CHAPTER - VIII

Resume
Refugees are a group of people who have been forced to leave their native land and settle in a place which is alien to them. Their displacement is a forced one and therefore involuntary. For these people, who are involuntarily displaced from their native land to another alien place, the critical problem naturally is that of adjustment and assimilation. Refugees have to put up with a lot of physical, mental, social and economic strains for a long time till they get settled down in one place or the other. Coming from entirely a different social, economic, cultural and political background, it will take a very long time for the refugees to integrate themselves with the environment of the host country. It all depends upon how best the refugees are able to socialise and adapt in the new situation and environment. Ultimately it is for the refugees to make their new found home acceptable to themselves as also to see that they are acceptable to the people in the host country.

India has witnessed heavy exodus of refugees at different times during the second half of the last century. Just after the partition of the country in 1947 it witnessed heavy influx of refugees from Pakistan; between 1960 and '65 India had to accommodate a large number of Tibetan refugees in the wake of China taking over Tibet; the Bangladesh liberation movement resulted in a massive repression by the Pakistani military junta causing mass exodus of East Pakistanis.
to India – a price India had to pay for helping Bangladesh in its freedom struggle. Further, in 80’s India had to face the movement of a large number of Sri Lankan refugees to India when the ethnic troubles erupted in Sri Lanka.

All the same, it is rather interesting to note that unlike other refugees - not only in India but also everywhere else - the Tibetan refugees to India were given a special kind of welcome and treatment because their flight was guided and led by their spiritual leader, Dalai Lama. So to say, it was a story of migration with a sort of leadership. The then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru took a special and personal interest in granting asylum to Dalai Lama and Tibetan refugees who could escape through treacherous Tibetan mountain terrain risking their life and properties and manage to reach India.

In contrast to other groups of refugees, Tibetans came to India in well defined groups and their migration process was guided by their religious and political leader. According to the High Commissioner for Refugees, as on August 31, 1996, the number of refugees in India accounted for 2,39,963 of which 1,08,000 were Tibetans. But according to website information, as on September 30th, 1996 the total number of Tibetan refugees accounted for 1,31,000 of which 1,00,000 were in India. Tibetan refugees were
officially received by India and therefore a planned settlement and rehabilitation programme for them was adopted by the government.

The task of settling and rehabilitating Tibetan refugees in India was undertaken by the Ministry of External Affairs. Responding favourably to the request of the Central Government, initially the States of Mysore, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, North East Frontier Agency and Sikkim came forward to help in the programme of settling the Tibetan refugees. Later, some other states were also asked to help in the Tibetan refugees' settlement programme. In India, there are now 34 Tibetan refugee settlements spread over 10 states. The State of Karnataka (it was earlier Mysore State) has the distinction of providing 5 settlements - the maximum number of settlements provided by a single state.

The Tibetan refugee settlement in Bylakuppe, the area of this study, organised in 1960 by the government of Karnataka, was the first settlement project to settle initially 3,000 Tibetan refugees at a cost of about Rs. 30 lakhs given by the central government.

Bylakuppe settlement is the largest as well as the oldest settlement of Tibetan refugees in India. The Tibetan refugees at Bylakuppe were settled in two camps – Lugsung Samdupling Tibetan
Settlement (the old camp) established in 1960 and Dickey Larsoe Tibetan Settlement (the new camp) established in 1969. These camps are spread over an area of 3,000 acres and 2,500 acres of land respectively leased out by the State government.

The Bylakuppe settlement is located on the Mysore – Madikeri trunk road, 84 kilometers from the city of Mysore. Periyapatna and Kushalnagar are the two important towns situated close to the settlement. The settlement in this place was organised over a period of 5 years, 1961 through 1965, by accommodating the Tibetan refugees who came in batches during this period. Originally, this area was a forest area where there was no human habitation. During the last 4 decades many changes and developments have taken place in this settlement and now it is more or less a semi-urban centre with all conceivable modern facilities. One distinguishing feature of this settlement even now is that it is exclusively a place of Tibetans and Tibetans only. Therefore, it has everything that is Tibetan in addition to what the settlers have acquired by being in the host country for over 4 decades.

Though changes have taken place in the style and functioning of Tibetans at the Bylakuppe settlement, still they are basically Tibetans in almost all respects. Though a majority of the present
population in the settlement belongs to second and third generations (and generation gaps are now visible), they are still Tibetans upholding and practising many of their traditional and highly religious customs and habits. In fact, the Tibetans are very much tradition-oriented and highly religious people. What one can find in the Bylakuppe settlement is a Tibetan society in a moderately modern setting. Much of their social and familial settings, living conditions and life styles are highly influenced by their age old Tibetan traditions. To have a proper understanding of the society of the people in the Bylakuppe settlement, it is necessary to know the way of life of Tibetan community in Tibet.

The social, economic, cultural and religious settings of the Tibetan society in Tibet are shaped or influenced by the ecology of Tibet. Small houses, scattered villages, dependence on natural resources for consumption and production, isolation from the rest of the world owing to limited transportation and communication facilities, simple way of life and an economy in which transactions are mostly on barter system are the general features of Tibetan life. All these features are the manifestations of the ecological conditions of the Tibetan plateau.
Tibet is a land of mountains. It is bordered by the Kuenlun and Tang La range in the north, Kara Koram and Ladakh mountains in the west and by the Himalayas in the South. It is a plateau extending over 4,70,000 square miles situated at an average altitude of 16,000 feet above the sea level. Because of rugged terrain, Tibetans live in small clusters of houses which are mostly small hutments built with locally available materials.

Barley, wheat, peas, beans etc., are grown in the river valleys of Tibet. Sheep, goats, yak, kyang, musk deer constitute the main animal life of Tibet and so wool, fur, hides are the main export items of this land. The mineral deposits in this land are not commercially exploited. Because of very poor transport and communication facilities they are highly immobile. Even within Tibet, their mobility is very much limited. Their villages are small clusters of houses and scattered all over Tibet. Owing to geographical barriers, interaction even among the villages is very much limited. Because of this, their customs, manners, food habits and religious and social institutions differ from region to region.

Tibet has the least western influence on it. Tibetans still follow and maintain a way of life which is highly traditional, religious and static in character.
Religion occupies a predominant position in the life of Tibetan people. Their religion is a form of Buddhism which believes in reincarnation. Their ruler is a religious leader – a monk, popularly called Dalai Lama. Tibetans believe in reincarnation of their leader. Their affinity to religion is so much that a good percentage of male population takes to priesthood. One can find a number of monasteries, big and small, all over Tibet.

Though Buddhism prohibits non-vegetarianism, Tibetans are mostly non-vegetarians. Their food includes meat, mutton, barley flour and cheese. Their favourite drink is tea.

Tibetans by and large are pleasure loving people.

Nobles, traders and the peasants are the three main groups of the social organisation in Tibet.

The landed-gentry, and the peasantry and shepherds are the two main classes that form the Tibetan society. Together they belong to the middle class and they mainly engage in trade. They export gold, yak-tails, hides, borax-salt, musk, medicinal herbs, wool etc., and import tea, cotton goods, hardware, precious stones, tobacco etc.
Due to difficulty in getting workers, agriculture has not been developed in Tibet. Shepherds and herdsmen who live in higher altitude constitute the main working group of the landed gentry.

In Tibet lands are possessed either by the State monastery or the feudal lords. Therefore, virtually land is not a marketable item in Tibet.

Women occupy a very important position in the socio-economic life of Tibetan society, but in religious activities they are given only a lower position. However, women have a great role in agricultural and business activity.

Class distinction is prevalent in Tibet. There are upper and lower classes and the distinction between them is mainly manifest in the social behaviour, dress and language.

It is interesting and curious to note that the ecological environment in Tibet has even influenced the institution of marriage in the Tibetan family system. To keep the family size small as well as to keep the family estate within the family fold, the practice of polyandry is quite common in the Tibetan society although polygamy is not uncommon.
Tibetans are highly religious and in all walks and aspects of their life religion has its unmistakable influence. They are highly conservative in their outlook and have a strong dislike for changes of any sort.

Even politics in Tibet is very much linked with religion. Their spiritual and religious head, Dalai Lama, is also the political head of the State.

Tibetans spend a major part of their time and money on religious matters.

Though there are numerous groups and sects among Tibetans, the main four sects are the Ka-Dam-Pa, the Sa-Kaya-Pa, the Ka-Gyur-Pa and the Ge-Lu-Pa. The Ge-Lu-Pa sect enjoys the privilege of providing both political and religious leadership to the Tibetans. Their religious heads are not elected but selected.

Tibetans had to face heavy loss of their people and property during their flight from their homeland. On the way, many of the families lost or missed many of their people and they had to abandon most of their belongings. They were absolutely a disintegrated lot when they reached India. It was an extremely difficult task for the
authorities to organise these disintegrated groups into convenient units for the purpose of settling them in the refugee camps. Without any consideration to sect and caste five adults, including women, mostly by mutual consents, were grouped into a unit, called family. The children were also distributed among the so called family units. (However, children were not counted for the purpose of constituting a family unit, which had 5 adult members). Each family was given a piece of land with a small house. Besides, each house was given some agricultural tools and a bullock. In the initial stages the families so settled were given free ration also.

In the Bylakuppe settlement there are 2 camps – the new (Dickey Larsoe settlement) camp and the old (Lugsung Sambdupling settlement) camp. In the new settlement there are 610 households spread over 16 villages. The number of households in each village varies between 22 and 52. The total population in the new settlement is 4,219. In the old settlement, the number of household accounts for 734. These households are spread over 6 villages. In each village, the number of households is between 101 and 138. The population in the old settlement is estimated as 4,197.

For the protection and maintenance of religion, Tibetans follow a custom called `Lamaism'. They have the practice of accepting
Lamaship. All Lamas/nuns have to undergo special course of education and training specially designed for them.

There are 6 monasteries, 4 in the old and 2 in the new camps, at Bylakuppe. These monasteries are the basic central institutions of the religious life of the Tibetans. Lamas stay in these monasteries and they are given religious education and training there. There are 260 Lamas in the new settlement while there are 6,463 Lamas and 350 nuns in the old settlement.

As the total population in Bylakuppe settlement is 15,487, the 6,723 Lamas and 350 nuns together account for 45.66% of the total population. Almost 50% of the population may be said to belong to Lamas.

Relatively speaking the density of population is slightly higher in the new settlement as compared to the old settlement. The average number of members in a household is 7 in the new settlement and 6 in the old settlement.

This study is based on a very comprehensive survey conducted by the research scholar among the households in the Bylakuppe
settlement. The survey covered nearly 75% of the households and 71% of the population.

The Tibetan refugees settled in Bylakuppe were originally settled in this camp between 1960 and 1965. 67% of the refugees were settled between 1960 and 1962 and 33% between 1963 and 1965.

Only 25% of the families could reach India with the full compliment of their family members. The rest 75% of the families lost or missed most of their family members on the way.

For the Tibetan refugees at Bylakuppe settlement, the ecological environment and the demographic situation at Bylakuppe are entirely different from what they were in Tibet. From the 75% of the households surveyed, certain interesting information about the pattern of their life when they were in Tibet could be collected. The male-female ratio among the population in Tibet was about 46:54. 64% of the population was not above the age of 35 years. Those who belong to the age-group of 35-50 years accounted for 14% and those above the age of 50 accounted for only 22%. In Tibet their life span was relatively short.
In Tibet, in the lower age-groups, females were significantly larger in number. On the other hand, in higher age-groups, males were larger in number.

The average age of males was about 34 years and that of females was 29 years. Taking the population as a whole, the average age of people in Tibet was 33 years.

In Tibet the number of members in a household was between 1 and 18. 47% of the households had 10 to 18 members and 53% had 1 to 9 members. Mostly the size of the family was very large in Tibet.

There was only informal system of education in Tibet. Whatever education children were given was given at monasteries and in some private houses. The subjects taught were Tibetan language, history, arithmetic and social studies. The only aim of education was to encourage reading of religious texts.

Agriculture, animal husbandry and the related activities were the main occupations of the households in Tibet. 46% of the households were mainly engaged in agriculture in Tibet. 32% of the households were nomadic agriculturists while 13% of the households were engaged in animal husbandry. 9% were in service occupations.
In Tibet, they preferred late marriages and this was more so in the case of males as compared to females. 18% of the male population in the age-group of 20-31 were married. In the same age-group, the married female population accounted for 52%. Among those who were more than 35 years old, 60% of the males and 69% of the females were married. Among the married people, 16% of the males were married before 32 years of age and the corresponding percentage in the case of females is as high as 47%.

These people did not practice family planning in Tibet. The two basic reasons attributed to not practicing family planning are that it is against their religious belief and that they wanted more number of people as workforce. Because of the practice of Lamaism, a good percentage of men folk turned into Lamas and families had to depend on the females for work and earnings.

In Tibet they had four distinct sects: Ge-Lu-Pa, Ka-Gyur-Pa, Sa-Kaya-Pa and Ka-Dam-Pa. 67% of the households were evenly distributed between the first two sects and the rest 33% were evenly distributed between the next two sects in Tibet. In Tibet 55% of the households were joint families and 45% were nuclear families.
The above related Tibetan background of the refugees at Bylakuppe settlement would facilitate one to understand the apparent as well as not so obvious differences between their past environment in Tibet and the present environment at Bylakuppe.

At Bylakuppe settlement, the average number of persons in a household is 6. Nearly 72% of the households have 2 to 7 persons and 24% of the households have 8 to 10 persons. The number of households with one member and that with more than 10 members account for 2% each.

The distribution of male and female members at Bylakuppe is more or less even with the male-female ratio of 50.07:49.93. This is in contrast to the male-female ratio of 46:54 in Tibet.

The age-wise distribution of the population at Bylakuppe shows that those who belong to the age-group of below 20 years and those who belong to the age-group of above 50 years account for 18% each. 29% belong to the age-group of 20-35 and 35% belong to the age-group of 35-50. In the younger age-group (20-35), very interestingly, the percentage of female members is more than that of male members. In this age-group, male members account for 46% and female members account for 54%. In all other age-groups, the
percentage of male members is more than that of female members. 87% of male members and 93% of female members in the age-group of above 35 years are married. This shows that good number of males as well as females get married relatively very late and this is more so in the case of males when compared to females.

The literacy level of the Tibetan refugees at Bylakuppe is very high. There has been considerable awareness with regard to educating the children among the Tibetan refugees. This is in sharp contrast to their earlier situation in Tibet where formal education was very negligible. At Bylakuppe 65% of male population and 68% female population are literates. There are no illiterates in the age-group of 15-30. Those who have education between primary and high school level account for 58%. 57% males and 59% of females have education between primary level and high school level. 5% of the male population and 6% of female population have University degree or professional degree level of education. On the whole, among those who possess different levels of education, at all levels the percentage of females is more than that of males. Even among those who are now studying at different levels the girls account for 51.5% and boys for 48.5%.
Government of India has provided facilities for the schooling of children at Bylakuppe settlement. There are two central schools with classes from VI to XII standard and four of their branches with classes from I to V standard, and three nurseries in this settlement. Apart from this, there is another independent school with classes from nursery to XII standard established and managed by their own government (in exile). This is a residential school where much importance is given for the study of Tibetan language and Tibetan literature.

Without exception, for all the people in the settlement, Tibetan language is the general working language for all practical purposes. Nearly 67% of the people in this settlement can speak in Hindi and 22% can speak in English too. The vernacular language of this place is Kannada. However, the refugees have not yet picked up this language. Only 2% can speak Kannada and even this 2% cannot read or write that language. (This only goes to show that these refugees do not have much social interaction with the people in and around Bylakuppe).

At the time of settling these refugees in this camp, each family unit was given a small house. These houses were built in the settlement area in single-unit, two-units, three-units and four-units.
77% of the houses are two-unit houses. Single-unit houses and three/four-unit houses account for 13% and 10% respectively. No household has made any substantial addition/alteration to the original house provided.

For each household, originally five acres of land were given for agricultural purposes and these lands were given on lease. The lease amount fixed was just Rupees 30 per acre per year and though everything over the years has changed in the settlement, this amount remains unchanged. Because of the subsequently added families there was a slight redistribution of the land holdings in the settlement and as on today the landholdings per household varies between 3 and 5 acres in the majority of the cases.

Presently almost all the land has been used for agricultural purposes in this region. Nearly 10% of the households have sub-let their land to the fellow households for agricultural purposes. There are two systems of agricultural farming practiced in this settlement. The first mode is independent farming where the households themselves independently conduct the agricultural activities in their respective land, and the second mode is group-farming where a number of families join together and engage in agricultural activities, pooling their lands together. It is observed that 64% of the
households are engaged in independent farming and 36% in group-
farming.

Agriculture, business and jobs in organisations or institutions
are the main means of employment and sources of income for the
people in this settlement.

Nearly 78% of the population account for the workforce in this
settlement. Of this notional workforce, 71% of the people are
employed in one way or other. Of the employed workforce, 51%
account for females and 49% account for males. In the workforce
belonging to the younger age-group women, and in the workforce
belonging to the older age-group men dominate. In the workforce
belonging to 15-35 years age-group women-men ratio is 2:1 and in
the 35-60 years age-group the corresponding ratio is 2:3. In the
workforce, 50% account for agricultural workers, 22% account for
those engaged in business, another 22% account for those in some
regular jobs and 6% account for those engaged in miscellaneous
work.

In 74% of the households agriculture is one of the main sources
of income. Salary from jobs is the main source of income in 56% of
the households. In 28% of the households the main source of income is business.

As per the survey data the weighted average monthly household income is about Rs. 8,200. However, as has been explained in this thesis, that figure is an underestimation and the actual average monthly income of the household would be around Rs. 12,000 to Rs. 20,000.

Among those engaged in business, 70% accounts for females and 30% for males. Woollen wears, foot wears and dress materials are the main trading items of those engaged in business. Most of these people go around the places for selling the products rather than setting a shop in a particular place. 60% of the business is seasonal in nature.

Nearly 90% of the households have savings ranging between Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 2,50,000. 75% of the savers have put their money in banks. The rest have put their money in post office and other non-banking institutions. On an average, a household at Bylakuppe has approximately Rs. 36,000 of savings.
A COMMERCIAL COMPLEX AT THE SETTLEMENT
Nearly 63% of the households have debts. The average debt of the household is about Rs. 8,700. Debts are mostly incurred for domestic purposes, purchasing dairy animals and vehicles, house repairing, medical care and education of children.

In most of the households, the management of the household is overseen by the eldest male member. However, in 20% of the households the house managers are females, who are the main earning members of the family. But individual domination is not very much found in the households.

In the settlement, they celebrate all family functions in a simple and traditional way. The birth, marriage or even death, are perceived according to their religious and traditional faiths and beliefs. They relate everything to nature. For example, in the selection of a name to the newly born baby or in matching a bride with the groom etc., they consider the day or the year of birth of the concerned person/s. Generally marriages for boys and girls are negotiated by the elders. However, love marriages are not uncommon. Though dowry payment is against the principle of Tibetans, of late some parents have started presenting some items of value to their daughters at the time of marriage. The worth of such presentation ranges between Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 20,000.
For generations, religion has been the essence of life for the Tibetans. Their religious fervour has not shown any sign of decrease since coming over to Bylakuppe settlement. Construction of pagodas or stupas, investing huge amount in their temples, celebration of festivals, dedication of children to monasteries, etc., speak high of their religious mindedness. In their homes also they keep idols or photos of their Gods and Dalai Lama for performance of prayers regularly.

60% of the household members take Tibetan herbal medicines for normal ailments and 32% of the people resort to the same for serious illness as well. However, of late the trend of going for allopathy medicine is more apparent.

Tibetans consider consuming alcohol as a normal phenomenon in their life style. In the settlement, nearly 64% of the households have members with drinking habit. Of the household members having drinking habit, 73% account for males and 29% account for females. Tibetan beer is their favourite drink.

Bylakuppe Tibetan settlement has developed in its own unique way. In its development the role played and being played by the Tibetan Co-operative Society is quite significant. There are two main
Co-operative Societies: one in the old camp and the other in the new camp. The main objectives of the co-operative societies include: encouraging collective farming and rendering various services to the settlers as also to initiate long term programmes for the development of the settlements. These two societies came into being in the year 1963 in the old camp and in 1969 in the new camp. These societies have health-care-centers, nursery schools, dairy farms, poultry farms, vegetable gardens, flour-mills and workshops. Besides, they have different sections dealing in agricultural related materials, consumer and household items, handicraft items, incense and perfumes etc.

The membership of the society is open to the settlers only. The society is the main organisation in the settlement and through its different sections it tries to meet the requirements of the settlers. The annual turnover of the society in the new settlement is around Rs. 36,452,000 and that of the society in the old settlement is Rs. 24,032,000. These co-operative societies have plans to extend and diversify their activities in order to make the settlement a self-sufficient society.

The villages in the settlement are well organised and all the villages are connected by a network of motorable roads. All the villages are electrified. The settlement has a good water supply
system. In both the camps the houses in the villages are built in rows and provided with compound walls or proper fence for security and protection.

For the smooth administration of the settlement, they follow a system of electing a leader for each village. Each village has a leader elected for a three-year-term. The President of the co-operative society is the representative of their leader, Dalai Lama. The secretary of the co-operative society acts as the coordinator between the village leader and the President. All the matters relating to the villages are dealt with through these leaders. It is found that they are all quite comfortable with such a system of administration.

In the settlement they have various voluntary and cultural associations. These associations function with the aim of self-help and mutual help and they are purely service organisations.

Over the years, the dressing pattern of Tibetans in this settlement has been influenced by the local system. But, the elder people are found still following Tibetan style of dressing. However, Tibetans do not spend much on ornaments. They have relatively very less fascination for ornaments.
With regard to food and drinks too, they have switched over to local items. Now they have for their dinner Indian dhal curry, vegetables, dosa and other local or northern Indian preparations. Still, even now the Tibetan food, 'Samba' is their favourite.

By and large, the people in this settlement are pleasure-loving people. They spend a lot of their time in organising religious and social functions.

200 elders, who are above the age of 60 years, were also interviewed during the survey conducted for this study. 84% of the elders interviewed have very good memory of their life at Tibet and the rest 16% have vague memory to fall back upon. 52% of the elders really felt sorry for leaving their motherland, but 32% stated that initially they felt sorry for being forced to leave their motherland, but over the years they came to be reconciled to their life at Bylakuppe.

Almost all elders found it difficult in the initial stages to adjust their life in a different atmosphere here at Bylakuppe, but now all have adapted themselves to the environment at the settlement.
A TEMPLE
7% of the elders feel that they would have been happier at Tibet but 54% of elders are of the opinion that they may not have been happier there. 39% are uncertain as to whether they would have been happier or not in Tibet.

The elders in the settlement do share their experiences in Tibet with youngsters whenever they happen to discuss their story of coming to a new land.

64.5% of the elders feel sorry for not being able to go back to their motherland during their life time. They strongly feel that at least their youngsters should strive to go back to Tibet. 5% of the elders do not want their youngsters to go back to Tibet. 30.5% of the elders are indifferent as to whether their youngsters should stay at Bylakuppe or go back to their motherland.

48% of the elders are not very sure as to whether their youngsters would be able to make this settlement their permanent home and be happy there. Only 9.5% of the elders are of the opinion that their younger generation would be able to live happily in this settlement by making it their home for ever. 42.5% of the elders are very clear in their mind that this settlement cannot be a permanent home for the Tibetan refugees settled here. The Tibetan
refugees are not given Indian citizenship and they continue to have only refugees status. Many elders are of the opinion that if Indian citizenship is given to them (and thereby if they lose their status as refugees) they will not be able to entertain even that faint hope of at least their younger generation going back to their motherland. They are of the opinion that by getting Indian citizenship they and all the coming generations will have to forget about their motherland for ever.

82% of the elderly people strictly follow the Tibetan tradition in their houses. However, most of them have adapted to the local way of life outside their houses. Nearly 30% of the old people are out and out Tibetans both inside and outside the houses. By and large the elderly people are ‘indifferent’ about the youngsters strictly following the traditional Tibetan customs and practices. They are aware of the need for and the advantages of socialisation.

In general, the elders are still tradition oriented and keep alive their hope of at least the younger generation going back to motherland alive. As far as the general perception of the settlers in Bylakuppe is concerned, it is gathered that majority of them feel that they would not have been happier in Tibet had they not migrated to India. However, in 14% of the households, the perception is
slightly variant that they felt that their living conditions would have been better in Tibet.

From the survey data the perceptions of the household members in general on some of the aspects related to their living conditions were graded on a 5-point-scale (very good, good, average, bad and not clear). The grade point average calculated on the ratings given by the households to various aspects of their living conditions show the following with regard to their general perception. They perceive that their living conditions would have been just an `average' one if they were to continue to live in Tibet. As far as the living conditions at present at Bylakuppe, they have rated it as `good'. The rating given for the local peoples' relationship with the households in the settlement is `good'. So also the rating given for the opportunities available to lead a comfortable life in the settlement is `good'. As far as the government's attitude towards them is concerned, the rating is `average'. About the chances or prospects of going back to Tibet the rating ranges between `bad' and `average'.

It is gathered that in the majority of the households the attitude towards educating both male and female children is `positive'. However, it is interesting to note that relatively in more number of households `positive' attitude towards educating female children is
more conspicuous than the 'positive' attitude towards educating male children. The survey data show that the attitude towards educating male children is 'positive' in 78% of the households and the attitude towards educating female children is 'positive' in 83% of the households. In other households the attitude towards educating children is not 'negative'. Mostly these households are 'indifferent' in this regard.

Majority of the households prefer the younger generation taking up employment in organisations and institutions. The households prefer their younger generation to be employed as salaried people rather than taking up other occupations like agriculture, business etc. The attitude towards the younger generation going in for employment is 'positive' in 63% of the households. In 11% of the households it is 'negative' and in the rest 26% of the households they are 'indifferent' as to their younger generation going for employment or taking up other occupations.

The role of women, both in familial and economic matters, is still very important. Women are engaged in agriculture, business besides management of household affairs. Women too go outside for business purposes. Now the younger generation is more educated than the earlier generation. And consequently both males and
females prefer taking up employment in institutions and organisations. However, for such employment they have to go outside, perhaps even to distant metropolitan cities. Majority of the households have a `positive’ attitude towards their children taking up jobs outside. In nearly 73% of the households, the attitude towards even female members going for employment outside is `positive’.

A good number of households prefer to keep going their family business. They would like to have their children stay back in their family business. In 44% of the households the attitude towards male children taking up family business is `positive’.

The Tibetan refugees in Bylakuppe settlement are, by and large, very particular that they should follow the Tibetan customs in their houses. In 70% of the households the attitude towards following Tibetan customs in their houses is found to be `positive’. In other households the attitude is not `negative’; they are `indifferent’ as to whether the Tibetan customs are to be followed or not in their houses.

In the matter of selecting marriage partners for their boys and girls, the Tibetans are more conservative than liberal. In general, they are for selecting marriage partners from their community. They
are very particular that their girls should choose partners from their community only. However in 50% of the households they are "indifferent" as regards boys choosing a partner from outside their community. But it is learnt that so far only in one case a Tibetan boy married a local Indian girl and in two cases Indian boys married Tibetan girls.

In the matter of dress also it is found that they would like to have their Tibetan style at least within the houses. But of late, the youngsters particularly are going in for modern dresses. This trend is seen more among the boys than among the girls. By and large, the attitude of the households shows that they are more or less "indifferent" as to whether the youngsters use modern or Tibetan style dresses.

A summary of the general attitude of Tibetan households at Bylakuppe towards education, employment, customs and habits are given below (the attitude with regard to each matter referred to is with reference to a 3-point-scale, namely positive, indifferent and negative).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude towards</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Educating male children</td>
<td>Relatively positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Educating female children</td>
<td>Relatively positive (more positive than in the case of (a) above)</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Employment of women outside</td>
<td>Relatively positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Children in general going for employment</td>
<td>Relatively positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Male children taking up family business</td>
<td>Indifferent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Strictly following Tibetan customs inside the house</td>
<td>Relatively positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Strictly following Tibetan customs outside also</td>
<td>Indifferent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) Male members selecting girls for marriage from non-Tibetan communities</td>
<td>Relatively indifferent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) Female members selecting boys for marriage from non-Tibetan communities</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j) Young girls going for non-Tibetan dresses</td>
<td>Relatively indifferent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k) Young boys going for non-Tibetan dresses</td>
<td>Relatively positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident that the outlook of Tibetan refugees in the Bylakuppe settlement in respect of family, social and economic matters have been changing from the very conservative and traditional to a relatively liberal outlook.
The Tibetan refugees at Bylakuppe have succeeded in their efforts to make their life comfortable in an entirely new and different environment than what they had in their motherland. In the initial stages of their settlement here, they had to struggle a lot to make this place a habitable one. They were not able even to communicate with the local people because of the language barrier. But they were able to elicit the sympathy of local people because of their amenable nature and general conduct.

In the earlier stages, though the local people showed sympathy to the Tibetan refugees because of the hardship they were undergoing, they avoided close association with the refugees. The Tibetans had peculiar habits like not taking bath and not washing clothes. However, these are all now things of past. Much water has flown under the bridge and Tibetan settlers at Bylakuppe are clean enough by local standards and their presence is no longer abhorred.

Tibetans in the settlement have passed through a process of socio-cultural and economic evolution. They are a conglomeration of people from different regions of Tibet and are legatees to varied customs and habits. As never before they are exposed to external influences since leaving their homes and hearths 40 years ago and now their `cloistered life in mountains – fortress remote from the rest
of the world’ has become a myth. The rupture caused to Tibetan society because of the onslaught of the Chinese has been so great that, for years to come, the fusion of Tibetan society into a homogeneous whole based on traditional lines may remain only a cherished goal.

At the Bylakuppe settlement the Tibetan refugees are self-contained social, cultural and religious entity with a sound economic footing. They have developed their economy with vigour.

The social and religious freedom granted to them is encouraging them to preserve their distinct culture and also their tradition – bound customs with a few regional adaptations. The presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in India and his frequent visits to the Settlement have been of great help in infusing into them a sense of unity and hope for future.

The Tibetan refugees at Bylakuppe have over the years given-up either by choice or by circumstances some of the very peculiar customs and systems that they were practicing in Tibet. Polygamy and polyandry are no more practiced by them. Their traditional customs with regard to the disposal of the dead body is very odd. According to their custom they will have to keep the dead body undisturbed for
three days and then leave it in the open ground as a feed for birds. They were able to follow this custom (or system), in Tibet where the environment was suitable for that. In the ecological as well as social environment in and around Bylakuppe, it is impossible for the Tibetans to follow the said traditional customs with regard to the disposal of the dead. They have very reluctantly given up that system and now they cremate the dead.

The Tibetan society in the settlement is characterised by its discipline and implicit faith in the leadership of their spiritual and political head, Dalai Lama. They are well organised and well settled.

Their attitude towards education has undergone a tremendous change. In Tibet the stress in education was primarily on religion and philosophy, and even now the elderly Tibetans make use of the `abacus' for all arithmetical calculations like addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. Now the schools in the settlement are catering to the diverse needs of the students. They are being taught humanities, languages and natural sciences with adequate provision for fine-arts also. In a sense, their curriculum has been responsive to the present day needs both in its content and methodology. Thus the younger generation has been enabled to understand the world in all its vastness through the subjects they study rather than limit their
interest only to religion and philosophy. This has certainly broadened the outlook of the society-in-the-making and helped the community come out of its conservatism.

The Tibetans' contribution to the economy of the local area and to the nation is quite significant. They grow large quantity of agricultural produce. Their handicrafts are exported to other countries. The nearby town Kushalnagar owes much to the Tibetan refugees for its development.

No doubt, Tibetan refugees at Bylakuppe settlement have passed through different phases of adjustment and assimilation. Further, though they had problems in the initial period, what is admirable is that they could adjust themselves to the host country. To their advantage, one should say that they are given full protection in India. All the same, when compared to other migrants in India, the condition of Tibetan refugees is far better because of the freedom given to them as to their socio-cultural and economic activities.

The whole settlement at Bylakuppe is fast developing into a metropolitan city with a difference that it is a city of a particular refugee group unlike other metropolitan centres of the country which
are highly cosmopolitan in nature. One can observe heavy investments made by refugees in the settlement. Almost all such heavy investments that have taken place in the settlement are mainly investments on religious establishments like temples, pagodas, monasteries etc.

The settlement people have everything they aspire for as per their traditional system and they are a happy society within themselves. Though they enjoy every privilege in the settlement, one thing that is not yet granted to them is the Indian citizenship.

Referring to Tibetan refugees in Nepal, it has been observed that “contribution of the Tibetan refugees to the Nepali economy is significant, and if they are repatriated, the country may face serious economic problems, but if the refugees remain, especially if more settle there, it will create political problems for Nepal with its giant neighbour China”.¹ How far this may be of relevance to India one cannot easily surmise. For one thing India is not a small country like Nepal.

Nepal’s experience is in contrast to the status, living conditions and state of affairs of the Tibetan refugees in the Settlements in India in general and particularly at Bylakuppe. They have made these settlements more or less a place of their permanent stay with all the

social, economic, cultural and religious facilities of their choice retaining all their traditional systems, customs and institutions yet integrating themselves with the local environment. It could be stated that Tibetan refugees at Bylakuppe settlement are an unique lot. They are within yet they standout.

It could be stated with reasonable certainty that this settlement will stay forever and the settlers going back to their homeland, even if conditions favour them, is almost ruled out. They have individually and jointly created so much of stake for themselves in this settlement. Technically, though the land at the settlement is not given to the settlers but only leased, the immovable assets created by the settlers on the land are such that it will be almost impossible to reclaim the land.

The settlement at Bylakuppe is distinct because it is one of the exclusive settlements for the Tibetan refugees which in every way keeps its own identity both culturally and religiously in the host country. Their style of life, living systems and customs and the privileges enjoyed make them no more guests of this country. The present situation is that without being guests they are enjoying all the benefits of guests. It seems that there is a strong case for the authority of the Government of India to look into the status of refugees in organised settlements like Bylakuppe when the settlement is more than forty years old.