CHAPTER-IV

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF TIBETAN REFUGEES IN INDIA

This chapter explores educational experiences of Tibetan refugees in India. It looks at the nature of access that Tibetan refugees have to school, the categories of schools that cater to them and social background of children enrolled in them. It looks at the place of Tibetan and English language and textbooks used in these schools. It also explores the curriculum and pedagogy in different schools, including the school ethos. The chapter is based on in-depth interviews with Tibetan youth on their educational experiences. Based on available data and research, a broad comparative study of the diverse perspectives on education and educational experiences of Tibetan youth from Tibetan and non-Tibetan schools in India is attempted. Perspectives of school administrators, teachers and officials in the Tibetan Government in Exile and CTSA, Government of India have also been included.

Access to Education

Tibetan children in India attend three types of schools in India: a) Tibetan Monastic Schools b) Non-Tibetan Schools c) Tibetan Secular Schools The focus of the study as mentioned in chapter three is: Tibetan secular schools and non-Tibetan schools. According to the Department of Education, Central Tibetan Administration about 75% of the school-age (6-17) Tibetans in exile receives school education within the Tibetan school network. About 15% Tibetan students of this age group attend non-Tibetan schools. The remaining 10%, as mentioned in the third chapter, may be enrolled in various Tibetan monastic institutions (DOE, CTA report 2004:8).

a) Tibetan Monastic schools: includes monasteries and other ecclesiastical institutions providing religious education to young children trained to grow up as priests or lama-monks. A definite change can be seen in exile with decline in the number of

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1 For the purpose of the study, 'secular' schools stands for regular schools (following CBSE syllabus) for Tibetan children in India.
youth opting for religious/monastic life. As pointed out above, only 10% of Tibetan children in the age-group 6-17 attend monastic schools (DOE, CTA report 2004:8). According to respondents in the study, the reasons for decline in number of students opting for monastic schools are “declining interest” in monkhood due to “a lot of discipline” that it involves for monks. “They have to take certain vows”, “freedom of thought is not there” for them and that they “cannot even look at women...” (Tamdin; Monlam, T.S, 2006).

Respondents in the study observed that amongst the Tibetans, it is considered ‘auspicious’ if even one child in the family can take up monkhood. They also agreed upon a decline in the number of Tibetan youth taking up monastic studies. Out of the thirty students in the study, however, only 6 respondents had siblings who had opted for monkhood. There were also cases where they had been voluntarily ‘given away’ by their families to monasteries for monkhood or when they were claimed by monasteries to be reincarnations of lamas called ‘rinpoches’ (Tsechu, N.T.S, 2006). Five out of six of the respondents, whose siblings opted for monkhood, were products of Tibetan schools, while one was a product of a non-Tibetan school. Three of the students’ siblings were also doing Buddhism-related religious studies or training to be translators/interpreters in the Tibetan Government in Exile (two of these respondents were from Tibetan schools and one from a non-Tibetan school).

b) Non-Tibetan Schools: have been broadly sub-divided into two categories for the purpose of the study: Christian Missionary/Convent schools and Indian public schools. Respondents in the study had attended such schools in parts of north-east (Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Shillong, Gangtok etc), north-west (Mussoorie, Nainital etc) and South India (Coonoor, Bangalore etc).

c) Tibetan (secular) schools: include schools run by the CTSA, an autonomous body under MHRD, Government of India. It includes Sambhota Tibetan Schools Association (STSA) schools run by the Department of Education, Tibetan Government in Exile. It also includes schools run by autonomous agencies: Tibetan Children’s Village (TCV), Tibetan Homes Foundation (THF) and schools run by other autonomous organizations. Respondents in the study had attended such schools in parts of North-East
(Tezu, Arunachal Pradesh etc), north-west (Dharamsala, Dalhousie, Gopalpur in Himachal Pradesh etc) and South India (Bylakuppe in Karnataka etc).

The table (Table: 1.1) gives a picture of the different kinds and total number of Tibetan schools in exile in India, Bhutan and Nepal. CTSA schools have the highest number of schools for Tibetans (28). There are (18) TCV schools, (16) STSA schools (4 of these schools are in Bhutan) and (2) THF schools. There are also (4) schools administered by other autonomous organizations in India. Other than Tibetan schools in India, there are also (13) SLF schools in Nepal administered by an autonomous body called Snow Lion Foundation (SLF).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Category</th>
<th>Total Number of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CTSA</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCV</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STSA</td>
<td>12 (India)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 (Bhutan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLF</td>
<td>13 (Nepal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THF</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(DOE, CTA report 2004:13)

While there are a significant number of Tibetan schools at the pre-primary levels (89), there is lesser number of schools with senior secondary levels (15) from where Tibetan students complete their schooling. Interviews with respondents' show that, the lack of availability of senior secondary schools seems to result in multiple shifting of schools. Students have to change their schools, in case their schools do not have secondary or senior secondary classes (See list of Tibetan schools in annexure: 3.1 and 4.1).

Another problem, which seems to result in shifting of schools, is that not all of the senior secondary schools offer three streams: Arts, Science and Commerce. Students completing 10th grade in TCV schools, for instance, have to therefore shift to TCV Gopalpur in case their preference is Arts, to TCV Bylakuppe in case of Commerce and TCV Dharamsala, in case of Science.

School Enrolment: available data (of the year 1998) shows that the Tibetan school network has a total enrolment of about 27,865 students. Table 2 shows the
distribution of students in Tibetan schools. Maximum numbers of 12008 students seem to be enrolled at primary level (1-5) in Tibetan schools while the total number of students at the senior secondary level is only 2006. Data for Tibetan students in non-Tibetan schools in the country is not available.

Table 2.1: Distribution of Students in Tibetan Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school (KG)</td>
<td>3207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary (1-5)</td>
<td>12008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle (6-8)</td>
<td>7084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary (9-10)</td>
<td>3560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Secondary (11-12)</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27865</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: http://www.tcewf.org/pubhcatlons/csr/mdex.html)

As can be seen in Table: 3.1, at the senior secondary school level, participation rate, however, seems to fall to 76%, followed by 40% at the college/vocational level. The participation rate of girls is shown as much higher than the boys at the middle, senior secondary and college/vocational levels (see table: 3.1).

Data about retention and drop-out rates was not available. According to the Department of Education, Tibetan Government in Exile, collecting data is difficult because a large percentage of the students of these schools are arrivals from Tibet who are directly admitted at various grades throughout the school year. Such admissions at different school levels mask the dropouts when an attempt is made to compute the same (cited in Current Status Report, 1998 http://www.tcewf.org/publications/csr/index.html).

Table: 3.1 School Participation Rate in Tibetan Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Male%</th>
<th>Female%</th>
<th>Total%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>(Pre-primary)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>(Primary)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-13</td>
<td>(Middle)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>(Secondary)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>(Senior secondary)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>(College/vocational)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: http://www.tcewf.org/publications/csr/index.html)

Location of Schools: The schools for Tibetans are located mainly in Tibetan settlements. They are also located at places that have a sizeable population of Tibetans in
hilly and sparsely populated areas in states like Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, West Bengal, Karnataka etc (see annexure: 3.1 for list of schools, location of schools, highest class, total number of students). The box sheds light on the general location of Tibetan schools in India. Respondents interviewed in the study were residents from some of the following places (see box).

**General Location of Tibetan Schools in India**

| CST Schools: Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Karnataka |
| TCV Schools: Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi |
| STSA Schools: Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand |
| THF Schools: Uttarakhand, Others: Delhi, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir |

Apart from similarities amongst Tibetan schools that will be discussed later in the chapter, some differences can also be noted amongst Tibetan schools in India. According to research studies, certain categories of Tibetan schools, for instance, TCV schools are “different” or “much better” as compared to the other Tibetan schools in terms of the quality of education and facilities available. There is a need, therefore, to look at the different categories of Tibetan schools and the students who attend these schools. The place of origin/birth as well as socio-economic status (SES) of parents, quality of education and medium of instruction appear to be some of the factors that influence choice of schools of Tibetan students in India.

**Categories of Students:** Students who go to Tibetan schools in India can be categorized into those born in India and those born outside India (Tibet, Nepal etc.). Those born outside India includes some who have come on their own, usually with a group of Tibetan strangers to India, others were brought by family members/relatives and left behind in India. It includes some who came at an early age (3-4 yrs) and attended school for the first time in India. It also includes those who came later when they were a little older (above the age of ten and below the age of seventeen) and have attended school both in Tibet and in India.

Interviews with Tibetan students, administrators in the Department of Education, Tibetan Government in Exile and TCV school administrators as well as available secondary literature also suggest that children born in Tibet and/or neighbouring
countries like Nepal and orphan and destitute children mainly study in Tibetan schools. Tibetan children born in India also attend these schools along with a very small percentage (10%) of Indian students. Of the thirty students interviewed, nine students had been born outside India (six students were born in Tibet, two were born in Nepal and one had been born in the Indo-Bhutan border). The remaining twenty-one had been born in India. All the nine students born outside India had attended Tibetan schools; six of those born in India had attended Tibetan schools while fifteen had attended non-Tibetan schools (see table: 4.1).

The Tibetan children born in Tibet, who come to India for their school education, are called ‘New Arrivals’ or “Sanjors”. Data/statistics are not available about the exact numbers of these students, however, according to Liang, “for the past five years, the average number of refugees who have been coming to India is in the 3000 range. More than 50% of these new arrivals are children under the age of fifteen. Increase in the number of new arrivals is the direct result of easing of the Chinese policies in the post-cultural revolution period. There are now thirteen established routes through which Tibetan people escape to their freedom in exile in India. Most of the new arrivals cross Tibet in India during the winter months (Dec-Feb) because during this time the snow is at its most treacherous and most of the Chinese guards are withdrawn to safer places” (Liang 1999: 18).

Respondents born outside India and educated in Tibetan Schools: The accounts of the nine respondents who were born outside India but were educated in Tibetan schools in India, throws light on the fact that Tibetan children from the age-group of 3-12yrs largely come from the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) along with Nepal, Bhutan etc to India to study in Tibetan schools. Respondents from TAR said that they had come to India in groups of around 14-27 persons, led by a ‘guide’. Some of them had been accompanied by their parents or relatives, who got them admitted to the schools and then travelled back to Tibet. On reaching India, the Tibetan Government in Exile (through its Tibetan refugee centers in Nepal and India), sent them to different Tibetan schools, after a much-awaited meeting with the Dalai Lama.

Children above the age of ten and below the age of seventeen, it seems, are categorized by the administration as “overage” children and are sent to a school
especially meant for them -TCV Suja in Himachal Pradesh. Some of these “overage” children also seemed to have studied in schools in TAR, before coming to India. Children below the age of ten are sent to other Tibetan schools located in different parts of the country. 2 of the respondents from Tibet had been brought by their parents to India (while 1 respondent had been brought by her uncle) and left behind in Tibetan schools. 3 of them had come with a group of Tibetan people, led by a ‘guide’ from Tibet. All of them, except one (whose parents had passed away) had come with the consent of their parents (see Table: 4.1) (see box).

In most cases, parents of respondents seem to have heard about the schools through relatives and friends in TAR, Nepal, Bhutan etc. A respondent from TAR said that a relative had told his mother about “such schools in India” and she “agreed” to send him (L.T, T.S, 2006) Another respondent said that, her parents came to know of “The Dalai Lama’s schools in India” through an uncle who had traveled to India. Before that they “knew nothing”(T.Y1, T.S, 2006).

The respondents gave a number of reasons for their parents having sent them to India. They said that their parents wanted them to grow up as “genuine Tibetans” under the care of their ‘god-king’, The Dalai Lama. Parents, it seems, also felt that their children were in danger of losing their Tibetan identity by receiving a “Chinese education” in Tibet. For parents, a “proper education” was also seen as one that was based in Tibetan language, culture and identity. As this was “not available in Tibet”, they were keen that their children receive it in India. Studies also state that most of the parents send their children across for a “better education” in India since most of them do not have the chance of a regular education in Tibet (Liang 1999: 18).
**Route to India-I**

“I came to India from Tibet in 1992. There are two ways of entering India. The more difficult and dangerous way is through the Shagonpola pass. 90% of the common people come through this pass. I came through this pass with a group of 22 people. In this group, I was the youngest. It took us 22 days of walking during night and sleeping during daytime to reach Nepal. To sustain us, each of us had tsampa (parched barley flour) mixed with sugar and chura (made of yak milk) with us. We used to ‘make’ water by trying to warm snow with the help of sunlight. This was a difficult task as sunlight used to be pale. We couldn’t make fires, as it would attract the attention of Chinese soldiers and we could get caught. We reached Nepal but were caught by the Nepal police and put into prison for six days. We were released when people from the Tibetan Reception Centre, Nepal came to secure our release. We were sent to Buddhist Vihar in Delhi and then to Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh for an audience with The Dalai Lama. After this, I was sent to TCV Suja in Himachal Pradesh for my education” (T.W, T.S, 2006).

**Route to India-II**

T.J’s parents had passed away and he was living with his married brother’s family in Lithang, East Tibet. He remembers his mother telling him when he was eight that they had been “rich” before the Chinese occupation in 1959. The “situation changed after that”. Their “house was set on fire and they lost all their wealth”. At eleven years of age, he met a monk scholar who “encouraged and inspired” him to go to India and study for Tibet’s cause. He ran away from home to Lhasa, Central Tibet, with money saved over time. For three months, he stayed in Lhasa with a person from his village. He started his journey to India with a group of fourteen people, in winter, with a ‘guide’ to guide them through snow covered mountains. The journey took 37 days of continuous walking, with the ‘guide’ losing his way, which discouraged many who wanted to go back. He also missed his elder brother. He, however, persevered, as he wanted to come to the land of “Jagar” (“White people”) from the land of “Jana” (“Black people”) “as the Chinese are called in Tibet”. On reaching India, the Tibetan Government in Exile sent him to the TCV Suja School, near Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh to attend “Opportunity Class” meant for newcomers from Tibet “to catch up” with other students (T.J, T.S, 2006).

One such student born in Tibet said that he was secretly “smuggled” to India by his parents to study, as there was “no scope in Tibet” for a proper education based on Tibetan culture and religion. “My parents sent me when they got to know that The Dalai Lama is running schools for the future seeds of Tibet in India”, he observed. He also said that he was sent to receive an education based on Tibetan culture and language, as it was “not available in TAR”. He observed that his parents have “experienced and seen what Tibet has become with their own naked eyes and have strong feelings, so sent me to India and not to a Chinese medium school” (T.W, T.S, 2006). One of the respondents
mentioned that the main reason for sending the children from TAR is “to ensure that their children do not lose their identity and their language” which makes them take the decision of taking the perilous journey.

Some parents also desired that their children contribute to safeguarding Tibetan Buddhism in India. As one respondent noted, “my parents sent me to enable me to get blessings from His Holiness the Dalai Lama (“whose existence I was never even aware of at that time, I did not know who he was as I was never told”) (T.Y1, T.S, 2006). Another said, “No parent wants to separate his child from him for twelve years...they did it because of their passion and belief in Tibetan Buddhism” (which is seen to be under threat of survival in erstwhile Tibet) (T.W, T.S, 2006).

Weak financial condition of his single mother was also referred to as one of the reasons, by a respondent from Nepal, for his being sent alongwith his siblings to India (Tsetan, T.S, 2006).

**Tibetan students born in India and educated in Tibetan Schools:** Tibetan students born in India also attend Tibetan schools. Six of the respondents in the study were born in India and went to Tibetan schools to study (see table: 5.1). Financial constraints of parents was said to be a major reason for their being sent to Tibetan schools to study, as CTSA schools supposedly impart education that is “free”. They said that, they were sent to Tibetan schools as their parents “could not afford” to send them to convent schools.

Other than financial constraints, however, quality of education imparted in some of these schools (especially TCV schools) was also suggested as one of the factors for studying in these Tibetan schools. In an interview, an administrative official of TCV Schools disagreed with the opinion that “only those who are from Tibet or are poor seek admission in Tibetan schools”. He said that TCV schools are of “good quality” and that there is an “increasing demand” for it amongst well-off Tibetans also. Preference, however, he said, is given to children from Tibet, orphans and destitute children\(^2\), as the schools have been set up specifically for them (TSO1, T.S, H.P, 2006).

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\(^{2}\) To avail free-of-cost education in TCV schools, two letters are required from the welfare officers and Tibet-Freedom Movement office in present in all Tibetan settlements that are knowledgeable about the economic condition of each family in the settlements and can thus verify the same (TSO1, T.S, H.P, 2006).
Parents of students not belonging to destitute, orphan families etc also seem to face difficulties in getting their wards admitted to these schools. A respondent in the study referred to her father being turned away by TCV school authorities, for herself and her brother’s admission when they were in the 2nd standard on grounds that he could “afford” their education elsewhere. The school authorities, it seems, could not take them as their “seats were limited and first priority was to be given to students from Tibet” and those who were “poor”. Her father then got them admitted to a “good” Public (non-Tibetan) school in Mussorie (Chime, N.T.S, 2006).

Reference can also be made to studies that note that only the “rich” manage to get their children admitted to TCV residential schools. It is observed that “rich businessmen and those working in the Tibetan offices of the exile government” send their children to TCV residential schools to a “greater extent than the inhabitants of the settlements, orphans and children of the poor parents”. While the schools were founded for them, they “cannot obtain a place in them” (Goldstein-Kyaga 1993:121). Reference is also made to the feeling amongst the Tibetans born in India, that it is “very difficult” for those them to obtain admission into the TCV’s unless one’s “parents work for the government” (Liang 1999: 46). At the same time, however, it is also accepted that pupils of poor parents also study in the same schools (Goldstein-Kyaga 1993:121).

Other reasons given by respondents for going to Tibetan schools were: accessibility/availability of schools (near Tibetan Settlements etc), “good” quality of TCV schools, presence of acquaintances/ guardians in a school, familiarity and community usage of the schools etc. A respondent born and brought up in a Tibetan agricultural settlement in Bylakuppe, Karnataka, for instance, said that she did her schooling from 2 Tibetan schools located in this settlement: CST CVP Bylakuppe (1st-10th) and the CST Bylakuppe School (11th–12th in Humanities). She has five siblings, all of them also went to the same schools. She said that they went to these schools as they were “near the settlement” and also because these schools are “meant for Tibetans—everybody goes there” (Kungsang, T.S, 2006).
Table 4.1: Respondents born outside India and educated in Tibetan Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.o.</th>
<th>Name of Respondent</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Accompanied by relatives/alone/in a group</th>
<th>Tibetan Schools attended (at entry and completion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>T.Y1* F</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kombo, Tibet</td>
<td>Came with uncle (left behind)</td>
<td>Upper TCV, Dharamsala, H.P (1-12) and TCV Gopalpur, H.P (11-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>T.Y2 F</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lhasa, Tibet</td>
<td>Came with mother (left behind)</td>
<td>Upper TCV, Dharamsala, H.P (1-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>N.D F</td>
<td></td>
<td>Zhangmu, Tibet</td>
<td>Came with father (left behind)</td>
<td>THF, Mussoorie (1-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>T.W M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lhasa, Tibet</td>
<td>Came in a group (with other Tibetans)</td>
<td>TCV Suja, H.P (1-10) Upper TCV, Dharamsala, H.P (11-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>T.J M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lithang, Tibet</td>
<td>Came in a group (with other Tibetans)</td>
<td>TCV Suja, H.P (1-9) TCV Gopalpur, H.P (10+2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>T.L M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lhasa, Tibet</td>
<td>Came in a group (with other Tibetans)</td>
<td>TCV Suja, H.P (1-9) TCV Gopalpur, H.P (10+2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Tenzin Pasang F</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kathmandu, Nepal</td>
<td>Came with grandmother (left behind)</td>
<td>THF, Mussoorie (1-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Tenzin Tsetan M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kathmandu, Nepal</td>
<td>Came with aunt (left behind)</td>
<td>TCV Upper, Dharamsala, H.P (Nursery), TCV School in Patlikuhl, H.P (1-8), TCV Bylakuppe, Karnataka (9-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Tenzin Monlam M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phuntsokling (Indo-Bhutan border) (Parents now settled in Tibetan settlement, Dehradun)</td>
<td>N.A (parents in India)</td>
<td>TNMF School Clement Town, UA (Nursery-2), Monastery (5-6 yrs), STS Dekyiling School, UA (5-6), CST, Mussoorie (7-12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Names of the six respondents born in Tibet has been given as initials on their request for confidentiality*
Table 5.1: Respondents born in India and educated in Tibetan Schools in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name of Respondent</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Place of birth in India</th>
<th>Tibetan Schools attended (at entry and completion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>T. Yangzom</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Dehradun, Uttarakhand</td>
<td>Herbertpur Camp School, H.P (1-5), CST, Paonta Sahib, H.P (6-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kungsang</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Bylakuppe, Karnataka</td>
<td>TCV, Bylakuppe, Karnataka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>T. Dechen</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Dharamsala, H.P</td>
<td>Tibetan Day School (1-4), Dharamsala (5-10), TCV Gopalpur, H.P (11-12), Upper TCV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tenzin Tamdin</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Dharamsala, H.P</td>
<td>TCV McLeodganj Day school (Nursery), TCV Putlikuhl, H.P (1-8), TCV, Bylakuppe (9-10), Upper TCV, Dharamsala, H.P (11-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tensing Sayang</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Kohlapur, Maharashtra</td>
<td>CST Sataun, HP (1-5), CST Paonta Sahib, H.P (6-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tenzin Gatop</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>Yongling day school (nursery), TCV day school (1-3&lt;sup&gt;n&lt;/sup&gt;), Lower TCV, Dharamsala (2-10&lt;sup&gt;n&lt;/sup&gt;), TCV Gopalpur, H.P (11&lt;sup&gt;n&lt;/sup&gt; – 12&lt;sup&gt;n&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents born in India and educated in Non-Tibetan Schools: The non-Tibetan schools that respondents in the study had attended were located at: Uttarakhand (Mussoorie, Dehradun, Nainital), West Bengal (Darjeeling, Kalimpong), Arunachal Pradesh (Tezu), Sikkim (Gangtok), Delhi, Tamil Nadu (Coonoor, Bangalore). All these schools are either affiliated to the I.C.S.E Board of Education or the C.B.S.E Board of Education (see Table: 6.1).

Tibetans who send their children to study in non-Tibetan schools, it seems, are better placed economically as compared to those who send their wards to study in Tibetan schools. This is because only the former, are able to pay the “expensive tuition fees” charged in these schools. As Tibetan schools provide subsidized education (which is ‘free’ in case of poor students and students from Tibet), they are preferred by those unable to afford non-Tibetans schools.
Table: 6.1 Respondents born in India and educated in Non-Tibetan Schools in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name of Respondent</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Place of Birth in India</th>
<th>Non-Tibetan Schools attended (at entry and completion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dawa Dolkar</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Nainital, Uttaranchal</td>
<td>All Saints College, Nainital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chimi</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vadodara, Gujarat</td>
<td>St Claire’s Convent School, Mussoorie (1-5), Mussoorie Public School, Mussoorie (6-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Namdon</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Darjeeling, W.B</td>
<td>Loreto Convent, Darjeeling (KG-12th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sonam Yangzom</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Darjeeling, W.B</td>
<td>Himalayan Nursery, Darjeeling (nursery-2), Vidya Vikash Academy, Darjeeling (3rd –5th), Loreto Convent (6th -12th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dickyi Ongmu Bhutia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Gangtok, Sikkim</td>
<td>Kyi-di-Khang school, Gangtok (nursery-10th), Paljor Namgyal Girls School, Gangtok (11-12th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tenzin Dawa Bhutia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Darjeeling, W.B</td>
<td>Himalayan Nursery, Darjeeling (nursery-2), Loreto Convent (KG-12th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chokpa Bhutia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Darjeeling, W.B</td>
<td>Christian School, Darjeeling (nursery), Mountain Home School, Coonoor (1-12th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jigme Yeshi</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Darjeeling, W.B</td>
<td>Bethany School, Darjeeling (nursery-2nd), St Joseph’s School, North Point, Darjeeling (3rd-12th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jigme Dadol</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Chitray, near Darjeeling</td>
<td>Himalayan Nursery, Darjeeling (nursery-2), Vidya Vikash Vidyalaya, Darjeeling (3rd–10th), St Josephs, North Point, Darjeeling (11th–12th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tenzin Topgyal</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Kalimpong, W.B</td>
<td>St Augustine, Kalimpong (KG-12th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tenzin Phungkhang</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Tender feet (pre-school), Bluebells International School, Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tenzin Dakpa Bhutia</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Kalimpong, Gangtok</td>
<td>Joybells, Gangtok (nursery-1), Bahai School (LKG), Tashi Namgyal Academy, Gangtok (1st– 12th)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SES of respondents' parents: Interviews with respondents also throw light on the distinction between Tibetan schools and non-Tibetan schools with regard to the socioeconomic status of parents of children enrolled in these schools (see table: 7.1).
Table: 7.1 Socio-Economic Status of Respondents’ Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES (occupation) of parents</th>
<th>Students from Tibetan Schools</th>
<th>Students from Non-Tibetan Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business (garments/handicrafts shops, hotels etc)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweater-seller</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator (Tibetan Govt in exile), Tibetan Medical Astro-Institute (TMAI) Delhi</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAR Govt. employee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt. of India (Jr. Engineer, PWD)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery-shop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant in monastery</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant in old-age-home, London</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The major occupation of parents of respondents (who attended Tibetan schools) was mostly sweater-selling (5), followed by farming (4) and business (garments/handicrafts shop etc) (3). Only one (1) was a TAR government employee and (1) was running a grocery shop. A respondent’s mother was also working in an old age home in UK (but he was not receiving any financial support from her due to her financial problems and was being supported by the TCV school he had attended).

9 respondents (who attended non-Tibetan schools) had parents who were into business (garments/handicrafts shop, hotel etc) (In 2 of these households, while one parent was running a garment shop, the other was a teacher and a businessman in Japan respectively). Other parental occupations were: PWD, Jr Engineer, Govt of India (1), Accountant in Monastery (1), in charge of Tibetan Medical Astro Institute (1), teacher (1), sweater seller (1), farmer (1) (also was supported by a son working as Mechanical engineer aboard). The socio-economic status of the parents of these respondents, therefore, seems to be relatively better than those who attended Tibetan schools. This aspect needs to be explored further.
The non-Tibetan schools that students in the study were enrolled in also seemed to be charging a much “higher” tuition fees (accompanied by boarding and lodging fees in residential schools), as compared to Tibetan schools (see annexure: 11.3 for examples).

Respondents, including officials at CTSA, Delhi also suggested that it is the relatively well-off who go to non-Tibetan schools. The officials noted that, “All the upper classes, middle classes and whomsoever can afford it send their children to English medium, Indian public schools and/or Convents”. They noted that “only the lower middle and lower classes of the Tibetan community i.e. sweater sellers, farmers etc send their children to Tibetan schools”. They said that even such parents are “forced” to send their children to Tibetan schools due to the “pressure” of the Tibetan Government in Exile (to send their children to Tibetan schools) to preserve their culture. They held the belief that, despite sending their children to Tibetan schools, the “temptation/desire for parents to change the school”, still exists (INDO1, 2, 3,CTSA, Delhi, 2006). Other reasons given by respondents for the preference of their parents for Non-Tibetan schools was the “English-medium”, “good quality” education that they believe is provided in such schools. The respondents observed that Tibetan schools (except TCV schools) are “not good” and that the “faculty is not up-to-date” in these schools.

The loss of English language skills in such schools is also considered a drawback. Erapeni Ezung’s study titled ‘Women in Exile: Tibetan Women Refugee in India’ also mentions (citing Tibetan girls in Delhi) the quality of education of non-Tibetan schools saying that “Tibetan children whose parents can afford to send them to Indian schools do much better than those who passed out from Tibetan schools”(Erapeni 2004:64).

Most of the students attending non-Tibetan schools in the study (11/15) come from the Northeast region of India. The reasons given for this by respondents in the study was the prevalence of “better” (non-Tibetan) schools run by Christian Missionaries and/or Indian public school authorities in these regions, as compared to Tibetan schools.

A respondent, for instance, said that there are many (non-Tibetan) schools in Darjeeling, which provide “good education” such as St Josephs (North Point), St Pauls’, Dr Grahams’ Homes, Loreto Convent etc. These are “considered to be brand ambassadors of western education where future minds are produced”, he says. He said that his father sent him to this school, as “the CST school in Darjeeling, particularly the
faculty was not considered to be that good", despite providing “free education” and the administrator of the CST school at the time was supposed to be a “very corrupt man” (Yeshi, N.T.S, 2006).

Respondents referred to their being sent to non-Tibetan schools, as they are “the best and most advanced”, have “better teachers” and provide “better education”. A respondent, for instance said that “what we learn in class 8th, they learn in class 10th”. The “quality of education” therefore, seems to be the main reason for these children being sent to such schools (Bhutia C, N.T.S, 2006).

Another reason given was the fact that students from non-Tibetan schools “get into better colleges”. They also get “better jobs outside Tibetan community”. The reason given for this was that these schools are “English medium- with no Tibetan allowed in class” which is said to be an advantage as it “improves English speaking skills, gives confidence” (Dawa Bhutia, N.T.S, 2006).

School atmosphere and ethos and school culture of non-Tibetan schools was also cited as another reason. A respondent, for instance, said that his parents wanted him to get a “good quality education” in a school with a “better atmosphere” that was “metropolitan” or “partly Tibetan and partly modern” (Dakpa, N.T.S, 2006).

Respondents born in India and educated in both Tibetan and Non-Tibetan Schools: There are instances of siblings in the same family being sent to both Tibetan and non-Tibetan schools. This reflects, to some extent, on the parental strategies to balance aspirations for fulfilling their ‘duties’ of preservation of Tibetan culture as well as desires for ‘modern’ education for their children. Reasons given by respondents were the desire of the parents to send “at least one” child to a Tibetan school to receive “Tibetan education” to “preserve Tibetan culture” (Bhutia D, N.T.S, 2006). In some of the respondents’ cases, it can also be seen that the eldest child was sent to a Tibetan school rather than the younger siblings. The reason for this, according to a respondent is

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3 Examples that can be cited in this context: A respondent’s elder sister was sent to a Tibetan school, Upper TCV, Dharamsala while he went to Bluebells International School, Delhi (Phungkhang, N.T.S, 2006). One respondent had one of her sisters being sent to a Tibetan school, Upper TCV, Dharamsala, while she and three of her other sisters went to non-Tibetan schools in Gangtok, Sikkim (Bhutia D, N.T.S, 2006). One respondent went to a non-Tibetan school in Nainital while two of her brothers went to Tibetan schools (Dolkar, N.T.S, 2006); one respondent went to a non-Tibetan school in Shillong for his Plus-two while four of his brothers went to Tibetan schools (Tsering, N.T.S, 2006).
the desire of parents to “protect” the younger child in the family. The respondent observed that his elder sister was sent to a Tibetan school instead of him as she “was elder” and his mother “might have wanted to protect” him from the “harsh life” in Tibetan residential schools where they need to “wash dorm floors etc and do everything on their own” (Phungkhang, N.T.S, 2006). 3 of the respondents had initially attended Tibetan schools but later shifted to non-Tibetan schools in the study (see box).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Respondent</th>
<th>Place of Birth in India</th>
<th>Tibetan School at Entry and Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tsechu</td>
<td>Bir, H.P</td>
<td>Bir Primary School (nursery and1), TNMF School, Clement Town, UA (2nd-10th), Carman School, Dehradun (11th-12th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamphel Tsering</td>
<td>Tezu, Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>CST, Tezu, A.P (nursery-8th), CST Dalhousie, H.P (9th-10th), Army School, Shillong (11th-12th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenzing Thupten</td>
<td>Ooty, Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>CST, Chowkur (nursery-4), Mountain Home (5th-7th), Baldwin Boys School, Bangalore (8th-10th), St Paul’s, Darjeeling (11th 12th)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 of the respondents had been enrolled in Tibetan schools till the 10th grade and shifted to non-Tibetan schools after that. Reasons mentioned for shifting to non-Tibetan schools by these respondents were: ‘location of the school’, ‘convenience’, ‘affordability’, ‘quality of education’ and ‘improvement of socio-economic status of parents’.

Table: 8.1 Respondents born in India educated in Tibetan and Non-Tibetan Schools
The fact that emerges is that access to different Tibetan and non-Tibetan schools may give rise to a diversity of experiences of Tibetan students in India. These experiences of schooling have been looked at, in the next section, in terms of comparisons between Tibetan and non-Tibetan schools in terms of: language of instruction, textbooks and Tibetan culture, pedagogy and school culture.

**Language of instruction**

Preservation of Tibetan language has been an area of concern for the Tibetan refugees in India. This concern can be seen in the major educational policies related to language and medium of instruction formulated by the Department of Education of the Tibetan Government in Exile over the years.

As mentioned in the third chapter, a three-language formula (of teaching Tibetan, Hindi and English) with English as medium of instruction was followed till 1984. There was a policy shift in 1984 with Tibetan being introduced as medium of instruction in the Tibetan schools from Pre-primary to class V and English medium from class VI to XII. However, Hindi is taught as a compulsory subject from class VI to VIII and as optional subject from class IX onwards. In 2004, the New Basic Education Policy for Tibetans in Exile was also introduced. The policy seeks “to gradually convert the medium of instruction in all Tibetan institutions of learning from pre-primary level upto the highest research study level, into Tibetan language” (Chashar et al. 2005:13).

**Tibetan language and place of English:** Respondents from Tibetan schools confirmed that Tibetan is the medium of instruction till class V in all Tibetan schools. They said that they could read, write as well as speak fluently in the Tibetan language because of the importance given to it in their schools. Despite the prominence given to it, respondents in the study, however, also said that they were still “weak” in Tibetan (written) language skills. After passing out of school, they claimed to “forget reading and writing” in the language, as they “don’t practice it” anymore. This is because they felt that they were pursuing their graduation from Indian colleges with English medium of instruction and also interacting with and getting “influenced” by other people/ cultures and “westernization”.

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Though English is said to be the language of instruction from class VI onwards in Tibetan schools, respondents observed that all subjects continue to be taught with "explanations in Tibetan, even after VI class". Tibetan teachers, it seems, speak to students and explain concepts in Tibetan language, as the shift to English from Tibetan is "difficult" in the VI grade for students to get used to. Alongwith this, it was observed that Tibetan students in school also tend to speak in Tibetan amongst themselves. With the teachers, principals, even cooks being Tibetan in school premises, it seems, to be the major language used in daily interactions. Respondents said that though there are a limited number of Indian teachers present in Tibetan schools, they are "very few" in number and teach either Hindi (I-VIII) or Science in the senior classes.

The 'Tibetan' atmosphere of Tibetan schools, where "everyone is Tibetan" and "everyone speaks to each other in Tibetan" and where there is limited use of English in classroom and school activities, was according to respondents, responsible for their "weak" English (spoken) language skills. Respondents observed that they were 'weak' in English language and unable to converse fluently in the language. A respondent noted, "This is why we face this problem. English taught in Tibetan schools is useless as the communication between teachers and students is all the time in Tibetan. If you don’t speak in English how will you improve?" (Tsechu, N.T.S, 2006). Another respondent said he could write in English well but is "not very fluent speaking" the language. The reason for this, he felt, is the "lack of practice in school. Teachers used to give all instructions in Tibetan in school", he added (T.W, T.S, 2006).

A certain kind of peer-pressure to speak in Tibetan was also stated to exist in Tibetan schools. Those who did try to speak in English in school were, it seems, teased by other students, which prevented further interaction in the language. Respondents observed that, "Anyone who tries to speak in English is made fun of". In the hostel/home as well as school, therefore, they "speak in Tibetan all the time". A respondent observed, "If you would (speak in English) everybody would make fun of you, you would stand out". Another respondent added, "My classmates would make fun of students trying to speak in English. They would say, "don’t act like an Englishman" (Tsetan, T.S, 2006). Respondents said that they feel "low on confidence and public speaking" due to these experiences in school and due their limited English and Hindi language skills.
The new education policy: All the respondents accepted the importance to preserve traditional language, culture and identity. They said that this was required as along with students from non-Tibetan schools, even students from Tibetan schools, who are taught Tibetan, are supposedly “weak in writing” in Tibetan language. This creates problems for them, they said, when they seek jobs in the exile government, the eligibility criteria for which is a test of written Tibetan language skills. Respondents referred to “a trend, after graduation, to attend Tibetan language classes from an institute in Sarah, Dharamsala to strengthen their written skills” (Monlam, T.S, 2006).

Respondents, however, seemed to have reservations about the merits of the new education policy of the Government in Exile introduced in 2004 that seeks to change the medium of instruction from English to Tibetan for all classes to promote Tibetan language. They observed that the policies might “weaken” or adversely affect the English language skills of the students. This, they said, will prove to be particularly harmful as English is required for post-school higher education in colleges in India as also for getting jobs in non-Tibetan communities in India and aboard.

Seventeen out of thirty students did not support the policy for the above reason. Seven out of thirty students felt that the policy was required to preserve Tibetan language but also felt that it would hamper English language abilities. Only six youth, out of thirty agreed with the views of the Government of Exile on ‘national’ grounds rather than ‘individual’ grounds and resolved the dilemma by prioritizing culture and language (in other words ‘ligatures’), before jobs (or ‘options’) for themselves.

All the fifteen students who had had their schooling in Tibetan schools also admitted that their competency in English language (especially spoken English) was limited due to the nature of their schooling. They referred to being fluent in Tibetan language (reading, writing and speaking) but ‘weak’ in spoken English. Respondents from Tibetan schools felt that, even at present, with English being the medium of instruction from secondary school onwards (class VI-XII), students have limited skills in English language and particularly lack fluency in spoken English. This, they saw, as a major handicap that restricts their life-chances in higher education and employment. The respondents also believed that international support for Tibet’s cause can be garnered
“only through English” with it being an international language and therefore saw this policy as an added disadvantage.

Respondents from Tibetan schools also referred to their limited Hindi language skills because of the “poor quality of Hindi” taught in their schools. Taught as a third language from class 4th-8th grade, the ‘examination’ in Hindi, it seems, would usually consist of ten questions and answers ‘taught’ to the students beforehand, which they would learn “by heart” and “reproduce” in the exam. Familiarity with other Indian local regional language(s) could also be seen amongst respondents. The reason for this seems to be the prolonged stay at the place and interaction with local Indians (usually comprising the non-teaching, cooking and cleaning staff) in the schools and in the local markets. Respondents who had studied in Tibetan schools in South India (Bylakuppe, Karnataka etc) referred, for example, to “knowing a little Tamil”.

Respondents educated in non-Tibetan schools, like Christian missionary schools, on the other hand, said that they have a “better command over the English language”. Some of the reasons mentioned by them for the lack of fluency in English language of Tibetan students from Tibetan schools were that: the teachers speak to the students and explain lessons in Tibetan. The students also talk to each other “only in Tibetan”. These respondents also seemed to believe that the change in medium of instruction to Tibetan will restrict the life chances of Tibetan students, as the “value of English as an international language” is necessary to get jobs. They recognized the importance of teaching of Tibetan language and culture but supported it’s teaching, as a second language rather than as medium of instruction for all classes.

In contrast to Tibetan schools, the language of instruction in all the non-Tibetan schools in the study was English. Respondents who had studied in non-Tibetan schools said that, as compared to students from Tibetan schools, they are fluent in English and even Hindi, as most of the non-Tibetan schools offer Hindi as a second language. These students also felt that their command over the English and Hindi language along with the comfort levels they share with Indian host community are their “strengths”.

These respondents admitted that their Tibetan language skills were weak. Respondents from certain non-Tibetan schools in the Northeastern regions of India, that offer Tibetan as Second language because of the significant presence of Tibetan refugees
in these regions, also felt that they were, “not as fluent in Tibetan” as compared to students from Tibetan schools. The reason for this was said to be the textbook content of Tibetan books in their schools that, it seems, comprised of only “basic grammar and comprehension”. There was none of the seemingly “extra and detailed teaching” (as in Tibetan schools) in Tibetan religion, history and philosophy in their schools. These respondents, like others from non-Tibetan schools, therefore, also claimed to be “more fluent in English and Hindi than Tibetan”.

Interviews with Tibetan youth and with Tibetan youth activist Tenzin Tsundue throws light on this phenomenon. Tsundue observed that students from the North-Eastern regions of India “speak a strange Tibetan which is a mixture of Tibetan, Lepcha and Nepalese (local languages spoken in the region along with Tibetan). They don’t mix with CTSA children. This is because they are better in English and Hindi, though they cannot speak in Tibetan” (Tsundue, Delhi, 2005).

Some of the non-Tibetan schools seemed to strictly enforce the practice of speaking in English in school, discouraging the use of Tibetan language skills. This becomes evident from accounts of respondents who studied in such schools. A respondent, for instance, referred to the “rule” in his school (St Josephs’, North Point, Darjeeling) that there would be a “fine of Rs.500-Rs 1000” if any student was found speaking in a “vernacular language” in the school premises. He observed, “we were forced to speak in English to improve our English” (Yeshi, N.T.S, 2006).

Place of residence also emerged as a factor that can be further explored. This is because respondents who stayed with their parents seemed to be able to converse more fluently in Tibetan, than those who had spent their school lives in boarding schools away from home, with little or no sustained interaction with the Tibetan parents and community. In case of the latter situation, respondents seemed to be familiar with other regional languages that they had been exposed to during their schooling in boarding schools in different parts of India.

Some of these schools based in South India, for example, Mountain Home School, Coonoor, it seems, offer Tamil as third language, opted for by Tibetan students (Bhutia C, N.T.S, 2006). There are also schools, which offer French as a third language, for instance, Baldwin Boys School, Bangalore (Thupten, N.T.S, 2006), Bluebells
International School, Delhi (Phungkhang, N.T.S, 2006) etc. Tibetan activist Tsundue, also remarked in an interview for the study that he is aware of a (non-Tibetan) school called Children Garden High School in Mangalore, Chennai where there are around thirty Tibetan children studying. Because the curriculum in Tamil Nadu schools call for teaching of Tamil language, it seems, they are also taught Tamil. As a result they seem to speak a “strange Tibetan, i.e. Tibetan with a Tamil accent” (Tsundue, 2005, Delhi).

Textbooks and Tibetan Culture:

Textbooks have been a medium through which efforts have been made to transmit Tibetan culture to Tibetan children in exile. Tibetan schools in India, Nepal and Bhutan follow a school curriculum approved by a board of education, which is recognized by their respective national governments. Tibetan schools in India, for example, use standardized curricula, courses and textbooks in English, published by the NCERT, New Delhi. These textbooks are based on the curriculum prescribed by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi.

The Publication department of the Tibetan Government in Exile has also published many additional books for use in Tibetan schools. These books are available in Tibetan and also in English language. The Tibetan language textbooks currently in use in Tibetan schools use the Lhasa dialect as the standard Tibetan. The major emphasis of the textbooks is to inform students about aspects of traditional culture, religion and way of life which could not be transplanted to India. For instance, a sentence from a first grade reader says, “milk comes from a dri” (the female of the yak species) and “yaks have two horns”, referring to Tibetan animals, which cannot survive in India and which most of the younger children have never seen (Nowak 1978:69).

Special magazines called Phayul (for children above VIth grade) and Gangjong (for children below VI grade) have been published for promoting reading habits of Tibetan children and arousing their interest in Tibetan culture. Efforts are also being made to condense the matter of the Tibetan folk literature, particularly an epic called Gesar and to publish it along with illustrations for students of middle school and higher levels. Popular world literature (for example: classics of Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet etc) is also being translated along with popular Indian comics like Amar Chitra Katha and its
stories like *Ashoka*, *Angulimala* etc into Tibetan to promote an appreciation of popular world literature amongst children (TO4, CTA, H.P, 2006).

A textbook in English language used for teaching history of Tibet to classes VI (and above) in TCV schools is ‘A History of Tibet Book-1 ‘The Land of the Snows’. The book has chapters on the early beginnings of the Tibetan empire, religion (Bon religion and the advent of Buddhism in Tibet etc), role of Mongols and Lamas, the origins of the Dalai Lamas and their power and daily life in Tibet during this time. Details on early Tibetan kings and their role in early Tibet can be found in the textbook (see box below).

School Houses⁴ in Tibetan schools are named after these early Tibetan kings, like Nyatri Tsenpo, Namri Songtsen, Songtsen Gampo, Tresong Detsen etc.

"The first of kings of Tibet lived in the southern province of Yarlung on the border with Bhutan. There are many tales about the origin of the first king. The oldest tales describe him as a god-like being who descended from the sky using a kind of rope-ladder... So they carried him on their neck and made him their king. He was named Nyatri Tsenpo, which means "neck-enthroned king". One reason why Buddhist legend describes the first king of Tibet as coming from India may be that they wished to suggest that he was a relative of the Buddha". Kings like Songtsen Gampo are given special mention because of their "contribution towards the growth of Buddhist religion in Tibet" and also because of their having "made Tibet into a mighty empire feared and respected by all other peoples" particularly China (Gibb 2004: 11-15, *A History of Tibet. Book-1. The Land of Snows, TCV, H.P*).

Textbooks seem to be used to recreate and to enable students to imagine life in erstwhile Tibet. This can be seen in Gibbs (A History of Tibet Book-1 ‘The Land of the Snows’) in a chapter called ‘A Visit from the Nomads’. A paragraph from this chapter says (see below):

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⁴ There are four ‘houses’ in Tibetan schools, named after Tibetan kings: i.e; Songtsen, Tresong, Triral, Nyatri (In THF Schools, Mussorie, alongwith these four houses there is also another named ‘Namri’). Respondents from Tibetan schools (15) refer to inter-house competitions in cultural and sports categories between the four ‘houses’ in the schools. Naming school houses after Tibetan kings seems to provide information alongwith communicating the greatness of the roles of these kings in the history of early Tibet.
"In the past, nearly half the population of Tibet lived as wandering mountain nomads. Most lived in the wild Amdo and Kham regions of northeast Tibet, though there were others on the great plains in the north, and in the remoter mountains of the west as well. It was a hard but vigorous life. As soon as the snows on the high pastures melted, the nomadic tribe, usually of three or four families, would climb into the mountains with their yaks and sheep. Each family lived in a black, yak skin tent, often guarded by a fierce dog. Before dawn the women would rise and milk the female yaks, called dris. Then, they would serve hot, buttered tea to their families, and, as, in the villages, a small offering of food and juniper was made on simple stone altar outside the tent. To end the morning prayers, an old woman might sprinkle a few drops of tea in the air and the nomads would give a great shout which echoed around the camp" (Gibbs 2004:69, A History of Tibet Book-1. The Land of Snows, TCV, H.P).}

**Chinese Occupation of Tibet:** students from middle school have a textbook in History called ‘A History of Tibet Book-2 ‘Independence to Exile’ (Gibbs, 1987) meant for classes VIII-IX. This books explores relations between China and Tibet (starts with the position of China after 1720), the government of the Dalai Lamas (structure of the government, local government, law and justice etc), early travelers to Tibet, British invasion, the Chinese invasion and the Simla Conference, role of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the finding of the fourteenth Dalai Lama. There are chapters on the proclamation of the People’s Republic and the ‘last days of Tibetan independence’, Chinese occupation, ‘oppressions and resentment’, ‘rebellion and destruction’. An extract from the section ‘Tibet is Crushed’ is given below (see box)

"From April 1959, then, all pretense of allowing the Tibetans any say in conducting their own affairs was abandoned. A virtual military dictatorship was set up in Lhasa.... A reign of terror was begun against all those thought to have aided, or even sympathized with the recent uprising. Nobles and landowners were imprisoned, humiliated and often shot. High lamas and monks came in for special persecution. Monasteries were emptied, the buildings destroyed, and the inmates, then forced to do the most degrading tasks, in order to ridicule the Tibetans’ religion. Most lamas ended up in forced labour camps, or were executed in the most horrifying ways. Nor did the poorest peasants escape from this wave of persecution. Anyone even suspected of opposing Chinese rule was punished and executed. Indeed, so bad was the situation in Tibet immediately after 1959, that a Commission of the United Nations on the evidence of the thousands of Tibetan refugees pouring into India described the Chinese behaviour to the Tibetan people as 'genocide'. “In the years following 1959, Tibetan culture and traditions continued to be attacked and destroyed. All education was now in Chinese, religion was declared to be 'poison' and effectively banned, and many young children were forcibly removed from their parents and sent to China to be indoctrinated. Meanwhile, Chinese officials continued to hold the most important posts in the Tibetan administration” " (Gibbs 2004:81, A History of Tibet Book-2. Independence to Exile, TCV, H.P).
Looking towards the future: The last section in the chapter titled ‘Exile’ of the book, expresses the “fervent wish of most exiles” for the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan refugees to “return to Tibet”. The disagreement amongst Tibetans over the conditions of return, complete independence vs. real autonomy is expressed. The end of the book quotes the Dalai Lama as saying, “The main problem of Tibet is not the Dalai Lama’s problem, nor that of the 100,000 refugees. It is up to the six million Tibetan people who are inside Tibet. Once they are genuinely happy and satisfied, then we will return—including the Dalai Lama’. May that day come soon” (Gibb ‘A History of Tibet Book-2 ‘Independence to Exile’, 1987:90).

Likewise, another textbook titled ‘A Guide To Democracy’ for Tibetan secondary school children says, “When the Tibetan people finally regain control of their country from China, they will finally get to vote on the type of government that they wish their country to have. The many years that the Tibetans have had to refine their democracy aboard will ensure a smooth political transition when they go home” (TCHRD report 2004:28).

A Social Studies Teacher teaching middle level (VI-VII) classes in a Tibetan school stated that while books prescribed by NCERT are used for teaching Civics and Geography in TCV schools; for History the schools use their own textbooks in Tibetan history (see box). He also explained that children have to be taught first in English, followed by Tibetan. This was because with rapid shift in medium of instruction to English from Tibetan in 6th grade, children it seems, “find it difficult to switch to English quickly and that “Questions have to be therefore translated in Tibetan to enable them to understand” (TT2, T.S, H.P, 2006). Tibetan respondents in the study referred to “knowing much” about Tibetan history, religion and culture because they had textbooks and teachers who explained “these things” to them.
Visit to a 6th grade classroom in a Tibetan School

A teacher was taking a unit test in ‘Tibetan History’. He explained the questions first in English, followed by Tibetan. The questions he wrote down on the blackboard in English sheds light on the textbook content. These questions were: Q1. What do you mean by the Middle way approach? Q2. Write any three points of the five points peace plan? Q3. Write any four important components of Middle way approach? Q4. Write down four ways for solving the Tibetan problem? Q5. Write the name of the two Chinese and two Tibetan representatives? There were other questions asking students to ‘fill in the blanks’. These were: 1. Five Points Peace Plan was addressed by His Holiness on ___. 2. The Middle Point Approach was addressed by His Holiness on ___. 3. The 17 point agreement was signed on ___. 4. The 17-point agreement was treated null and void by the Tibetan government on ___. 5. “Religion is poison” was said by ___ to His Holiness. 6. ___ said “except independence all other issues can be solved through negotiation” (Field notes, May 2006, Upper TCV School, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh).

Tibetan school textbooks have, however, also come in for some criticism from within the Tibetan community due to an emphasis upon Tibetan Buddhism and spirituality. Tsering, Topden, President of San Fransisco Bay area, Regional Tibetan Youth Congress (RTYC), criticizes this saying that “creates a kind of politics that does not inspire” the youth to take action from the cause of Tibet’s independence (Tsering 2004, cited in www.timesoftibet.com).

In contrast to Tibetan schools, Non-Tibetan schools follow subject-based textbooks in Mathematics, English, Social Studies, Science, Hindi etc prescribed by either the I.C.S.E Board or the C.B.S.E Board, depending upon the school’s affiliation. These textbooks are included in the non-Tibetan Schools curriculum all over the country. As mentioned earlier by respondents, there are non-Tibetan schools, particularly in North-east India, which offer Tibetan as one of the Second languages. These schools, according to the respondents in the study, however, do not follow a prescribed syllabus and aim only at providing some kind of basic understanding (alphabets, numbers, grammar etc) of Tibetan language to students. This is in contrast to the books in use in Tibetan schools, which are prescribed by the Department of Education of the Tibetan Government in Exile and seem to provide more detailed, richer understanding of Tibetan language, literature, history and culture to students.

Respondents studying in non-Tibetan schools in Darjeeling threw light on this issue saying that the Tibetan taught to them in non-Tibetan schools is “much easier” and “lower in standard” as compared to the Tibetan taught in Tibetan schools (Topgyal,
Another respondent also added that the Tibetan taught in Tibetan schools, especially in “higher classes, is more difficult”. She said that Tibetan schools “emphasize more on everything Tibetan, on traditional Tibetan education” (Sonam Yangzom, N.T.S, 2006). One such respondent said that they just had to “translate meanings” which they would “mug up”. They, therefore, “lag behind” students from Tibetan schools, who “go into details”, he said. He added that the reason for this problem is the lack of a “proper syllabus” for Tibetan in non-Tibetan schools in Darjeeling (Dadol, N.T.S, 2006). A respondent who had studied Tibetan as second language till the 8th grade, chose Hindi afterwards as she felt “much more comfortable” with it. She said that Tibetan as a second language was “tough” as in the senior classes it included letter writing and essay writing. Earlier, there would be just questions and answers given to them before exams that they would “rattofy” (learn by rote) and write, it was “easy to score” but later, it seems, it became “difficult”. She “left it” as she was “not interested” in it (Bhutia D, N.T.S, 2006).

Certain schools in South India also offer Tamil (Mountain Home, Coonoor) and even French (Baldwin Boys School, Bangalore) as a second language to students, as mentioned above, and follow textbooks prescribed by the respective Board. Pedagogy is another area where attempts have been made by the Tibetan government to provide a balance of ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ education in exile. The next section throws light on this aspect.

Pedagogy:

As pointed out in the third chapter, the Tibetan education system has been oriented towards the goal of bringing about a ‘balance between the modern and the traditional’. Conflicts seem to have resulted as a result, which have been elaborated upon. In the initial years of the establishment of the Tibetan schools in early 1960s, it seems that only religious monks or lamas taught Tibetan language in Tibetan schools. The lamas teaching Tibetan language to the students were criticized as they largely used ‘traditional’ methods like memorization of textbooks rather than by means of co-curricular and classroom activities. Nowak (1978) and Chhodak (1981) refer to criticism of the pedagogical approaches used in Tibetan schools for teaching the Tibetan language by religious priests or lamas. It is stated that the standard pedagogical method consisted
of the teacher talking, lecturing, reading from books and maybe asking students a few questions. As Chhodak observes, “In these schools, learning takes place in a very passive way, student participation and initiative being alien to this process. Rigidity and uniformity are the rule without exception” (Chhodak 1981:165). It was decided that while lamas should remain in schools to teach religious subjects, they should not dominate over the qualified Tibetan lay teachers (Nowak 1978:61). It was also felt that the Tibetan teachers needed to be re-oriented in modern methods of teaching Tibetan language (as against continuation of the older methods) (CTSA report 1963:17).

Several changes seem to have occurred over the years in pedagogical techniques of teaching Tibetan and other languages. Lay teachers alongwith monks seem to be taking classes on Tibetan religion and culture in Tibetan schools at present. Teachers teach using student-centered methods like group discussion, exercises etc. Language labs have been established in several of these schools to strengthen language skills (especially Tibetan) of children. However, there is also continued criticism of teaching methodologies for teaching Tibetan as being largely outdated. There are demands to make it more child-centered and interesting by using, as in other subjects, Multimedia, magazines and comics etc as teaching aids, specially to encourage the lower classes. According to a Tibetan language teacher teaching XI class in a TCV school, this is because, “in the lower classes (VIII, IX and X) students seem to lose interest in Tibetan language and culture” (TT6, T.S, H.P, 2006).

While a series of new textbooks and courses have been introduced in the Tibetan schools over the years and represent modernization of the traditional system of education and curriculum, the pedagogical approaches used in classrooms are still very much subjected to criticism by students, teachers as well as administrators in such schools. This is because, it seems, they seem to continue to retain much of their earlier features. As part of the reasons of their ‘weakness’ in studies, respondents pointed out the “examination-oriented” education system of cramming and rote learning in exams in which the aim is to memorize everything and to pass the annual exams. They observed that there was “absolutely no scope for self-initiative or imagination” in whatever they were taught. For

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5 Answers were translated from Tibetan to English by an English teacher of the school (TT4, T.S, H.P, 2006)
instance, even in class 12, the exam in Tibetan grammar and comprehension used to, it seems, consist of a set of questions and answers which students were supposed to memorize and write in the exam (Tsetan, T.S, 2006).

It is observed that children in Tibetan schools appear to follow and learn through “repetition with mantra-reciting and guru-submitting” (Labiesse 1995:13). This monastic pattern “to discourage the ego” seems to be at odds with modern student-centered pedagogy. In addition, there seems to be the existence of the traditional practice of keeping discipline by “ngo- tsha”, or the sense of shame, “which does not promote student participation and is contrary to modern pedagogy that recommends making students self-confident” (Labiesse 1995:13).

Practices of education in Tibetan schools have also been criticized as being more teacher-oriented with student participation being limited, with “not much scope for critical thinking and development of creativity”. For instance, as a headmaster making rounds in the school, Karma Tensum refers to hearing instructions from teachers like, “Khatsum” which, he says, if “translated kindly” means “keep quiet” (Tensum 1995:20). Nowak (1978) has also referred to use of “shame sanctions” as a primary means of enforcing “good behavior” in the schools.

Respondents in the study blamed “outdated, lecture-based” pedagogical methods for their weak English, Hindi (and even Tibetan) and lack of “good teachers” in school. They mentioned that “good teachers” were rare in schools who would encourage students to participate in classroom activities that “improved English”, for instance, encouraging students to read aloud from textbooks and to do book reviews (TY2, T.S, 2006). Talking in English, they observed, enables one to “gain confidence”. Tibetan teachers in Tibetan schools, it seems, rarely did this. Respondents also pointed out the need for more “activity-based teaching” in class as children were said to “become sleepy” otherwise (Pasang, T.S, 2006).

According to a respondent, “all Tibetan students lack confidence”. The teachers, he suggested “should make the students work hard, tell them to go to the library more, to give them more activities to do in class. Be it elocution or sports, it is always the same students who participate. Though opportunities are provided, students’ stay away...later
on this causes problems for them. They should be encouraged more,” (to participate) he added (Tsetan, T.S, 2006).

Interviews with officials of DOE, CTA and Tibetan teachers in a Tibetan school (Upper TCV, Dharamsala) also regarded “outdated and lecture-based pedagogy” in Tibetan schools as a major problem. Along with this, “environment in exile and exposure to western culture, initial dependence upon the Indian or foreign system of education for administrative support, refugee status, faulty educational planning in exile (such as exam-oriented syllabus and curriculum) and lack of parental support” (in case of students from Tibet, orphans etc in residential schools) were cited as reasons for the lack of motivation and interest amongst students in Tibetans schools (TO2, DOE, CTA, H.P, 2006).

As compared to the use of ‘traditional’ pedagogy and teaching-learning techniques in Tibetan schools, as mentioned above (lecture-based pedagogy, rote-learning and memorizing, lack of use of multimedia etc), non-Tibetan schools where respondents in the study had studied, were said to be “much better” than the former in the sphere of pedagogy.

A respondent who studied in both Tibetan and non-Tibetan schools like Baldwin Boys School in Bangalore and St Paul’s in Darjeeling felt that Tibetan schools “still do not apply modern teaching methods” and do not provide knowledge about the “outer world” to Tibetan children. Tibetan schools, he felt, though give “adequate education”, “cannot give the best education” that is available it seems, only in Christian missionary or Indian public schools (Thupten, N.T.S, 2006). A respondent from Loreto Convent, Darjeeling observed, “Tibetan schools emphasize more on traditional, Tibetan education and everything Tibetan, not on modern education, like us. The main difference is recitation of prayers…we don’t know anything…we are dumb…they know everything”. “They are also taught Tibetan dance, music with Tibetan instruments that we are not taught. We learn from other students (from Tibetan schools) if we have to perform” (Sonam Yangzom, T.S, 2006). Similarly, a respondent who studied in Mountain Home School in Coonoor said, “they focus more on Tibetan things and culture…they are very good in prayers…they have it everyday. Whatever I know about my culture is due to my mother, while these students are taught everything in school” (Bhutia C, N.T.S, 2006).

The next section explores the school culture of Tibetan and non-Tibetan schools.
School Culture: ‘Tibetan’ atmosphere/ethos of Tibetan schools

School culture- in terms of the ethos and values that schools seek to encourage amongst students, needs to be further looked at. This section explores school culture in terms of the atmosphere of schools (Tibetan or non-Tibetan) and looks at: physical environment and structure, mission and vision of schools, name of schoolhouses, morning assembly and prayers, punishments in school, special holidays and celebrations in schools. It explores the influence of teachers, family and community on respondents in ‘becoming Tibetan’ and diversity of experiences in this regard. Relationship between respondents from Tibetan and non-Tibetan schools alongwith their choice of schools for their ‘future’ children has also been explored.

a) Physical environment and structure of schools: Influence of Tibetan Buddhism: The physical environment and the ambience in all the Tibetan schools seems to be largely Tibetan and highlights the importance of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibetan culture. All these schools emphasize the incorporation of Tibetan language and culture within the regular curriculum and after-school programs and celebrate traditional days important to Tibetans, according to the Tibetan calendar.

According to Thargyal, “Chos, a term Tibetans use to designate Buddhism, is considered the only source of Tibetan identity, culture and otherness”(Thargyal cited in www.famine.tufts.edu.). Thus, for the same reason, the emphasis of Tibetan Buddhism in the school culture and environment can also be clearly seen. The narratives of youth in the study throw light on the important role that religion played in their lives when they were in school. Respondents referred to the daily morning assembly starting with a Tibetan Buddhist prayer addressed to Manjushri- the god of wisdom; special classes on religion; holidays observed on days of religious significance (for instance: Saka Dawa on 11th June every year commemorating the birth, enlightenment and passing away of the Buddha); prayer ceremonies in a temple on campus attended by students, teachers, houseparents etc where students would offer butter-lamps with traditional prayers. The physical environment of the schools is also enthused with religious symbols and meanings. As mentioned previously, the schools usually have a temple on campus, with brightly-
coloured Buddhist prayer flags\textsuperscript{6} fluttering from the rooftops which are auspicious religious symbols, supposed to bring good fortune and drive away evil spirits. For the children who lived with their parents as well as the ones who lived in the residential schools, a \textit{mantra} that was taught to them and seemed to be perpetually on their lips was '\textit{Om Mani Padme Hum}', an invocation of the \textit{Bodhisatva Avalokiteshwara}.

The physical environment as well as the school culture of Tibetan schools alongside structured textbooks\textsuperscript{7} on history and culture, with a strong emphasis on spirituality, seems to combine to communicate to children the importance of religion in daily life. The teachings on Buddhism are also combined to create certain universal values and attitudes of compassion, honesty and sacrifice amongst the children. This is reflected in the mission for TCV schools, "Others Before Self". The TCV schools also state that their aim is "to teach children the virtues of honesty, compassion and sacrifice as taught by Lord Buddha"(Education Code, TCV Schools, 1999:1).

The importance of religion in school life is also noted by Tenzin Tsundue, who reflecting upon his personal experiences of school life observes, "in exile Tibetan schools, children do their regular prayers as per the school curriculum, sitting in neat lines in the school hall, singing sacred lines set to poetry in praise of hundred thousand deities that us children never really understood. In school we were quite religious, making prostrations every night before going to bed. Later, in college, these habits slowly wore out after the first year"(Tsundue cited in \url{http://www.friendsoftibet.org/tenzin/}).

\textbf{Mission/Vision of schools:} All the Tibetan schools clearly state their aim to provide traditional and modern education to Tibetan children in exile. CTSA schools state that their aim is "to impart quality education". Emphasis is, however, laid "on preserving and promoting the ancient Tibetan culture and heritage"(CTSA report 2005:152).

The mission of the TCV schools, for example, in India "is to ensure that all Tibetan children under its care receive a sound education, a firm cultural identity and

\textsuperscript{6} Buddhist prayer flags or \textit{lungtai darchok}, or "wind-horse flags" were a "Buddhist adaptation of an older Bon custom practiced as a means to ward off evil forces and attract benevolent forces in nature. Under Buddhism, the flags continued to be a means of communication with all that is sacred, and they also became silent prayers to the Buddha. Five colors, indicating the five elements, were associated, by rotation, with the calendar years, so each person was assigned the color of the year he or she was born"(Michael 1982:151).
become self-reliant and contributing members of the community and the world at large”. It is also observed that, “while looking after their physical, mental and spiritual needs, the Tibetan Children’s Village seeks to impart the best of modern education along with a deep and intimate understanding and appreciation of the rich and historical heritage of Tibet, which would give them a sense of national identity and enable them to share the hopes and aspirations of the Tibetan people for a free Tibet” (TCV school calendar 2006:3).

b) Life in Tibetan residential and day schools: 12 out of 14 of the Tibetan senior secondary schools in India are residential (see annexure: 4.1 for students and senior secondary schools they attended). These schools had been originally established as welfare institutions providing care along with education to orphaned, destitute children, children whose parents were working in scattered road construction sites in India. While these reasons remain, these schools also have the priority of looking after the welfare needs, providing boarding, lodging and education to Tibetan students who come every year from Tibet to get an education that safeguards their Tibetan identity (and is not available in Tibet).

The residential accommodation of students in Tibetan schools like the Tibetan Children’s Village (TCV) schools consists of 8-10 ‘homes’ or buildings, lodging 28-30 children each. Each of these homes has a foster ‘home-mother’ or housemother (along with sometimes a house-father) who takes care of the children. According to the Director of Education, TCV, these ‘mothers’ play a central role in the growth and well-being of the children. They are, therefore, required to go through an intensive and practical training programme on child psychology, health and hygiene, values, environmental awareness, home management and functional literacy, both in Tibetan and English, for those “mothers who have had no schooling” (Dorjee 1999:31).

Interviews with respondents also highlighted the important influence of the schools (along with their ‘homes’) in their student lives. The institutionalized presence and example of Tibetan adults at Tibetan residential schools as ‘housemothers’ and sometimes also ‘housefathers’, called Amala (mother) and pala (father) respectively, and the love and care provided by them seems to have been an important part of their lives. Interviews with students suggested that their relations with the ‘amala’ ranged from
being "scared" because of their strictness or being very fond of them and even "missing" them, especially now that they were "away from the home in Delhi" (T.W, T.S, 2006).

The reason for bonds being formed with home-mothers is said to be the fact that a majority of the students in the Tibetan residential schools are students from Tibet who have come to India at a very young age leaving their parents behind. These students, it seems, usually lose all contact with their parents after coming to India (fearing that any contact with parents may lead to their penalization or persecution by the Chinese government). They, therefore, pass much of the growing years of their life, from primary to senior secondary school, under the care of these house parents which results in formation of affectionate bonds amongst them (Dorjee 1999:31).

Students in the study also referred to the "close bonds" that developed with the other students and the house parents while they were in school. Bonds seem to have developed amongst the students because, as mentioned before, though children seem to take time getting used to staying in India away from their home in Tibet and their parents, gradually the nostalgia and attachment seems to wear off, as "seniors take care of juniors" (TY2, T.S, 2006). Respondents said that in the TCV school homes, the smaller children are personally taken care of by the older ones who help them with their daily chores, like washing clothes, in 'kitchen duties' etc. A respondent observed, "We consider our school classmates as our brothers and sisters. Our boarding house is called 'home' and an attachment is there for the small ones and for the elders" (TY2, T.S, 2006). They mentioned this as the reason for many of them wanting to come back to the schools to teach as teachers. They said that they wanted "to come back" even though teachers are "not paid well" in the Tibetan schools "to repay debts of gratitude" that they felt for their schools.

Poems written by school children in their school magazines, for instance, 'Sherab-Lophel', a students' bi-monthly brought out by the Tibetan Homes School, Mussoorie expresses the emotions of love and gratitude that Tibetan children have for their schools /'homes' and towards their house parents. A poem by a 5th std student of the school says "...My heart is full of beautiful scenes of Tibet", "...my heart is full of gratitude for T.H.F." (Ngawang Kyap, Sherab-Lophel, 2005: 22, T.H.F, Mussoorie). Another poem titled 'My Great Foster Parent' says "...Where I can see the reflection of
my real parents...Your care for us and the lessons...valuing small things will be cherished forever...How can I ever repay your kindness, the moments shared with you is unforgettable. And all I can say is “THANK YOU!!!” (Pema Wangchen, Sherab-Lophel 2005:23, T.H.F, Mussoorie).

The “routine of all Tibetan schools is the same” according to respondents from these schools. They observed that they would get up at 5:30am, wash up, and have breakfast. The “older ones” would have to help the housemother in making the breakfast that would usually consist of bread, eggs, butter tea (traditional Tibetan tea) or sweet tea. Everybody would then sit together and pray. These prayers would be addressed to The Dalai Lama or to a Buddhist goddess, Manjushri (Buddhist god of wisdom and intelligence) and Padmasambhava “to tackle demons and evil”. On Wednesday’s, they would “usually pray for the long life of His Holiness The Dalai Lama”. In the evenings’, their prayers would be addressed to the Buddhist goddess Tara (goddess of compassion). Interviews with respondents, therefore, throw light on the fact that aspects of Tibetan Buddhist religion are an integral component of the school curriculum of Tibetan schools where, from an early age, children are socialized into the importance of religion in their daily life in these schools.

Studies like Novak’s also note that “apart from the half-hour (daily) prayer sessions, there are occasions when the whole school community-students, teachers and dormitory house parents all take part in special prayer and incense-burning ceremonies (bsangs-gsol) at the summit of the prayer hill located behind the school” (Upper TCV, Dharamsala). Novak refers to the co-existence of religion and politics in the prayer services that “directly refer to the contemporary status of Tibet”. In short, she notes “how these co-curricular activities, like the other aspects of the explicit curriculum serve as powerful transmitters of both the old and the new forces effecting ethnic self-definition” (Nowak 1978:104).

Life in the homes seems to be routinized and regulated in terms of weekly rotation of household duties amongst students. Respondents noted that all the children would be divided into groups of four. The children would be all given certain ‘duties’ that would include: helping in the preparation of breakfast and dinner, sweeping and mopping of the dining hall floor, dish-washing, watering of plants, cleaning of the environment around
the home, cleaning of toilets etc. These duties would have to be completed from 6am to 8 am. After breakfast and the household duties, students would go to school for morning assembly.

**Morning assembly:*** Prayers, once, again, seem to emerge as an important part of school life. Morning assembly would be held from 9:00am to 9:30am with prayers, once again, being offered to Manjushri—the Tibetan Buddhist deity of wisdom and intelligence—to help students “become intelligent”. Singing of the Tibetan National Anthem, followed by the Indian National Anthem, would follow. The headmaster would then make important announcements for the day.

Classes would start for the day and end at 4:00pm. From 4:00pm to 6:00pm, the students would change clothes and freshen up. The students with ‘kitchen duty’ would be required to help in the kitchen. From 6:00pm-6:30pm they would have their dinner and clean up. From 6:45pm to 8:30pm there would be ‘self-study’. At 9:00pm students would, once again, say their prayers (led usually by the school captain) and finally everybody would go off to sleep.

**Tibetan teachers and ‘Tibetanness’:** Respondents observed that their teachers in Tibetan schools would tell students to ‘defeat’ China “by studying hard” and “becoming something” and working for ‘freedom’ of Tibet when they grow up. Teachers also seem to be making children aware of the differences between themselves and Indians and their ‘bigger responsibility’ towards Tibet as a nation. The influence of teachers can be seen in the accounts of students, also, in terms of encouraging feelings of nationalism towards Tibet and making students aware of their responsibility towards their country as ‘refugees’.

A respondent referred to teachers telling the students to “fight back with the help of the pen, not the sword/knives” as then they would “obviously lose” as they have “lesser population”. She observed, “They used to tell us that we have to “learn about the world and about human rights to challenge China” (Pasang, T.S, 2006). Another added, “The teachers would tell us to study hard and work for the freedom of Tibet, to struggle hard” (T.Y1, T.S, 2006). A respondent noted that the Tibetan music and dance teachers would advice students “not to follow western dance and try to follow Tibetan cultural dance” (Kungsang, T.S, 2006). Another respondent remembered a teacher telling him
“not to learn the western guitar” (even though he wanted to) saying that if he learnt it, his "way of thinking will change". He observed that in the 4th, 5th and 6th classes, their teachers would tell them that they are “refugees”, they are “different because they have an ‘R’ written on their forehead and they have to go back”. Teachers would, it seems, also tell the students that they have an “extra responsibility to do well in studies” and that they have to “work hard” because “Indians have their own country and they don’t”. “If others (Indians) study for 2 hours, we need to put in 4 hours” (T.W, T.S, 2006). They would tell students “we are completely different from Indians and that we should not get carried away with fashion”, “we should first get our independence and then enjoy” (Sayang, T.S, 2006).

Respondents admitted that their (Tibetan) teachers “shared an affinity” with them and were not “very strict”. They also said that they were “very close” to some of them as they had “grown up” with them.

An Indian teacher of Mathematics teaching class IX in a Tibetan School, however, referred to a “lack of discipline” in some of the Tibetan schools. The reason for this, he felt was that teachers tend to be (and are also told to be) lenient with students, many of whom have undergone hardships and left Tibet to come to India to study. “Discipline problem is there”, he added. He also believed that Tibetan students tend to be "weak" in studies because teachers are “not allowed to beat the students”. “Beating might have made a difference. The students don’t listen to me, I have to tell them to sit down like primary school children”. He, however, also added that this problem was not there in the former TCV School that he had been teaching in at Selaqui, Dehradun. “Maybe because this is the school headquarters, things are liberal”, the teacher observed (IT1, T.S, H.P, 2006).

There are, at the same time, other respondents who referred to the ‘strictness’ of Tibetan teachers in their schools, which also needs to be mentioned. Students who had studied in the TCV, Suja School, near Dharamsala, meant for children regarded as ‘over-aged’ (above ten years of age and below seventeen), referred to problems being faced by teachers there in handling students in this school. The school, according to a respondent, was “very congested with twenty-five boys in a single dormitory smoking, quarrelling, and disobeying the teachers trying to control them” (T.J, T.S, 2006). A respondent, who
went to a Tibetan Day school in a Tibetan settlement called Dekyling School in Himachal Pradesh, also said that he found the atmosphere of the school “very strict”. Even though it was a day school, the Tibetan teachers, it seems, would take “rounds” of the Tibetan settlement (within which the school is located) after classes “to see if the students were doing their homework and studying” (Monlam, T.S, 2006).

Peer-culture: existence of practices of ‘name-calling’, labeling and ‘making fun’ of students (by the peer-group) in Tibetan schools for ‘making mistakes’ or grammatical errors in speaking correct English was mentioned. This seemed to discourage them from speaking out and participating in classroom activities. Such practices also it seems, made them less confident, as they feared making mistakes (and made fun of).

Tsundue throws light on this aspect observing that, “In school spoken English was in name only. The students pulled each other’s legs whenever somebody dared to speak in English, calling the person, “Mr. John”. That has resulted in dumb Tibetans in college. When the Indian students spoke the foreign language with ease and flair, we stuttered and stammered. It was so embarrassing talking to Indian classmates in broken English. This affects the students’ behavior, adversely lowering confidence and morale so one becomes a lonesome Tibetan among a sea of Indians” (Tsundue cited in http://www.friendsoftibet.org/tenzin/).

Interviews with respondents and an official at the Guidance and Counselling Department, CTA, Dharamsala, also refer to existence of such practices. Teachers at a Tibetan school also referred to this “habit” of students making fun of each other if they make mistakes while speaking. It was observed that students “feel shy to speak in English” in class and ask the teachers if they can speak in Tibetan. “Tibetan people are naturally very shy by nature”, it was noted, which seems to augment the problem (TT5, Upper TCV School, H.P, 2006).

Respondents in the study as well as a student counsellor in the Tibetan administration, referred to the unhealthy practice of labelling and teasing of students by their peer-group if they would talk/interact with members of the opposite sex “alone” with this being regarded as “a big thing in these schools” (TO6, CTA, 2006). This, they said, also affected, to some extent, the students confidence and self-esteem.
Feelings of low-self esteem was also said to develop amongst students in school due to refugee students being constantly told that they “are refugees” and that they “do not have their country” etc. According to an official at the Tibetan administration, “Tibetan children tend to be brought up in schools where they develop a low self-esteem. This is because there are Tibetan teachers telling them from childhood that they have an ‘R’ written on their forehead and that we cant do anything about it. A lot of self-denigration leads to low self-esteem” (TO6, CTA, 2006) (see box).

“"When we were children in a Tibetan school in Himachal pradesh, our teachers would regale us with tales of Tibetans suffering in Tibet. We were often told that we were refugees and that we all bore a big ‘R’ on our foreheads. It didn’t make much sense to us, we only wished the teacher would hurry up and finish his talk and not keep us standing in the hot sun, with our oiled hair. For a very long time I sincerely believed that we were a special kind of people with an ‘R’ on our foreheads. We did look different from the local Indian families who lived around our school campus,” “Perhaps the first thing I learnt at school was that we were refugees and we didn’t belong to this country” (Tsundue cited in http://www.friendsoftibet.org/tenzin/).

Interviews with students also reaffirmed the existence of feelings of low-self esteem and low self-worth, seen by them as resulting in lack of confidence and the desire to stay and socialize within the Tibetan community and to try get jobs within its fold.

**Co-curricular Activities and Holidays:** Co-curricular activities, particularly, celebration of Tibetan festivals is given an important place in the schools (see box).

The Holiday schedule of the TCV schools refers to: Parents Day, Tibetan National Uprising Day, Tibetan Women’s Uprising Day, Second Saturday, State Day, Saka Dawa, SOS Day, Zamling Chisang, Birthday of The Dalai Lama, Choekor Duechen, Independence Day of India, Democracy Day of Tibet, Staff Day, Gandhi Jayanti, Tibetan Youth Day, Village/School anniversary day, Lha-bab Duechen, Children’s Day, Nobel Peace Prize Day, Nyanpa-Guzom, Republic Day of India, Tibetan New Year and Choenga-Choepa. It also states that non-Tibetan teachers are permitted to take the following holidays: Holi, Good Friday, Dussehra, Diwali. Other important days: ‘Nobel Peace Prize day’ (when the Dalai Lama received the Nobel Peace Prize) and ‘Democracy day’ (Education Code, TCV Schools 1999:6).

Respondents referred to the practice of many co-curricular and extra-curricular activities taking place in schools such as intra and interschool competitions in dance,
music, debate (Tibetan and English), quiz, elocution (Tibetan and English), essay-contest, athletics-meet etc, painting and Tibetan calligraphy, holding of the ‘Tibet-Our-Country-Project’, celebration of important days according to the Tibetan calendar, such as celebration of the Dalai Lama’s birthday, observance of the 10th March Uprising Day etc. Students referred to special Tibetan occasions celebrated in the ‘homes’, for instance the Tibetan New Year, Losar etc.

The celebration of many Tibetan holidays in Tibetan schools, it seems, continues to take place in exile, though in an “abbreviated fashion” due to exigencies in exile as “less time can be taken off to engage” in them. Observance of these events in school are seen as important as they are the means by which Tibetan children are taught to think of themselves as a “homogeneous group” with a common socio-cultural, political identity (Nowak 1978; Shakya cited in Liang 1999).

According to Liang (1999), the symbols of a political nation include: a flag, a National Anthem, days of national celebration and a national figurehead. All these symbols of a ‘political nation’ seem to be present and commemorated in Tibetan schools. Respondents in the study referred to the raising of the Tibetan flag and the singing of the Tibetan National Anthem (alongwith the Indian) in their schools every morning. The two new occasions created in exile to foster a sense of national identity, primarily, commemoration of the 10th March uprising and celebration of the Dalai Lama’s birthday (Liang 1999), both take place in Tibetan schools. Topden Tsering elaborates upon the significance of such occasions in Tibetan schools (see box).

"The idea of youth is unabashedly political in the exile context. In Tibetan schools, before a child learns to spell “Apple”, he is given a new name: “Seeds of the Future Tibet”. March 10 demonstrations, “Hamay Kya Chahiye? Azaadi Chahiye (“What do we want? Freedom!”); pressing bodies with flags and placards; a leader perpetually shouting into a big microphone; the school headmaster unfailingly evoking the blessings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for all the good things in life. In the book of one’s early life, one chapter perennially open is that of the politics of his being... on his statelessness, his confusion. The letters are all too clear and bold. Those depicting his parents’ early years of survival, the dislocation of a nation and the banishment of a god in the person of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; the sheer evil of China as a nation, as a history, as an idea”(Tsering cited in www.timesoftibet.com).
Tibetan schools are said to contribute towards the development of a more “militant type of nationalism” (Novak 1978) simply by providing an official Tibetan context for what would otherwise be isolated statements coming from individual refugees. Nowak states that statements from respected authority figures such as teachers, like “We will get our country back from the Chinese” combined with actual deeds of patriotism makes the school’s role in promoting of nationalism becomes even more evident. Therefore, positive sentiments of cultural uniqueness, national consciousness and group loyalty are developed, fostered, and then channeled into an all-inclusive set of values named “patriotism”(rgyal-zhen)(Nowak 1978:101).

Accounts of respondents, which throw light on how celebration of such events in schools might be one of the factors influencing Tibetan children, “become Tibetan”, have been given below. Referring to the protest marches and sloganeering that Tibetan schools participate in, a respondent referred to Tibetan schools being largely “political schools” (T.J, T.S, 2006). Alongwith actual deeds of patriotism like daily singing of National Anthem, staging of debates on legitimacy of Tibet’s claim to independence, school wide participation in protest marches on 10th March Uprising Day etc, the role of Tibetan schools in promoting Tibetan nationalism can be further explored (see boxes).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Losar (Tibetan New Year)</th>
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<tr>
<td>It is celebrated in Tibetan school ‘homes’, with three days of holidays. All the older students “visit each other” in their respective homes, while the younger ones stay back. Alongwith special Tibetan food (khapse, desi, chang, Tibetan Butter tea, tsampa etc) there is a ‘prize’ distribution ceremony called ‘Migtsen Sonrey’ (or ‘eyes-closed prize’). Children from Tibet, orphans and those unable to go home (with home being in far-off places like Nepal etc) or those from poor families, are given new clothes, chocolates etc. On the third day, after prayers and rituals, there is a traditional Tibetan dance called ‘Khoshe’ performed by boys and girls in the school. A fete is put up in the school grounds with Tambola, music, movies in the school auditorium, good food etc. Students are also allowed to go for outings to the bazaar etc.</td>
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March 10th Uprising Day
This day marks the crushing of the Tibetan uprising against the Chinese government in Tibet in 1959. It is commemorated in Tibetan schools and settlements, with peaceful protest marches and sloganeering. Respondents from Tibetan schools in India noted going on peace marches from school twice a year, with placards saying, "Tibet Ki Aazaadi Bharat Ki Suraksha", 'Long Live His Holiness Dalai Lama', 'We Want Justice, Save Tibet', 'Stop Genocide', 'Quit China', 'Red Chinese Go Back', 'Yaad kar, Yaad kar, 1962, Chini-Hindi, Bhai-Bhai, Chini ek dhokha hai', 'Aalu-Puri Tel Mein, Chin Ke Neta Jail Mein'; shouting slogans, like, 'Chinese! Go out of Tibet! Tibet belongs to Tibetans'! Special programmes held, for example, at Tezu, Arunachal Pradesh, with "peace prayers", "important people speaking for hours" and the effigy of Mao, labelled "A Guest without invitation with gun" burnt with firecrackers "like Ravan", was mentioned (Tsering, T.S, 2006).

The Dalai Lama's Birthday
The entire Tibetan refugee community all over the world celebrates the Dalai Lama's birthday with much gaiety. Tibetan schools in India also commemorate this event with cultural programmes: teachers teach Tibetan songs and dances and students perform (yak dance and other folk dances), music etc alongwith singing the National Anthem (Indian and Tibetan). There are visits to monasteries to pray for the Dalai Lama's long life. Organizations such as the Tibetan Women's Association (TWA) as also other Tibetan women cook and provide free food or sell eatables such as momos.

The Dalai Lama: accounts of respondents and available literature refer to the person and symbol of the Dalai Lama as a crucial factor in the lives of Tibetans, right from school. Anand, observes, "In recent years, Tenzin Gyatso, the XIVth Dalai Lama, has become one of the most widely recognized religious figures on the planet". He is not only the "most prominent advocate of the Tibetan cause, but also its main theoretician". The "centrality of his role in defining Tibetanness cannot be overemphasized", he observes. Personal loyalty to the Dalai Lama seems to play a key role in the Government in Exile's efforts to strengthen the sense of a unified Tibetan identity. The Dalai Lama acts as a "summarizing symbol" for the Tibetan diaspora, where he is now revered as "neither wholly transcendant (and thereby out of this world) nor wholly immanent (enmeshed in temporalities like the rest of us) but an ambiguous symbol imbued with the qualities of both"(Nowak cited in Anand 2003:226). Nowak observes that the Dalai Lama's "charisma, unique status in the eyes of the Tibetan people, his extraordinary sacrality" is "respectfully incorporated in everyday school life in much the same way that Mao has figured in the socialization of Chinese children for decades" (Nowak 1978:105).
Classroom observances in Tibetan schools along with narratives of Tibetan youth in the study, analyses of school textbooks and research studies throw light on the fact that the person and symbol of the Dalai Lama is eulogized and revered in all Tibetan schools as the most important ‘god-king’ of the Tibetan peoples. A framed picture of The Dalai Lama can be found hanging usually above or near the blackboard in front of the classroom with ceremonial scarves wrapped around it. His birthday is celebrated with much gaiety and festivity in Tibetan schools and by Tibetans everywhere. Prayer-songs written by him are chanted daily after singing the Tibetan and Indian National Anthem during morning assembly and prayers for his welfare are a constant feature of regular worship (Fieldnotes, Upper TCV School, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, 2006; Samyeling School, Majnu-Ka-Tila, Delhi, 2005).

The Dalai Lama’s quotations and guidance is a usual feature in the school calendar and manuals (See annexure: 10.1) of Tibetan schools and also form the core principles of the schools. Eulogies in praise of him can also be seen in the TCV school calendar. The principles of TCV education, for example, refer to certain “core principles” rooted in the Tibetans “unique culture that guide the operations in a TCV school”. These include, “intellectual awakening, development of practical skills, promoting responsibility, self-reliance and service”, “good human beings”, stating, “...wherever they go, our children shall not be wanting in the milk of human kindness and compassion as envisaged in our cultural heritage and always taught by His Holiness The Dalai Lama” (Manual for TCV Schools, undated). The school calendar has this quote of The Dalai Lama on its cover, “If you help others with sincere motivation and sincere concern, that will bring you more fortune, more friends, more smiles, and more success. If you forget about others right and neglect others’ welfare, ultimately you will be very lonely”. The respondents in the study also regard The Dalai Lama as their “most important role model” (details in chapter five). Thus, the person and the symbol of The
Dalai Lama seem to emerge as one of the important markers in the lives of Tibetan youth in exile, right from schooldays, in India.

'Tibet-Our-Country': an important month-long event called the ‘Tibet-Our-Country Project’ is observed in all TCV schools (other Tibetan schools, like CST, THF, CNMF seem to celebrate the event for one week). This seems to be a very significant school activity that plays an important role in educating the Tibetan children on aspects of Tibetan culture and identity. Respondents in the study regarded it as an “important event”. Classes’ uptill 8th grade seem to participate in the event.

The ‘TCV Education Code book’ describes the ‘Tibet-Our-Country project as “another rich and fundamental educational activity that has taken a firm root in the curriculum” of their schools. This project, it is stated, “aims to bring about an understanding and appreciation of our rich cultural heritage through a very practical and hands-on experience of our culture and way of life”. A month is devoted to the “study and research of our culture and way of life through various educational vehicles like dramas, quizzes, simulations, discussions, debates, elocution, and individual, group and class projects. The project ends with a grand exhibition of the children’s work for all to see” (Education Code for TCV Schools 1999:20).

The month of August, every year, is set aside for the ‘Tibet-Our-Country Project’. During this month, students make and submit projects on Tibet, for instance, models of the Dalai Lama’s palace called Potala Palace etc, to highlight all aspects of Tibet’s traditional, cultural and religious life. An exhibition showcasing paintings of all three regions of former Tibet, Kham, Amdo and U-Tsang (of what they looked like prior to Chinese occupation), pictures of the peoples, places and history of Tibet are displayed. The idea is “to prove that Tibet was a separate country” prior to the Chinese occupation and to inculcate this idea amongst youngsters. Samples of the Tibetan currency used in Tibet before 1959 are displayed. Tibetan National Anthem is also sung in the school assembly to inculcate “feelings of nationalism amongst the students”. Changes are made in seating arrangements in the Tibet week, with chairs arranged in a circle so that “everyone can see each other”, the aim is to foster greater interaction amongst students and encourage a “close, community-feeling”, according to students. A respondent refers
to his school making him “very conscious of his identity, especially in the Tibetan Week” (Monlam, T.S, 2006).

Recreating traditional Tibetan way of life in ‘Tibet Month’

Tibetan students put up exhibitions with themes based on Tibetan culture like the life of nomad Tibetans before (1959) in Tibet. Tents are erected showing a ‘typical’ Tibetan family dressed in traditional attire, with girls making butter tea. Tibetan traditional utensils are also shown. “Everyone during the ‘Tibetan week’ talks in Tibetan. ‘Tibetan food’ is served in school. Programs are held on religion to acquaint the children with Tibetan religious rituals and ceremonies. A Tibetan altar with Thangka painting and seven bowls of water is kept before the altar. Students explain its significance. Everyone wears chubbas or Tibetan traditional costumes. ‘Open’ debates are also organized in Tibetan language on Tibet-related issues. Students circulate pictures of Tibetan stamps and currency notes etc amongst themselves for their “information and awareness” (Monlam, T.S, 2006).

Interviews with students suggested that photo-exhibitions organized by the Gu-Chu-Sum (an organization of ‘freedom fighters’ or political prisoners of Tibet) are held in Tibetan schools all over the country. During such occasions students (usually classes four and above) are shown audio-visual documentaries, photographs of Tibetan protestors being brutally beaten up by the Chinese authorities in TAR and of monasteries being destroyed. Statistics are released of Tibetan political prisoners tortured and killed in Tibet and weapons (knives, cattle-prods, electronic rods etc) used to torture them are displayed. Students from Tibetan schools in Dharamsala, H.P also referred to periodic trips from school to the Tibetan library and museum where all this information is displayed in detail.

Additional similar projects also seem to be organized in Tibetan schools with the aim of inculcating ‘Tibetanness’ amongst students. A respondent from a Tibetan school, for example, referred to another project in school called the “Treasure Box” Project. The idea of this project seems to have been to enable children to cherish Tibetan culture and tradition. She says, “When I was in the 6th grade, there was a project in school called “Treasure box”. There was a big, painted box and we were told that we could put our ‘treasures’ in the box, which would be opened after 50 years. I put a map of Tibet (pre-1949) inside the box. Others put chubbas (traditional Tibetan clothing) or Tsampa (Tibetan flour) etc” (Dechen, T.S, 2006).

Through projects like these, therefore, the sentiment that their religion, culture and identity is something that is precious and needs to be cherished and “preserved” for
future generations, seems to be communicated to the students by the school authorities. Respondents referred to the influence of these projects with their idea of “being Tibetan” “getting stronger” during this time every year. They referred to feeling “angry and sad” with the Chinese. A respondent, for instance remembered how it felt to see pictures of monasteries being destroyed: “It felt as if something bigger was being destroyed...” She referred to feeling “sad” and “helpless” as she “could not do anything” to stop the destruction, torture and death in TAR (Dechen, T.S, 2006).

Students who were born in Tibet said that they “never knew all this was happening” when they were in Tibet but “such pictures, accounts of former political prisoners makes the disbelief turn to belief”(T.Y1, T.S, 2006). Another respondent said that initially he used to find such things “difficult to believe” as he had “no idea of all this” while he was in Tibet. Questions like “where is all this happening?” “How come I never saw?” would arise in his mind (T.W, T.S, 2006).

Life in Tibetan residential schools, with the overwhelming presence of Tibetan staff, teachers, ‘home mothers’ and students; observance of important days in the Tibetan calendar; curriculum and pedagogy and routinized activities tailored to foster Tibetanness, seems to be like living within a “Total Institution” (Goffman 1961).

In contrast to the ‘Tibetan’ school atmosphere and school culture of Tibetan schools, the atmosphere and ethos of non-Tibetan schools, according to the accounts of respondents who went to such schools, seems to be largely multicultural and/or Indian (See annexure: 6.1 for students and annexure: 11.1 for non- Tibetan schools attended).

School Culture: Atmosphere/ethos of Non-Tibetan schools

a. Physical environment and Structure of Schools: while the Tibetan schools were built from the 1960’s onwards, many of the non-Tibetan, Christian missionary schools where respondents had studied, seem to have been constructed in the pre-British or British period, particularly those located in the North-east regions of India. The pre-

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9 The term ‘Total Institution’ was introduced by Erwing Goffman in Asylums (1961) to analyse a range of institutions in which whole blocks of people are bureaucratically processed, while being physically isolated from the normal round of activities, by being required to sleep, work and play within the confines of the same institution. Examples are: boarding schools, barracks, monasteries alongwith prisons and mental asylums” (cited in Marshall 1996: 535).
dominant ‘Christian ethos’ can be seen in terms of the architecture/layout of the buildings, names of the schools, presence of a chapel and/or grotto in the school etc alongwith school culture, class room activities etc. in schools like Loreto Convent, St Josephs, Bethany School (Darjeeling), All Saints College (Nainital), Mountain Home School (Coonoor), Carman School (Mussoorie) etc.

At the same time there are Indian public schools set up by Indian rulers or other citizens where Tibetan students are enrolled in. The school atmosphere and ethos of these schools, seems to highlight the Indian culture and tradition (see annexure: 11.2 for example). Other such schools are: Tashi Namgyal Academy, Joybells School, Kyi-de-Khang or ‘House of Happiness’, Paljour Namgyal Girls School (Gangtok), Vidya Vikash Academy (Darjeeling) etc.

**Mission and Vision:** As compared to the more particularistic and Tibetan culture-specific mottos of Tibetan schools, Non-Tibetan schools (where Tibetan students are enrolled in), in India have mottos (in Latin and English language), which espouse more universalistic, multicultural, humanistic values like hard work, honesty, service, courage, purity etc amongst students. Some examples are: ‘Per Ardua Ad Astra’ or ‘Through hard work to the stars’ (St Augustine, Kalimpong), "Moniti Meliora Sequamur" or "Having been taught (or advised) we follow the better (or the higher) things" (St Pauls’, Darjeeling), ‘Sursum Corda’ or “lift up your hearts” (St Josephs, North Point, Darjeeling), “Learn to Serve” (TNA, Kalimpong). Schoolhouses in non-Tibetan schools generally seem to be named after important founders of the school, priests/nuns or important places etc (see: 11.4 for examples).

**b. Life in Non-Tibetan residential and day schools:** all the 12 non-Tibetan senior secondary schools that respondents in the study went to in India were residential (see annexure: 4.2 and annexure: 6.1 for number of respondents and senior secondary schools they attended). Life of these respondents in these schools highlighted the following:

**Morning Assembly and Prayers:** According to respondents in the study, the non-Tibetan schools they had studied in had “Christian” prayers and/or “Indian” prayers or both being sung in the morning assembly. Hymns were sung with some of these Tibetan students also being part of the school choir. In many of these Christian Missionary
schools in the study, the school chapel seems to emerge as an important place and symbol of school culture. Tibetan students who went to non-Tibetan schools in the study, said that praying to “Christian gods” rather than chanting Tibetan *mantras*, seemed to be “normal” to them while going to non-Tibetan schools. Respondents observed that they did not “feel funny” doing “Christian prayers”, as the “whole school was doing it” (Phungkhang, N.T.S, 2006). Some of them also said that they used to pray to “2 gods” i.e. the Buddha and Jesus in school. They were, however, not allowed to make prayer altars etc in their hostel and would “just chant some *mantras* before sleeping” (Bhutia C, N.T.S, 2006).

India’s National Anthem is sung along with school songs (see annexure: 11.4 for an examples). This is usually followed by daily announcements by the headmaster/principal. Respondents said that students would make “presentations” and read out daily news. They referred to “English” prayers being sung during the morning assembly like, “*We Shall Overcome*, ‘*Make me a channel of your peace*’ and “Christian prayers”, like, “*Our Father in Heaven, Holy be Your Name*, ‘*Remember Most Gracious Virgin Mary*’. There were also Hindi prayers in some of the schools, like “*Ya Mohammad, Jesus Christ, Gautam Buddha, Guru Nanakji, Hum Aapke bachche hain, apni sharam mein rakhna*, ‘*Humko man ki shakti dena*’ (Chime, N.T.S, 2006). The above, therefore, can be referred to as examples of multicultural, secular ethos in these schools.

**Discipline:** As compared to the “lenient school atmosphere of Tibetan schools”, respondents from non-Tibetan schools said that their schools were “more strict” and “disciplined”. Respondents referred to punishments given to students during the morning assembly for misconduct etc. Punishments would be given to students, it seems, “to maintain discipline” as “misbehavior was not tolerated” in the schools. Boys caught smoking or fighting etc, it seems, would be “thrown out” during the assembly (Dadol and Yeshi, N.T.S, 2006).
Punishments in School

Jigme Yeshi from St Josephs North Point in Darjeeling said that, “if the crime was less, like smoking” the student’s parents would be informed. More serious ‘crimes’ would result in “caning” and “therapy with catholic priests” where the student would be “bulldozed with Christian values, Vedas, Tibetan Tripitakas and Bhagwad Gita etc” (Yeshi, N.T.S, 2006). Thupten observed that St Paul’s, Darjeeling was “very strict” with “army-like rules and regulations regarding studies, discipline and dress code” and punishments for not following them. These helped him to “change” and become “mature” (Thupten, N.T.S, 2006). Respondents from Loreto Convent, Darjeeling also referred to punishments for girls wearing “short tight skirts”, “long and painted nails, colored hair etc” with it making them “more disciplined” (Dawa Bhutia and Sonam Yangzom, N.T.S 2006).

Co-curricular Activities and Holidays: The major occasions for celebrations in non-Tibetan schools seem to be: Parents’ day, Teachers’ day, Children’s day and national holidays and festivals celebrated/observed by the Government of India (see annexure: 11.4 for examples). Except for certain schools in north-east India, there is “no trace of Tibetan programmes” in most of these schools. A student, from St Pauls, Darjeeling said that the only “important occasion” he remembers in school was the school fete (a time when “girls would come” to the school). He said that he was “totally cut off from the Tibetan world” (Thupten, N.T.S, 2006).

Cultural Programs in Non-Tibetan Schools

Inter-house western and Indian dance competitions take place in schools. A respondent referred to dancing to Indian folk songs such as, “Radha Mohan Brindawan Mein, Aaj Ki Raas Rachai” and “Mera assi kali ka lahanga dekho” during such occasions (Tsechu, N.T.S, 2006). References were made to inter-house debate, quiz competitions, “resource talks” on environment, career, trekking trips etc taking place (Topgyal, N.T.S, 2006). Some students said that they were part of their school choir and were used to singing hymns on various occasions (Dolkar; Phungkhang, N.T.S, 2006). A respondent referred to Teacher’s day, day scholar’s day etc being celebrated along with rock shows and ‘Prom’ celebrations (as in the west) in his school (Dakpa, N.T.S, 2006).

Differences in the school atmosphere and relations with school staff of non-Tibetan schools as compared to that of Tibetan schools can also be seen. An interesting example seems to be the atmosphere at lunch in the school hostels. From accounts of respondents, it emerges that lunch hour is much more formal in some non-Tibetan residential schools than that of Tibetan homes. While students in Tibetan ‘homes’
referred to getting ‘kitchen duties’ and helping the Amala or homemaker with the cooking, cleaning utensils etc, a respondent from St Paul’s school, Darjeeling, for instance, referred to a totally different picture of his school during lunch-hour. According to the respondent, in St Paul’s, though the principal and the rector would have lunch with the senior section in the same dining room with 300-400 students, the former would, however, be “seated on a higher platform”. After lunch the headmaster would ring a bell, which would result in “pin-drop silence” and make announcements “like in the assembly” (Thupten, N.T.S, 2006). Thus, seating arrangements, practices like ringing of the bell and making announcements following lunch—all seem to present a picture of formal discipline unlike the ‘family-like’ atmosphere in Tibetan homes during lunch hour.

Also, the food served seems to be reflective of the school culture- while food in Tibetan homes was largely said to comprise of a mixture of Tibetan and Indian food, food in non-Tibetan residential schools was said to consist of a mixture of different cuisines – Indian, Continental or Chinese cuisine to suit the tastes of students from different nationalities and multicultural backgrounds.

An exploration of a non-Tibetan, Christian missionary school in Darjeeling, St Paul’s, in which 2 respondents in the study studied in, throws light on the school atmosphere and ethos of a non-Tibetan school. The differences as compared to Tibetan schools, thus, can be noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>St. Paul’s School, Darjeeling</th>
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<tr>
<td>A residential boys’ school founded in 1823, St Paul’s “educational policy is oriented towards life in India and India’s place in world affairs”. The School’s “most important asset” is its “international multiracial and cross-regional cosmopolitan character”. A Christian school ethos is also reflected in the school badge, monogram, the school prayer and school song (see annexure: 11.4). The chapel holds a “central place in the life of the school” where the school “meets as community for prayer and inclusive, liberal corporate worship”(<a href="http://www.indicareer.com/ResidentialSchools.html)(http://www.spsdarjeeling.com/">http://www.indicareer.com/ResidentialSchools.html)(http://www.spsdarjeeling.com/</a>). The dorms named as, ‘Merlin Dormitory’, ‘King Arthur Dormitory’, ‘Lyon Hall’, ‘Westcott Hall’ etc also reflect the anglicized school culture. School uniform is an integral part of the school culture with wearing of rings, holy strings, medals and talismans not allowed. English is the medium of instruction. Tibetan is not offered as a second language (unlike other schools in Darjeeling).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A respondent from the school regarded life at St Paul’s as a “multicultural and unique fruitful experience” and a “turning point” as it was here that he learnt to “interact
with and make friends from different nationalities" (Indians, Nepalese, Bhutanese etc). He also realized that “despite hardships” his parents had sent him to this school, as it was the “best school” (in terms of “facilities, teachers and students” and “school discipline”). He said that he “feels good” about the education he has had. He admitted that he does not know Tibetan language (reading, writing, speaking), as “never had Tibetan language in school”. He, however, was familiar with “verses from the Bible, Christian hymns” etc as used to sing them during morning assembly. He said that he has a “different approach to life” as compared to Tibetans from Tibetan schools as he “was not taught to be pro-Tibetan by school”. “We (Tibetan students from convent schools) think differently,” he noted. He felt that the “standard” of St Paul’s was “different” and “better” though in terms of “rules and regulations regarding studies, discipline and dress code”; it was “very strict” (Thupten, N.T.S, 2006).

i) Celebration of festivals by Family/Community and ‘becoming Tibetan’: Losar or Tibetan New Year and the birthday of The Dalai Lama are occasions that seem to have been celebrated by the Tibetan respondents in diverse ways, depending upon their place of residence during school. The respondents who, during their school days, lived with their families at their home, celebrated Losar with them along with their friends and relatives. Those respondents, who had stayed in hostels but had gone home during the occasions, also happened to celebrate the festivals with their parents and community members. Some respondents, however, never seemed to have the opportunity to stay at home as these days were working days in their school or because their home was far away from their school etc. These respondents seemed to celebrate the festival in their school hostels with Tibetan friends.

The situation of students studying in Non-Tibetan schools in the north-east, however, seems to be different from their counterparts in other parts of India, specially because of their contact and interaction with students from Tibetan schools. Respondents from these areas said that along with Nepalese, Hindi and English programmes, they often put up Tibetan programmes on such occasions in their school, usually “seeking help” from students of Tibetan schools (see annexure: 11.4). This is because the latter seem to have better understanding and knowledge of Tibetan dance/music etc due to being trained in these activities in their schools. On the occasion of the celebration of The Dalai
Lama’s birthday, for instance, Tibetan students in non-Tibetan schools in places like Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Gangtok observed that they would gather at the local Tibetan school there to see the cultural programmes put up by children in these schools.

The Dalai Lama’s Birthday
Respondents from Darjeeling referred to going with their teachers or parents to a hall called ‘Bhanu Bhawan’ and to the local CST school to see cultural programmes put up by CST students. They said that their parents, some of them ex-CST students, often used to participate in these programmes. They also referred to visiting the CST school to hear The Dalai Lama on his visits there (Dawa Bhutia and Sonam Yangzom, N.T.S, 2006). A respondent from Gangtok said that along with visiting the local Tibetan school called Palden Khangsar School, they would also gather at a picnic spot called ‘Phelasoso’, close to their school and celebrate with food etc (Bhutia D, N.T.S, 2006).

Celebrating Losar (Tibetan New year)
Respondents who had stayed with their families during school said that they used to celebrate Losar, for three days, the same as students from Tibetan schools. After cleaning the house, making offerings and praying at the family altar, they would celebrate with “good food” (Tibetan sweets called “deka”, “khapse”, “chema”, “cho” and drink called ‘chang’), new clothes and crackers. They would greet elders, saying “Tashi Delek”, play cards, watch movies at home. They would visit relatives and neighbours, exchange traditional Tibetan silk scarves called ‘khat a’ and invite them for lunch/dinner. Respondents from Darjeeling said that they also used to visit monasteries like, Daligompa, Sakyagompa, Tamang monastery. Sometimes, their parents would invite monks home for praying. All the community-members, it seems, would gather at a local community hall called ‘Manilakhang’ to offer garlands, sweetmeats to a photograph of The Dalai Lama and other gods, pray and sing the Tibetan National Anthem and dance. Food and games stalls would also be put up (Yeshi; Dawa Bhutia; Sonam Yangzom; Namdon; Dado!, N.T.S, 2006).

Amongst some respondents, especially those settled in other regions of the country, however, the lack of or little contact with other community members during festivals often seems to have produced a feeling of alienation. Such respondents said that they celebrated these occasions at home, with their parents. They seemed to have grown up largely away from the influence of the Tibetan community (in terms of lack of participation in Tibetan processions etc) and felt comfortable socializing with Indian or other groups of friends.

Respondents from Gangtok, Delhi, Nainital, Mussoorie, for instance, said that they were “not really into the Tibetan community that much” and that they would just
offer prayers at home in front of The Dalai Lama’s portrait for his “long life”. At times, they would visit other families. A respondent, who grew up in the East of Kailash area in Delhi, referred to visits with his parents to the Tibetan settlement at Majnu-Ka-Tila to see special cultural programmes during Losar. Most of the time, however, he said, he would prefer to stay at home, rather than ‘socialize’ with the Tibetan community. He referred to certain rituals performed by his father that he is also “required to learn” but has always found them practices “very strange” (Phungkhang, N.T.S, 2006). A respondent from Nainital said that she used to celebrate Losar at home with her family with good food, new clothes etc. There were no other Tibetan families staying near her house and sometimes, her mother would take her to visit Tibetan families staying at other areas of Nainital but, it seems, she never used to enjoy such outings, feeling “out of place” (Dolkar, N.T.S, 2006).

ii) Celebrations in School Hostel: respondents who stayed in residential schools during the festivals seemed to celebrate the occasions in their school hostels. These were those who had studied in other regions of the country, like south India. Away from the influence of the family and the community, there students, it seems, never got the opportunity to celebrate Losar with their parents at home and instead celebrated the occasion in their hostel. Two respondents, who had been students in the Mountain Home residential school in Coonoor, Tamil Nadu said that they (20-25 girls and 3 boys) would celebrate The Dalai Lama’s birthday “on their own there” by “gathering at the hostel dining table and singing a birthday song for him”. They would pray for him, collect some money, buy sweets and distribute it amongst themselves. Losar would, it seems, fall on a working day so they would get up early to make a Tibetan sweetmeat called ‘dessi’ with rice and butter, perform rituals that they had learnt at home and then celebrate by dancing. Tibetan girls would wear the traditional Tibetan dress called chubba. Sometimes the principal would give them a “holiday” and they would go out for a movie. They would also be served good food in the hostel (biryani, ice-cream etc). They would also call and wish their family-members at home (Thupten and Bhutia C, N.T.S, 2006).

iii) Participation in Protest Marches: participation of students from non-Tibetan schools in protest marches largely seems to have depended upon the location of the school and place of residence as well as the role of the family and the community.
Greater interaction between family and the community could be seen in the north-eastern parts of the country and other places where Tibetan population and/or Tibetan schools are located, as mentioned before. This is because Tibetan population and/or Tibetan schools usually seem to initiate protest marches or host certain cultural programmes to which students from non-Tibetan schools are invited and join in.

All the respondents from Darjeeling (except one) said that they used to participate in peace marches and go with their parents, relatives and friends on occasions like, 10th March, Tibetan Uprising Day. The march would start from 6:00pm at chowrasta and then spread through “markets owned by Tibetans” like Mahakal market, Fancy market etc every year. Respondents referred to “singing prayers for strength” and shouting slogans like “Free Tibet”, “Release Panchen Lama”, “Chinese, Laot Jao” (“Chinese, Go back”). Monks would lead, followed by CST students and finally the public would follow. Sometimes there would be silent candlelight marches.

Respondents from Kalimpong, Darjeeling etc said that living in these places had enabled them to participate in Tibetan processions and protest marches, as there is a “strong sense of community” there (Topgyal; Dadol, N.T.S, 2006). A respondent from Darjeeling referred to walking, sometimes accompanied by his sister and his parents and shouting slogans like “China, Get Out of Tibet”. Students from Tibetan schools, he observed, would sing Tibetan songs like ‘Jhamling Chisang’. He said that he doesn’t know the song as was “not taught” in his school (Dadol, N.T.S, 2006).

Respondents from other parts of the country like Tezu (Arunachal Pradesh), Kalimpong (W.B), Mussorie (U.A) Bir (Himachal Pradesh) and Gangtok (Sikkim) etc also referred to participating in protest marches in their respective areas with family and friends shouting slogans like “We want freedom, We want justice” etc. Sometimes, it seems, effigies of Mao were also burnt (as mentioned earlier) on such occasions (Tsering; Tsechu; Chime; Topgyal; Dicyi, N.T.S, 2006).

At the same time, there were two respondents whose families were settled in Dimapur in Nagaland, which is home to many Tibetan families. These respondents had, however, studied and grown up in residential schools in South India. As a result, they had never seen or participated in Tibetan protest marches (Thupten and Bhutia C, N.T.S, 2006). Reference can be made to other respondents also who had stayed with their
parents, away from Tibetan settlements and had never participated in any such marches though they had “heard about it” (Phungkhang; Dolkar; Chime; Bhutia C, N.T.S, 2006).

On the other hand, there were also respondents in the study from non-Tibetan schools who had stayed with their family during their schooling and had participated in processions and protest marches, as had been “encouraged or pushed” by their parents and elders to do. These respondents said that they had used to participate in the processions, despite being disinterested, out of “respect” for the former. A respondent from Gangtok, for instance, said that she along with her other sisters were “forced to go” to these peace marches by their “Mom La” or grand-mom who would “scold” them if they refused to go. An aunt of theirs usually accompanied them to these marches (Bhutia D, N.T.S, 2006). Some of the respondents also said that their parents held posts in the Tibetan Government in Exile or in major Tibetan associations (like Tibetan Women’s Association etc) and were taken along by them to processions. A respondent from Kalimpong, for instance, said that he used to participate in peace marches as his father was the Secretary in the Tibetan Welfare Office in Kalimpong and used to take him to the marches “even though he was very small” (Topgyal, N.T.S, 2006). Another respondent from Gangtok also added that that he used to participate in protest marches, as was taken by his mother, who was, for two years, head of the Tibetan Women’s Association (TWA) in Gangtok (Dakpa, N.T.S, 2006).

At the same time, however, reference has to be made to a respondent, from Darjeeling who seems to have been the only respondent (out of four others) from a non-Tibetan school in Darjeeling who had never participated in protest marches there. He seems to have been discouraged by his father to do so as the latter feared that his son would “get spoilt” and asked him to “stay away”. The respondent said that his father, a staunch supporter of The Dalai Lama wanted him out of “sloganeering, picketing and shouting anti-Chinese slogans as he felt it would “make matters worse” for Tibet. He said that only the ‘leaders’ of such marches, it seems, were educated. Most of the participants were, he believed, “college dropouts who were into smoking and listening to Bob Marley and Santana”. This respondent also referred to the “pollution” of the younger generations in Darjeeling. “They like to imitate Eminem, Kid Rock, wear clothes like that and behave
like them”. He was advised “not to be carried away by the sea or would become like them” (Yeshi, N.T.S, 2006).

All the fifteen students from non-Tibetan schools in the study accepted that when compared to students from Tibetan schools, they had very limited (or nil) Tibetan language skills and limited knowledge about their culture and religion due to the nature of their schooling. All the fifteen students (except two who had shifted to a non-Tibetan school after tenth grade) referred to the non-Tibetan and ‘mixed’ atmosphere of their Christian missionary and/or Indian public schools as the reason why they know “less” than students from Tibetans schools about “Tibetan tradition, religion, culture etc”. Whatever little knowledge they said they have about Tibetan religion and culture seems to have been the result of family socialization (“what our parents taught us”) and community-gatherings during Losar (Tibetan new year) etc as mentioned above.

**Influence of Teachers:** Unlike Tibetan schools, which have a majority of Tibetan teachers, a majority of the teachers and students in the non-Tibetan schools were said to be Indian. Schools in north-east regions of India, however, had Tibetan, Indian and Nepalese teachers also. The overall school culture and ethos in non-Tibetan schools seemed to be similarly ‘mixed’ or Indian.

Most of respondents referred to “better teachers” in their schools as compared to teachers in Tibetan schools. Respondents from Loreto Convent, Darjeeling, for example, said that they had “better teachers in LC”. Teachers in Tibetan schools, they said are “not regular- like it happens in all (Indian) government schools”. They are also “not paid well” and are “not good” (Dawa Bhutia; Sonam Yangzom, Namdon, N.T.S, 2006). A respondent from St Paul’s, Darjeeling and other students also observed that they had “excellent teachers” who used to apply “modern teaching methods unlike Tibetan schools” (Thupten, N.T.S, 2006).

In contrast to teachers in Tibetan schools who seem to encourage ‘Tibetanness’ amongst students (as mentioned before), teachers in non-Tibetan schools were said to encourage universalistic values amongst students, like hard work, confidence alongwith personality development skills. A respondent from Mussoorie Public School, Mussoorie said that students in her school were “told to be outspoken, to flaunt their skills”. She said that this has resulted in their being “more confident” than students from Tibetan schools.
who are “told to keep quiet because they are refugees”. The latter, according to her, therefore, tend to be more “shy” and lack confidence as compared to them (Chime, N.T.S, 2006). Another respondent from Loreto Convent, Darjeeling said that she “liked” the “Moral Science and value education classes” that they used to get twice a week even in class 12. The teacher would talk about ‘art of living’, health, every aspect of life etc” (Sonam Yangzom, N.T.S, 2006). A respondent from St Joseph’s, North Point, Darjeeling observed that whenever he feels down, he remembers his school motto and being told by teachers “to reach for the stars whatever you do” and that “it is a sin to dream small for a North Pointer” (Yeshi, N.T.S, 2006).

Diverse experiences in non-Tibetan schools: Some students who had shifted from Tibetan to non-Tibetan schools referred to the move being “good” for them due to many reasons. A respondent, for example, who studied till 10th in Tibetan schools and shifted to a non- Tibetan school called Carman School in Dehradun said that despite the latter being “more expensive”, she is “grateful” as she “became more confident in this school” (was “more shy in the Tibetan school”) and learnt swimming, dance, fashion designing, fine art etc. “Ab public ko face karne mein aasani hota hai”, she observed. (“It is easier to face the public now”). The teachers and non-teaching staff in the latter, she says, were more “liberal” and “good” to them than the Tibetan school, which was more “orthodox”. Life became “much easier”, she said as “interaction between boys and girls” was “better here”. She observed that, teachers and hostel matrons in the Tibetan school “were not happy” with “a boy and a girl talking alone with each other” and sometimes they were also “beaten up for this”. But things were different, it seems, in the non-Tibetan school, where interaction between the sexes was “encouraged”, with birthdays of students being celebrated in “the basketball court with a party” where all students could interact with each other (Tsechu, N.T.S, 2006). Another respondent who shifted from a Tibetan (CST, Chowkur) to three non-Tibetan schools, at different point of time, namely, Mountain Home (Coonoor), Baldwin (Bangalore), St Paul’s (Darjeeling), as mentioned before, said that though he “took time to adapt to speaking in English”, the shift helped him become “mature” (Thupten, N.T.S, 2006).

At the same time, however, there were respondents who seemed to have faced adjustment problems due to the shift from a Tibetan to a non-Tibetan school. One such
respondent who shifted from Tibetan schools (CST Tezu and CST Dalhousie) to a non-Tibetan school (Army Public School, Shillong) said that the “teachers used to care for the others as they were rich, I was the only one who was poor”. “I used to feel lonely, the school was too good for me” (Tsering, N.T.S, 2006).

Respondents from non-Tibetan schools largely felt “at home” and comfortable in interacting with Indians as their peer-group and teachers had been Indian or ‘mixed’. They also observed that it is difficult for students from Tibetan schools “to mix with Indians” as they are not “comfortable with English and Hindi”.

Most of the respondents from non-Tibetan schools (especially those who had stayed away from Tibetan settlements), however, referred to a lack of interaction with students from Tibetan schools. They observed that they had “nothing to talk about” (with the latter) and that their “ways of thinking, communicating and interests” were “all different” (Bhutia D; Thupten, N.T.S, 2006 etc). A respondent who had studied in All Saints College, Nainital said that there were no other Tibetan girls in her school, apart from a “junior”. Her neighbours were all Indians except a girl who was ‘gyagar khamba’ or “half-Tibetan”. She, therefore, had little or no interaction with Tibetans from Tibetan schools and also consciously “avoided” these interactions, as she did not “like being with them” (Dolkar, N.T.S, 2006).

Some of these students also said that they did not like to interact with their cousins and other Tibetans from Tibetan schools, as the latter apparently “look down” upon them, as they are “not very fluent in Tibetan”. Another respondent also suggested that students from non-Tibetan schools face a “soft discrimination” from students from Tibetan schools, as they don’t know much about Tibetan language, culture and religion (Thupten, N.T.S, 2006).

All fifteen students from non-Tibetan schools referred to the “spirit of competition” and high levels of “self-confidence” that they felt they possessed as a result of their schooling. As compared to students from Tibetan schools, this has apparently helped them to compete and secure ‘good’ percentages in the plus two exams, enabling them to secure admission to ‘better’ colleges in Delhi. These respondents felt “privileged” to have attended non-Tibetan convent or Indian public schools (as compared to Tibetan schools).
Respondents from non-Tibetan Schools in the study also said that they wanted their future children to study in non-Tibetan schools. This is because they believed that students from Tibetan schools ‘lag behind them’ in terms of: ‘good English language’ (speaking), ‘all-round personality development’ (believed that their schools are ‘better’ than Tibetan schools in providing language skills, social skills etc) and ‘quality of education’. They also felt that their schools have ‘better teachers, curricular and co-curricular activities etc’ which are “not limited to Tibetanness” and help them become “global citizens” (Phungkhang, N.T.S, 2006) along with providing them with better career prospects. A respondent, for instance, noted, “education is my passport”, saying that his school has taught him to participate and win in competitions and to be “the best” (Yeshi, N.T.S, 2006).

A respondent from another non-Tibetan school observed that she “stands out amongst Tibetans” because of her education. She noted that “Tibetans who have studied in TCV and other Tibetan schools tend to have limited language skills and their level of confidence is very low”. “I have an edge over them in terms of these two qualities, because of which they criticize me for being over-confident”. “I mingle with everyone (Tibetans and non-Tibetans alike) and I am really grateful for my schooling for this”. She said that she is “different from other Tibetan girls from Tibetan schools”. She noted that as a woman, she feels that there is “social pressure on Tibetan girls to be well behaved” and to be “shy” and “modest”. She felt that this “social pressure” is more amongst students from Tibetan schools. As a result, she felt that the Tibetan youth from Tibetan schools are not comfortable with the fact that she interacts with boys and girls from “inside as well as outside” the community. The respondent observed, “I like interacting with different people all the time, in the college as well as here in the hostel, which is not considered good for girls. They expect us to be shy all the time and walk with downcast eyes, but why should I act shy if I’m not and why should I walk with downcast eyes, unless I want to?” (Dolkar, N.T.S, 2006). She felt that students who go to missionary schools are pitted against ‘others’ and therefore strive to compete and do well in studies. Students from Tibetan schools, on the other hand, she said, “lag behind” because they “don’t really have to fight or compete with others to do well” as “Unko sabkuch jaldi mil jaata hai” (“they get everything easily”).
As already mentioned before, some respondents from non-Tibetan schools in the north-east regions of India, however, seemed to have more interaction with students from Tibetan schools and referred to “taking their help” for performing in cultural programmes in their school.

In contrast, respondents from Tibetan Schools wanted their children to study in Tibetan schools, as they believed that students from Non-Tibetan schools ‘lag behind them’ in terms of knowledge of Tibetan language, culture, religion and identity- the “reason for their very existence as Tibetan refugees”, in India. They regarded it as their “responsibility to preserve Tibetanness” in exile, a responsibility that they saw only themselves as living up to. This was because they regarded students from non-Tibetan schools as “foreigners” who didn’t even know their own language and religion.

An exploration of the educational situation of Tibetan refugees in India thus, reveals the existence of a diverse range of differential experiences of these students. These differences exist in terms of access to different categories of schools and the social background of children enrolled in them. Differences exist in terms of medium of instruction/ languages taught in school (the place of Tibetan and English languages), textbooks used in the schools, the curriculum, pedagogy and overall school culture in different schools. It also includes relationships between teachers and students in the schools as well as relationships between Tibetan students going to Tibetan and non-Tibetan schools and their educational experiences.

Other than the schools, differences also seem to exist in terms of impact of individual families and the Tibetan community on their lived realities inside as well as outside the school situation in different parts of India. In this regard, the diverse roles of the family, community and peer-group become important in terms of the manner of celebration of festivals/holidays and participation in peace marches/peaceful demonstrations, while at school. These diverse experiences, therefore, need to be taken into consideration to understand that Tibetan students in India do not comprise a uniform, homogeneous whole but have differential educational and life experiences. These differential patterns need to be explored in order to understand and analyze the educational situation of Tibetan refugees in India.
The next chapter explores the meanings and definitions of Tibetan identity and of 'being Tibetan' in secondary literature. It looks at perceptions of Tibetan and Indian officials and of Tibetan youth of 'Tibetanness', their experiences of 'being Tibetan' and/or individual and ethnic identities in exile. It explores sites of Tibetan youth identity-construction in exile. It also explores the youth's aspirations for educational and occupational mobility and available life chances in the host country.