

# Tibetan Community In India And The Way Forward

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The Tibetan community is an immigrant community in India whose origin is in Tibet, which is presently an autonomous region administered by China, located on the lofty Tibetan Plateau on the northern side of the Himalayas. Because of its soaring peaks, it is known as the "Roof of the World." They migrated to India as an escape from colonization by the Chinese. Indian Government welcomed them with open arms, and they provided them with the autonomy and self-governance option. This laid a solid foundation for the friendship between India and the Tibetans in exile. Support from the Indian Government led to the establishment of the Tibetan Government in exile. The 14th Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso) established the Tibetan exile administration in the north Indian hill station of Mussoorie on April 29, 1959. The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) was moved to Dharamshala, situated in the Indian State of Himachal Pradesh, in May 1960, making it the HQ of the Tibetan exile world in India. This paper will try to study the history of Tibetans from their establishment, migration into India, their way of life, how this way has impacted Indian society, and how to deal with them going forward.

The migration of Tibetans into India categorized into three depending on the time of their movement (Zhang et al., 2016). However, the movement's underlying reason remains the same: colonization and the suppressed freedom of worship. The first migration happened around 1959 at the onset of the Tibetan uprising due to the Chinese invasion. When the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, together with his Government, departed for India, searching for political asylum. During this period, approximately 80000 Tibetans went to India through the Himalayas Mountains with the Dalai Lama's leadership. They were followed by about 1500 to 2500 others each year until they were nearly 100000 in the years that came after.

In the 1980s, the second phase of mass exit due to Chinese political repression surged. The Chinese policy of having Tibet open to Chinese tourism and trade forced about 25000 Tibetans to join their exiled colleagues in India. This phase that covered up to 2009 had Tibetans who entered India while others exited after a pilgrimage in India. This phase is categorized as Education-forced migrated, whereby students and their parents wanted to acquire a complete Tibetan education. Reports from the Central Tibetan Administration show over 70 Tibetan schools in India (Phuntsog, 2020).

There is a third and ongoing migration of Tibetans. Most of them are monks and nuns desiring to quench their thirst for religion and seek complete religious education. Under Chinese rule, spiritual culture is not taken seriously. In India, Tibetans were given residential permits that were renewed yearly. The permit gave them the liberty to work, rent a house, open, operate a bank account, and acquire identity certificates. This was unlike other foreigners. Another favor given to the Tibetans that was deprived of other foreigners was land. Tibetans were granted land for settlement and livelihood. They were also provided jobs to sustain their livelihoods. The jobs were not limited to building roads, special military, and paratrooper unit positions. In the army and the other units, they have also protected the Indian and Chinese borders and the high-altitude Himalayan areas.

Indians and Tibetans shared religious beliefs, mainly in Buddhism, which cemented their relationship, explaining their preferential treatment. India is considered the origin of the Buddhist religion and is thus highly regarded by the Tibet people (Michael, 2019). Apart from the spiritual proximity, Indians treat Tibetans primarily because their place of residence is being fought for by both China and India. India wishes to persuade the Tibet people to their side instead of the coercive approach being driven by the Chinese to subdue the land.

Tibetans, like other refugees, have an impact on the host community. The effect could be negative or positive or both. Even though most refugee settlements in most countries are always regarded negatively because of the social, economic, and political burden it gives to the host country, Tibetan refugees were different; they are regarded as the most 'successful refugees' that is why it has attracted a lot of studies on how they were able to fit into the Indian society. The reason for their success is not only social but also political. On the social factor, the Tibetans displayed some superior characteristics instead of the usual 'refugee syndrome' portrayed by others in their situation. For example, in them is an ingrained sense of entrepreneurship, strong work ethics, the sexual division of labor was lacking (Nayak et al., 2019). These came in handy as the Indian community had a great pool of unskilled labor; hence they would not have survived would it not for their characteristics. This would not have happened were it not for the keen interest that the Indian Prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru had in this particular community (Namgha et al., 2019).

The systemic leadership and shared power structure also helped in their successful settlement (Szmigielska-Piotrkowska, 2016). Dalai Lama took his cabinet to asylum. This enabled a smooth transition to the new place, and the leadership was well skilled. Within no time, Tibetans were self-sufficient because of these systems. They even created employment on the host community in agricultural production as they preferred trading themselves. The local community also benefited from the Tibetan facilities such as schools and hospitals. Foreign agencies that provided aid to the refugees extended help to the hosts too. The establishment of the Tibetan community brought about job opportunities, chances of doing business, and modern facilities.

Tibetans are generally peace-loving and compassionate people. They are hard-working and immensely talented as well. Tibetans, despite their success in India, believe that they are there temporarily. They vigorously practice their religion, customs and traditions under the leadership of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, but they still miss their land and origin. They still live with hope and dream that they will return once again to Tibet. But the reality seems to be different. Some of them have started leaving the challenges in their homeland notwithstanding. Experts have suggested and voiced their concerns on the need for openness and dialogue on both sides of the Chinese Government and Tibet's leadership. The need for relaxation of the hardline stance adopted by the Chinese leadership is regretful. As China aspires to be the world's superpower nation, the administration must understand that it cannot achieve it only based on military and economic prowess and moral authority provided by the Tibetan side. One can notice that the benefit is symbiotic and common ground has to be found.

His Holiness Dalai Lama's middle way approach is a first step in the right direction. Indian influence in resolving the issue cannot be gainsaid and must lead in the negotiations. It is true that the Tibetans feel marginalized and pushed to the periphery on matters of economic development (Tsering, 2017). The Fifth Tibet Work Forum, which held the improvement of education, medical service, and protection of the environment in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, was another big win (Fayiah et al., 2020). The proposal for the Tibetan people to have self-governance in their internal matters while china continues with the whole responsibility of defense and international during the US Congressional Human Rights Addressing Washington in 1988 by Dalai Lama was commendable but lack of sincerity and courage to engage in dialogue by the Chinese is very loud. Chinese's Big-Brother-Syndrome

is hurting the determination to resolve and move forward. And one wonders what does one gains in the stagnation of the talks. If not, then the leadership must climb down and deal with the issue conclusively once and for all. To this end, India must take responsibility, sober up, as it is the only other that hold the key to the end of this stalemate.

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