

## TIBETAN REFUGEE POPULATION IN INDIA (Reflections on India's Policy and India-China Relations)

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**ABSTRACT:** The present paper attempts to understand the dynamics of the settlement of Tibetan refugee population in the different parts of the world with a focus on India along with the implications of the policy for India's internal political dynamics as well as India-China relations in the era of growing interdependence between the states to seek answer to research questions:(i) What are the spatial expressions of Tibetan migration to India on the Indian landscape?; (ii) What are the likely trans-national implications of the presence of the Tibetan refugees? (iii) How have the Indian Government responded to the creation of Tibetan settlements and the benefits extended?

The paper attempts to be descriptive, evaluative and analytical in nature largely drawing the data available from secondary sources like books, articles from journals available offline and online, newspapers, other internet sources etc.

While only 2.0 per cent of total Tibetans population in the world was living outside Tibet, more than seven of each ten persons living outside Tibet were residing in India. Within India, more than a half of total Tibetan refugees were living in Karnataka followed by West Bengal and NCT of Delhi, three in combine having 99.0 per cent of them. The refugees engaged in various economic activities, having social, cultural and religious freedom but staying as refugees and are not allowed to enter government jobs and indulge in anti-China activities.

China, on its part, maintains Tibet a disputed territory of Lamas as an integral part of China under 'One-China Policy'. For India, Tibet has been a dilemma, as on one hand Indian government has accepted 'One China policy', on the other hand it continues to extend asylum of Tibetans in its territory; India's border issue with China still remains unresolved largely attributable to Tibet issue. The study recommends that to resolve the Tibetan issue, both India and China need to start a political dialogue. This will not only solve the Tibetan problem but also address border issues between the two Asian giants.

**Keywords:** *Tibetan Refugee Population, Dalai Lama, Political Asylum, China, 1951 Refugee Convention*

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### Introduction

By their invasion of Tibet in 1959, the Chinese demolished not only the Tibetan cultural and heritage monasteries but also ill-treating their men, women and children. At that time, fearing persecution by the Chinese, Dalai Lama, the Tibetan leader, along with his eighty thousand followers took asylum in India (Dinesh, 2008:105).

Tibetans came to India in three separate phases: (i) The Dalai Lama fleeing to India with his close relatives and ministers and taking refuge here; (ii) China partially opening Tibet to the world in the 1980s; and (iii) 1996 onward. During the past six decades India has walked a fine line between granting asylum to the Tibetans along with providing them a base for setting up a government-in-Exile and recognizing China's right over Tibet under its 'One China Policy'.

The resettlement of such a huge number of Tibetan refugees in India is one of the best examples of accommodating persecuted people by any host country. Since their arrival, they

have garnered a good amount of support for their cause from India as well as a few western countries like the United States, and the United Kingdom. India has always respected their religious guru, the great 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, and supported him financially to preserve Tibetan's religion, their identity, culture and language. With the cooperation of state governments, India rehabilitated these refugees in permanent settlements throughout the country with freedom to practice their religion, culture, and language. In addition, they are free to do any kind of work like an ordinary Indian citizen. Even to support them economically, the government has provided them opportunities to work in the handloom sector and open small restaurants and Tibetan markets in and around their settlements.

The dual and somewhat ambiguous approach adopted by the Indian government has serious implications for India-China relations as well as international order. Over the six decades of their stay in India, the Tibetans have built their own settlements on the Indian landscape. Through the medium of these settlements, the Tibetans have recreated their own homeland at a foreign place, leaving, in the process, their imprint on the spatial, cultural and geopolitical landscape of India as well as the larger region.

Taking a cue from the above statements, the present paper attempts to understand the dynamics of the settlement of Tibetan refugee population in the different parts of the world with a focus on India along with the implications of the policy for India's internal political dynamics as well as India-China relations in the era of growing interdependence between the states in the light of the following research questions.

### Research questions

1. What are the spatial expressions of Tibetan migration to India on the Indian landscape?
2. What are the likely trans-national implications of the presence of the Tibetan refugees? and
3. How have the Indian Government responded to the creation of Tibetan settlements and the benefits extended?

The paper attempts to be descriptive, evaluative and analytical in nature largely drawing the data available from secondary sources like books, articles from journals available offline and online, newspapers, other internet sources etc.

### Contextualising the Problem

Currently, India hosts more than 2.0 lakh refugees, forced to flee conflict and persecution in their home countries. As per available information, the details are as follows: (Afghanistan, 10,340; Myanmar, 4,621; Sri Lanka 1, 01, 896, and Tibetans 1, 10,095) are living in India (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2015). Apart from these, there are refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the Middle East countries, whose exact number has never been officially collected and estimated. In 2019, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued a statement stating that more than 30,000 persons belonging to minority communities (Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and Christians) from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan are living on Long-Term Visas

in India (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2019). These Long-Term Visas are granted to refugees based on existing guidelines after due security verification etc., permitting them for facilities at par with other foreigners. By availing this document, they can get employment in the private sector and can study in any educational institution (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2015).

For Tibetans, the rehabilitation policy was first framed in 1959. As per the guidelines provided by the policy, Tibetans living in settlements in India can stay indefinitely (UNHCR, 2003) and can do any kind of work except government jobs. They cannot buy land or property and their freedom of movement is limited within and outside India. During the early years, Tibetan refugees without identification documents in India were at risk of persecution, arrest, and deportation in China. According to the new policy guidelines, the Central Tibetan Relief Committee can take land on lease for the resettlement of Tibetan refugees and also use it for educational, cultural, and commercial purposes. Basically, the Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy is an executive policy and has been reviewed every twenty years (The Indian Express, 2017). Gradually, with the passage of time, the government of India has given a lot of exemptions in its policy guidelines and increased the benefits for Tibetan refugees.

In October 2014, the Government of India reviewed the Tibetan rehabilitation policy with the aim to provide better livelihood opportunities for the Tibetan refugees in the country. It provides uniform guidelines for states to demarcate facilities for Tibetan refugees to follow in their respective areas. As per the policy, it is mandatory for the Central Tibetan Authority (CTA) to carry out the census of Tibetan refugees in India every five years and to submit the report to the Central government and to the respective state governments (Government of India, 2015). The following are the benefits and facilities provided by the Indian government for the overall development of Tibetan refugees in various sectors.

#### *Economic Benefits*

The Indian Government has allowed Tibetan refugees to open Tibetan markets. They can sell products like handloom, handicrafts, etc. Qualified professionals among them can work in private and non-government sectors. They are free to do any work as they desire, can apply for trade licenses from the respective state governments. All Tibetans are entitled to get bank loan facilities. They are provided with the facilities of crop loans and crop insurance. The government has also advised the states to launch skill up-gradation and training programs for the welfare of Tibetans.

#### *Social Welfare Schemes*

Tibetans refugees are also entitled under the largest poor welfare schemes like public distribution system (PDS) and *Indira Awaas Yojana*. Under the PDS scheme, the governments in states of their residence have provided them ration cards that allow them to purchase essential goods at the subsidized rates. Similarly, under Indira Awaas Yojana government will built houses for homeless Tibetans and for those living in dilapidated and kutcha houses.

## 88 Tibetan Refugee Population in India: Reflections on India's Policy

Besides, the Central Government has also ordered the state governments to benefit Tibetan refugees under central employment schemes like National Food Security Act (NFSC), National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), *Rajiv Awas Yojana* (RAY), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), and under all other social security schemes that are available for an Indian citizen.

### *Education and Health Facilities*

India has funded Tibetan schools to provide free education for their children and also provide subsidies to the Tibetan children in schools and universities to pursue professional courses such as engineering and medical sciences. They can pursue any career in all fields according to their professional qualifications including nursing, engineering, accounting, medicine, etc. Also, India provides free health care to Tibetan refugees at subsidized rates in all village dispensaries and government health centers.

### *Religious and Cultural Support*

India has never forced any of its refugee communities to follow any particular religion. Since the inception of Tibetan refugees in India, their settlements in India have been designed in such a way so that they can live together within their society and practice their religion, culture, and language. The Indian government also provided the land and financial help to Tibetan refugees to build a large number of Buddhist monasteries on their land.

### *Citizenship, Voting Rights and Other Amenities*

According to Indian law all Tibetan refugees born between January 26, 1950, and July 1, 1987, are eligible for Indian citizenship (Goyal, 2019). Under this law, a large section of the second and third generation of Tibetans living in India became eligible for Indian citizenship. However, for that benefit, they have to abandon all the privileges or benefits that the Central Tibetan Administration grants them. They will also have to leave designated Tibetan settlements if they are residing in them. They will also have to forfeit the subsidies that they are entitled with the refugee certificate (RC), renewed annually.

In the year 2014, Chief Election Commission directed all Indian states to include Tibetans and their children born in India in the electoral rolls and granted voting rights to all people of Tibetan origin born in India between 1950 and 1987 (Goyal, 2019).

The government of India also provided the guidelines that the land allotted to Tibetan refugees should not be disturbed by the respective state governments. The Center government also ordered the states to provide infrastructural facilities and basic services like transportations, electricity, and drinking water in or around all Tibetan settlements.

### **Tibetan Population in Exile: Global and Indian Scenario**

For Tibetans, India became their one of the favourite destinations, may be due to geographical proximity and the favourable response from the Govt. of India for their political asylum. Although, as per Tibet Data Website, only 2.0 per cent or 129 thousand of their total

6.41 million population is living outside Tibet (Tibet Data, 2015), i.e. in other parts of the world; their quest and demand for their independent homeland is still alive.

Of the total 129 thousand Tibetan diasporic community living worldwide, 94 thousand or more than 70.0 per cent are currently based in India (Table 1). While about 13,500 live in Nepal, almost 2, 000 in Bhutan and the remaining 19,000 migrated to other parts of the world. Switzerland is the first distant country that came forward to assist the Tibetan refugees. In the 1960s, around 1,000 Tibetans migrated from South Asia to Switzerland for resettlement. From then onwards, there has been a steady increase in the Tibetan refugees in Switzerland. According to the 1998 CTA survey, more than fifteen hundred Tibetans are settled in Switzerland. Canada is the second Western country that welcomed the Tibetan refugees from South Asia in a large number. The first group of 228 Tibetan refugees arrived between 1970 and 1972. In 2010, the Canadian government decided to take nearly a thousand Tibetan refugees living in Arunachal Pradesh of India for resettlement in Canada. As per the 2016 Census in Canada, the Tibetan community comprised over 8040 members in that country. The earliest Tibetan immigration to the USA took place in the 1950s, and by 1985, around 524 Tibetans were living in the USA. In 1990, the US granted resident alien status to 1,000 Tibetan refugees through a special act of the US Congress. With this, Tibetan population as well as the US policy of family reunification, the number of Tibetans in the United States increased dramatically, the total number of Tibetans settled in the United States moved up to 11, 265 by 2013. Tibetan refugees from South Asia also migrated to other parts of the world such as Europe, Japan, Taiwan, Australia, and New Zealand (Choedon, 2019:16).

Country	Population (in number)	% to total	Country	Population (in number)	% to total
Tibet	6, 282, 187	97.98	Bhutan	1,298	0.02
India	94, 203	1.47	United Kingdom	650	0.01
Nepal	13, 514	0.21	Rest of Europe*	640	0.01
USA	11, 265	0.18	Others**	1,254	0.02
Canada	4, 640	0.07	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,411,191</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Switzerland	1,540	0.02			

\*Excluding Switzerland and Scandinavia \*\* Including Australia (533), Taiwan (485), Scandinavia (110), New Zealand (66), and Japan (60), where total Tibetan population is less than 600 persons, each.

Different sources provide different population figures on the Tibetan refugee population living in India. According to CTA figures 94, 203 Tibetans are living in India. Government of India estimates this figure more than 1.10 lakh persons (Government of India, 2015). Ahmad (2012) in a research article stated that their total population in India is around 1.49 lakh. In this context, it is to be noted that no census has been held of Tibetans population since 2009.

The Tibetans headquarter in India is located at McLeod Ganj in Dharamshala- the district headquarters of Kangra district (Himachal Pradesh). It is also known as ‘Little Lhasa’ and perceived as *de facto* capital of Tibetan Community in Exile (Purohit, 2019). Tibetan population is distributed in various parts of India. Karnataka state, in south India, alone hosts more than half of their total population of 1.49 lakh persons in India. Another, 24 thousand

## 90 Tibetan Refugee Population in India: Reflections on India's Policy

and 14 thousand are residing in West Bengal and NCT of Delhi, respectively. The Himalayan states of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh also have their population in significant numbers. Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh are other states where their population is more than 1500 persons in each case (see Table 2). According to research published in the Tibet Journal, today there are approximately 150, 000 Tibetan refugees living in India in almost 37 diverse settlements and 70 scattered communities.

<b>State</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Population</b>
Karnataka	75, 000	Jammu and Kashmir	2,300
West Bengal	24,000	Maharashtra	2, 200
Delhi	14, 000	Uttar Pradesh	1, 800
Uttaranchal	9,800	Assam	,800
Himachal Pradesh	9, 600	Others	3, 800
Arunachal Pradesh	5, 700	<b>Total</b>	<b>1 49, 000</b>

Source: Ahmad, 2012

The Tibetans keep on entering India for different reasons. There are, however, different estimates on this count. According to the estimates of the CTA, the Indian government and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 1500 to 3500 Tibetans are entering to India annually, mostly coming via Nepal (Tibet Justice Center, 2016). According to the estimates of International Campaign for Free Tibet, a non-profit organization, 2,500 to 3,500 Tibetans flee Tibet into India and Nepal annually. It may be further mentioned that all emigration from Tibet is not for permanent settlement in India; some are coming to receive traditional Tibetan education and some others to meet and pay homage to their religious *guru*. It is stated that many of them also return back (United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2003). The highest percentage (45.0 per cent) of such emigrants to India come for monastic purpose followed by those coming for Tibetan education with 30.0 per cent, nomads and unemployed with 20.0 per cent and the farmers with remaining 5.0 per cent ( see The International Campaign for Tibet, 2006:30).

### **Tibetan Refugee Settlements in India and their Types**

Soon after the first wave of Tibetan refugees arrived in India, the Government of India provided immediate relief assistance for them. The Indian government first resettled them in temporary settlements, which were later converted into permanent settlements. The Tibetan religious leader re-established his government in exile with the permission of the Government of India, better known as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) (Bernstorff & Welck, 2003:135). Dalai Lama also established the Home Department to look after their various issues like establishment, maintenance and handling of their settlements. Through this department, the Government of India has been providing them financial help to avail them the basic facilities and adequate sources of livelihood.

Till present the Central Tibetan Administration has established 58 Tibetan settlements in India, Nepal and Bhutan out of which 39 major settlements are located in India, while 12 and 7 in Nepal and Bhutan respectively (Department of Home, CTA, Central Tibetan relief

Committee, 2020). Out of the total 39, fourteen settlements are present in Himachal Pradesh, five in Karnataka, five in Arunachal Pradesh, four in Uttarakhand, three in West Bengal, two in Sikkim and one each in Ladakh, Delhi, Maharashtra, Orissa, Meghalaya and Chhattisgarh.

On the basis of occupation, Tibetans settlements in India, Nepal and Bhutan are categorised into three types: (i) agro based, (ii) handicraft based and (iii) cluster communities (Department of Home, CTA, 2020). In the following, a list of **Tibetan Settlement Offices** in India has been presented.

- (I) *Agricultural Based*: Choephelling, Dhargyeling, Tenzingang, Tuting (all in Arunachal Pradesh); Lugsung Samdupling, Dhondenling, Dickyi Larsoe, Doeguling, Rabgyeling (all in Karnataka); Doeguyulgyelling (Uttarakhand); Kunphenling (Sikkim); Norgyeling (Maharashtra); Phendeling (Chhattisgarh); Phuntsokling (Odisha); and Sonamling (Ladakh); =**Total 15**
- (II) *Handicraft Based*: Bir Dege, Bir Chauntra, Bir Tibetan Society; Phuntsokling, Gapa Tibetan Society, Kham Khatok, Paonta Cholsum, Sakya Tibetan Society TashiJong, Tashiling, Tibetan Bonpo Foundation, and Yangchen Gatselling (all in Himachal Pradesh) =**Total 12**
- (III) *Cluster Communities*: Bomdila (Arunachal Pradesh); Darjeeling (West Bengal); Palrabling, Tashiling, Dharamsala (Himachal Pradesh); Lingtsang, Dekyiling, Dhondupling (Uttarakhand); Gangtok (Sikkim); Kalimpong (West Bengal); Samyeling (NCT, Delhi); and Shillong (Meghalaya) = **Total 12**

Each settlement has a Tibetan representative called a welfare officer taking care of the welfare and interests of these settlements. Moreover, these settlements have been set up keeping in mind their employability issues. Indian government has taken several steps to rehabilitate Tibetan refugees at various places in the country. The concerned state governments have been provided them agricultural land on leasehold basis to earn livelihood. To generate more employment for them, the government of India has also established Handicrafts centers at Dalhousie, Dharamshala, Shimla, and Kullu in Himachal Pradesh, Darjeeling in West Bengal and Raipur village of Dehra Dun district in Uttarakhand (Government of India, 2015). The permissions to run shops and restaurants have also been granted to them. Moreover, they are also being helped financially to establish their monastic institutions and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Government of India provides funds for the development and maintenance of Tibetan Art and Culture annually (Government of India, 2019). The Government of India with the help of local and international NGOs and the western countries also provides a huge sum to the CTA for the development and establishment of new settlements and monasteries.

### Tibetans-in-Exile: Some Issues

#### *(a) Legal Status: Refugees or Foreigners?*

Although India is not a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol but a large number of refugees are living in the country. In absence of a uniform law to deal with a huge number of refugees living in India, it treats the incoming refugees according to their national origin and political considerations. Recently, Indian Citizenship laws have been amended to accommodate specifically the persecuted non-Muslim religious minority groups from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh, but this step seems to be motivated by nationalist politics rather than humanitarian concern because somewhere the government ignored other refugee groups needing protection.

India has been dealing with refugees and asylum seekers on an ad-hoc basis (Bhattacharjee, 2008:71). Ministry of Home Affairs has been issuing standard operating procedures (SOP) from time to time and case to case basis in this context. According to these rules any person fleeing their country due to fear of persecution on the basis of race, religion, sex, nationality, ethnic identity, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, the Ministry of Home Affairs can grant Long Term Visa (LTV) after due security verification, on the recommendation of the respective State/UT administration (Government of India, 2014).

As it has already been stated, India is not a signatory to any International Refugee Convention (UNHCR, 2011), the Tibetans in India are considered to be foreigners under certain basic Indian laws relating to foreigners (Tibet Justice Center, 2016:6). However, in practice, India has never treated them as foreigners and the Government of India has made special provisions and rules for the welfare of Tibetans in exile. All the refugees have been receiving special attention and treatment. Although they do not enjoy the right to formally participate in Indian politics like an Indian citizen, but all Tibetans coming before 1987 or born in India can apply for Indian passports and citizenship; also free to work and own property in India. Moreover, the Government of India provides them a legal identity document, registration certificate (RC) renewed annually, to live and travel within India. In addition, the Government of India issues another identity certificate, Yellow Book, on the basis of which Tibetans are allowed to travel abroad and in India; and there is no problem in renewal of these documents.

#### *(b) Protest in Arunachal Pradesh against Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy*

In 2017, Arunachal Pradesh government implemented the revised Tibetan rehabilitation policy, which faced huge protests across the state. These were mainly organized by the Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee, Arunachal Civil Rights, All-Arunachal Pradesh Students Union, and the People's Party of Arunachal to express their opposition to the establishment of permanent settlement of Tibetans in the state (*The Indian Express*, 2017). These organizations also demanded the revocation of illegally issued PR/ST certificates to them along with the cancellation of business license already obtained, a written undertaking



from the CTA for not demanding Indian citizenship and STC/PRC in Arunachal Pradesh, and Tibetan refugees to be moved back in the demarcated camps (*Tibetans Journal*, 2018).

The local population of the state was also not happy with revised guidelines. They believed that the Tibetan resettlement guidelines set up by the government were a threat to their identity and culture and also weakened constitutional safeguards for indigenous communities. They also feared that jobs and other facilities availed by the original tribal population would be endangered by the settling of Tibetans.

Apart from the above incident, there have been some sporadic anti-Tibetan incidents in the state and other parts of the country. Broadly speaking, the Tibetan refugees are living a protective and peaceful life without any kind of harassment from the Indian; and the government of India is also not forcing them to return to Tibet.

### **Tibetan Refugees and India-China Relations**

As stated before, India, on the one hand, accepts 'One China Policy' and, on the other, continues to support Tibetan refugees in India. In other words, India accepted Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, and assured the Chinese of not allowing any political activities against them by the Tibetans living on Indian soils.

In contrast, India is continuously harbouring Tibetans and supporting them for their cause. This contradiction in India's policy is constantly harming its relations with China (*The Hindustan Times*, 2012). For India, Tibet has been always a dilemma and the Tibetan issue has always played a major role in Sino-Indian relations. By considering Tibet as a part of China, India has made a huge mistake that can never be rectified. China always sees the 'Tibetan community in India' as a threat to its national security and blames the Dalai Lama and his followers for all anti-China incidents in Tibet (*The Indian Express*, 2018). Furthermore, the Chinese officials also think that Tibetan religious and political leader Dalai Lama wants to drive out all non-Tibetans from the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR); and for that the exiled Tibetans along with their leader recognized the Five-Point Peace Plan of 1987 and the Strasbourg Proposals of 1988 as their political guidelines since 2005. For China, these proposals are similar to agendas that Tibetans adopt for their secessionist activities. Also, in view the Chinese leadership, these proposals 'were seen as an extension of Indian foreign policy' (Pardesi, 2012).

After 1949 when the Chinese Communist Party came into power it initiated its age-old expansionist policy and as soon as it confiscated the territory of Tibet, revoked the 1914 Simla agreement. China always claims that Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh had been a part of south Tibet. Its Tawang region is the main center of Karma-Kagyü sect headed by Karmapa lama. Therefore, whenever India allows Tibetans religious leader His holiness Dalai Lama to visit Arunachal Pradesh especially the Tawang area, China has always been customarily objected warning India its adverse impact on bilateral relations (Rajdan and Nair, 2017). It seems that The Dalai Lama's visit to Tawang does not fit into the Chinese scheme of things (Dutta, 2017). Moreover, China aggressively promotes the "One-China Policy". In

2017 when Tibetan religious leader, The Dalai Lama, visited Arunachal Pradesh then China again objected and behaved aggressively. Chinese leaders had issued belligerent remarks and warned India that allowing the Tibetan leader to address the gathering there would severely damage bilateral relations. Recently, the Chinese media accused Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi of going against his predecessors and taking a different stance on the Dalai Lama issue. They stated that he is challenging Beijing by increasing public engagement with the monk (Rajdan and Nair, 2017).

China has also blamed an organization of Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) based in India and Tibetan refugees from around the world for the anti-Chinese activities and protests that began in Tibet in 2008. China sees TYC as a reserve force for Tibetan independence. As this organization is founded in India, Chinese authorities somewhere believe that India has been deliberately supporting this organization against Chinese (Pardesi, 2012). More importantly, China emphasizes that the socio-political activities of Tibetan refugees in India are not limited only to religion and culture. They believe that India wants to make Tibet independent using the Tibetan government in exile and Dalai Lama. Consequently, Chinese misperceptions of India's intentions vis-à-vis Tibet are severely affecting its relations with India. The quintessential example of this Chinese misperception is the 1962 India-China war. As Pardesi (2012) has rightly pointed out that Chinese misconstrued fear of India's intentions to re-establish Tibet as a 'buffer state' between India and China, was a major factor leading to China's decision of launching an attack against India in 1962.

India shares 3488 Km long border with China, which is not fully demarcated. This leads to small-scale skirmishes between the armed forces of the two nuclear powers since they fought a major war on territorial integrity in 1962. However, despite these major irritants, at present China is the India's largest trading partner and both states are members of several multilateral organizations including China-Russia-India trilateral, BRICS, SCO, and G20. The two nations talk of promoting globalization and share a common interest and position on various international issues concerning both the States. The two sides have also taken various initiatives to bring new thrust in developing their bilateral relations (Haider, 2019). However, in spite of all this, there is deep mistrust between the two nations, especially in relation to the border dispute. Moreover, the unresolved Tibet issue also continues to cast a shadow over their turbulent relations. Although, His Holiness Dalai Lama with his Tibetan followers living as refugees since last more than six decades are looking up at China for accepting his 'Middle Way Approach', meant to get legitimate autonomy for Tibetans living in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) within the framework of the People's Republic of China. But China has not paid any heed to this approach, as suggested by The Dalai Lama. So, the unresolved border issues between India and China also largely owe its origin to the illegal occupation of Tibet by China. The unsettled Tibet issue will continue to have its direct or indirect bearing on India's relations with China.

## Concluding Remarks

India has been hosting a large group of Tibetan refugees for the last six decades, coming from its rival neighbour occupied territory without seeking any permanent solution to resolve the Tibetan issue. In absence of any specific policy on these refugees, it is very difficult to say how long they will continue to stay in India, and if China does not accept their demands, what will be the India's stand on the issue? The presence of Tibetan refugees and their religious leader, The Dalai Lama, has always influenced India's relations with China, demanding India to reconsider its stand on 'One China Policy' till the Tibetan as well as the border issue with China are resolved. India can put pressure on China by supporting the anti-China activities of exiled Tibetans living in India, but it will never go with such an option as it knows that such activities of exiled Tibetans may threaten the security of the region and India-China relations. To resolve the Tibetan issue, both India and China need to start a political dialogue. This will not only solve the Tibetan problem but also address border issues between the two Asian giants.

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