CHAPTER 3

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF CENTRAL TIBETAN ADMINISTRATION AND LIVELIHOODS OF TIBETANS IN INDIA

This chapter gives an overview on the historical background of: how Tibetans came into exile and; the administrative structure of Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). It also deals with the importance of Integrated Development Plan (IDP) formulated by planning council. Later, it deals with the administrative structure at settlement levels and the livelihoods of Tibetans in India.

3.1. Introduction

In 1949, the People’s Republic of China invaded Tibet through its military force. Subsequently in 1959, the situation culminated in the flight of the Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama to India. The Government of India granted political asylum to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to approximately 85,000 Tibetan refugees who could escape with him.

In India, His Holiness the Dalai Lama established Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). The CTA, headquartered in Dharamsala, North India, has evolved as a competent, democratic government with legislative, judiciary and executive bodies. Tibetans, within and outside of Tibet consider it as their sole legitimate Administration. The CTA also enjoys the strong support of parliamentarian of many countries, Non-Government Organizations and individuals throughout the world. After taking refuge in India, the first priority of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the CTA and the Tibetan refugees was to have a long-term rehabilitation program for themselves.

With the generous assistance of the government of India and Nepal, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, foreign donors and the work, faith and tenacity of the Tibetan refugees themselves, 54 Tibetans refugee settlements have been established in India, Nepal and Bhutan. There are presently Tibetan settlements in Ten Indian States, the largest population being in Karnataka State with Five settlements. All the settlement has educational facilities from Nursery to Higher Secondary as well as monasteries for the place of worship for the Tibetans. Settlement
also has a primary healthcare center and all the settlers have access to modern traditional Tibetan medical care in their respective settlements.

Further, each settlement is administered by a settlement officer, who is also called the Representative of the Department of Home and is guided by the Central Tibetan Administration, the local Tibetan Assembly (LTA) and the laws of the host country. Each village/camp within a settlement also elects a camp leader who acts as a liaison between the Representative office and the settlers. In all the settlements there are registered Co-operative Societies which play an important role in the socio-economic conditions of the settlers.

Glance of Tibetans in foreign countries other than India, Nepal and Bhutan

Tibetans have resettled in various part of the world after the forceful invasion of Tibet by China in 1959. According to the latest Tibetan Demographic Survey 09, the total headcount of Tibetan living in foreign countries other than India, Nepal and Bhutan stands at 18,920, which is a rise of 55.6 percent from the previous estimate in 1998 (12,153). According to the demographic survey 09, the North America has the highest number of Tibetans abroad with 11,112 followed by Europe with 5,633 and Australasia with 1,120. Such demographic information on Tibetans abroad was carried through the office of Tibet in those nations.

Table 3.1: Central Tibetan Administration at Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Approximately 1,28,014 [Approximate world-wide distribution: India 94,203; Nepal 13,514; Bhutan 1,298; and rest of the world 18,999 (Demographic Survey of Tibetans in Exile 2009, by Planning Commission of Central Tibetan Administration, 2010)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Democratic and popularly elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judiciary</td>
<td>Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislature</td>
<td>Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile with 44 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>The Kashag (Cabinet) is the apex executive body. The Sikyong (Tibetan Political Leader) is elected directly by the exile</td>
</tr>
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</table>
population for a term of five years. Under the Kashag are the main departments of Religion and Culture, Home, Education, Finance, Security, Information and International Relations, and Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major NGOs</th>
<th>Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC), Tibetan Women’s Association (TWA), National Democratic Party of Tibet (NDPT), Gu-Chu-Sum Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Missions</td>
<td>Based in New Delhi, Kathmandu, New York, London, Geneva, Moscow, Brussels, Canberra, Tokyo, Pretoria and Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livelihood</td>
<td>Agriculture, agro-industries, carpet weaving and exports, service sector. The winter sweater selling business is the economic mainstay of about 70 percent of the exile population in India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Total school enrolment is 85 to 90 percent of the school-aged children in exile. According to 2009 Demographic survey of the Planning Commission of CTA, Effective Literacy Rate of the total Tibetans in India, Nepal and Bhutan is 82.4%</td>
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Source: Central Tibetan Administration official webpage

3.2. Structure of the Tibetan Refugee Community

(a) Charter of the Tibetan Refugee Community

His holiness the Dalai Lama has on numerous occasions emphasized his wish to further develop the Tibetan Administration system into a more ideal democracy for Tibet and the Tibetans, culminating in the establishment of a Tibet Constitution Redrafting Committee in 1990 to formulate a draft democratic construction for future Tibet and a Charter for the Tibetans while in exile.

(b) The Assembly of Tibetan People’s Deputies

The assembly is the highest elected legislative organ of the Refugee Community. The present is the 16th since its inception and has 46 elected members representing the three provincial regions and five major religious sects of Tibet. All legislative powers
and authority are vested in the Assembly, and legislation further requires the assent of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Any Tibetan who has reached the age of 25 years, without discrimination on grounds of sex, religion and social origin, has the right to contest elections to the Assembly. Likewise every Tibetan who has reached the age of 18 years is enfranchised without any discrimination as mentioned above.

(c) The Kashag

The Kashag or the cabinet of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) is responsible for exercising executive powers is subordinate to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Its members are elected by the Assembly of Tibetan People’s Deputies. The Kashag is the highest executing organ of the CTA.

Table 3.2: Central Tibetan Administration: Organizational Structure

Note: On 29th May 2011 approval for the devolution of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s political power to the elected Tibetan leaders.
3.3. The Constitutional Commissions of the Central Tibetan Administration

(a) The Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission

The Tibetan supreme justice commission was established in 1992. Under the Charter the Commission is responsible for the settlement of cases and controversies of a purely civil nature and which are internal to the Refugee Community. Disputes will be settled more or less in accordance with arbitral procedures.

(b) The Election Commission

In accordance with the Charter of the Tibetans in exile, the power and function of the Election Commission is to conduct and oversee the election of the Assembly of Tibetan People’s Deputies; Local People’s Assemblies; the Chair and vice-chair of the Assembly; members of the Kashag; the chair of the kashag; referenda and; other such elections as per the provisions of the Charter.

(c) The Public Service Commission

The main function of the Commission is to recruit, train, appoint and promote the civil servants of the CTA.

(d) The office of the Auditor General

This office is responsible for auditing the accounts of all the Departments of CTA and its subsidiaries which are funded by the CTA. It is also required to audit the accounts of all the public Tibetan institutions like cooperatives and societies, trading concerns, educational institutes, hospitals and health centers.

3.4. The Departments of the Central Tibetan Administration

There are seven important departments under Central Tibetan Administration which are as follows:

(a) The Department of Religion and Culture

This department was established by His holiness the Dalai Lama in year 1959 with the aim to preserve and to promote the understanding of Tibetan religion and culture. The Department has helped in the preservation of the lineages of both Buddhist and Bonpo traditions and in the re-establishment of their monasteries in India and Nepal,
as well as finding sponsors for needy monks and nuns. The Department also organizes
various exchange programs and produces religious and cultural publications.

(b) The Department of Home

Department of home is responsible for all rehabilitation schemes for the Tibetan
refugees. All the settlement’s Welfare Officers and the managers of the handicraft
centers are directly responsible and under the control of Home Department.
Cooperatives and societies also come under the responsibility of the Department.

(c) The Department of Finance

Under this Department, it has a separate section for the Budget, Loans, and Business
Operations. It is responsible for formulating the annual budget of the Central Tibetan
Administration. The business units under the Department seek to generate income for
the CTA and to provide employment for Tibetans in the Settlements.

(d) The Department of Education

It is responsible for all educational facilities except those schools falling under the
autonomously constituted Tibetan Children’s Village and Tibetan Homes Foundation.
The Department oversees all 85 Tibetan schools in India, Nepal and Bhutan serving
over more than 27,000 children. The Department runs a major child sponsorship
scheme, and also awards scholarships to bright school graduates for further and higher
education.

(e) The Department of Security

The primary duty of the Department is to ensure the personal security of His Holiness
the Dalai Lama. The department has a Branch Office which mainly arranges public
audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and helps Tibetan refugees to seek
renewal of their Refugee Residential Certificates. The Department also runs a
Research Unit which keeps abreast of developments in occupied Tibet by China.

(f) The Department of Information and International Relations

The main activity of this Department is to disseminate information about Tibet. The
Department prints and publishes journals, other publications and audio-visual material
on Tibet. Various desks of the Department monitor human rights, environmental
issues and the condition of women on Tibet. The Department acts as the protocol office of the CTA and liaises with the Tibet Support Groups around the world, as well as other organizations which deal with Tibetan issues.

(g) **The Department of Health**

This Department is responsible for looking after the health needs of the refugee community in India, Nepal and Bhutan. It runs health centers in almost all the settlements, as well as six referral hospitals.

Along with the above Departments in function, The Central Tibetan Administration also has the Planning Council, the office of the Reception Centers, the office of Personnel and Estate, overseas Offices and Special Units of the CTA.

(h) **The Planning Council**

Recognizing the needs to improve the use of its human, physical and financial resources in the development of the refugee community, the CTA established the Planning Council (PC) comprising the heads of various CTA Departments and units. The PC has been instrumental in introducing planning processes into CTA, as well as establishing various services and other units, for example the computer services and handicraft exports.

(i) **The Office of the Reception Centers**

In order to meet the flow of refugees from Tibet into exile, the office of the Reception Centers was established in 1990 with the aim to provide reception facilities for the newly reached refugees. It has a branch office at Kathmandu in Nepal, New Delhi and Dharamsala. Along, it also assists in admission of new refugees into institution of relevance within the refugee community.

(j) **The Office of Personnel and Estate**

It has overall responsibility for looking after the welfare of CTA staff in terms of pensions, medical welfare, allotment of staff quarters, as well as for the construction and maintenance of the buildings and quarters of the CTA.
(k) Overseas Offices

The CTA has ten Overseas Offices located at New York, Geneva, London, Paris, Zurich, Budapest, Moscow, Tokyo, Canberra and Kathmandu. In addition there is the Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in New Delhi.

(l) Special Units of CTA

Over a period of time, various functions and activities performed by the different departments of the CTA were spun off into special units, others were established independently. These special units operate autonomously under the general supervision of the kashag and the concerned Departments; a few remain under the direct management of the Departments. Such units are given below. Many of these units appear under the relevant sectors of this plan.

(m) Under the Department of Religion and Culture:

Under the Department of Religion and Culture, it has four important units.

1. The Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA);
2. The Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Varanasi;
3. The Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA) and;
4. Tibet House, New Delhi.

(n) Under the Department of Finance:

Under the Department of Finance, it has two important units.

1. His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s Charitable Trust and;
2. The Tibetan Administration’s Welfare Society (TAWS).

(o) Under the Department of Education:

Under the Department of Education, it has three important units.

1. The Tibetan Children’s Village (TCV);
2. The Tibetan Homes Foundation (THF) and;
3. The Cultural Printing Press.
(p) Under the Department of Health:

Under the Department of Health, it has two important units.

1. The Tibetan Medical and Astro Institute (TMAI) and;
2. Delek Hospital and other hospitals.

(q) Under the Planning Council:

Under the Department of Religion and Culture, it has four important units.

1. The Tibetan Handicraft Development Board (HDB);
2. The Tibetan Computer Resource Center (TCRC);
3. The Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) and;
4. The Technical Service Center (TSC).

3.5. Integrated Development Plan

The planning commission under the Central Tibetan Administration is responsible for planning and implementing the Integrated Development Plan for the Tibetan communities in exile. The latest Integrated Development Plan produced by Planning Commission is the IV Integrated Development Plan 2009-2013.

Such plans are being made considering both long terms and short terms goals for the further enhancement and development of the Tibetan community in exile at micro level and Tibetans in Tibet at macro level. At micro level considering the short term goals, it aims to give socio-economic lifting of the Tibetans in exile with the provision of basic livelihood requirements along with the provision of universal education to all.

At the macro level considering the long term goals, it aims to preserve, promote and protect the Tibetan’s rich and diverse environment from the degradation method being adopted by People’s Republic of China (PRC) in the name of development. It also gives importance on creating and provision of equalitarian society in Tibet with equal consideration given to both male and female. It aims to preserve the rich cultural identity of Tibet. Thus, Integrated Development Plan has become the core for both planners and implementers to develop Tibetan Refugee Community.
Goals and Developmental principles of the Integrated Development Plan

The following long term and short term goals were framed by planning council under Central Tibetan Administration for the effectiveness and efficiency in the functioning in Tibetan exile both at micro and macro levels.

(a) Long Term Goals

a) To restore Tibet to her invaluable role, by converting the entire three provinces of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo back to its originality of stability, peace and harmony.

b) To transform Tibet into modern developed country where every people irrespective of caste, birth, sex and religion can freely practice their religion, culture, thought, education and economic activities based on democratic principles.

c) Prior to the Chinese invasion Tibetan was an unspoiled wilderness sanctuary in a unique natural environment. In the past decades Tibet’s wildlife and forests have been almost totally destroyed and rivers were polluted by the Chinese. The effects on Tibet’s delicate environment have been devastating. Moreover, china used Tibet for production of nuclear weapons and has started dumping nuclear wastes. Therefore serious efforts must be made to restore the natural environment in Tibet and free Tibet from nuclear weapons production and dumping of nuclear waste.

(b) Short Term Goals

a) To provide basic amenities of food, shelter, clothing and health to all Tibetans during their period in exile; and to revive and preserve the Tibetan race, culture, religion, traditional arts, crafts and sciences, and virtuous nature of the Tibetan people.

b) To improve the existing means of economic livelihood of the Refugee Community; and to introduce modern technologies both for the resent and the future in various fields to enhance and establish a sound economic base for the CTA and its people based on a mixed economic system.
c) To provide opportunities for modern and traditional education to the future seed of Tibet: children and; to develop the human resources which are the backbone of community development.

d) To solve the problems of inter-departmental and constituent units’ work-overlap and pool joint efforts and cooperation’s of departments units to achieve results on any particular activities through people’s education, publications and so on.

e) To evolve new strategies to raise funds, as community contributions, grants and loans where appropriate, from the Tibetan Refugee Community, host country governments, banks and loan funds and; to facilitate longer-term funding by international governmental and non-governmental organizations providing development and humanitarian assistance.

3.5.1. Need for the Integrated Development Plan IV (2009-2013)

The Planning Commission under Central Tibetan Administration has set-up three important goals and eight targets for the Integrated Development Plan (2009-2013).

(a) Need for Viability:

As per the Integrated Development Plan, The Tibetan refugee settlements were set up primarily to preserve the unique Tibetan culture and traditions by providing a modest self-supporting livelihood based on agriculture and handicrafts. Over the years, the settlements have experienced an unprecedented out migration of able-bodies persons, thus threatening the very survival and the purpose of the settlements. In this view, making settlements viable assumes the first developmental priority. This involves supporting settlements to restructure their agricultural methods and revitalize their rural co-operative societies while making sure that the local democratic institutions are strengthened and made accountable. These changes must help in creating a favorable environment which encourages participation and investment in rural resource base.

(b) Need to Strengthen Institutions:

Strengthening of institutions has been given importance under the second goal of the Integrated Development Plan. Strengthening of both formal and informal institutions
will help in preserving and upholding Tibetans polity, culture and traditions both at individual and at collective levels.

(c) Need to Integrate the Scattered Tibetans:

In order to integrate scattered Tibetan population who stay far away from their own community often faced with identity crises, socio-cultural alienation and discrimination. They are also deprived from the basic opportunities and facilities which are being accorded to Tibetans in their own community.

3.6. The Governing Structure of Tibetan Settlements

The structure of refugee settlements and scattered community is based on the democratic principles. There is a Representative of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in each settlements and major scattered community who is responsible to look after the welfare of the settlers and the scattered community people. The general structure of the settlements is based on the clusters of villages. These clusters of villages are in turned headed by the camp leader or group leader, who is elected among themselves by winning the majority of the votes. The responsibility of the camp leader is to see the welfare of his/her camp and he/she also acts as a coordinator between the representative’s office and the general public of their respective camp. There is also a provision under the charter that, the settlements and clusters of scattered communities can elect their own settlement’s welfare officer if they feel and think that someone among them is capable to take responsibility and to look after the welfare of their people.

Along, most of the Settlements have registered cooperative society which plays an important role in the socio-economic conditions of the settlers. While the cooperative secretary is appointed by the CTA, the policies of individual cooperatives are determined by the board of directors who is democratically elected by the settlers who are the members of the cooperative.

And the settlements also have local assemblies which would further help to reinforce active and democratic grassroots participation both in decision making and the daily functioning of the settlements and scattered communities. The establishment and election of local assemblies have been made mandate under the charter. These local assemblies make local laws, rules and regulations and pass them with the due
consultation with the settlement or welfare officers. They are also responsible for passing the local budget yearly.

3.7. The Role of the Prominent Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the Press:

There are many independent operational NGOs within the Tibetan refugee community. Among them, the most three prominent NGOs that can be seen and well-known among the settlers are the Tibetan Freedom Movement, Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) and Tibetan Women’s Association (TWA). These bodies have large membership base and have its branch active in almost all the major settlements and scattered communities.

Many of the institutions listed above, work closely with the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and operate under the general supervision of the concerned departments.

There is also a small press section in the settlements which would update about the important happening and news of the settlements with its periodic publications thereby encouraging democratic debates within the community.

3.8. Economic Activity and Occupational Structure of Tibetan community

Tibetan communities in India are working in different set of economic activities for their livelihood. Most common occupations that they have engaged in can be classified into cultivators; sweater sellers; teachers; CTA/alike services staff; NGO staff, household workers, health services staff and others.

a) Cultivators

Cultivators are those sections of the society who are engaged in farming activities and especially Tibetan settlements in southern India fall into agrarian settlements. In this way, cultivation was the major source of income generation activities to the Tibetans in their earlier exile life. Now a day, shift can be seen from cultivation to business generation activities. As per the Tibetan Demographic Survey 09, there are 2,673 cultivators amounting to 8.1 percent of the working Tibetan population in exile. Proportionally speaking there are more females engaged as cultivators with 10.3 percent whereas males are 6.4 percent.
b) Sweater sellers

Sweater selling is one of the most reliable sources of income generation among Tibetan households in India. Often, they are engaged in seasonal business of sweater selling in the nook and corner of the various Indian cities especially with the approach of winter season. Typical sweater selling season begins in September until the end of January. As recorded in Tibetan Demographic Survey 09, a close to 15 percent of the total working population engages in the sweater selling activities in a given year with a higher participation of female workforce which account for 17.5 percent when compared to 12.1 percent of the males. This signifies that females were more active income generators when it comes to sweater selling seasonal business.

c) Teachers

Teaching as a noble profession is another prominent profession chosen by university graduates. As the Tibetan saying goes, “come to learn and go to serve”. Most of the graduates prefer to serve in their community by imparting knowledge and enlightening the young Tibetan minds. Not only that, since Tibetans are refugees by nature, there exist a narrow job opportunities other than teaching or to serve in administration. As per the findings of Tibetan Demographic Survey 09, there are total of 2,352 teachers accounting for 7 percent of the entire working population with more number of male teachers. Statistically, there are more numbers of male teachers with 1,254 as opposed to 1,098 female teachers.

d) Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) Services

These are the sections of people who come under the civil servant of CTA and its affiliated offices including the settlements offices. This job is often considered as the most respectable and desirable job by the elderly Tibetan people. As per the Tibetan Demographic Survey 09 (TDS), a total number of 3,173 Tibetans are working in CTA and its allied/affiliated offices accounting to 10 percent of the entire working population. Proportionally speaking, the female work participation is 6 percent, whereas the male work participation is 12 percent.
e) Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) Services

Non-governmental organization also plays a very important role not just in preserving, protect and upholding of the Tibetans culture and identity. But it also plays vital role in providing employment opportunities to Tibetan community people. There are numbers of non-governmental organizational (NGOs) employing many Tibetans in various settlement locations. As recorded under Tibetan Demographic Survey 09, a close to 3 percent of the total working Tibetan population is working under NGOs in their various capacities. The participation rate of male is higher in this work category with 3 percent whereas females are 2.2 percent.

3.9. Conclusion

It is concluded that like any other free nations of the world, Tibetans in exile were successful in setting up of their own democratic administrative structure under the Central Tibetan Administration. Their administration functions through effective decentralized democratic set up under various departments. Additionally, on par with the host country’s planning and execution, importance of planning was felt among the administrators and it has assigned the planning council to formulate such plan for Tibetan community through its Integrated Development Plan.

At the settlements level, administration was carried out under the direct supervision of its representative officer appointed by Central Tibetan Administration along with the elected camp leaders for each camp/village. Tibetans have successfully resettled in India with no major difficulties in their livelihoods. Economically, they are engaged in various income generating activities like seasonal sweater selling and running small businesses set up within their community. Further, they have taken up jobs in CTA, NGOs, healthcare services, teaching and so on.