Introduction
Introduction

For long, Geography remained a subject of curiosity and voyages and geographers were explorers and surveyors. In this open field, geographers very often appear ambitious and crazy too. If not crazy, what else they can be when they fondly claim that Geography is the mother of all sciences (or studies?). The discipline itself has traditionally been vaguely defined as the study of human beings with reference to Earth. Concepts of space have now become really the focal point of Geography, and locations, distances and interactions have become the building blocks for theories in Geography. Geographic space may be a physical or quantitative construct. In titled sense, geographic space refers to an extent of area occupied by physical reality or activity.

McLeod Ganj, a small town though hosts people from all walks of life; prominent ones still remaining the Locals, the Tibetans and the foreigners who have an average longer duration of stay. But while we talk about social groups we take into consideration only the localities and the Tibetans in exile. The local population comprises of people from different spheres involved in different activities.

The study tries to find out the transnational space between the Tibetans and locals residing in McLeod Ganj since 1960s. An effort has also been made to find out the implications of the transnational space being created due to the rapid development taking place at McLeod Ganj particularly due to it being referred to as “Little Lhasa” or the seat of Tibetan Government in exile.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Until recently, Dharamshala was known as a hill station of district Kangra. It was only after 1960’s that His Holiness The Dalai Lama took residence in exile over a ridge above Dharamshala known as the British Hill Station of Mcleodganj. Following their leader, many Tibetan Refugees also settled in the upper part of Dharamshala. After His Holiness The Dalai Lama
was awarded the Nobel Prize (1982), Dharamshala has become a very attractive tourist destination.

Two distinct parts of Dharamshala are usually differentiated. Kotwali Bazar and areas further down into the plains of Kangra Valley and its surrounding areas on hillsides are known as Upper Dharamshala. Mcleodganj is 9 Kms from Lower Dharamshala having a large number of Tibetan population.

The urban settlements of Mcleodganj and Gayanki are characterized by their high population density.

Bhagsunag earlier used to be predominantly a village but now its converting slowly into a semi-urban area. Forsythganj is located on the Mall Road, the main road connecting Mcleodganj to Dharamshala and it is also teeming up with population and new urban ventures are creeping in. People with various nationalities and cultures live together in Upper Dharamshala. In Mcleodganj and Gayanki Tibetan Refugees and in the villages the local ethnic groups called Gaddis live. A large number of western Israeli’s and Indian tourists also find their way to Mcleodganj and Bhasunag every year. Here different ethnic groups live in relative harmony but they do not mix for social activities.

Several scholars are of the opinion that the Tibetans in India have acclimatized well into the Indian society with regards to the Indian language, culture, customs, laws and regulations. The longer the Tibetans live in India, the more acculturated they get. Coming from their isolated homeland to a modern, multicultural and global society certainly puts its mark on them.

Since a large share of Tibetan population lives in Upper Dharamshala (Mcleodganj), Tibetan culture dominates. Tibetans did not have a full fledged nationalism before 1950, nor was traditional Tibetan Society a homogeneous one. Today, the political context of occupation and coercion is always present.
in the exile community. An important part of Dharamshala in particular, but also for the exile community as a whole, is the many festivals and other events occurring throughout the year.

There are many conflicts that have arisen among the Tibetan population most of them being internal conflicts. For e.g. the Tibetans who were the first ones to arrive in India in 1959, and years thereafter, including their children, the so called long times quite often look down on the newcomers who are considered by many to be a burden to the exile community. The newcomers are considered a burden to infrastructure as many of them do nothing for a living but yet are assigned a place to live in one of the settlements.

It has also been observed that there are many conflicts between the Tibetan population and local population especially the tribal groups of Gaddis and Gujjars.

Inter religion marriages are a common sight at Mcleodganj. Many Tibetan women have married the local men of the area and Tibetan men instead prefer marrying foreigner females for a better prospect to move out of the country.

With rapid increase in population, the pressure on the environment is continuously growing. The environment of Dharamshala especially Mcleodganj is getting threatened by its rapid growth. The main threats are considered to be:- deforestation and erosion, forest fires, uncontrolled construction and development, insufficient toilet facilities and supply of drinking water.

The social space between the Tibetans and the local people seems to be very less. The local population support the stay of the Tibetans only as far as business opportunities are concerned. Tourism has been increasing each passing day and this is proving beneficial for the locals. It was only with the arrival of the Tibetans that they got involved into commercial activities. It has
been observed that even slight protests at Mcleod Ganj by the Tibetans lessen the tourist flow and affects the business.

1.2 STUDY AREA: AN INTRODUCTION

Dharamshala is a town situated in the foothills of the Himalayas in the district of Kangra and state of Himachal Pradesh, India. Two distinct parts of Dharamshala are usually differentiated. Kotwali Bazar and areas further down into the plains of Kangra Valley known as Upper Dharamshala. Mc Leod Ganj often referred to as “Little Lhasa” is the seat of His Holiness The Dalai Lama; the spiritual guru of the Tibetans in exile. It is a small town situated 9 kms from Lower Dharamshala While inhabitants of Lower Dharamshala are almost Indians, Mcleodganj has a large Tibetan population. The area of Upper Dharmashala is increasingly popular with western and Indian tourists. Most of them come to receive blessings of His Holiness The Dalai Lama.

McLeod Ganj has an average elevation of 1457 mtrs. (4780 ft.) above the mean see level. The area covered by McLeod Ganj is almost 29 Km². The Geographical extent of Dharamshala is 32.2220° N 76.3172° E. The population of McLeod Ganj is 25,000 out of which 15,000 people are Tibetans in exile.

The urban settlements of Mcleodganj are characterized by their high population density. Since a large share of Tibetan population lives in Mcleodganj, the Tibetan culture dominates. Mcleodganj is also the first stop for many Tibetan refugees who have first arrived in India.

The Tibetan Welfare office estimates the Tibetan population of Mcleodganj and around Dharamshala to be 10,000 people. Most of the Tibetans are concentrated near the temple of His Holiness The Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration.

Since 1982, after His Holiness The Dalai Lama was awarded Nobel Peace Prize, Mcleodganj has become a very attractive tourist destination.
Currently there are more than 70 hotels in Upper Dharamshala and on an average about 350 tourists daily staying overnight.

Mcleodganj has many monastries the most important being the Namgyal Monastery which is located in the temple premises of His Holiness, The Dalai Lama. The Central Tibetan Administration houses many departments looking after the administration and welfare of the people. The department of Finance, the Department of Information and Human Rights, Department of Health, Department of Finance and Department of Home etc. are very important. Many organizations both govt. aided and N.G.O’s are working from Mcleodganj.

Contrary to this, the urban settlements are in a cramped housing situation. A considerable number of buildings are illegal or are constructed without authorized construction permits. This has led to a haphazard form of settlement in Mcleodganj leading to problems posing a threat to the environment. Deforestation, forest fires, land slides, uncontrolled construction, untreated sewage, open sewage, insufficient toilet facilities, insufficient supply of drinking water and its contamination are some of the environmental hazards in Mcleodganj. The climatic conditions are also changing due to the rapid change in the environment.

Before 1960, the local inhabitants of the place used to be small peasants with little scope of good income. It was only after the arrival of the Tibetans that trade and commerce has flourished at Mcleodganj. Business has developed over the years and the local population is not very keen in doing farming or practising agriculture. This can be seen from the crowded market place of Mcleodganj from where every little business runs.

The impact of the tourism has also played a very important role in changing the scenario in and around Mcleodganj. This has helped in improving the economy of the area. Due to the arrival of foreign tourists and Indians also, the culture of the place is changing at a fast pace.
The young population whether Indians (locals) or Tibetans are seen following the western culture.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The present study has been carried out to achieve the following aims and objectives:-

1. To describe the various physical, social and cultural changes that have taken place at Mcleodganj and its environs over the four decades.

2. To explain the production of space with respect to migration and antecedents and consequences of social conflict.

3. To make a comparative analysis of social spaces of Mcleodganj and Dharamshala.

4. To Analyze various causes leading to the creation of transnational space and consequences thereafter.

5. To present peoples’ perception about the new space being created at Mcleodganj and its environs.

1.4 DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data and shall be used quantitatively as well as qualitatively Survey of India topographical sheets of the study area have been used extensively along with other collateral data which has been obtained from various professional journals, doctoral theses and reports of various government departments viz. Department of Statistics, National Sample Survey Organization, Town and Country Planning Department, Department of tourism, Census Department, Department of Tibetan Welfare, some government and non government agencies etc. Extensive field work has been done by conducting structured questionnaires, schedules, interviews and personal observations in order to collect primary
data. Tertiary sources have been used where primary and secondary data are not available.

Diversified source materials have been consulted in order to have a detailed study and to generate desirable results. Following source materials have been used in this study:

1. Census data obtained from Directorate of Census, H.P.
2. Data gathered from Town and Country Planning Department
3. Data obtained from Department of Home, Central Tibetan Administration.
4. Data gathered from various published and unpublished official reports.
5. Data gathered through questionnaires, schedules, interviews and personal observations.

The study is based on a deductive research method. Various hypotheses have been formulated in order to achieve the objectives of the study. A comparative study method has been adopted to make an in-depth analysis of social and cultural space shared by Tibetans and local people. Behavioral approach has been used to know people’s perception about changes in Socio-Cultural environment and development patterns. People’s perception about the new space being created at Mcleodganj and its environs has also been taken into account.

An extensive primary survey has been conducted of the study area to know the people’s perception of transnational space and its multifaceted consequences. This has been done through 100 samples of each Indian and Tibetan and Tourists drawn for the field study and care has been taken to include different categories of people from heterogeneous groups. The method
of replication has also been used to gather information in different circumstances and with different sorts of participants. Questionnaires have been administered to various groups using a variety of question formats.

Data gathered through primary sources has been computed carefully and displayed with the help of tables, graphs, diagrams and maps. The entire data has been processed and analyzed with care and has been further condensed and a compact generalization has been made.

1.5 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The subject-matter of social geography revolves around social space, social pattern and social processes including socially defined populations in their spatial setting. The subject is viewed as being more than a loose agglomeration of such divisions as cultural, population, electoral, linguistic and education aspects of geography. The most important requirement of social geographer is to have some competence in human ecology, anthropology and sociology in order to make useful studies. The nature of social geography encompasses the study of the (a) distribution of social phenomena, (b) social structures, functions and processes, (c) social adaptation to areas (d) geographic basis of society (its ideology, culture and spiritual guidance) and (e) regional differentiation in terms of social characteristics.

Early Contributions

The development of social geography owes a great deal to the contributions made by Strabo, Kant, Ritter, Ratzel, Montesquiers, Vidal de la Blache, Fleure, Patrick Geddes and Daryll Ford. The later contributions have been made by Waston, Pare, Buuttimer Eyles, Jones and David Smith. The varied social conditions of different places were described and contrasts between one area and another were brought out by Strabo. However, Kant emphasized on the morals of people or different areas. Ritter insisted that social factors were to be studied in relation to other human factors and to the earth in
order to get the true character of the areas. Ratzel, too, used the word ‘ANTHROPOGEOGRAPHY’ to show his concern with racial, political and social factors while describing the regions. Patrick Geddes believed in the unity of an area that is derived from the trinity of relationship between place, work and folk.

The varied content, approach and methods in social geography are due to the basic dichotomies that exist in philosophical viewpoints. The broad philosophical viewpoints followed in geographical studies are (a) Positivism (b) Humanism and (C) Structuralism and, as a part of Humanism, idealism, phenomenalism and existentialism are followed in social geographical studies. Augusto Comte believed in the philosophy of positivism.

Social Geography Abroad

Social geography is an important research specialization in France, United States, Britain, Germany and Sweden. Some of the current themes of social geography abroad are racial minorities, ethnicity, immigrants, social relations, assimilation segregation, residential choice, mobility patterns, social behaviour in space, housing, place of work, shopping and recreation patterns, level of living, well-being, inequalities, deprivation, violence, crimes, health care system, education and social area analysis etc. Farrington and Keith suggest that the most "satisfying versions of family conflict theory [are] explicitly macrostructural in nature" (1993, p. 370). This approach suggests

• that structural variations of the family (e.g., families in poverty; ethnicity of family) are important;

• families contribute to the maintenance of the existence of the social order via socialization of children and power structures (e.g., division of household labor).
Families are paradoxical, containing

- structural mechanisms which regulate power, and
- they are characterized by processes which operate to intensify conflicts.

Although conflict is present, social order is maintained.

Benefits of conflict, if it is limited in amount, intensity, and manner of expression:

- Source of personal growth (e.g., fulcrum for change).
- Effective method for dealing with underlying or potential family problems.

Social Geography in India

Perhaps India is one of the ideal federal states with multi-sub-racial, religious, tribal, casteist, linguistic and dialectical groups for that offer interesting and challenging themes and issues for in-depth studies in social geography.Along with these diversities, Indian population is and large rural, agricultural, illiterate, traditional, conservative and poor. Prior to 1970, the social geographic studies were part of regional geography, human geography, settlement geography, urban geography or even cultural geography. These studies emphasized on village or urban morphological characteristics and analysed social areas based on religion, caste, occupation and socio-economic classes. The other studies were on caste based artisans and their role in society, caste and social interaction and relation particularly with reference to marriage alliances. The religious caste and linguistic groups are expressed in their social organization and well reflected in the spatial pattern of rural settlements and urban development (Robest Bradnock, 1986) in India. The systematic study of the levels of education by rural-urban; male-female, religious, caste and tribal
groups have been made by several geographers (Sopher, 1980; Gosal, 1982; Gopal Krishan, 1977; Madusudan Rao, 1980; Dutta, 1982; Bahadur and Ahmad 1981; Khandekar, 1980; Dhanpal and Ahmad; K.N. Singh, 1993). The factorial ecology of Calcutta has been studied on the basis of residential differentiation of the urban population (Berry, 1969). Caste and urban house type (Hirt, 1982), traditional methods of medicine (Bhardwaj, 1975), role of education in the process of social change (Bhatnagarr, 1972) have been studied. The other important current themes in social geography are social infrastructure facilities, their locational pattern and analysis, levels of living and well-being, nutrition, health behaviour, disease pattern and environmental factors, tribal medicine, health care delivery systems, level of education in the process of industrialization social tension, conflicts, violence and crime, social transformation issues and problems.

Race is one of the major global biological characteristics of population to understand the regional societies. The contemporary ethnic distributions, evidence of blood groups on the racial composition of India’s population were studied by Mehdi Raza (1977, 1978, and 1979). However, social geographers in India have not paid adequate attention to the study of sub-racial traits of India’s population.

Social Structure

The society is made up of elements drawn from diverse origins; within the population of India are subsumed tribes – no less than three hundred ethnically differentiated communities – caste groups, language and religious groups, displaying striking cultures. There are differences in racial stands and ethnic and cultural identities are strongly defined. Almost all religions from tribal forms of animism and totemism to Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism have their followers in different proportions. The social diversity is perhaps the most powerful manifestation of Indian identity. The social groups with diverse ethnic origins, representing racial stocks from proto-
Australoids and Mongoloids to the different branches of the Mediterraneans, western Brachycephalic groups and the Nordics, found a place for themselves at different points of time adapting themselves to the different ecological niches offered by the physiographic and the climatic setting of the subcontinent. There are strongly defined tribal identities based on ethnic origins. The tribal population includes within its fold hundreds of large and small ethnic groups from the Santhals, Gonds and Bhils to the Mundas, Oraons, characterized by heterogeneity of a very high order. Their geographic patterning in the Indian space in it posed serious problems in the administration of the tribal affairs.

The tribes have been living in a world of their own in habitats which permitted little interaction within themselves or between them and the rest of the Indian population. The tribal view of social order and social law is essentially different from the rest of the society.

The organization of space in tribal regions may thus be seen as a manifestation of the ways of adaptation to the environmental setting as determined by the historical process of peopling of the traditional habitats by homogeneous clan and kinship groups. Over the time, and as a result of their hamlets acquired the character of a monolithic tribal core region. The placement of tribes in spatial segments may be an outcome of a social history of contract, confrontation and contestation between the ethnically differentiated tribes and between them and the peasant groups who hastened the process of their displacement from the river valleys in the course of the colonization of the riverine tracts.

All other sections of the society, whether Christian or Muslim, are also socially organized along caste lines. Caste is a social phenomenon of great relevance. The lay out and morphology of the rural settlements reflect the way different caste groups have come together to constitute the village society and have segregated in space in accordance with their function or occupation and
their social ranking based on it. The spatial arrangement of caste to community
groups within a village in itself is a demonstration of traditional relations based
on the single criterion of caste identity.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

There is no denying the fact that all research studies are the mixed bag
of scopes & limitations. The present study is also no exception yet the
following are the scopes of the present study:

i) There is dearth of data on transnational space and the present study is
first of its kind in this field.

ii) McLeod Ganj, which is the capital of Tibetan Government in exile
for about the last five decades has been in the centre for international politics
and the present study tries to analyse the spatio-temporal changes taking place
at McLeod Ganj.

iii) Peoples perception is also an important parameter to highlight or
uncover the hidden facts. This study has separately analysed the perception of
Tibetans, Locals and Tourists to have a composite view.

Limitations:

Inspite of these points of merits there are certain limitations:-

i) In all geographical studies maps play an important role but the
author feels handicap as no map for land use and spatio-temporal
development could be found because of administrative
restrictions.

ii) Though the author has done an extensive field survey to gaze the
peoples perception but the subjectivity in the opinion cannot be
overruled.
iii) Though all possible care has been taken to decide the sample size and sampling techniques yet suitability and highest accuracy cannot be claimed.

1.7 MAJOR HYPOTHESES

Following hypotheses have been formulated to investigate the problem in the present study:

1) The presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the true index of fast changing social space at Mcleodganj.

2) The creation of transnational space has led to changes in physical, social and cultural landscape.

3) The production of space with respect to migration has led to social conflicts.

4) Change in ecosystem of the study area is the result of influx of refugees and tourists leading to illegal construction of buildings.

5) Movement of His Holiness out of Mcleodganj will result in decline in tourism.

1.8 ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The first chapter discusses the introduction about the research and includes statement of the problem, aims and objectives, review of literature, major hypotheses, data sources, methodology & organizational framework.

The second chapter gives an account of theoretical background of concept of space, evolution of social space in India, Social and Transnational space as a planning unit, The Concept of Transnational Space, Transnationalism in India, Transnationalism and its consequences in Mcleodganj and it environs and also a critical analysis.
The third chapter dwells upon the Socio-Cultural profile of the study area. It includes the social aspects, the social groups, the rural settlement patterns, the urban settlement patterns, the land attributes, the rural-urban fringe and the urban sprawl developing at Mcleodganj. This chapter also includes the cultural aspects, population growth, density and distribution, the literacy pattern, sex ratio and migration pattern.

The fourth chapter discusses the land use or land cover pattern and changes in the study area. The Spatio–Temporal change and the people's perception about the land cover changes have been discussed.

The fifth chapter consists of the socio-cultural development at Mcleodganj. It also includes the economic development and the planning policies framed for the study area.

The sixth chapter discusses the perception of people about the Transnational Space and its implications. The physical, the social, the economic and the cultural implications have been discussed.

The seventh chapter discusses the summary and conclusion of the entire study/research carried out of the concerned study area.

1.9 REFERENCES


Course Team (1972): *Social Geography*, The open University, Nilton Keynes.


