard or argue against.

According to the officials, Tibetans in exile realized that they had a chance to make a difference to their own lives through the elections and had started to participate more. The voter turnout has increased drastically each year according to the official records. The second aspect is citizenship. The Indian citizenship offered to Tibetans had most Tibetans either confused or against it. The administration however takes a neutral stance on the whole matter. They claim to leave the decision up to the individual. They state clearly that any individual taking up citizenship will no longer be under the Central Tibetan Administration, but they leave the decision purely up to the individual. One official chose to state that the RC was almost like a sign of loyalty. There's also the issue of power being handed over to the CTA from the Dalai Lama himself. The officials had little to say about the decision itself, choosing instead to mention that the citizens had reacted badly to the news initially. One interviewee goes as far as to say that the people relied on the Dalai Lama too much. The official wanting them to take

more initiative. The others were more positive about it, choosing to focus on the fact that people had eventually warmed to the decision.

3.4 Discussion:

Analyzing the three significant part of this study gives way to a large room for discussion regarding the observations, and therefore analysis, made on field. Firstly, one of our original questions asked during the interviews with the Tibetan locals was where they came from and the location of their prior home. A significant part of sample indicated that they arrived from either directly Tibet or some other minor settlement in India. However, another significant part of our sample also revealed that they were migrants from the Southern settlement to the Northern settlement (Dharamsala).

This shift occurred due to several reasons like the system requiring the family to disperse, the movement for the Dalai Lama, and so on. Thus, when further questioned regarding the South to North displacement and its significance, it was learnt that most of these cross-country migrants preferred the southern settlement for reasons such as the Dalai Lama residing in Dharamsala, the fact that being in Dharamsala makes a Tibetan feel like he/she is closer to the Tibetan Culture and being in Dharamsala makes a Tibetan feel that they are able to directly able to give back to their own community.

Secondly, when it came to the significant generational gap, it was seen that the older generation was more open and willing to talk about their journey and experience as compared to the younger generation. The older generation had grown up in Tibet. They had a chance to experience life surrounded by their culture, their people in their own country. This makes their journey from Tibet to India all the more traumatic.

Most of the refugees, fled at a moments notice unable to carry with them momentos or prized possessions. All they have left of their country is their memories of it. Therefore, their willingness to talk about their journey and experiences is understandable. Their emotional connect to the event goes deeper than just having lived through the perilous journey. To add to

this, being surrounded only by remnants of the Tibetan culture is hard for them. Being able to relieve any part of Tibet probably eases the feelings of homesickness for the refugees. The younger generation, on the other hand, has never been to Tibet. Or if they fled from Tibet it was as children and they are unable to recall anything. They are still told stories of the land and the importance of it. They are still instilled with the patriotism that is present in the older generations. With their strong sense of nationalism comes a conflict of interest. Most of the younger generation retain a citizenship to the exiled administration of a country they've never been to. While the nationalism does exist in both generations, there is a sense of conflict in the younger generations that does not exist in the older generations.

Thirdly, while interviewing the intended sample, we came across several Indians who we got into casual conversations with. These conversations though irrelevant to our study, revealed small pieces of information which we did not discover originally. It was brought to light by few Indians that in 1991 there was a brief period of time where there was severe tension between the Indians and the Tibetans. This tension soon gave way to riots and unrest between both parties causing small acts of violence. While the Indians spoke about this relatively more openly, a very small number of Tibetans actually spoke about this incident. Even the few who did manage to talk to us spoke only about the Indian violence whereas the Indians spoke about the violent acts committed by both parties. This refusal to speak about any tension could result from the Tibetans in exile needing to maintain a sense of diplomacy. Throughout the study the Tibetans in exile provided diplomatic answers seemingly to maintain an image. This could be the same reason they were hesitant to speak about the conflicts. It is simply to maintain an image.

Fourthly and lastly, similar to the conflicts there was another aspect to the opinions of the people of McLeod Ganj which we learnt only upon our third and fourth day of interviewing. We came across people who brought to light the conspiracy theories which run deep within the community. A few Tibetans put forth a theory, which stated that the moments of tension created between Indians and Tibetans, due to Tibetans, were not their fault rather an act of the Chinese. The theory stated that the Chinese kidnap Tibetans and brainwash them into disliking not only Indians but Tibetans too. These people are then sent to Dharamsala and made to create

unrest among the people. The theory finds the Chinese to blame easier than either Tibetans or Indians.

It could be this way in hopes of protecting the Indians and Tibetans from any negative labelling. Therefore, preventing the rise of any kind of tension. By blaming the Chinese and keeping the Tibetans and Indians in good light, the Tibetans can continue to live safely in McLeod Ganj and not fear any Indian distrust. Living in India, on a soil which is not theirs demands the Tibetans to maintain positive relationships with their host country to avoid any kind of problems or disagreements.

A full summary of the study can be found in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 Introduction:

The study attempts to capture the experience of Tibetan refugees. Initially, the study had hoped to simply look into the identity of the people. The study choose to try and understand the relationship between their identity as both a refugee in India and as a citizen of the Central Tibetan Administration. It was quickly readjusted to encompass the experience of a Tibetan refugee as the question of identity comes under the experience of a person. A person's identity will affect their experience and therefore it was decided that the research will look at the socio-political aspects of the experience through the lens of lived everyday experiences.

In order to understand the present-day experiences of Tibetans as refugees, it was important to understand the historical context of their displacement and the various events and processes surrounding it. Our second chapter, therefore, began with an exhaustive review of literature that covered Tibetan history, explicated the Tibetan crisis that emerged with the occupation of Tibet in 1950, and an appraisal of the positions of the three stakeholders in the conflict: Tibet, China, and India.

The present-day situation of the conflict was understood through the Chinese white papers and Tibet's response to these white papers. The Tibetans had proposed their solution to the conflict, this being the Middle Way approach. The Middle Way approach involves Tibet ruling itself under Chinese territory. Tibet would be considered a part of China, but simply left to administer itself under the supervision of the Chinese government. This suggestion was met with suspicion on the part of the Chinese government. They viewed the Middle Way approach as an elaborate plan concocted by the Tibetans to gain independence. This is where the conflict stands presently as per our secondary research.

The secondary data also looked at other political aspects. These aspects such as Indian foreign policies, the role of Tibet on India's foreign policies, legal or formal status of refugees, and general research on the Tibetan Government in Exile. For instance, the presence of the spiritual leader of the Tibetans is a vital political catalyst for India's relationship with China.

The Dalai Lama's presence in India severely hinders the fostering of a better relationship between the Chinese authorities and the Tibetan locals. The tentative legitimacy of the CTA acts as a uniting force between a multitude of Tibetan refugees globally, leading to greater difficulties in subjugating Tibetan resistance within China. This study conclusively established that the presence of the Dalai Lama is one of the sole reasons behind the large Tibetan settlement in India. Although the study did not delve deeper into the implications this has on India's relationship with China or the foreign policies, it was one of the aspects our research confirmed.

Understanding the secondary data enabled the researchers to conduct a valid study in Dharamshala. More specifically, the study was conducted primarily in McLeod Ganj- a small town in Dharamshala, and the seat of the Central Tibetan Administration. The collection of primary data on field revealed interesting observations and results.

There was an aspect that was unexpected when it came to the study. Participants mentioned a difference between the settlement camps and their experience in them depending on whether they were in South India or North India. Those that had lived in both areas mentioned a distinct preference for South India, claiming that the people were 'nicer'. However, they did return to Dharamshala for several reasons. Some wanted to be closer to the Dalai Lama, or be closer to their community and culture and some wanted to serve their community better.

The sample consisted of older as well as younger generations of Tibetans in exile in India. However, data collected from the younger generation was limited due to their apprehension towards being interviewed and speaking about Tibet. These differences in response patterns between the older and younger generations provided some useful insights into their experiences of exile. Their answers, however, were insightful. These differences in response patterns between the older and younger generations provided some useful insight into their experiences of exile. The older generation was much more willing to talk, is what was noticed. The older generation respondents provided lengthy accounts of their journey to India and about the experience of living away from their homeland. They showed a strong sense of

emotional attachment to Tibet. The younger generation however, shared the fierce patriotism of their elders.

There was also the issue of the conflicts. The Tibetans in exile, throughout our study, had the habit of giving diplomatic and seemingly rehearsed answers to most questions. Tibetans were visibly uncomfortable answering questions about the Indian government, India as their host country as well as their own administration. Even when asked about their relationship with the locals of Dharamshala, they chose to remain diplomatic and curt.

Dharamshala locals, too, provided more information in off-the-record casual conversations than in recorded interviews about the conflicts that have occurred. When simply speaking to the Indian locals, they spoke about instances of communal tension and instances of violence between Indian locals and Tibetan refugees. These conversations were always off-the-record as our study was not including Indian locals and their relationship with the refugees.

It was worthy to note that the officials' observation of democratic participation of the refugees having increased, reflected in our study to an extent. In our interviews, a few people happened to mention the 5-50 sessions. As explained to us by some Tibetans in exile, the sessions were held between the Central Tibetan Administration and the Indian Government. The sessions spoke about a plan for the refugees currently residing in India. The plan looked at the event of the refugees being unable to go back to Tibet for the next five years and also for the next fifty years. We had previously not come across these sessions and were informed of this political update by some of the younger generation when they were inclined to speak to us.

While the present study did yield useful information about the experiences of Tibetans in exile in India, the subject can be explored through further research.

A major aim of the study was to identify any differences or generational gaps. While the study did manage to make some observations regarding this, a further in-depth study could be conducted. The sample in this study could not properly account for the observations made.

The willingness of participants to speak became an issue as well as the inability to communicate with other participants. This greatly limited our sample and thereby a way to conclusively identify generational gaps. This limitation could possibly be overcome with time. Developing a relationship with the younger generation will help them open up. It might be easier for them to speak to a third party about sensitive issues with more of a relationship existing.

The study also could not look into the dynamic between Tibetans in exile and the Indian locals. This dynamic, from what the researchers could glean from the few days on field, is nothing if not contradictory. The present research showed that there was a difference in how comfortable respondents were in talking about intergroup conflict. The relationship between Tibetans and locals is not one devoid of conflict and this dynamic can be explored further through in-depth studies of interpersonal relations in the region.

One more possibility is a comparison of lived experiences of Tibetans in exile in Dharamshala to those in other parts of India. This could be productive in highlighting the nuances in experiences of exile as well as the effects of living in different communities.

Another aspect that could be looked into is the psychological trauma of refugees, the experience of being displaced from one's homeland and the process of adjusting to and understanding a new culture while also trying to maintain and protect one's own. The psychological trauma of the journey is understandable, and hopefully is worked on in the future. The psychological aspects of living in Dharamshala have much to do with belonging and a sense of identity. Many of the Tibetans, while secure in the knowledge of their citizenship, still mentioned feeling conflicted as they had never seen their home country. The younger generations had only ever heard of Tibet, having been born and brought up in India. Having grown up in a country other than the one they belong to and being regaled with stories of their own country leaves the younger generations with a strong sense of patriotism like their elders without ever having seen their country. This conflict could be an interesting aspect of the Tibetan's experience to study. Future studies could look at what the dissonance means for the Tibetans in exile, how it affects them and their experience of living in India. The present

study could thus act as a foundation for further, more in-depth explorations with regard to Tibetans in exile in Dharamshala as well as in other parts of India.



(Picture taken at a junction in McLeod Ganj. A picture showcasing a small piece of everyday life for the Tibetans in exile.)

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APPENDIX

This survey is for the Tibetan community in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India.

General Information

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Occupation:

1. How long have you/your family been living in Dharamsala?
2. Have you lived anywhere besides Dharamsala?
3. Do you know when your family left Tibet?
4. How was the journey from Tibet to Dharamsala for you/your family?
5. Do you ever think about going back to Tibet?
6. Are you happy in Dharamsala?
7. Have things changed for Tibetans in Dharamsala over the years? If so, how?
8. Have you had the need to interact with Indian Government Officials in the past? How was the interaction?
9. Have you had the need to interact with Tibetan Government Officials in the past and for what reasons? How was the interaction? (Do they feel more comfortable with either of them or does it not matter?)
10. What are your expectations from the Tibetan Government in Exile?
11. Do you vote in elections? (Tibetan Elections)
12. What are your opinions on the change in leadership?
13. How has your experience of living with non Tibetans in Dharamsala been?
14. How have your experiences with Indians in Dharamsala been?
15. How has Indian culture influenced Tibetans living in Dharamsala and vice versa?
16. Have you faced any problems living as a refugee in India?
17. If given a chance would you accept Indian citizenship?
18. If yes/no- why?

This survey is for the NGO officials residing in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India.

General Information

Name:

Official Position:

Section 1: NGO Officials

1. When and why was the NGO established?
2. What are the services you offer to the Tibetan refugees?
3. How helpful has the Central Tibetan Administration been in Human Rights programs for the refugees?
4. Could you share any first-hand experiences of the types of cases you have dealt with in the past in regard to Tibetans fleeing to Dharamsala?
5. What is your opinion on the increasing number of human rights NGOs in Dharamsala?
6. With an increasing number of NGOs catering to the Tibetans in Exile, do you think there has been or there will be a chance for improvement with respect to the condition of these refugees?
7. What are the measures you use/planning to use to spread awareness on human rights and democracy for Tibetans in Exile?
8. How effective have the works of the NGO sector been in promoting the Tibetan Independence Movement?
9. How has the government responded to cases of human rights violations against Tibetans in Dharamsala?
10. How aware are the refugees of the human rights and services entitled to them?
11. How do welfare matters related to property rights, travel within and outside of India affect the refugees?
12. What vision do you have for the Tibetan refugees 10 years down the lane?

This survey is for the Tibetan officials residing in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India and are a part of the Tibetan Government in Exile.

General Information

Name:

Official Position:

1. What post do you hold in the Tibetan Government?
2. What is the recruitment process that the government officials go through?
3. As a government official what gratuity do you receive for your service?
4. In which instances where you required to interact with Indian officials?
5. How is the relationship between Tibetan officials and Dharamsala locals?
6. How are laws enforced by the Tibetan government in Dharamsala?
7. How does the government in Dharamsala coordinate their actions with other Tibetan settlements?
8. How does the concept of the green book operate within the state of Dharamsala?
9. What is the government's outlook towards Tibetans opting for Indian citizenship?
10. Has the Government taken any steps towards resolving the matter of citizenship amongst the Tibetan people?
11. What is the process of obtaining a RC card?
12. Do concepts such as Aadhar cards and Pan cards affect the Tibetan people's movements and actions within the state of India?
13. Has the change in political leadership affected the Tibetan government in exile? if yes, in what way?
14. What was the level of democratic participation by the Tibetans?
15. What are the challenges the government faces in its functioning?
16. What changes in the structure and functioning of the government have you seen in the last decade or so?