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## **SOCIAL NETWORKING AND LIVELIHOODS**

**A STUDY OF TIBETAN REFUGEES IN DELHI**

**Monika Bisht**



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## **Abstract**

The Tibetans in India are considered an exile diaspora having unique strategy in their adaptation and livelihood in the alien land. Challenges relating to their roots as well as to the existential socio-cultural and economic issues often make the Tibetan community unique. Based on both primary (qualitative observation) and secondary (existing literature) sources of data, the paper tries to map out various patterns and ways of social networking and livelihood promotion of Tibetan communities in Delhi. The paper tries to investigate how the Tibetans mobilise their economic capital through social networking. The social capital plays a very important role in the economic life of the Tibetans. Unlike natives, they have no established source of livelihood or access to public services owing to their refugee status. However, due to strong social networking, they are able to engage in informal economic activities. Occupations such as handicrafts, carpet making, woollen-making, traditional arteries, ethnic food-costumes and ornaments businesses, travel and restaurant business etc. are the major sources for their livelihood. They face socio-economic and political deprivation in the absence of legal as well as other benefits that the permanent citizens are entitled to.

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Key Words: Tibetan Diaspora, Social Networking, Livelihood Generation, Exile, Political Protest, Cultural Capital

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**Statement: All the views expressed in the paper are of the author(s).**

# Social Networking and Livelihoods

## A Study of Tibetan Refugees in Delhi

**Monika Bisht**

### Introduction

Refugee issues are one of the most important socio-economic and political concerns of our times. India has several refugee groups, among them Tibetans constitute a very significant proportion and scattered across the country, close to 25,000 living in Delhi itself. They are scattered in Majnu-ka-Tila, Kashmiri Gate, INA, Trilok Puri and other parts of Delhi/NCR. A significant number of Tibetans reside in a narrow-laned, small locality named as New Arya Nagar at Majnu-ka-Tila. They are involved in many informal economic activities such as handicrafts, jewellery making, hotel and restaurants, woolen making and selling and so on for their livelihoods. The Tibetan community in exile is the most resilient and popular refugee group in the world. Unlike other refugee communities, Tibetans are broadly scattered various parts of India mainly Himachal Pradesh, Leh & Laddakh, Karnataka and Delhi. Delhi has been selected as a place of residence for Tibetan community, which facilitating broadly two aspects, first the demand of political independence for their homeland can be fulfilled by Indian government and second, the expectation of generating proper livelihood opportunities with the support of social-networking (Frechette, 2007). The Tibetans in India are considered popular exile community in terms of cultural integration and livelihood issues (Arora & Thapliyal, 2011). Since 1950s, the Tibetan community has impacted socio-economic and political aspects of India (Adams, 1983). Since 2000s, the increasing number of Tibetans have started residing in many places of Delhi (Sharma, 2009). According to Planning Commission Report, 2009, there are around 94,205 Tibetan refugees in India (Sharma, 2009).

The present paper is an attempt to understand that how socio-cultural capital helps the Tibetan refugees to generate their livelihoods in their host-country. It explores their different modes of economic activities and how these activities contribute into their livelihoods. It also

analyses the role of social-networking in mobilizing livelihood opportunities.

### Methodology and Objectives

The paper is based on both qualitative and quantitative research methodology. Both primary and secondary data sources have been used in the study. The data and information has been collected through observation method. The numbers of the respondents are 300 for the interview. The primary data were collected from Tibetan settlements in Delhi. The fieldwork was done in New Arya Nagar located at Majnu-ka-Tila, near Kashmiri Gate, Delhi. The secondary data was based on existing literature including books, articles, working papers and research papers on Tibetan exile.

The broad objective of the study is to analyse the mobilization of livelihood opportunities of Tibetans through social networking in Delhi. The study specifically focuses on (a) the various patterns of social networking for the promotion of livelihood opportunities; (b) to identify the various economic activities of the Tibetan community; (c) identify the issues and challenges they face for their livelihood generation and (d) to find out inter-generational changes in terms of socio-cultural and educational aspects of Tibetan community in Delhi.

### Background of Tibetan Settlement

Before talking about the livelihood issues, it is important to give a background and their revolution as refugee group in India. The exile of Tibetans was begun during 1950s which is a most controversial part of Tibetan history (Adams, 2005). The political contest with China brought changes in the socio-cultural scenario of Tibet and, thus, resulted in a large number of Tibetan exoduses to many other countries especially neighbouring countries. There were two large waves of Tibetan migration to India. The first wave started in 1959 when over 85,000 refugees followed Dalai Lama, the religious

*guru* of Tibetans. They established a community in the town of Dharamsala in the northern state of Himachal Pradesh. Dharamsala is home for the Tibetan government-in-exile, known as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). Throughout 1960s and 1970s, the role of Indian government was liberal towards Tibetan immigration and the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru granted them preferential status among refugees and helped them to establish nearly 40 agricultural-based refugee settlements in order to allow Tibetans to preserve their culture, religion and tradition. The second wave of Tibetan immigration in India was begun in late 1980s. The status and experience of second wave of refugees from Tibet was vastly different and revealed a huge withdrawal of the Tibetans. They enjoyed more preferential and settled status as compared to first wave of Tibetan migrants. There has been a sharp difference persist between first wave migrants and/or their descendants and the small section of recent refugees who continue to flee from Tibet. The latter are considered rough in nature, more Chinese and different while the former are considered as liberal in nature, alike Indians or Nepalese and influenced by global consumerism (Moynihan 2003:318-9).

India is a favourable destination for Tibetan refugees not only because India is a neighbor country but also has a religious root of Bauddh Dharma. India is the birth place of *Mahatma Buddha* and he attained the "ultimate-true wisdom", known as '*Bodh*' in the land of India only. Tibet's religion, culture, philosophy, art and poetry all show a deep influence from India. In few epic stories, such as Mahabharata, there have been discussion of Indo-Tibetan relations (LL Mehrotra, 1997).

The flow of Tibet migrants has been continued and growing day-by-day (Adams, 2005). The numbers have increased fivefold during 1989 to 1993 from 688 to 3,208 refugees (Adams, 2005). India hosted some 110,000 Tibetan refugees as of the end of 2001. There are estimated 121,143 Tibetan refugees, mostly sheltered in Dharamsala of Himachal Pradesh, Laddakh of Jammu and Kashmir and Mysore in Karnataka (The South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre). Every year around 1,800 to 3,000 Tibetans flee from Tibet and the majority of them head to Dharamsala. (*Bhibhu Prasad, 2007*).

Tibetan refugees followed Dalai Lama, their religious guru and moved to India, Nepal, Bhutan and other parts of the South Asia (*Routray, 2007*). The major priorities of Dalai Lama were the rehabilitation of Tibetan refugees, education of Tibetan children and preservation of Tibetan culture and identity. It was necessary

during that time to settle all the Tibetan refugees into cohesive homogenous society. With these objectives, the Dalai Lama re-established his government in exile to meet both the immediate and long term needs to Tibetan people. The Dalai Lama approached the then Prime Minister of India, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru for his assistance in the permanent rehabilitation of the refugees. Pandit Nehru accepted and wrote to the government of Indian states, requesting them to make land available to refugees (*Routray, 2007*). Mysore state (presently Karnataka) was the first to accept 3,000 Tibetan refugees and offered 1500 hectares of uninhabited jungle land on lease to Tibetan, thus beginning the first Tibetan settlement in exile in a place called Bylakuppe in 1960 (*Schrempf, 1997*).

Soon after this, the second and third settlements were constructed in Arunachal Pradesh in 1962. Gradually, settlements started in many different parts of India, mostly in South India. Since numbers of refugees were increasing and existing settlements were crowded already. Therefore, agro- industrial based settlements were created to accommodate the remaining refugees in India. In these settlements, Tibetan refugees partly relied on agriculture and partly on industrial activities. Unfortunately, at the later stage some of the settlements failed, largely due to lack of technical knowledge, poor management and limited funding.

## Theoretical Framework

The Tibetan diaspora in India can be understood through social network theoretical framework. Basically, they are embedded with kinship and cultural capital in host place. In fact, the social network theory views the exile community as an actor who gathers the resources needed to secure and prepare their survival in the host-land. Social network theory views the diaspora community in mobilizing resources stemming from the commonality of interests and available at the level of social and economic cross-border networks.

The social network theory is basically an interdisciplinary approach of studying the structure of whole social entities to examine network dynamics. The idea of social networks is coined by J. A. Bernes (1954). The social network is a theoretical construct useful in the social sciences to study relationships between individuals, groups, organizations or even entire societies. It studies how people, organizations or groups interact with others within their network ([www.utwente.nl](http://www.utwente.nl)). The Tibetans are socio-culturally connected with each other which consequently reflects in their economic activities (*Rathee, 2010*).

The network analysis is the study how the social structure of relationships around a person, group or organization functions and affects beliefs or behaviours. The social network, in context of Tibetan community, have become significant in mobilizing people, resources, employment sources and so on. In the host country, the religious and cultural practices brought them together to organize their livelihoods through social networking. They are inter-dependent with each other for their survival and livelihoods in host country. The community itself is the source of information for job or employment. The social networking helps them in maintaining the religious and cultural practices, arranging the economic activities and mobilizing the livelihoods opportunities.

Tibetans have settled their community market which is known as "Tibetan Market" in Delhi. They have ethnic and cultural products, garments, foods and jewellery to sell in their shops where helpers and workers are also from their own Tibetan community. They run small business activities namely small eateries, garment shops, hotels and restaurants for the survival. The sense of belongingness and togetherness provides familiarity and convenience in their economic lives. As observed in the field that each individual is significant and concerned for the community as a whole.

### **Economic activities of Tibetans: Impact of social-cultural capitals**

The Tibetans have rich socio-cultural capital which makes them socially combined with each other. The two mantras of Buddha Dharma- Peace and Non-violence are spread all over the world. Therefore, the Tibetans are regarded as 'religious' and 'spiritual' everywhere in the world. The Tibetans have their religion, language, foods, costumes, art, music, literature and life-style etc which are sufficient to make them distinct cultural diaspora community in India. Therefore, the Tibetans are considered as socially networked in India. **Social networking**, here, broadly refers to the mode and pattern of utilizing socio-cultural capital in livelihood generation.

The field work has been done in New Arya Nagar Colony at **Majnu-ka-Tila**, which is located at Northern Delhi near Kashmiri Gate. It is very congested local area where Tibetans are living and have well established social network with each other. The social network and cultural integrity can easily be understood while observing their livelihoods. There are various hotels and restaurants in the colony as the temporary stay for Tibetan tourists. It is noted that these hotels and restau-

rants provides a sense of security and comfortability to them.

During the survey, it was found that the Tibetans have their own market around their homes. Few Tibetans run eateries or food stalls where they sell their traditional eatables. There are many small food-stalls run by both Tibetan men and women and earn their livelihoods. The Tibetans fond to eat their own foods which can be easily understood from the eatable shops. There are so many small hotels, restaurants and eateries can be found which not only doing huge business but also are providing employment to Tibetans for survival. Today, these restaurants and small hotels have become food-joints for food-lovers in Delhi. Many people used to hang around with their friends, family and siblings and enjoy the Tibetan food there.

*I found very tasty and delicious food at this place. This is a very interesting place for shopping, food and fun. I used to come with my friends here for shopping and hang-out. Infact, whenever, I come to Kashmiri Gate, I generally visit this place also for lunch.*

*Tasha, Visitor at New Arya Nagar.*

The jewellery shops are not less than attractive from anything here for shoppers. Few Tibetans own their jewellery-shops wherein they employed Tibetan 'karigars' and workers. They make the ethnic-ornaments in traditional-designs with variety of *jhumkas, kangan, kade and angoothi etc*. People used to like these accessories, jewellery and ethnic-ornaments. These jewelers earn good money out of this business. Similarly, the Tibetans' traditional costumes i.e.; full red gown kind of attire called *chupa* and *pankhda* are very fascinating for many tourists as well as local people of Delhi. They purchase Tibetans' traditional dresses for new fashion trend. However, there are many shops for western costumes like jeans, shirts, skirts, trousers etc.

*I started this business 9 years ago. That time, I had very little space but now I am satisfied with my work. I have employed 4 boys (workers) to assist me. I deal hundreds of customers daily. Not a single day, I found my shop vacant without any customer. It's just because of God's blessings....it is sufficient for my livelihood.*

*Thomba, Shop-owner at New Arya Nagar.*

Activities such as carpet-making, shawls, sweaters, winter-clothes etc. are the main activities of Tibetans in Delhi. Although, these are seasonal businesses but carpet-making, sweater-weaving are their traditional activities.

These are basically women-led activities. The women are considered suitable for weaving, suing and carving jobs. Therefore, they carve and weave the carpets, sweaters entire year. The owners of the shops are generally males and they fix wages on the basis of their earnings and profit. Therefore, the women workers are given very limited amount of wage.

The sweater selling business is the economic mainstay of about 70 percent of the Tibetans in India (CTA website). Recently, the informal jobs and individual businesses outside the settlement have emerged as another significant occupation with approximately 10% households engaged in each. The average annual income of the Tibetan settler household is approximately INR 80,000 per annum with moderate variation across regions. The growing workforce of Tibetans in Delhi raised the issues of social-networking. They not only have the Tibetan workforce is noticeable in Delhi but also several students and scholars are getting higher education from various universities. This encourages understanding their patterns of livelihood in Delhi.

*It is very difficult to survive in an alien country. Although, CTA helped in providing food, shelter and education but job is very important for earning money. I found few Tibetan friends in Delhi and then started living with them. Now, I am working in their shop as helper for last 6 years. We all run a garment shop and earn our daily wages. Money is important for survival in Delhi today.*

*Norbu, 18 year, Resident at New Arya Nagar, Majnuka-Tila.*

The economic activities of Tibetans are not based on any form of discrimination either caste or race etc. These activities are generally adopted by their personal motives and income perspectives. However, the Tibetans who established in Delhi earlier have more expanded business activities compared to new Tibetan refugees. The role of Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) is very important in their economic activities. They provide funds and economic assistance sometimes under certain conditions. CTA also provide the unemployment allowance to the Tibetans who do not able to get any job or employment. CTA also helps in terms of any kind of economic crisis and accidental conditions. Tibetans are always supported by the CTA in terms of economic, social, educational and other forms of needs.

There are also shops of crockeries, artifacts, show-pieces for decoration purpose. These products are very famous

at this place. The customers used to come from different parts of India to buy all these products. The tour and travel is one of the important occupation for Tibetans in Delhi. Very few of them are in formal sector especially in service sector.

## Survival Strategies

The term 'livelihood' comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A *livelihood* is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (Chambers & Conway, 1991). Basically, the term livelihoods connote the meaning of inter-connectedness, building up of the social-network and inter-relations, whereas, the economic activities give a sense of job, employment and income per capita to understand the economic growth.

In Delhi, the role of monasteries is very important for Tibetans' livelihoods. They pursue a are very religious and devoted life. They monasteries plays important role in their spiritual and devoted life journey. According to a study, they use to have a big monastery situated around their settlements. Monastery includes a pious place for prayer for Tibetans. It signifies the building, or complex of buildings, comprising the domestic quarters and workplace(s) of monastics, whether monks and nuns, and whether living in community. The monasteries provide of togetherness and commonness among their community people.

The Tibetan people live together with mutual trust and faith. They want to live their life with peace, prosperity and non-violence. The social capital plays a very important role in the economic life of any diaspora, Tibetans are no exception. There is no established source of livelihood for Tibetans in Delhi, but it is interesting to see that they are very much socially combined with each other with proper social networking. While with the changing nature of time and space, Tibetan community started engaging in different works and followed different pattern required for their survival.

There are range of economic integration and social adaptation (assimilation was rarer) present within the Tibetan community. Many studies have highlighted the spread and conscious efforts to promote education through schools. There are many Tibetan schools providing education and ensuring social cohesion and modernization of the community (Methfessel, 1997). The unique Tibetan schooling system has ensured that all Tibetans learn to read and write their language and



the establishment of monasteries and different Institutes for perpetuating language and culture has ensured that Tibetan language flourishes in exile (Phuntsong, 1998). Most Tibetans who have been born and brought up in India have thus benefitted from some form of higher education and this also has influenced their interaction with the host community. Studies revealed a positive and strong correlation between educational status of a person and multilingualism, higher levels of local interaction, stronger economic participation, and greater social and cultural ties with the local residents.

Language is generally the essential toolkit for both expressing and perpetuating a culture and inextricably connected with affirmation of distinct ethnic identity (Anderson, 1983). Survival and adaptation to new cultural contexts and integration in a community is evident in the adoption of language of the hosts and the everyday use of Tibetan dialects and languages and their literary perpetuation and expression especially among the refugees and their first generation immigrants. (Arora, 2011) They used and were fluent in their own Tibetan dialect, and with variability were fluent in Hindi and English. Learning Hindi language is essential for their economic and social survival and communication with the host community and tourists visiting India. While, the younger generation both men and women who have benefitted from the modern schooling system are quite fluent in the English language.

## Challenges

The Tibetans are basically exiled community and therefore, even after spending around sixty years in India, they faced the challenges in their settlements. The identity issue is one of the major problems in their economic, social and political rights. The exile communities are not privileged of voting rights as they are not granted citizenship. The Tibetans are residing mainly in Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and some parts of North-eastern states but they are not provided reservation facilities in entire formal sector employment. In Delhi, they are generally involved into informal jobs without any social security mechanism.

The issue of culture is also very huge challenge for them. The second and third generations Tibetans are basically dwelling in heterogeneous cultural setting where they used to interact with the different cultural background people. They are regarded India as their second home and for Tibetan is alike an imaginary land. Therefore, the recognition of their culture, language and

the social-acceptance are important for them.

The Education is pre-requisite for the development of any community. The formal education and the technical education are significant for the employment in formal sector employment today. They are provided the formal education so that they become qualified, skilled and professionals. The education will also contribute in their freedom struggle and will help in their demand for separate state.

## Generational Change

Since last many years, the number of Tibetans is increasing in India and therefore, in the current decade, this is almost third generation of Tibetans who is struggling in exile for their freedom of mother-land in host-country, India. The new generation Tibetans are different from their ancestors. For the young Tibetans, India is their own country and Tibet is an imagined land they have heard in many stories from their parents and ancestors while residing in India. They are more liberal in adopting the socio-cultural practices of India as compare to their ancestors. They are born and brought up in India and therefore, India is like home for them and Tibet is the second home. This makes the huge differences in their dreams, thinking and assimilation between the varied generations of Tibetans in India. The adaptation of socio-cultural practices brings changes in their outlook and life-style.

Many Studies have highlighted the spread and conscious efforts to promote education through schools. There are many Tibetan schools providing education and ensuring social cohesion and modernization of the community (Methfessel, 1997). The unique Tibetan schooling system has ensured that all Tibetans learn to read and write their language and the establishment of monasteries and different Institutes for perpetuating language and culture has ensured that Tibetan language flourishes in exile (Phuntsong, 1998). Most Tibetans who have been born and brought up in India have thus benefitted from some form of higher education and this also has influenced their interaction with the host community. Studies revealed a positive and strong correlation between educational status of a person and multilingualism, higher levels of local interaction, stronger economic participation, and greater social and cultural ties with the local residents.

The young Tibetans are provided with English medium school-education in Tibetan schools in India unlike the

religious education provided to their ancestors. They have more exposure to the different forms of occupational-opportunities. They are adopting the new occupations such as working in hotels, tourism industry, multi-national companies and so on. The study finds that the new generation Tibetans are more mobile from one country to another. Many Tibetans are settled in the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Norway, France and Australia. They are engaged in many businesses and economic activities in these countries. Today, the young generations Tibetans who resides in India are aspire to go abroad for better career. They seek new identity for their community unlike their lineages after struggle of years.

### **Imagined Community: The Virtual Globals**

Being a refugee community in India, Tibetans are socio-culturally networked community. They are highly connected with their community people all across the world. Today, the Tibetans are spread in various parts of the world such as South Asia, America, Australia and few countries of Europe etc. (<http://tibetnetwork.org/>).

Since 1990s, the technological development and upgradation in Information and communication technology has immense role in society in the development in ICT in social-networking of Tibetans. They are connected with their friends and families through social networking sites such as Facebook, (not functional now) and twitter etc. They used to chat, arrange meetings, parties and share photos, videos and information etc. There are various organizations which continuously tried to make efforts to unite the Tibetan community. Few official sites are Global Tibetan Professional Networks, Empowering the Vision Project (ENVISION) and International Tibetan Network etc. Many organizations aim to develop and empower the Tibetan community. They promote various courses, training programmes, health programmes, child-care programmes and spiritual pilgrims etc. There are so many official social-networking sites also which provides many information regarding training courses, educational courses, jobs and professional networks.

The Central Tibetan Autonomous has its official websites which share enormous information related to socio-cultural, educational and political. They provide open information to promote democracy and unity among Tibetan in exile (<http://tibet.net/>). The CTA website explores immense information on Tibetans and their livelihoods. The CTA also facilitate the pilgrimage pro-

grammes for Buddhist monks all over the world. The Buddhist pilgrims visit spiritual/religious places in different parts of the world and spread the knowledge of peace and non-violence. They explore their religion and tries to unite the Tibetans together for restoring their freedom.

In India, there are large number of Tibetans are settled in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh. The Tibetans have pilgrimage places, monasteries and settlements of Buddhist monks and therefore, the Dharamsala is basically considered as holy Buddhist pilgrimage. Also, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), which is the government of Tibetans-in-exile have permanent head-quarter situated in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh (<http://tibet.net/>). Therefore, Dharamshala has become a very important place for Tibetans in India. The Tibetans in India receives all social-cultural, economic, educational and political support from CTA only. Therefore, they have networking with other Tibetan community residing in Dharamshala through Buddhist pilgrimage.

### **Gender role**

Tibetan women have been, generally, leading monastic life for many hundred years. Traditionally, the Tibetan nun did not carry the same prestige which a monk had in Tibet (Sharma, 2012). They were not given the equal opportunities to the official positions to the nuns and they were often excluded from the debates on philosophy and from the spiritual arts such as thangka painting and mandala construction. Despite all, several Tibetan nuns have made a significant impact upon Tibetan history by acting as religious administrators, yoginis and advocates for a free Tibetan. Today, the Tibetan women in exile are getting education, family aid and community support to imbibe changes in the survival in exile. The Tibetan society encourages the welfare of women. The major change has been seen in their life in exile is that the Tibetan community has changed from nomadic herding to handicraft business. Historically, the education has been given to a boy than a girl which means the education for Tibetan women is always secondary in Tibet and now education has opened to all Tibetan people whether men and women.

At present, the Tibetan women are engaged in new forms of occupations in Delhi. The study finds that the young Tibetan women are working in beauty parlours, eatery shops, and garments shops and working in carpet weaving, handicrafts and woolen making etc. All such activities are basically seasonal work and therefore during off working days, they involve in some other activities. They work as casual work and earn low wag-

es having no other economic benefits such as increments and bonus etc. The new generation women are seen working as small shop owner, holding eateries, running beauty parlours and the owning garment shops. The second generation women are educated and attended average education up to matriculation level of formal schooling and are working in informal sector. They are playing dual role of women both house-making as well as working for livelihoods. These women wanted to work outside for contributing into family income and children's education. They are active and ambitious and aspire their children to study higher education and become successful. They have high dreams, spirit and ambitions in life unlike the age old Tibetan women. The first generation Tibetan women tried to nurture their children, preserve their cultural practices and protect their family in exile. The second generation Tibetan women have different dreams; they want to educate their children and make them successful in their life and want to become self-dependent.

## Conclusion

The issues of settlements and livelihoods first raise the quest for the nation of home. While understanding the Tibetan Diaspora, the concept of home is tied to a sense of one's 'identity'. The home is basically associated with a place and that place must have social values which provide roots to the particular culture and belongingness to all those people who resides or resided in that place. This native idea of home becomes important for the identity of those people as well as nation also. In this context, the 'home' is the symbol of emotions, feelings and nostalgia for the migrants as well as refugee community. Cultural continuity is critical to their self-identity and perpetuating their political identity as Tibetans in exile. Culture lies at the core of personal and collective identity and consists of both material cultures, social and cultural practices. In a published interview, even His Holiness, Dalai Lama admitted that the resurgent interest in preserving Tibetan cultural identity since the 1908s and 1990s was due to increasing western interest in Tibetan Buddhism and exotic Tibet. Are the Tibetans unaffected by the popular culture and mass media of their host communities? There is no traditional Tibetan identity in exile and it's a highly contested issue (Frechette 2002: ix-xi). The young Tibetans freely enjoying Bollywood films and dancing in Indian songs while not are being as well-versed in Tibetan folk songs that they had learnt from their elders.

Elderly women, who used to wear traditional clothe are now preferring to wear trousers and shirts and T-shirts. Most youth are wearing western clothes and young women are no longer wearing traditional Tibetan

clothes except for ceremonial occasions. Many youths who have lived all through their life in India have been exposed to and have adopted some aspects of what is broadly understood to be Indian and western culture. The Tibetans were quite satisfied with the provision of necessary facilities for the health and education of their community. Adoption of food habits, dress, and language of host community helps in adaptation and some minimal socio-economic integration while retention and perpetuation of Tibetan language and culture has ensured that they have integrated or assimilated into Indian society. Routary (2007) has analyzed Tibetans' effort to protect their religious and cultural system on one hand and their modernization efforts on the other and significance of almost zero opposition by India to their cultural practices.

Tibetan celebrate all relevant days connected with Buddha's life and festivals celebrated by various sects of Mahayana Buddhism (various sects although a small minority are Muslims), the birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, other cultural festivals which are uniquely Tibetan and connected with its agricultural calendar such as the New Year (Losar), and days to commemorate important political events such as 10<sup>th</sup> March which is celebrated as the National Uprising Day and 4<sup>th</sup> July to commemorate the Four Rivers six ranges (Chu Bzhi Gang Drug) movement. Many of them are aware and join in the national celebrations such as the Indian Republic Day (26<sup>th</sup> January), the Indian Independence Day (15<sup>th</sup> August), and the Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi (2<sup>nd</sup> October).

The Tibetans are facing various challenges due to their refugee status in India. The livelihoods of Tibetans require wide range of research work. There is need to do research on their working conditions and livelihoods all over India. They are scattered in different parts of India and engaged in various forms of work-opportunities for their survival. Due to absence of labour laws for refugee people, they are working on poor wages and contract work. There is lack of policy framework for their better employment-opportunities, social development and empowerment.

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**Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT)** is an International consortium of researchers and policy makers drawn from national and international universities, institutes and organizations. GRFDT is presently based in India and is focusing specifically on the issues related to migration, diaspora and transnationalism.

The GRFDT works as an academic and policy think- tank by engaging national and international experts from academics, practitioners and policy makers in a broad range of areas such as migration policies, transnational linkages of development, human rights, culture, gender to mention a few. In the changing global environment of academic research and policy making, the role of GRFDT will be of immense help to the various stakeholders. Many developing countries cannot afford to miss the opportunity to harness the knowledge revolution of the present era. The engagement of diaspora with various platform needs to be reassessed in the present context to engage them in the best possible manner for the development of human societies by providing policy input at the national and global context.

## Membership Benefits

GRFDT is born out of need to have a democratic space for research and policy engagement in the area of “Migration and Diaspora”. The democratization is possible only with participation of diverse range of stakeholders in creating an eco system for meaningful engagement. Members are key to the governance, election, administration and general activities of GRFDT.

- Members play key role in infusing new ideas, bringing dynamism to GRFDT through their active participation in all aspects of GRFDT activities.
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The papers should be structured through numbered main headings (in all caps bold), subheadings (in upper/lower bold), and sub-sub-headings (in normal italics). Spellings of frequently used words should be consistent all through the paper.

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Notes should be numbered in Arabic numerals as superscripts inside the text, and their details should appear as end notes. Tables should appear along with their data sources (if not generated from author's own research) in the appropriate places inside the text.

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Reference cited in the text should follow the author-date system (e.g., Cohen, 1997) and should be properly referred to at the end of the text in the following style.

#### Books/Edited Books

Cohen, R. (1997). *Global diasporas: An introduction*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

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#### Contacts

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# International Conference

## GLOBAL MIGRATION

*RETHINKING SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURE*

**26 November– 27 November 2016**

**@ India International Centre Annexe, New Delhi**

### About the Conference

Globalization has brought about a new paradigm where socio-cultural, political, and economic landscapes get exposed to unexpected dynamics of challenges and change. It thus becomes a matter of both challenge and opportunity for the home and host countries. On the one hand, the economic changes over the past hundred years that includes close integration, opening of trade, ideas and information, have resulted in benefitting the industrially developed economies. On the other hand, for the developing economies, the challenges remain though of different level and kind. However, the changed circumstances globally also bring along opportunities for these states to help them overcome the challenges. The increased movement of people has resulted in the global development of new ideas, intercultural linkages, democratisation of global space etc. In this scenario, diaspora has emerged as an important player in the transnational sphere for both the home and host countries. The following are the Themes and Sub themes for the Conference.

Technology transfer, brain circulation, skill development, Virtual Diasporas and Knowledge Platforms, Diaspora investment and Entrepreneurship, migration and technology, Concepts of Migration and Diaspora (Critical appraisal of place of birth, duration), Transnationalism and Globalisation, Dual Identity, Voting right of Diaspora, Diaspora Policies, Diaspora Engagement Policies: Legal, political, economic and socio-cultural, Emigration policy for the lesser skilled temporary migrant workers: Emigration Laws around the world, Diaspora and Development, Return Migration, Migration of Health Care and IT Professionals, Dias-

### Participants

The conference will bring together scholars from diverse fields such as academic, civil society, Media, Industry and policy. The conference will have more wider reach and try to represent as many as 50 countries so that both macro and micro perspectives and diversities of issues will be covered. . The conference intends to provide comparative perspectives in diaspora engagement.

<b>Important Dates</b>		<b>Registration Fee*</b>	
Last date for receiving abstract	<b>30 June 2016</b>	<b>(Conference kits and food are included in the registration fee)</b>	
Communicating about selection	<b>20 July 2016</b>	Postgraduate Students	<b>Rs.2000 (US \$ 30)</b>
Last date for receiving full paper	<b>30 October 2016</b>	Others	<b>Rs. 2500 (US \$ 40)</b>
Date of Conference	<b>26-27 November 2016</b>	<b>Conference Coordinators: Dr. M. Mahalingam &amp; Dr. Rajneesh Gupta</b>	

**\*GRFDT is trying its best to mobilise sponsorship to cover the cost of travel and accommodation of the participants/delegates as much as possible. However, the forum cannot assure anyone at this point about it.**

**Coordinator: Dr. M. Mahalingam**, Email- [president@grfdt.com](mailto:president@grfdt.com)

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