CHAPTER - IV

EXODUS AND THE PROCESS OF ADAPTATION
TIBETANS
Almost 29 years have elapsed since the Tibetans came over to India. Most of them have been rehabilitated in consultation with the administration of Dalai Lama. They have spread themselves across the length and breadth of the country.

In order to properly manage and monitor the rehabilitation programme, council for Home Affairs of His Holiness Dalai Lama was established in 1960 and today it is one of the major departments of the Tibetan administration in exile. In close collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation the Government of India and various voluntary organisations. The council to date has resettled 47% of the 110,000 refugees currently in exile. They have been settled in 14 major and 8 minor agricultural settlements, 21 agro-industrial settlements and 10 handicraft centres scattered over India and Nepal.

There is one small settlement at Rajpur (Dehra Dun) which comes in the category of the handicraft centre. This settlement was established in 1965 and at that time Tibetan population was around 252. But now it has increased to 387. In 1981, another settlement at Sahastradhara
near Dehra Dun came up to accommodate 842 Tibetan refugees who were expelled from Bhutan. There are now nearly 1200 people located in this settlement. The major aim in establishing handicraft centres is to help those Tibetan refugees who are endowed with the art of Traditional Tibetan carpet weaving. The handicraft centres seek to train Tibetan refugees in the art of carpet weaving. Besides providing a source of employment the centres would also contribute to the preservation of the art of Tibetan carpet weaving. Every carpet centre as a matter of policy is run by a manager who is appointed by the Council for Home Affairs of the Tibetan administration and is operated as a co-operative Society. The Subordinate staff under him normally comprises of one accountant, a cashier a store-keeper, two instructors, a sales clerk and Supervisors for each section of the centre. The main function of the staff is to carry out the day to day activities of the centre. A management board consisting of elected member of the society meets at regular intervals to make major decisions concerning the developmental activities of the society and the manager is guided by these decisions. The wage structure is guided by the Council for Home Affairs and is common to all handicraft centres
under the control of the Council. It is based on a fixed minimum of work required of each worker. Workers failing to meet the requirement are penalised. In addition, there is a provision for bonus.

The Rajpur Road Settlement is a little different from other Tibetan Settlements because it is not administered by the Dalai Lama. Unlike in other Tibetan Settlements here the Tibetans live amidst Indians. Here except for a small minority of Tibetans who have been provided accommodation in the carpet weaving centre's quarters, the refugees are managing on their own.

Most of the Tibetans have taken either half or full portion of Indian houses on rent. Some enterprising Tibetans have bought houses too. At Rajpura Road, there is a small monastery which is headed by a learned Shakya Lama of Red sect. There is also a Traditional Tibetan clinic managed by the Tibetan administration. Just at the beginning of Rajpur Road, near the bus stop, there is a Tibetan tea stall serving Tibetan food and Changh (ricebeer). Further up the road, there is a Tibetan emporium exhibiting Tibetan handicrafts. This is being managed by an enterprising Tibetan and is owned by him.
The carpet weaving employs a portion of Tibetans. Others have taken to selling wollen sweaters and hosiery products. Normally, they go to Panjab especially to Ludhiana in batches for the purchase of wool and then take it wherever the market looks promising.

There were two entreprizing Tibetans at Rajpur Road. One of them runs a small factory manufacturing iron knives and the other one is the owner of an Emporia of Tibetan artifacts mentioned earlier. Both of them employ Tibetans as wage labourers and as supervisory staff. A large number of able-bodied Tibetans have been recruited by the Indian army in its wing known as the Special Frontier Force, Which has its headquarters in Chkrata which is about 30 kilo metres from Dehra Dun. Some of them have opened tea stalls serving Tibetan delicacies and the (Changh) rice beer which has become very popular. A few of them are casual labourers offering their services to whoever is willing to engage them.

Reflecting upon the economic conditions of Tibetans, an information brochure of Tibetans in exile succinctly puts the situation as follows:
Because of an acute shortage of land, farming cannot be expanded. Because of the difficulty in selling carpets in India and abroad, the centre cannot be expanded, nor wages increased. Some entering settlers, during the winter months engage in the petty business of sweater selling. These refugees travel to numerous Indian cities and towns to hawk their wares on footpaths and the main cross roads wherever business is profitable. The earnings from this business are a source of supplementary income for these people. The circumstances which must be endured are harsh but settlers are in need of the financial resources. Unfortunately, widening business activities outside the Settlement could lead to the gradual disintegration of Tibetan communities. However, the economic reality is such that, until additional viable industry within the Settlement is established, this situation will continue.

Occupationally speaking, our respondents are engaged in around 22 types of activities. This could be seen in the following table.
TABLE-1.

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO THEIR OCCUPATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typed occupation</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Rs. to</th>
<th>Rs. per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mistry Carpenters</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Carpet Weavers</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teacher</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Carpet cutter</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Carpet Master</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Helper in Carpet Centre</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Carpet weaver on hire basis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Owning a carpet centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Weaver of Trad.clothes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Salesman selling carpets</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Retired Army Personnel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Supervisors of Const.work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Cook</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Salesman in the General Merchant shop run by Tibetan Admin.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Salesman in an Indian shop of an Indian.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Batik painter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Handicrafts i.e.carving crafting .</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Coolie</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. In sweater selling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Selling the sweaters for somebody</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Tailoring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Lama</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A close look at the table reveals that the Tibetans are engaged in around 22 assortment of economic activities. Since, the mainstay of the Tibetans is carpet weaving, the majority of our respondents were found to be in this category i.e. 14. There exists a well demarcated hierarchy within the carpet centre. For instance it is headed by a manager and then there is a carpet master and then comes the accountant and weavers. There are several category of weavers/senior weavers, junior weavers, skilled weavers, trainees, trimmers, experts in dyeing and so on.

The variety of occupations mentioned in the Table No.1 indicate the struggle the Tibetan refugees are putting up to survive in a new environment.

Cut off from their traditional agriculture, they mostly look for opportunities to earn a livelihood in petty trade and business, in traditional handicrafts and in wage labour. Those Tibetans who were relatively well off are entrepreneurs, shopkeepers and tea stall owners. They refused to divulge their income but by their clothes, motorcycles, scooters and in one instance a jeep it was evident that
they have been more successful. To this category belong the owner of the knife factory, a small scale carpet centre and the whole-sale traders of woolen garments and handicrafts.

The Tibetan dhabas at Rajpur Road are not popular with Indians. Only the poor Indians visit it for drinking changh and mundwa (another alcoholic beverage). These tea stalls are ill lit and badly ventilated with make shift furniture.

The lone painter I came across was a skilled artist in Thanka painting which previously had adorned the wall of most of the monasteries in Tibet. Since painting a Thanka is expensive, the artist has diverted his skill to batik painting. He does not earn enough through batik, since there are not many buyers there and he cannot afford to market his paintings elsewhere. His paintings are not popular because he depicts deities and demons in them which do not appeal to the local customers.

Amongst our respondents was one Lama who belonged to the sects of Red hats. The Tibetan administration has set up a monastery in Dharamsala which has a branch in the Mundgod in Karnataka.
The monks from these places visit all the settlements in India to cater to the spiritual needs of Tibetan refugees.

Class distinctions are slowly emerging amongst the Tibetans. In the sweater selling business, a rich Tibetan would hire other poor Tibetans to hawk sweaters. The usual practice is for him to escort a group of Tibetans to Ludhiana and invest money in wholesale purchase. He then parcels out his stock to several salesmen and pays them their commission. The knife manufacturer Mr Phatki has employed many Tibetans as workers. Another Tibetan Mr Wangchuk Gyalpo has opened a carpet weaving centre in collaboration with a Swedish National. Since he pays the Tibetan workers a slightly higher wage than is offered by the carpet weaving centre run by the Tibetan administration and provides them a meal he has been able to attract better workers. This carpet centre caters exclusively to European markets and has adversely affected the chances of earning foreign exchange for the other carpet centre.
Thus a handful of the Tibetan refugees have grasped business opportunities that came their way demonstrating rare entrepreneurial spirit. These successful entrepreneurs belonged to the nobility in the traditional Tibetan hierarchy. It is reported that they brought with them considerable quantity of gold to invest in their enterprises. Apart from the successful cases mentioned above, there are now a few second generation Tibetans who have become prosperous. Some of them were adopted by European and American foster parents and have completed their schooling. There are others who have dropped out of high school in India. Those who have completed their school have now been recruited by the Tibetan administration itself in various managerial and supervisory capacities. The school dropouts however took to smuggling of gold and electronic gadgets across the Indian border. The local police complain that some of these Tibetan Youth have even become drug peddlers, bootleggers and pimps. The local police officials who are themselves reported to be working hand-in-glove with these elements admire the sense of solidarity and loyalty of these Tibetans in protecting their leaders. The police say that they are not able to break down these Tibetan Youth even through third degree methods. This substratum of the Tibetan community has
tinted the perception of the local Indians towards the community as a whole.

The Tibetans even those belonging to the second generation have so far not opted for the Indian citizenship which was offered to them. They are waiting for Rangzen (freedom). They continue to consider themselves as transitory migrants in India. Of late, a realization seems to have dawned on the younger generation regarding the difficulties involved in attaining Rangzen, some of them confided to me that the way of Buddha's Ahimsa cannot liberate their country. They advocate militancy. But they do not question the authority of their elders although they voice their disagreement with their elders often on public platforms.

This brings us to the question of the growing generation gap amongst the Tibetans. Statistics show that approximately 50% of the Tibetans in exile are under the age of 25. The older generation consisting of simple hardworking but unskilled people is being replaced by the younger generation consisting of multi-lingual sophisticated and politicised persons. Their administration is apprehensive about absorbing
the younger generation into the settlements which are already bursting at their seams. Some of the Senior officials in Tibetan administration feel that programmes must be evolved to harness the education and skills of Tibetan for constructive activities so that Tibetan legacy can be preserved.

At Rajpur Road, the younger generation look distinct in dress pattern from their elders. They wear fashionable clothes such as Jeans and Tea shirts and some of them even own motorcycles. They want to get jobs in the modern administrative and industrial sectors of the society and earn handsome salaries. They are not satisfied with the jobs provided by the Tibetan administration which they feel are poorly paid. They love music, both western and Hindi film music. They have taken a great liking for Hindi films and Indian food served in restaurants. This greater degree of exposure to Indian and western culture has also evoked their national consciousness. They celebrate important festivals like losar the Tibetan new year, which falls on the 6th of July and also the birthday of His Holiness Dalai Lama. They are also the active members of the Tibetan Youth Congress and take part in all its activities.
As regards films and music, though it seemed to be the prerogative of young ones only, there exists preferential feelings for the Hindi movies amongst all the age-groups. Most of the Tibetans like Indians know the names of the top film stars, their personal lives, romances and divorces. At Rajpur Road, Tibetan youngesters anxiously wait for the release of Hindi movies at Dehra Dun and one could see them flocking to the theatre since most of them not only can underst-

Hindi language but also can speak fluently.

Most of the Tibetan women and elderly men wear a partially modified version of Tibetan dress and Indian dress. This, because they found out that getting a Tibetan dress made is extremely expensive in comparison to Indian clothes and hence evolved a modified version of their traditional costume. Moreover, the traditional Tibetan dress was not suited to the climate which in India is relatively warm.

The traditional way of brewing butter tea is still very much popular amongst Tibetans at Rajpur Road. They also relish Mundwa, a home brewed alcoholic drink which is normally consumed with the help of a pipe. Changh is also extremely popular. It is also popular with Indians who find it relatively cheap.
At Rajpur Road, an Indian tea-shop owner Mr. Tandon stated as follows:

'My tea-shop is frequented both by Tibetans and Indians. The kind of in-group feeling is extremely strong amongst the Tibetans. They come to me most of the time for loans on which I charge an interest. Earlier they used at times abusive language but as I gradually learnt their language and they realised that I understand their language they stopped criticising us. Now one of them has even become a very close friend of mine.' Close friendship between the Indians and the Tibetans is, however, rare at Rajpur Road. The relations between them i.e. Tibetans and Indians were limited to peripheral contacts. A clear cut boundary between the two groups exists very much and with the passing of time it is further widening. In the social context, Indians rarely visit the Tibetans or seek to reciprocate Tibetans gesture of friendship and neighbourliness. Indians consider the Tibetans as extremely polluted, as they do not clean their bottoms after defecation. Their non-vegetarianism especially the fact that they also eat beef has tarnished the Tibetan image in the eyes of Indians there, who were mostly Hindus.
who live on Rajpur Road. The Indians regard the Tibetans as unclean because they often smell of stale liquor and butteroil. One Mr. Garg who runs a grocery shop on the Rajpur Road thus expressed his feelings.

'Being a businessman, I want them to stay here since they give me a lot of business. I have rented out a portion of my house to them. But their life style is abhorrent and nauseating. They eat (Bara Gosht) i.e. beef and as a devout Hindu, it is difficult to stomach one's neighbours consuming it. Moreover, they litter the street in front of my house with big sized bones. This has literally made my life hell. My wife keeps pestering me all the time to leave this hell and go back to our native province where at least she can breathe in a pure atmosphere. But the business compulsions are something I can't leave'.

This kind of a reaction was not just confined to Hindus at Rajpur Road. Even the Indian Muslims of the area expressed their disgust at the Tibetans and alluded that they even ate dogs. Notwithstanding these complaints several Indians have rented out portions of their houses to the Tibetans. They keep
grumbling about the smells emanating from the butter oil lamps lit before their deities, their food preparations and the like. But these complaints have not resulted in attempts to get rid of their Tibetan tenants.

When Tibetans visit their Indian friends, it becomes a formal occasion. Tibetans do not take members of their families with them when they go on such visits. A few of them however have developed informal relations with the Indians and they can even casually walk into their houses and indulge in gossip over cups of tea. But even this is an one-sided relationship. While the Tibetans accept Indian hospitality and even relish their food, they however, began noticing that their Indian friends did remain aloof and consciously avoid eating at Tibetan homes. This refusal to reciprocate is the Indian's attempt to express their own ritual superiority over the Tibetan. The Tibetans realize that they have been segregated in the very process by which they are accepted by the Indians.

In their marital relations Tibetans including those of the younger generation are conservative
and express strong preference for endogamy. An overwhelming proportion of Tibetans preferred to marry within the community. Indians complain that the Tibetans practice even polyandry and that they have loose morals. They point out that the Tibetan men encourage their women to take to prostitution and that flesh trade has become rampant in the Rajpur Road area because of the Tibetans' loose morals. The Tibetans are rather defensive about their marital practices and prefer to remain silent about their marriage rites and customs.

A majority of the Tibetans have only economic and commercial relations with the Indians. This was in the form of landlord-tenant or shopkeeper-customer or moneylender-borrower relationships. In these relationships there was little informality which extended beyond the parameters of business. For Indians, the presence of Tibetans ensures the commercial viability of their ventures. Tibetans too are not keen to any ties of friendship beyond business and commerce.

While the Tibetans have become sensitive to the subtle ways in which the Indians have segregated
them, they are quite at ease with the Indians in commercial transactions with them.

Around 48(80%) of the Tibetan respondents do not feel that Indian traders cheat them. Most of them have by now acquired a working knowledge of Hindi and are in a position to compare market prices in several shops in their area.

While the Tibetans of the older generation have acquired by now a working knowledge of Hindi, the younger generation Tibetans who were born and brought up in India are more proficient in Hindi. As the Tibetan administration has consciously introduced strong doses of Tibetan language and culture in their schools, the members of the younger generation have developed a strong Tibetan identity - an identity which has taken on a political colouring now.

As mentioned above, younger generation Tibetans have become multilingual but most of them are content in learning Hindi besides their mother tongue. Only 1/4th of the Tibetan respondents in my sample said they had some knowledge of English.

Let us now turn to the views of the members of the host society among whom the Tibetans are...
regarding how they think and feel about the Tibetans. In the last 29 years since the Tibetans first arrived to India, the attitude of the members of the host society has undergone a change. In the initial stages of their arrival, the local Indians were quite sympathetic and hospitable to the Tibetan refugees. Now there is repressed hostility towards them. Nearly 78% of the Indian respondents continue to regard the Tibetans as outsiders. They have over the years, developed a negative stereotype of the Tibetans as dirty, foul smelling and as given to vices such as eating beef, drinking alcohol and prostitution. They have become envious of the handful of successful Tibetans and say that they succeeded by indulging in smuggling, bootlegging, gambling and prostitution. They vehemently oppose the idea of Tibetans being given Indian citizenship on the ground that they will have a bad effect on the younger generations of Indians. They even foresee that if the situation is allowed to continue there may even be communal clashes between the Indians and Tibetans. One factor contributing to the possible communal clashes is the envy of lower middle class Indians who economically speaking are a suppressed lot. This category envy
Tibetans for the favoured and generous treatment bestowed upon them both by Indian and foreign governments plus a host of voluntary agencies. They feel that the government has done too much for the Tibetans at their own expense. They resent both the cash and kind assistance being provided to the Tibetans. They feel that so many pressing problems of theirs cannot be executed for want of finances such as proper schooling of their wards, proper drainage system and hygiene factor in the streets. They feel sore over the foreign sponsorship provided to Tibetan children.

They complain that Tibetan children are receiving better education in the expensive schools than their own children. Some of the younger generation of Tibetans who are well dressed and are in possession of two-wheeler motorcycles is also generating envy.
There exists only one study of Tibetan refugees conducted from a sociological perspective by Palakshappa. Although this is a study of a settlement in Karnataka, yet the conclusions he arrives at requires their elaboration here especially in the light of our study which was about the Tibetans not in the settlement. Palakshappa in his study of Mundgod settlement emphasises upon the social organisation of Tibetan villages which number around 11 which more or less resemble the organisation of villages back in Tibet. The institution of group leader which emerges as one of the important factor in the lives of Tibetans is a crucial variable which is absent in our study owing to fact of it being a non-settlement. Right from the initial phase of the rehabilitation to the ongoing activities of the settlers, the group leader acts as a suitable go between the authorities, administrators and his own people. This provides a protective cover to a lay Tibetan for his day to day dealings and needs. In the case of our respondents this cover was absent.

Palakshappa argues that Tibetans at Mundgod represent the case of 'progressive
adjustment'. Economically, the Tibetans have made their settlement a success. They have become so prosperous that many have been able to rebuild their dwellings with better material. They have also acquired consumer durable goods like transistors, watches colourful clothes etc. The prosperity of the Tibetans have come about over a period of time. From the hostility which existed earlier to a situation of symbiotic relationship between the refugees and the local people now is a story replete with inter-community nexus and networks. The important role in bringing about Tibetan prosperity is played by the cooperative society which in Palakshappa's opinion acted as a buffer vis-a-vis the resident Indians of the area. This institution protected the illiterate settlers from exploitation of the local money-lenders and traders.

It must be pointed out here that the Tibetans in Rajpur too showed the signs of progressive adaptation. Although there was no cooperative society to mediate on their behalf, this did not prevent the Tibetans from venturing
on their own. This prosperity is reflected in the houses built by some enterprising Tibetans, possession of motorcycles, Jeep etc. Some of them wear neat and colourful dress.

The Economic prosperity feels Palakshappa brought in its wake certain unavoidable consequences. The important among them is the generation gap. The ruinous consequence of this being the erosion in the authority structure of elder Tibetans. There is considerable change both in apparel and dietary habits of younger generation. They have also become independent of their parents in matter of the choice of a spouse. They also look down upon the unclean habits of their parents and older members of the family. Another effect of the prosperity is the emergence of the distinctions of class amongst the Tibetan people in Settlements. The economically more successful families have taken land on lease from the Indians as well and display consumer durable items. If we look at our study, we would notice that more or less same changes taking place at Rajpur Road also. Some of Tibetans are well off as mentioned in my study. They have got constructed pucca multistory houses
plus has the means of conveyance. The class distinctions amongst the Tibetans emerged quite early as each one is carrying on its own at Rajpur. The only difference with the finding of Palakshappa's study is that I did not come across any instance whereby one could conclude that erosion in the authority structure of elders had come about. The younger generation looks different, think differently, have also internalized both Indians and western values, but they show due and proper respect to the elders.

Lastly to the question of disintegration of Tibetan identity and their assimilation into the host society, the answer one can derive from Palakshappa's study is in negative but he feels that some aspects of Tibetan culture is giving way to Indian culture. To this, I would say that Tibetans in order to adapt themselves, might have shed some of their cultural traits on account of such a lengthy period of stay, but they are still attached like an umbilical cord to anything Tibetan.
PUNJABIS AND BENGALIS
In Rudrapur block of Nanital district of Uttar Pradesh, one gets the impression as if one is in Panjab. The market of Rudrapur town resembles the typical market in any town of Panjab. Most of the people wear Panjabi clothes i.e. peasants are seen in 'Tehmed' a dhoti like cloth wrapped to cover their legs, a kurta and a turban which is a mark of distinction of the sikhs. One can see these peasants carrying their crops in the tractor-trolleys and at the same time listening to the Panjabi folksongs blaring from their portable two-in-ones music systems. The market is dotted with Panjabi dhabas specializing in Panjabi food such as Sarson Ka Sag, Makki Ki Roti and Lassi etc. In the market there are also hawkers vending Panjabi drinks. Most of the Panjabi peasants can be seen walking around or riding heavy motorcycles with their guns slung on their shoulders. Panjabi has become the lingua franca of not only the town but the surrounding countryside as well. The houses of the some of the wealthy Panjabis can be seen on the outskirts of the town. These houses are majestic standing on sprawling farms and orchards with an imposing gates made of wrought iron. One can also see several types of agricultural implements lying around in these houses. A little away from
the suburban limit of the town are the agro-based industries which dot the landscape. There are a large number of rice mills which are known as rice-shellers in this area. Most of them are owned by the Panjabis. Almost all the Nationalised banks have their branches here and do brisk business. Sometimes there are posters pasted on the front wall of the bank intimating the date of auction of the properties of the defaulter. There are also offices of several sahkari samitis or cooperative societies located here. The local branches of land development bank and the cooperative bank are also located here. Around the periphery, are situated the villages of the Panjabis, Bengalis and Buxas. On the whole the area appears to be considerably prosperous.

Panjabi refugees who came over from west Pakistan began to settle around 1951 in the Tarai Bhavar belt of Nanital district of Uttar Pradesh. At that time this belt was a dense forest containing

1. The Buxas are a tribal people believed to have entered this region in early Moghul times as attendants to Rajput widows who were seeking refuge as Moghuls Conquered Various Rajput States. Buxas include a very populous caste of blacksmiths.
a number of beasts of prey. The land was marshy and infested with mosquitoes. It was a inhospitable and uninhabitable belt, with only Buxas living there practising shifting cultivation.

There were both Hindus and Sikhs among the Panjabi refugees. The Hindu refugees belonged to the Khatri and Arora castes. These refugees belonged to the Zhang and Multan districts of West Pakistan and were mostly petty traders and moneylenders. Among the Sikhs besides the Khatris and Aroras there was a sprinkling of other castes such as Jats and Rajputs. The Panjabis came almost soon after the partition. The Panjabi refugees were first asked to clear the forests on a daily wage basis. Subsequently the government allotted them the cleared lands. Each of them was allotted land to the tune of 15 acres. They also received cash assistance ranging from Rs.800 to Rs.1000. Apart from those who were directly settled on land, a number of other Panjabi refugees came to this area. Among them were many who sold the land in Panjab allotted to them to buy more land at a lower price in this region. As land values were very high in Panjab. They could buy large tracts of land in the Tarai with the cash their lands generated in Panjab.
Another group of Settlers attracted to this region belonged to the notorious tribe of Rai-Sikhs in Panjab. These formerly nomadic people took to robbery and looting when their means of livelihood were threatened by changes brought about by the British Government. The Rai-Sikhs had by now developed an appetite for land and desired to settle down as agriculturists.

A majority of the Punjabi refugees who were settled on land were, strongly enough, new to agriculture. Of the 60 Punjabi refugees I interviewed 57 changed their occupation to become agriculturists.

The Panjabi refugees were after a couple of years followed by the Bengali refugees from East Pakistan. The Bengali refugees have been trickling into this area since 1951 and the trickle has not stopped even today. The Bengali refugees were also rehabilitated in this area but the government gave them much less land than their Punjabi counterparts. This is partly because land became relatively scarce as the Bengali refugees started moving in. Even here, those Bengalis who came during the 1951-58 phase received 8 acres per family. Those who came during the 1959-64 phase received only 5 acres per family. Further those who came after 1964 received
only 3 acres per family. The Bengalis also received cash assistance.

The Bengali refugees who came over to Rudrapur belonged mostly to the untouchable Namashudra caste. Like their Punjabi counterparts, these Bengalis too found themselves in an alien environment.

At this stage it is important to note the mode of exodus of the Bengalis. Unlike in the case of the Tibetans or the Punjabis the Bengalis who came to Rudrapur were not a part of mass-flight. They had started trickling into West Bengal since days prior to partition because of the communal riots that flared up in Naokhali and surrounding areas of Bengal in 1946. These Bengalis drifted to other states when they found that West Bengal was getting too crowded by the refugee population. The Bengalis keep coming into India even today because they find that they have better economic prospects in this country.

The Punjabi experience in Rudrapur stands out in stark contrast to the experience of the Bengalis in this area. Though they were strangers to agriculture, the Panjabis not only became prosperous agriculturists
but they also diversified their investments into liquor shops, rice shellers and goods transport. Their prosperity has percolated to their children and grandchildren as well. The second and third generation Punjabi refugees have now become leading professionals in the area. The younger generation has only a faint notion that their parents or grandparents were once refugees. The Punjabis have not only mingled into the mainstream but have themselves become the mainstream today.

In contrast, the Bengali refugees continue to be regarded as refugees even today. They have not been able to retain the land that had been allotted to them. Most of them have sold their lands or have mortgaged them. Some complain that the 'wily Punjabis' cheated them. The Bengalis continue to harbour grievances about the Punjabis and they want to be included in the scheduled castes list of the Uttar Pradesh government. Their woes and their complaints remind us of the dependent infant syndrome that Keller uses to characterize them.

It is now imperative to understand how the Punjabis succeeded in adapting themselves whereas
the Bengalis have failed miserably. At the outset, it is important to point out that there are vast cultural differences between the Punjabis and the Bengalis. The Punjabi refugees, it should be remembered belonged to relatively better off castes. While they were petty traders and moneylenders they always regarded themselves as Kshatriyas and consciously adopted what they regarded was the Kshatriya way of life. Their penchant for lavish display, their desire to acquire wealth, which to them, were markers of their high social status made them pursue all possible avenues towards prosperity. In their pursuit they did not suffer many social handicaps because they had by tradition been businessmen and because they were literate and had acquired some education. Dwelling mostly in small towns they had learnt to interact with the governmental bureaucracy and the law courts. All these features of their social background put them at a considerable advantage in the Rudrapur situation. The Punjabis success in Rudrapur can be delineated by means of the following cases:

Case No.1.

'Less than ten miles from U.P. Agriculture University is a farmer, not to be named here, who
owns and operates about 100 acres. He acquired this site in 1951 after an initial career in military service. Arrangements for the allotment and his purchase of the land, so early in the development of Tarai, were relatively easy, and on his account not too costly. For what he took over was then uncleared light jungle, isolated, very difficult to reach, and a tract that only a strong and courageous farmer could hope to develop as a farm. This man sunk about Rs.60,000/- of savings and borrowings into clearing trees, making access roads, land development, and generally unprofitable agriculture for more than ten years. As the place could not support his family under tolerable conditions, they lived elsewhere.

Around 1962, a turning point came with the establishment and useful extension services of U.P.A.U. This farmer paid close attention to all that university experts had to recommend about land development, irrigation, new varieties of seed, latest agronomic practices in application of fertilizer and of plant protection materials. After more than a decade of miserable work and no profit, this farmer finally about 1966 began
to derive the benefits of new technology in agriculture. Since then and during the period up to the end of 1968 he was given electricity and power connections on which he installed two tubewells and other irrigation facilities. More recently he had bought a tractor and with it tractor-drawn harrow, cultivator and trolley. He sowed large sized plots with new varieties of wheat, maize, potato and other crops, and double cropped most of his farm, making a third crop each year in melons and some vegetables, making full use of his own assured sources and irrigation. He maintained a permanent labour force of seven men with families, giving them quarters, food, fuel and more with cash payment at the rate of Rs.4.50 a day, for two reasons: casual labour was unpredictable and especially hard to obtain in peak seasons like sowing and harvesting and then it would be expensive too. He stressed, however, the special advantages of having permanent workers able to learn and execute dependably the increasing technical practices in agriculture such as managing proper water distribution, fertilizer application and farm machinery. His marketed surplus had risen so steadily that
he had cash income sufficient to complete a spacious compound and attractive large house, as well as install or improve various agricultural equipment and storage facilities. He sent his children to school and college far away from Tarai.

**Case No. 2.**

The next respondent was originally a resident of district Multan, when they learnt of riots elsewhere and the possibility of their being evicted from there, the respondent was asked to migrate by his relatives but he refused. He wanted to leave with all the other members of the community. Thereafter, his brother and the respondent's son left for Haridwar where he used to go every year during summer. They took most of the family's gold and money with them. Only after fifteen days of their departure, riots overtook their township. The Muslim hooligans were forcibly evicting the Hindus.

The Military forces intervened eventually and escorted the Hindu residents to a Jullundur bound train. At Jullundur they stayed only for 15 days. Ration was disbursed totally free of charges there. Other necessities of life they had to pay
for. The respondent's brother had learnt of the trouble by then and he came to Jullundur to take all his relatives to Haridwar with him. There they stayed at that ashram where they had a room built in memory of their late father. A fruit-shop was started by the respondent in Haridwar using the little money he had with him. Their monthly income from this used to be around Rs.250 to Rs.300/-. Thus, did they pass four years there whereafter they came to Rudrapur where they were allotted land and a plot in lieu of compensation. Most of the refugees from Multan had been settled there and thus they were again together. They had also got four plots in Tanakpur, they got 600 acres of land. It was in pretty good condition. They had left behind 1200 acres of land in Pakistan, where they used to reap harvests of wheat, channa and cotton.

The respondent and his brothers divided among themselves all the property they had got, each getting 300 acres of land, two plots and a portion of the house. The government had also sanctioned a taccavi loan of Rs.500/- for the purchase of
seeds and fertilizers. The respondent had got his son and daughter married off during this time. On 300 acres of his land, the respondent had an orchard of grapes which earned him a lot for these grapes he sold all over the state. He now had two tubewells installed. The attitude of the local people was very helpful and they did a lot for the refugees. The respondent sold his two plots and used the proceeds therefrom to add to his house. His son also had four children by now and he wanted more accommodation to be arranged in the house. But their days changed for the worse again. The respondent's son had gone to Delhi to transport building material from there. He was travelling in a car which had collision with a truck and he was killed on the spot. The respondent's eldest grand-son was a mere boy of 15 at that time. The sudden death of the only son had broken the respondent and he felt himself totally helpless. But his daughter-in-law came to his help, she herself came out of the house to manage the affairs of their agricultural land.

She also undertook the education of her children. They managed thus for 3-4 years after which
the eldest grandson became old enough to lend a
helping hand. Their orchard prospered under the
supervision of the daughter-in-law. The respondent
purchased 50 acres of land at a distance of two
miles from Rudrapur, had two tubewells installed
there and had the incomplete construction of the
house completed, using the profits from the orchard.
The attitude of the locals has further improved,
opines the respondent. Chaudhary Leela Krishan
has emerged as the leader of their community. He
is most helpful to everybody and he is the only
capable leader according to the respondent. The
Congress Party has always been their undisputed
choice and the respondent would like all the members
of his community to vote collectively for the Congress
Party.

Only the Congress Government can run the
nation effectively, that's their belief. Just three
years ago the respondent had arranged the marriage
ceremony of his grand-son. He also has had a Rice
mill installed at Bajpur costing Rs.10 lacs. Now
the affairs of the family are looked after by the
daughter-in-law and the youngest grand-son. The
respondent stays at house, pays daily visits to temple in both mornings and evenings. He has a harvesting machine and also three tubewells at his farm. His two grandsons own their own cars. But still he misses his lost son. However, he consoles himself by saying that was His Will and man is helpless in the face of this.

The respondent is pretty sure that all his life is self-made. If unfortunately, he comes to bad days again, he would still work as hard as he can in his old age now and would try his best to make his life all over again.

Case No.3.
The next respondent had come to Haridwar during summer as he used to do every year. He was blissfully unaware of the dangerous portents which ultimately culminated in communal holocaust leading to their being evicted from the ancestral place. They did have a good deal of their gold with them for the respondent's wife and sisters used to carry all their jewellery with them. They had to stay in Haridwar for about two months. They were putting in at Swami Shankaranand's ashram. They had got
a room built there and they used to stay there every year. With the money they had brought with them, they could barely make both ends meet.

After a great deal of anxiety, they learnt that the other relatives of theirs had migrated to Bikaner. After knowing of them, they too shifted to Bikaner with whatever things they were left with. There they lived at GANGA SHEHAR. The respondent was given free accommodation in a house which was owned by a local seth for whom the respondent used to do accounting assignment at the latter's shop. This house was lying unoccupied. At Bikaner, they stayed for two years. The seth used to pay the respondent Rs.75/- p.m. They had to sell part of their gold gradually to manage to live. Their next place of shifting was Panipat for they came to know of other members of their community having settled there. They sold their remaining gold to set up a flour and cotton mill which they named Sudershen Flour and Cotton Mill. They rented a house in Insar Mohalla, Ward No.12. It was a small house and they had to pay Rs.15/- p.m. as rent. Till 4 p.m. the respondent worked at the Octroi
Post and thereafter he ran the mill. During daytime his father sat at the mill. His monthly income was Rs.65/- p.m. and he used to make about Rs.1000/- p.m. from the mill.

Thus, they lived at Panipat for one year. When the government allotted them 250 acres of land in lieu of compensation at Rudrapur, they shifted there. They were also given a residential plot which was quite big. They sold the flour mill for Rs.250/- and set up another such mill in Maharajpur village near Rudrapur. They utilized the earnings from the said mill and the taccavi loan of Rs.300/- from the government to buy seeds and fertilizers. Since they were dependent wholly on rain and had no tubewells at that time; they did not cultivate the whole land themselves, parts of it they used to give on crop-sharing basis to others to work on. But in 1951 they learnt of the digging of canals which was translated into reality in 1956 when their village received water from a channel. Till then they were at the mercy of the rain Gods. By then they had sold off the flour mill for that was no longer needed. They had earned money enough
to pay greater attention to their land holdings and have a tubewell installed by 1966. This led to further productivity for they could cultivate the whole of their holding. In 1972, they had two more tubewells installed and had also a thresher purchased. They also invested in a tractor. In 1974, they started having a new house built in Rudrapur for their old house did not have a proper location and it was in a lane not wide enough to reach in a car or a tractor. His eldest son had completed his M.B.B.S. by then. The respondent had an imposing clinic built for him at Rudrapur. He also purchased some more land around Rudrapur. This was used exclusively for vegetable-cultivation. Here too, a tubewell was installed. He purchased two more plots again near Rudrapur. He had his younger son and daughter too married well. The respondent feels proud of the fact that at present both his sons own their own cars, they have two bungalows in Rudrapur, alongwith 400 acres of fertile land, two tractors, a thresher and three scooters.

Referring to the attitude of the local residents, the respondent explains how in course of time, it has undergone a virtual metamorphosis. To begin
with, they were hostile for they seemed to resent the fact that their own government was giving the refugees a most-favoured deal, seemingly ignoring those who had all along been there. The allotment of compensation in cash and kind also seemed to provoke the wrath of the local residents. But later as the refugees adapted themselves to their surroundings and came up in life through sheer hard work, the local residents seemed to soften in their attitude and at present the respondent feels that so well are they blended in ties of business as well as personal relationships that it is difficult to see one apart from the other.

All that is the result of his toil, he feels. He had to exert himself fully for this. The respondent has great faith in God and feels that everything was His Will. He shudders to think of all which they have been through. However, if it comes to the worst all over again, he feels he would not resign himself to his fate but would do his utmost to rise to the occasion. He feels sure of surfacing all over again even if he cannot attain this much affluence.
Case No. 4:

The next respondent used to live in Multan before migrating to Rudrapur. In between he stayed at the Kurukshetra camp too. By early 1947 when communal trouble started in other neighbouring cities, they had an inkling of the possibility of their having to migrate from there. Therefore, they had deposited all their money, revolver, gun, swords etc. with the Pakistan government. What triggered off their migration was the merciless murder of a cousin of the respondent's in broad day-light. This led to a panicky atmosphere. People started leaving out of fear. The respondent and his family was lucky to get military escort and thus board a Kurukshetra bound train safely. In Kurukshetra, they rented out a house for Rs. 20/- per month for the womenfolk to live in. The men of family, i.e. the respondent, his brother and father, used to work outside.

The respondent had his son sent to Ambala for higher education. He started doing odd jobs and after making a small capital, opened a ghee-shop. After waiting for 1½ years, they were allotted land and plot at Rudrapur. The plot they got
at Rudrapur was a big one and only two rooms and the kitchen pucca. But after two months only, another refugee filed a case in the Rudrapur Court that the plot they were living in was to be allotted to three claimants whereas the respondent and his brother were the two occupants of that house. The respondent lost the case and after about six months, he and his brother got separate houses. The allotted land to them was quite inadequate. In Pakistan, they had 500 acres of land, where they used to raise crops of wheat, chana and cotton. But they were sanctioned only 200 acres and the two brothers split it between themselves.

The respondent employed persons to till his portion of land. The whole land-holding was not brought under cultivation by them. Rather they ploughed it only according to their need. They raised crops of wheat, chana and cotton. Using the taccavi loan of Rs.400/- which they got from the government, they purchased seeds and fertilizers. At Rudrapur, the respondent's daughter-in-law also found a job earning Rs.150/- per month. His son had completed his LL.B. and his private practice earned him Rs.250/- per month. His daughter-in-
law had taken a job only because she felt bored staying idle at home and she was also interested in working.

The attitude of local residents was very sympathetic for they knew of their sufferings. The respondent had his eldest daughter married in Pakistan itself but the other two daughters had to be married off. He had been handed over the gold, which he had deposited with the Pakistan government before migrating but he had to sell off 50 acres of his land to finance the two marriages. But soon he started making good money from his farms. His son too had over a period flourishing practice. He became a top notch lawyer of Rudrapur. His daughter-in-law had left and she had to stay at home to look after them. The respondent's wife had expired much earlier, having suffered from cancer.

The respondent noticed a further improvement in the attitude of the locals for now they had to deal with members of the erstwhile refugee community. His son, too had many clients among the local residents. The respondent's two grandsons had done
their M.Com. and B.Com respectively. One took a
bank job and for the other the respondent opened
an ice factory. In the beginning, he made a good
earning but soon many new such factories were opened
there and hence the respondent started a poultry
farm too for the grand-son. After sometime, the
respondent's son gave up his legal practice and
he started dabbling in politics. All the members
of the respondent's family are Congress-supporters
for they think Congress to be the only proper party.
The respondent would like all to strengthen the
hands of the Congress leaders. He feels that most
of his people do vote for Congress Party only.

His own community has had some important
Congress leaders. They have always been immensely
cooperative and helpful. During this time the grands-
sons too have got married. He had them properly
educated. Now he does not lack anything. He has
had his house made more convenient. He owns a tractor,
two tubewells, a color T.V., air-conditioners,
a Fiat car. All this he takes to be the result
of the hard work put in by himself and his son.
He acknowledges the role played by God too in their
affluence. God forbid, if they have to face stark poverty again, the respondent feels sure of changing his fate through sheer hard work.

Case No.5:

The next respondent was a resident of Zhang and was living well. They had their own house to live in. They also owned 1200 acres of land and had their godowns filled with grain. They were primarily agriculturists. His father was a nambardar. They used to raise wheat, cotton, chana, and sirsum crops. The respondent and his younger brother were students and their father used to look after the family affairs. Life was quite comfortable for them. They had close contacts with Muslims. There was no illwill or animosity of any sort, but slowly the poison of hatred spread. Hindus and Muslims were at each others throat. The respondent had an inkling of the coming tragedy for one of their close relatives had been brutally assassinated in broad daylight in Zhang. Such cases were frequent occurrence.

The respondent suggested to his brother that they should migrate but he refused and hence the
respondent himself along with his wife, two sons and a daughter left at the pretext of going to Haridwar. He had taken all his gold, clothes and cash with him while leaving. Within one month, the partition was announced and serious communal strife erupted. His brother had to leave Pakistan abruptly and he was in the Jullundur camp from where the respondent took him along with him to Haridwar. Thus they lived for four years in an ashram at Haridwar. The respondent opened up a fruit-shop with the help of the money he had brought. After four years, they learnt of their being allotted two plot in Rudrapur. later they got two more Initially plots, and 600 acres of land. All the houses were Kachcha ones. These they had got in the names of the brothers and their mother. While leaving Pakistan, they had papers of their claim deposited.

To begin with, they had to draw water from a nearby well to irrigate their land for they had no money to have a tubewell installed. There were no takers of their land even if they wanted to sell it. But soon they not only received part of their claim in cash, they were also given some
loan by the government. Now they opened a fire wood shop, the respondent and his nephew together. They invested their earnings in the purchase of seeds and the installation of a tubewell. After 2-3 years when their finances got on an even keel, they disbanded that shop. To arrange the marriages of the girls in the family, 2-3 plots had also to be sold off.

With the passage of time, the financial position eased and they purchased 15 acres of land in near Rudrapur and used it for vegetable-cultivation which proved to be a profitable proposition. They were putting their whole land holdings under plough for irrigation-facilities had increased tremendously after a channel had branched out up to their village. To derive the maximum profit from their holdings, they leased out part of their holdings on crop-sharing basis. A taccavi loan of Rs.500/- from the government facilitated the purchases of seeds and fertilizers. Their hard work bore fruit and soon they could invest their profit into the purchase of two more plots.

The respondent, recalling the manner of their reception by the local residents of the area, explains
that they were sympathetically disposed to the refugees. They could understand the plight of those who were literally uprooted from their native places. The local residents, thus, did not harass the refugees.

Taking back the thread of the story, the respondent recalls how soon their toil on their lands brought them in a financial position comfortable enough for him to purchase a shop for his son where he could deal in insecticides and pesticides. Time passed thus and with a proud gleam in his eyes the respondent, coming to the present mentioned their owning too individual bungalows, one with the elder son and other with the respondent. His elder son had a flourishing business and he gradually bought all the articles of convenience and luxury including a car. His younger son too owns a jeep and a motorcycle. These days he manages their agricultural farm.

The erstwhile refugees mix most unconsciously with the local residents in gatherings social and professional, and there is close intermixing and social interaction. The erstwhile refugees community has come to have quite a few leaders looking after
the needs of the people in general and of the community in particular.

One such leader, the respondent considers Sri Lila Kishan to be the most capable. He is always prepared to give patient attention to those who approach him with their problems. Among organised political parties, Congress(I) has been the most helpful to their community, according to the respondent. People look up to the Congress government for having their aspirations fulfilled. It is the only government which can be assured of its own stability and thus can focus all its energies on the amelioration of the people. The respondent would like all members of his community to vote to strengthen the hands of the Congress leaders. He himself along with his family members has always been voting for the Congress party, and they propose to continue doing that.

The respondent, in his old age now, can not put in much physical work. He still pays regular visits to his farm to oversee things. Most of the time he spends with people of his own age. When asked how he would react if unfortunately he has to face the same hardships again, the respondent
beamed with confidence and asserted that they would work as hard as they can and make headway. Toil with his grace can transform even the most adverse circumstances into a bliss.

To explore the causes of the Punjabi success I asked some pointed questions of my Punjabi respondents. Their responses revealed their perception of themselves as well as of the Bengali refugees whom they regard as abject failures. The Punjabis' accounts emphasize, continuous hard-work, confidence in oneself and their so-called traditional resilience. The Punjabi refugees kept repeating how they worked hard in inhospitable conditions to clear the forest and subsequently to cultivate their lands. For them the Bengali refugees are a good foil. "Look at the Bengalis," In one hand there is biri and in the other Chata (Umbrella), How they are suppose to work. Others say that the Bengali labour is so lazy that even when he is offered a working lunch he prefers to go back to his home for a frugal meal.

The Punjabis also regard themselves as very tough and resilient. Many of them kept telling
me that even if they lose all that they have acquired today, they are prepared to build up their wealth again and they are quite confident of achieving it. Some of them consciously attribute this trait to their collective memory. Coming from a land which had been invaded and ravaged by hordes of conquering foreigners, feel they have acquired an inborn capacity to fight and rise from the ruins.

Some of the Punjabi sikhs relate their success to their simple religion and way of life. According to them Sikhism teaches the following three tenets:

i. Kirat Karo i.e. work to produce
ii. Nam Japo i.e. Be greatful to God.
iii. Vand Chakho i.e. share your blessings and food.

These tenets they regard are simple to follow and give them ample scope for venturing out in new directions without any inhibitions.

The self-image of the Punjabis depicted above has certainly played an important role along with their social background in accounting for their successful adaptation. But in the Rudrapur context they had many other circumstantial factors which
helped the Punjabi refugees. First, it should be mentioned here that the Punjabis could effectively manoeuvre the bureaucracy into acceding to their request. Besides being literate and educated they also knew Hindi which enabled them to gain access and win favours from the various government officers, policemen and others. Further, the Punjabis also displayed a strong sense of communal solidarity. They have formed a powerful voting bloc in the area and on the eve of elections they were able to extract from the then U.P. Chief Minister promises regarding the conferment of proper land rights to them.

Some of the Bengali refugees, however complain that the Punjabis have grown rich by cheating and exploiting them.

Reflecting upon the general nature and way of life of Bengalis, Mr. Pratap Singh popularly known as Pratap Bhaiya (ex-legislator U.P.) and now practising advocate in Nanital Court and the person who had been championing the cause of Bengali refugees.
Bengalis were not used to agriculture but still they were given land. They were used to fish farming in East Pakistan. The mistake of the Government is that it made them owners of land, which in turn they sold off to other community. Now there is a ban on the sale but the major portions have already been sold by them. Government's indifferent attitude and their own leadership exploited them. For instance, there are sub-colonies inside the main colony, in every colony, there is one leader and at the time of election, each one asserts individually and they bargain individually with the political leaders, thereby the leadership becoming rich at the expense of the majority. That is why the majority of Bangalis did not get political consciousness. Even today they feel for West Bengal. The younger generation after becoming graduate, leave their places on account of progressive ideology i.e. left. In turn, they too, become political agents of political parties. Most of the Bengali land is being mortgaged to the 'Land Development Bank' which charges anything between 18 to 20% on the loans, and that is how the Bengali are slowly losing their land. Moreover, the cash loans given either by the government or the allied agencies have played
havoc with them. The loan either has been spent on liquor or on houses. The land which was given to them, some plots were fertile, some were waterlogged and some were absolutely barren. Around 30% have got nothing from the government either in cash or kind, hence they are known as without politically, common man belongs to different opposition blocks and the leadership changes its posture at the cost of common-man as and when the situation suits them. As regards the hard working is concerned, there is no doubt that the Panjabis have surpassed Bengalis”.

In the words of Mr. P.K. Mukherjee who runs a small grocery shop in Dineshpur block.

When we came here, government provided us partly clear land, since it was more or less a jungle. We tried very hard to make it agriculturable. But the seeds, oxen and cart which government promised were not provided at the time when needed desperately. So the local money-lenders came in and advanced us loans at a high premium. In the beginning, the fertility of soil was very less and it was mostly barren. By the time lands became productive, the interest of money lenders had compounded into a
huge amount. So, the loan which we got from government went into paying off the loans of money lenders. Meanwhile, the government loan too mounted and in order to pay back that, perforce, we had to dispose off our lands. This is how slowly and gradually we became landless and pauper.

Well, there are hundreds of thousands of cases mostly pending in the courts and police stations indicate the horrendous State of affairs where the Bengali became a pwan in the hands of Panjabis, bureaucracy, Police and Judiciary. I have selected some specific cases which point out grim details and helplessness of Bengalis. The case of Krishnapad Mullick of village Chandanagar, Post Office Dinesh Pur, Tehsil Gadarpur, Thana Rudrapur is very illustrative. In his own words, "This case relates to Benami land transaction which is in the name of my father Jitendra Mullick and the land record No.is 87/40. What happened when we came here we were allotted 8 acres of land plus 4 acres of Benami land, at Radhakantpur. My field is half a km from the village what happened in 1982, I gave my land i.e. 4 acres to Sardar Tahal Singh and Sukha Singh
of Tanakpur which is half a km. from my village for the purpose of share-cropping. After thrashing and harvesting, we all decided to hire a truck and transport it to the market. I used to stay in my field at night for the purpose of keeping the watch on ripe crops. A night before the decided day of transporting the crops Tahal Singh and Sukha Singh came along with 12 or 15 Sardars around 12.30 A.M. and tied my feet and hands and took me to a nearby deserted place. It was a Chilly-wintery night and three people sat with me with swords and guns in their hands. At around 3 A.M. they took out a stamp paper and asked me to sign on it by pointing their gun at me. I signed it at that time and in the morning I became unconscious, since they had left me alone at that spot, some passers by rescued me. I collected the villagers and told them the happening. We all went to Tahal Singh's house and told him to return the half of the harvested crops, which they had carried away that very night. He promised that he would give me the rightful share day after the morning. On being asked as to why he did this act of shame, he told us frankly that they want this land by hook or crook on being asked to return the signed
paper, he denied having any obtained from me. When I went day after he told me to go immediately. Then along with the Sabhapati, I went to local police station (Dineshpur) and aprised S.H.O. of all the details. He promised to take action and told us that we go back and till the land. When I went to my fields, I found a small hut constructed there. We again went to S.H.O. and he told us that by force we should dismantle the hut and if he comes to me I will see. We all went and demolished the zhuggi. But what happened after that he (Tahal Singh) brought his tractor and ploughed through my land and sowed (Masoor and Jawar) one daroga and a Sepoy also came to our village and had food at my place and reassured me. On subsequent visits when I went to field, he openly threatened me, not to come again since he has got all the right papers from court and that too signed by me in back date. I was scared for my life and didn't dare to visit the field again, upon my subsequent visits to Thana, The S.H.O. Mr. Dixit told me every time he would do something but nothing happened. Later on he was transferred. I was not in a position to go to court since not a grain of rice was left
even to feed my kids. What more they did, that in the false papers they got one Bengali Mr. Khagendranath Goledar of same village as a kind of witness against me that I have sold my land on my own volition. This Bengali is the munshi to the Patwari Mr. Zameel, Tehsil Gadarpur. Evidently, Tahal Singh and Sukha Singh after bribing heavily to patwari manipulated the papers in their favour.

The other case relates to the legal 8 acre which had been allotted to us by the government.

This land is also in my father's name and is scattered at three places. What happened we had borrowed money from Land Development Bank and Dineshpur Sadhan Sahakari Samiti at the rate of 14% per annum on long term instalments. The L.D. Bank and Samiti in principal mortgaged our land in lieu of loan. So when the loan mounted, we decided to sell 2½ acre in village Manza Khotla - 2 K.M. from Dinesh Pur to one Sardar Pritam Singh of Motipur village, 1½ K.M. from Dinesh Pur. This land's number in the records is 155/2. On the mutually decided day of registration which was in Kashipur those days but now in Bajpur, he told my father to accompany him to the Court. For the money, he asked me to accompany
his cousin to Rudrapur to an (Aorthi) in the Mandi. Trusting his words and believing that his son had already gone to Rudrapur to collect money, my father signed the paper in the court. We did not get any money from Rudrapur. In the evening when I told my father that we didn't get a penny, Pritam Singh again promised to take us to Aarthis in the Rudrapur. But in the market the Aarthi refused and he kept assuring us. Then he promised that he would pay back our loan, but only paid Rs.3,000/- to L.D. Bank. Now the officials keep on coming and pressing me for money. I lost my land and the debt remains the same.

He further explains the interesting story of his house. In his own words, "Our house which is in Radhakantpur, a distance of 2 K.M. from Dinesh Pur was in the name of my father. My father, and one of my brother used to stay there. What happened that my father went out of the village for sometime. In the meanwhile the Sabhapati-Adhar Chand Vaid, a nomoshudra of our village, in collusion with my brother decided to sell our house. Sabhapati wanted to give this house to one of his relatives who had no house, so Sabhapati called the Panchayat. Except
my brother who was in collusion with Sabhapati, we all pleaded our case strongly that a joint house cannot be sold or given legally without the consent of all the brothers and father. But the irony of the whole thing is Sabhapati could prevail upon the Sarpanch and Panchayat members who gave the verdict in favour of Sabhapati. The net result is that we had to leave the house. This shows glaringly the cut-throat competition and goondaism prevailing amongst Bengalis who would not hesitate to kill another Bengali for their selfish and ulterior end".

The above case shows clearly the nexus existing between the bureaucracy, court, police and Panjabis. The second part of the case shows that even the real brothers amongst Bengalis do not hesitate to deprive another brother for some pittance.

Another case, is of Mr. Harinder Nath Rai. In his own words, "Most of the people here belong to Khulna district in the erstwhile East-Pakistan. They are peace-loving and have never known to take up even stick or gun. When we came here, the land was barren and the irrigation came up very late. Most of these people meanwhile had to sell their lands
to mahajans who used to charge 12 paisa for a rupee a day. Open goondism aided and abetted by police and judiciary have played an important role in usurping the land of Bengalis. So much so that the land allotted to landless under the 20 point programme was also usurped. While narrating an incident, he says he along with some Bengalis was implicated falsely in a case of murder of Kernal Singh, a Panjabi. The reason being that in my village, I only have got a licensed gun. They thought since this is the only gun in this village let us implicate this person, thereby there won't be any gun left in the village and in future they can attack with impunity".

In the opinion of Dr. D. Nath a practising R.M.O. at Dineshpur village, market the main reasons for the failure of Bengalis as far as successful adjustment is concerned are given below: when we came here:

i. We didn't know Hindi.
ii. We all were illiterates.
iii. Cycle of crops over here was different from the one we left behind.
iv. Since we were illiterates, money lenders and officials all have looted us.
He further cited his own case. That way back in 1957-58, I took loan from the cooperative Seed Store in the form of seeds to the tune of 80 qtl. from Gadarpur. I paid back the loan with interest, but still the amount is standing against my name. I am lucky to have the receipts but in so many other cases, people didn’t keep the receipts with them. So they had to pay, double and sometimes triple the amount for the loan. Till now, government officials are looting us, e.g. for three years, three people of this village filed an application for the artisan tubewell and they all have bribed to the tune of Rs.300 each, but so far nothing has been done from the cooperative Bank. We get manure and seeds, but when we get it, its too late and then farmers sell it off cheaply. Moreover, useless litigation takes away lot of our money. At times, we have to borrow for the court expenses too. Dhirendra Biswas of Chandan nagar’s case is also illustrative enough of the rampant hooliganism unleashed by Panjabis on Bengalis. In his own words, "I had borrowed Rs.7,000/- from Land Development Bank 4 years ago. In order to pay back the loan, I sold 4 acres to Babu Tarafdar of Durgapur - 1 K.M. from here for Rs.8,000/- three
years ago. Since there was 'Mukhtarnama (paper of ownership) in my name, I gave it to him considering he is a Bengali. He did not pay a penny to me and further sold the land to three Sardars. Their names viz - Harpal Singh, Surjeet Singh and Bachan Singh. The first two stay at Rambag while the third one at Khatola. These three Sardars in turn sold to Sardar Gulab Singh of Gadarpur. Gulab Singh also didn't agree to pay a penny. Rest of my land which was 6 acres was usurped by one notorious Kernal Singh who was murdered. What he did, he kidnapped me 2 years ago and kept me in his relative's house say 1 ½ K.M. from here. There at the point of gun he asked me to sign the papers regarding my land. I had to sign it. later on Kernal Singh sold that land to Gulab Singh (Guylati as he is known). In the whole scenario, I didn't get a penny. There was a case- in the court which I lost it, since I did not have money to visit the court or pay to advocates. When I couldn't go, the verdict was declared in favour of Kernal Singh since the matter became one sided.

The list is endless. The cases after cases are full of the details of exploitation of Bengalis.
The case of Satish Chander Mandal of Chandan Nagar is also a pointer toward the state of affairs prevailing in the Tarai area. In his own words, "Upon our arrival, we were allotted land at Prafull Nagar which is 5 K.M. from Dineshpur. Earlier only Bengalis were given land in this village. What happened six years ago, Sardar Kulwant bought the land of one Sudhyno Kumar Mandal whose land was adjoining mine. So naturally Kulwant's land and my land stood in juxtaposition. He started harrassing us in the following way:

i. When any cattle was dead, he would bury it in front of my house and his house was immediately behind ours.

ii. Since there is only one small water channel, he refused to let us have our share of water stating that when he would fulfil his requirements, then only we could have it. He never released water, and our land gradually became barren.

iii. Several times we fought on our children's petty fights.

iv. Moreover, in our riped field, he would unleash his cattles so that they could destroy our crops.
v. Several times, Panchayat was called, but he never cared for their verdict.

vi. Ultimately, we sold our land to Kartar Singh of Lakhipur and the house to Kulwant Singh.

Anil Chand Barai of Dineshpur market says, "No doubt we were given land but soon we mortgaged it to the Panjabis. The basic philosophy was to 'eat today, come what may tomorrow'. And moreover, oxen, carts and seeds were given pretty late. It was purely a jungle land when we came here, so what we could do about this. In our case it was not rehabilitation but again the uprootment'. Amulo Rai of Chandan-nagar, says, that, "Govt. should take impartial view of both the communities. Police, Court, bureaucracy, all side with Panjabis since they can afford to bribe them heavily. Recently, on the confines of my land, a Sardar has planted the trees, and I don't think have the guts to oppose him".

Another case points out to Bengali temperament and their way of life. This was narrated to me by Gauri Dutt Joshi an ex-surveyer of Relief and Rehabilitation department. In his words, "If the Bengali
have the money for evening meal, he won't bother about the labour but instead would keep on playing the cards. In Neta Ji Nagar, I knew a respected Bengali who had five members in his family. What happened that one morning I visited them and found his children hungry, I asked what is the matter, evidently there was no money in the house. I too had no money even then I asked him to accompany me to the next village. There from a shopkeeper, I got him 5 K.G. of rice. While the shopkeeper was in no mood to oblige him, he gave it to him on my credit. In the evening, when I visited the village again, I saw him selling 1 K.G. of rice in order to buy fish. I lost my temper and slapped him. Shows how frivolous, leisure-oriented these people are. Bengalis in general are very-very lazy, Babu Syndrome is very strong. They want to project themselves as Babu, meaning a big person. There is this typical case of Mahendra-Halder of Dinesh Pur who sold 16 acres of land and now is a wage labourer and at times can be seen begging in the market.

As has been earlier pointed out that the cohesiveness of a community could be gauzed through
its voting behaviour pattern. If the community votes en-block for a party or candidate then their consensual pattern would reflect the cohesiveness of the unit. This further would reflect the entire attitude of the community and the community consciousness.

The Bengali voting behaviour pattern reflects the great shism existing in the community. This is owing to the fact that every Bengali harbours the illusory notion that he is the undisputed and the most qualified person to be the spokesman of the community. The result is that a typical Bengali village in the Tarai belt is littered with the spokesman of various types resulting into umpteenth factional groupings within a village.
While it is not possible to authenticate whether the Bengalis lost their land due to reasons they mention it is however clear that the Punjabis have acquired a reputation of being aggressive and unscrupulous. This is corroborated by several officials in the area and by the Buxas who have now come to resent the Punjabis.

But the Bengalis lack of success cannot entirely be laid at the door of the Punjabis. There are instances of internecine factionalism among the Bengalis. Although the Bengalis also trace their ancestry to Kshatriyas way back in history, they are now satisfied with accepting state patronage in the form of scheduled caste status. They always keep harping on their "Sonar Bangla" or Golden Bengal and nostalgically talk about fish delicacies of Bengal. Many of them recount how they went back to West Bengal and Bangla Desh and tried to find some land in the Sunderban area. On failing to obtain anything worthwhile they returned to Rudrapur and again claimed the status of refugees.

When mentioning about the Punjabis and the Bengalis, it is important to mention here
the present position of Buxas, the local tribals.

Before the arrival of displaced communities the Panjabis and Bengalis, Buxas reigned supreme over the entire belt of Tarai. But now their villages at times are juxtaposed to those of Panjabis and Bengalis or at other places are interspersed in them.

The story of the miserable plight of the Buxas begin with the arrival of the displaced communities i.e. Punjabi and Bengalis into the Tarai. Panjabis, through his shrewed and meticulous planning have been usurping the Buxas land although technically no deed of land could be registered in the courts if it belongs to Buxas. But there are enough loopholes in the law. Mortgaging the land is one such which have been tremendously exploited by the Panjabis.

The modus-operandi of the Panjabis are two pronged. In the first one, they would get friendly with Buxas, and would have several drinking sessions with them. Since drinking is an obsession with the Buxas, Panjabis it
seems have exploited to the hilt to their full advantage. They would address the elders of the Buxas family with honorific titles of kinship and in the process would win them over completely. During the period of familiarity, there would normally be several sessions of drinking and eating. Then in a particular drinking session which was already earmarked Panjabis would whip out their pistols or guns and would force the tipsy Buxas to sign the papers regarding mortgazing their land. In the second one, Panjabis and Rai-sikhs have been reported to harvest the ripened crops of Buxas at the dead of night. They would lift their milch cattles and thereby would deprivie the Buxas of their livelihood. These kinds of operation were normally completed during the night.

In so many other instances, anami land which belonged to the village a whole and which was being used as grazing was suddently and foreibly claimed by Panjabis and Rai-sikhs thereby depriving the Buxas their grazing pastures.
There have been several incident of lifting the cattles at night by Rai-sikhs and Panjabis so much so that even when the Buxas located them at the house of Sikhs and Panjabis, they have refused and snubbed them.

One of the Buxa succinctly described the present scenario. That the Panjabis plus the Government officials and the police have openly and shamelessly looted us. Mr. Bibha Singh of village langrabhoj, 6 km. from Rudrapur says that those Buxas who owned land to the tune of 50 to 60 acres ten years ago now owns around 4 to 5 acres. The only principle which operates here is might is right.

Karan Singh of the same village points out how the official apathy is proving ruinous for the Buxas. In the case in which for the Buxas. In the 'There bullock carts were sanctioned for this village, half of the loan was to be converted into subsidy. its almost three months, nothing has happened. Everyday, we the working class works out time, money to go to the block for the carts. The B.D.O. says if we make noise about the delay, then he will not convert the loan into subsidy of 50%. Meanwhile the interest rate is mounting.
Hari Singh Thakur of tilpuri Bari Rai 10 km. from Rudrapur says that, 'Arpund 10 years ago, I had sixteen cattles i.e. 12 buffaloes and 4 male buffaloes. One night, all were stolen and I reported the matter to police. They told me first to investigate myself and only then they would do something. They never did anything that's how I was completely ruined.

In other instance, he says that, 'I had a licensed gun which was stolen and I reported the matter to the thaha incharge. Thieves were caught and the gun recovered. So far, I didn't get my gun. They demanded heavy bribe which I couldn't pay. So the gun is lying with the police. I have taken various rounds of officials but nothing so far has happened.

Thus the above examples are a pointer as to who the Buxas have been gradually loosing in terms of land and cattles. Buxas do not accuse the Bengalis of this kind of plundering since they too are the victims of this terror unleashed by the Rai-sikhs and Panjabis with the connivance of government officials. The net result is that
the Buxas have been forcibly edged out and driven to the verge of starvation and being the landowners have now become landless. Buxas own weakness for alcohol is partly responsible for their present state of affairs. They seems to have mortgaged their land at their own volition in majority of the cases.

Buxas in general are very simpletons and are influenced by the myths, magic and totemic worship. This kind of blind faith owes more or less to the vast illiteracy prevailing amongst them. This has further conditioned their attitude which makes them totally fatalistic in nature. They seem to have accepted injustices or usurpation of their lands and live stock with traditional forbearance and patience. This has resulted into wreaking havoc on the Buxa way of life and they find themselves today at the threshold of nowhere.