

# Socio-Economic Status of Tibetan Refugees in Bylakuppe Settlement

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**Abstract:** The purpose of these research is to study the empirical Socio-Economic status of Tibetan Refugees in Bylakuppe Tibetan settlement which is the largest settlement in exile India and the settlement is divided into two settlement known as Lugsung Samdupling (Old settlement) and Dickey Larsoe (New settlement) with the expected population of 15,574 Approx. This paper discusses the social and economic changes in Tibetan settlement Bylakuppe, Karnataka. This paper also seeks to highlight the way in which how Tibetan people in Bylakuppe changes their standard of living from the past five decades and to find out the various source of occupation which has been shifted from agriculture sector to other sector and how it leads to the growth of their settlement as a whole. The data has been analyzed using SPSS and Ms. excel, the analysis showed that the Tibetan peoples in Bylakuppe settlement now opting Business sector for the growth of their family rather than their primary source, which is Agriculture sector. It also highlights that their social status in terms of the education status, relationship with the Indian neighbors and also their future plans of going back to Tibet.

**Index terms –** Tibetan Settlement, Refugee status, livelihood

## I. INTRODUCTION

History of Tibet has always been an account of invasion and occupation where either Tibet was invaded by other countries or Tibet itself invaded those countries. But the recent invasion of China has been of a different nature. The force occupation of Chinese in the name of liberation policy has cost dearly to Tibet in terms of social, cultural and economic condition unlike any other interference in the past. This has also led to the escape of His Holiness the Dalai Lama along with 80,000 people to India and other South Asian countries. The Tibetan refugees experienced both psychological fear and physical exhaustion while crossing the high Himalayas during their way to India. Tibetan who fled to India are not ordinary refugees, they have taken refuge not as individuals alone but rather as a national polity that has escaped the destruction-taking place in Tibet.

### 1.1 Tibetan Settlement in India

In the beginning of the exile many of Tibetans got engaged in the newly construction works in the hilly states of India. Tibetans were trained in cultivating local Indian crops like maize, millet, rice and mustard and since then it became the main source of livelihood during those times. At the same time Tibetans have started selling winter garments especially sweaters in streets of various towns and cities of India. Today sweater-selling business has become dominant economic activity for Tibetans in India. Although agriculture is a majority primary occupation of Tibetans especially for those living in agricultural based settlements in south India.

### 1.2 Challenges in Exile

In the beginning, many of them got engaged in road construction works in the hilly states of India. Gradually, they were rehabilitated in the newly created settlements in south and central India. Tibetans were trained in cultivating local Indian crops like maize, millet, rice and mustard and soon after, agriculture became the main source of livelihood. At the same time Tibetans have started selling winter garments especially sweaters in streets of towns and cities of India. Today sweater-selling business has become dominant economic activity for Tibetans in India. Although agriculture is a major primary occupation of Tibetans especially for those living in agricultural based settlements in south India. In exiled community, the major challenge we face today is the growing unemployment among the Tibetan youth. According to the Tibetan Demographic Survey, the unemployment rate among the Tibetan youth is as high as seventy-five percent. On that, the number of school and college graduates increasing every year, about 1250 students passing out every year from the schools and colleges in India. The chances of these youth getting employment in our community are very low as total absorption capacity is just five percent. The major factor is the lack of employment opportunities in the settlements and the shift in the economic structure of refugees in exile.

### 1.3 Bylakuppe Settlement

Bylakuppe by its very name means 'a place of rains'. According to one earlier study during 1970s, there have been altogether six resettlement projects in Karnataka for the Tibetan refugees. Of them, Lugsung Samdupling at Bylakuppe is a major one. It is the earliest one and established in 1960s. Some other sources claim that the establishment of this settlement started in the year 1961 when His Holiness Penor Rinpoche reached here. He also established Namdroling Monastery in 1963. He came to Bylakuppe with 600 followers who had taken refuge and placed their trust in him. During 1963, there were only ten monks. But during 2006, it increased to 5713 registered monks and over 3000 of them are currently resident (NNI: 2010). Mysore Rehabilitation and Development Agency (MYRADA) took up the responsibility of giving settlement houses. The settlement has 1800 (approximate)

acres of land for construction of housing and for cultivation. It is about 87 kms from the southwest of Mysore City. This settlement consists of 16 villages and each having an average of 40-50 families. All the villages are situated in different locations at a distance of about 2-3Kms to each other. It lies on a flat plain at an altitude of approximately 2750ft above sea level and the temperature ranges between 24 to 35 degrees Fahrenheit with an average rainfall of 42" to 45" annually. As per the estimates given by Bhatia (2002), Bylakuppe old and new camps totally constitute 3620 monks in the monastery during 1994-96. Anyhow, this estimate is very less than the new estimates.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Adams, 2005) study focuses on newly arriving Tibetan refugees in India and the challenge of integrating them into the pre-existing refugee community. He asserts that new refugees are often without skills or qualifications, a disadvantage that may exclude them from both the community in exile and the larger Indian host community. He even argues that by highlighting the new arrivals' wealth of cultural heritage, they may regain their lost social capital and sense of belonging. However, Adams' solution does not take into consideration that newcomers from Tibet have been perceived as being too Chinese – a perception that would clash with the idea of newcomers as culturally rich. Although Adams is correct in emphasizing the need for effective institutions that cater to the social welfare and integration needs of recent arrivals, his integration suggestions are too simplistic and require further research.

(Saklaini, 1984) gives three reasons for the Tibetan success in India, Firstly, the Tibetans are hardworking people. Secondly, their womenfolk also work as hard as men, if not more. And thirdly the Tibetans have a natural instinct for trading. It is observed from the field that the local economy of the people in the settlement largely depends on farming, sweater selling and handicrafts. At the same time, one cannot deny the fact that a number of youth from the settlement also got employment in lucrative private concerns in India and abroad. Moreover, the Funds from Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), United States (US) and other independent well-wisher also contributed to the enrichment of the local economy in the settlement.

(Tarodi, 2011) discusses the laws and regulations governing refugees in India in general and the Tibetan refugees in particular. In this context, it describes the actual practices in two Tibetan settlements in Karnataka. The paper highlights the ways in which Tibetans have Negotiated the restrictions they face as refugees in India and created enabling conditions in exile. The discussion reveals the shortcomings of the current protection framework and the necessity of a national legislation on refugees. The Tibetan refugees have sought shelter in India in three main phases: the first phase between 1959 and 1962, the second between 1986 and 1996 and the post 1990s phase. Those refugees who came to India till the 1980s were issued registration certificates (RC) under the Foreigner's Act.

## III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:

- To know the economic status of Tibetans living in India.
- To find out the changes in the occupation of Tibetan refugee's in Bylakuppe.

## IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The primary data is collected on the basis of questionnaire from the sample group. The data collected from the respondent are coded, tabulated and analyze into logical statement using statistical tools like SPSS and Ms. Excel

The secondary data is collected from magazine, journals and articles.

In this survey, both field survey and questionnaire were done. The questionnaire was filled by 140 respondents where there are 71 males and 69 females. The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. To study demographic profile descriptive statistics were used.

## V. DATA ANALYSIS:

- Microsoft Excel will be used for the initial coding of data and partial analysis as well.
- SPSS software will be used to analyze the data collected.
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### 5.1. Demographic Profile

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Demography	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	69	49.3 %
	Female	71	50.7 %
	<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100 %</b>
Main Source of Income	Agriculture	35	25.0 %
	Business	71	50.7 %

	Sponsorship	2	1.4 %
	Wages and Salary	32	22.9 %
	<b>Total</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>100 %</b>
Qualification	Higher secondary/Diploma	43	30.7%
	Under Graduation (UG)	60	42.9 %
	Post-graduation (PG)	31	22.1 %
	Higher than PG	6	4.3 %
	<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100 %</b>
Settlement	Old Settlement	83	59.3 %
	New Settlement	57	40.7 %
	<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of 140 respondents. The samples comprise of respondents from gender, Main source of income, qualification and their settlement.

## 5.2. Analysis between Age group and Future source of Income of the respondent

Which field do you think is best for the growth of your family income?	Agriculture sector	Business sector	Government job	Private job	Grand Total
16-25	7	53	14	13	87
26-35	3	20	5	2	30
36-45		2		1	3
46-55	4	2	2	2	10
56 and above	3	3	1	3	10
Grand Total	17	80	22	21	140

### Interpretation

It is evident from the above table that most of the younger generation of the age between 16-25 are willing to do Business sector in near future and very few wants to do Agriculture which indicates that after few years all most majority of peoples in Bylakuppe settlement will involve in business to improve their standard of living. And we can also see that older people are still in believe with the agriculture it is mainly because of the believe and faith which they have worked so hard till now and also it was their main source of income from the past many decades. So they wouldn't let it go even if there is not much income through agriculture.

## 5.3 Analysis between Total Family Annual Income and source of family Income

What is your Total Family Annual Income?	Agriculture	Business	Wages and Salary	Grand Total
0-2,00,000	20	18	10	48
2,00,000-5,00,000	16	33	13	62
5,00,000-10,00,000	1	20	4	25
10,00,000 and more	0	0	5	5
Grand Total	37	71	32	140

### Interpretation

It is also clear in the above table that the majority of the respondent earn their total income in between 2,00,000-5,00,000 where Business sector plays a very important role in their growth but it cannot be assumed that all the business income is earned through the Winter sweater selling alone yet most of the income comes from that particular business in Bylakuppe and also in many Tibetan settlements around India.

## VI. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

The study has found that the main source of family income of the respondents are from business sector followed by the agriculture and many of them are now don't depends on the agriculture because they earn less from agriculture and it is more time consuming as compare to doing business. Tibetan refugees have settled in India in the tens of thousands since 1959 and they have secured massive support from the Government of India. The early arrivals of refugees mostly engaged in agriculture and handicrafts. The economic conditions of Tibetan refugees have drastically improved over the last few decades. From the research conducted and by analysis result it can be concluded that in spite of agriculture being the major source of income in Bylakuppe settlement yet it reveals that majority of the people now opted business sector more than agriculture for the growth of their family income as well as growth of the settlement as a whole.

## VII. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS:

Livelihood of the Tibetan people has been changed drastically over the decades in India. It is being found that Tibetan people in bylakuppe are engaging more in business than in the agriculture sector. Thus, it is important to make awareness on the importance of agriculture industry and also emphasizing them to make a structural plan before they startdoing a business. It is also important to maintain the unused agricultural field properly otherwise it will create a difficulty in cultivating crops in the near future.

## VIII. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY AND SCOPE OF FURTHER RESEARCH:

The study is limited only to the Bylakuppe Tibetan Settlement, Karnataka and it has to reach out many other settlement so as to get the result more effectively and efficiently. Thus, the respondent in the study becomes less naturally as I have selected only one Tibetan Settlement, so unable to generalize with overall Tibetan Settlement.

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