INTRODUCTION

On the 18 April 1959 Premier Zhou En-Lai reported to the National People’s Congress about the rebellion in Tibet, which the Tibetans called ‘National Uprising’. In his report, Zhou said, “Tibet is China’s territory and the rebellion of the Tibetan reactionaries and its suppression are China’s internal affairs”. Only seven years before, on 6th April 1952, Chairman Mao, in a directive to the Central Committee of the CPC (Communist Party of China), contrasted Tibet and Xinjian said, “while several hundred thousand Han people live in Xinjian, there are hardly any in Tibet, where our army finds itself in a totally different minority nationality area”. Seventeen years earlier, during the Long March, while passing through the snowy mountains in Western Szechuan, Mao had perceived “Tibet’s ‘difference’ to be more fundamental, speaking of the cattle and grain necessarily taken by his army from the Tibetans for the food we took from them”. In the perception of the Chinese leadership, the hub of the matter lies in that, over those twenty-five years before 1959 Tibet changed from being a foreign land to being a part of the Chinese territory. Therefore, to fully take a cursory look at the evolution of the Sino-Tibetan relations in historical perspective.
The Tibetans stand out as a people with their own history, language, culture, and with a way of life that is essentially peculiar to them. They are neither Chinese nor part of any other group of people. There are numerous factual and documentary evidences that confirm that Tibet had been an independent country for centuries since the time King Songsten Gampo acceded to the throne. Songsten Gampo ruled from around 630 to 649 AD. His armies penetrated upper Burma, Nepal and the modern Szechuan province of China. After a Tibetan victory in the Szechuan plains, the Chinese Emperor Tai Tsung sent a princess bride named Wen Cheng to join Songsten Gampo's household. This matrimonial alliance is being cited by the Chinese to legitimize its claim over Tibet. According to the Chinese, the Tibetans and the Hans, through marriage between the royal families, and meetings and alliances, cemented political and kingship ties and friendship and laid a solid foundation for a unified nation. However, Weng Cheng was only one of the four wives of the great Tibetan Emperor Songsten Gampo, one of them was a Nepali and the other two were Tibetans. Therefore, no inference can be drawn from such past relationships as the basis of domination, or claims by one nation to have an authority over another.

The apogee of Tibetan power was achieved in seventh, eighth and ninth centuries, when it was felt as far afield as Thailand and North India in the west, embracing East Turkestan as far as
Samarkand which Tibetan forces besieged around 800. In fact, tenth century witnessed a war between Tibet and China in which the former captured parts of western China. In 763, China’s capital was also captured. Following the war, a treaty of peace was signed in 821 that recognized the equal and independent status of both the countries. A stone column was erected in 823, the text of which, written both in the Tibetan and Chinese scripts, records a boundary agreement between Tibet and China on the basis of equality. It was a treaty of friendship and understanding between the two sovereign states and not a record of unity as being partially quoted by the Chinese to convince the world of the legitimacy of their occupation of Tibet. During the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, Buddhism, which was adopted as state religion during the rule of Songsten Gampo in the seventh century, overwhelmed the Tibetan social order. In the thirteenth century, as Genghis Khan’s Mongol empire extended towards Europe in the West and China in the east, Tibetan leaders of the powerful Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism concluded an agreement with the Mongol leaders in order to avoid being conquered. The Tibetan Lama promised political loyalty and religious blessings and teachings in exchange for patronage and protection. Later in 1247, Godan Khan, the grand son of Genghis Khan, invested the religious leaders of Tibet with the control of all the thirteen provinces into which Tibet was then divided under the Mongol system of myriarchies. The Mongol Chief Godan Khan was impressed by the learning of Sakya Pandit, and dubbed him
as “moral and spiritual advisor to my people, fit to pray for the welfare of my deceased parents”. When Sakya Pandit died in 1251, his nephew, Phagpa, took over his position.

The religious relationship became so important that when, decades later, Kublai Khan conquered China and established the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), he invited the Sakya Lama to conduct his enthronement and named him ‘Tishih’ or the imperial preceptor and supreme pontiff of his empire. This was the beginning of Patron-Lama (Cho-Yon) relationship between the Tibetan priest rulers and the Mongol Emperors. This Cho-Yon relationship resulted in Kublai Khan adopting Buddhism as the state religion of his Empire with Phagpa as its highest spiritual authority. In gratitude, Kublai Khan offered his Patron-Lama political authority over entire Tibet in 1254. This unique Cho-Yon Central Asian relationship also formed the basis of later relations between Manchu Emperors and successive Dalai Lamas. An essential element of the Cho-Yon relationship was the protection that the Patron provided his Lama in return, not for latter’s allegiance but for his religious teachings and blessings. Some Cho-Yon relationships acquired important political dimensions. Tibet broke political ties with the Mongols in 1350, before China regained its independence from Mongols.
The line of Tibetan hierarchies, beginning with Sakya Pandit continuing through numerous vicissitudes, with the simultaneous development of many monastic sects, merged with the line of Dalai Lamas favoured by Gelugpa sect then growing to pre-eminence. In fact, the Tibetan religious scholar Tsongkapa (1357-1419) founded the Gelug School of Tibetan Buddhism. It became the fourth major school of Tibetan Buddhism, the others being the Nyingma, the Sakya and the Kagyu. Panchen Gendun Drup was Tsongkapa's principal disciple. Panchen Gendun Drup's third 'incarnation', Sonam Gyastso, was invited to the Mongol court of Altan Khan who first conferred the title of "Talai (Dalai) Lama" on him. The title was applied retrospectively to his two previous 'incarnations' making him the third Dalai Lama. The Chinese propaganda claims of the establishment of the 'Dalai Lama' by Manchu Emperor a century later is not true.

In 1350, the Tibetan king Changchub Gyalsten replaced Sakya Lamas. The new Tibetan king did away with the Mongol influences in the Tibetan administrative system and introduced a new and distinctly a Tibetan one. The Chinese too regained their independence from the Mongol rule, and established the Ming dynasty 18 years later in 1368, which lasted till 1644. During this period contacts between Tibet and Ming China were spasmodic and largely limited to the visits by individual Lamas of various, sometimes rival monasteries to China and the granting of honorific imperial titles or gifts by the Chinese Emperor.
to them. But since Tibet was not ruled by any of those Lamas, whatever the nature of contacts with China, they could not affect the independent status of Tibet. In fact in 1406, the ruling Phagmodrn prince, Dakpa Gyalsten, turned down the imperial invitation to him to visit China. This clearly shows the sovereign authority of Tibetan rulers at that time.

The final years of the rule of Ming dynasty in China witnessed the rise of the great fifth Dalai Lama. The fifth Dalai Lama became the supreme political and religious leader of Tibet with the help of his Mongol patron, Gushri Khan. The fifth Dalai Lama maintained a close relationship with the Manchu rulers. The Manchu Emperor Shunzi invited the fifth Dalai Lama in 1653 for a state visit to the imperial capital. Commenting on this visit, W.W. Rockhill, an American scholar and diplomat in China, writes:

the Dalai Lama had been treated with all the ceremony which could have been accorded to any sovereign, and nothing can be found in Chinese work to indicate that he was looked upon in any other light; at this period of China’s relation with Tibet, the temporal power of Lama backed by arms of Gurshi Khan and the devotion of all Mongolia was not a thing for the Emperor of China to question.

On this occasion, the Priest-Patron or Cho-Yon relationship, as mentioned earlier in the discussion, was reaffirmed. Throughout the
Qing dynasty, relations between Tibet and Manchu emperors remained formally based on the Cho-Yon relationship. On the political level, some powerful Manchu emperors succeeded in exerting a degree of influence over Tibet. Thus between 1720 and 1792, imperial troops were sent to Tibet on four occasions to protect the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people from foreign invasion by Mongols and Gurkhas and from internal unrest. These military expeditions provided an opportunity to the Emperor to have a representative posted in the Tibetan capital. Some of these imperial representatives, called Ambans, successfully exercised influence over the Tibetan government, particularly with respect to the conduct of foreign relations. The treaties of 1890 and 1893, between Britain and China has a special significance so far as Chinese influence in conducting Tibetan foreign policy is concerned.

The British efforts to re-establish Indian trade with Tibet and the presence of the Chinese Amban in Lhasa led the British representative to take the view that China possessed a residuum of at least de facto authority over Tibet. In 1876, Great Britain and China entered into a treaty whereby it was agreed inter alia that the Chinese government would make the necessary arrangements for the British exploration mission to visit Tibet. The Tibetans refused to recognize the treaty and the British mission was abandoned before reaching Tibet.
Notwithstanding these signs indicating an absence of effective Chinese control over Tibet, Britain signed a Convention with China with respect to Tibet in 1890. The subject matter of the Convention dealt with external affairs and boundaries. Matters went a stage further in 1893, when an Anglo-Chinese Convention purported to open Tibetan territory to British Trade. It is therefore clear from the subject matter of these two conventions that the British regarded China as an authority over Tibet. The Tibetan government rejected these treaties as ultra vires and this precipitated the British invasion in 1903. The quashing of the treaties irked the Manchu Emperor and his displeasure was mirrored in military non-assistance to Tibetans during the British invasion. However, the British left Lhasa in 1904, after having concluded a bilateral treaty with the Tibetan government, known as the Lhasa Convention. The Lhasa Convention of 1904 granted major trading concessions to Britain. In order to carry out the trade unhindered, the British signed another convention in 1906 with China.

The geographical proximity of Tibet with Central Asia was constant cause of concern for Russia. In fact, Russia was making attempts to gain influence in Lhasa, and the Dalai Lama was inclined to choose Czar of Russia as his protector. The British foresaw the Russian motives, and signed a Convention with Russia in 1907. Both parties undertook to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet through
the intermediary of China, though Great Britain stipulated for herself the right of direct commercial relations with Tibet. Though the two Conventions of 1904 and 1906 had no mention of Chinese suzerainty, the 1907 Convention recognized it expressly. The most likely explanation of this feature of the Convention is that Great Britain, having obtained for herself a very favorable position in Tibet, was anxious to prevent any direct relations between Russia and China in connection with any matter related to Tibet. It is remarkable that neither the Chinese government nor its representatives in Lhasa uttered a word of protest on the signing of this Convention in the name of The Tibetan government.

This was a clear indication of the decreasing Manchu influence over Tibet. The situation lasted a few decades. Tibet was never incorporated into the Manchu Empire and it continued to conduct its relations with neighboring states largely on its own. Despite this loss of influence, the Chinese imperial government claimed some authority over Tibet, an authority that the British imperial government termed 'suzerainty' in its dealing with Russia and China vis-à-vis Tibet. However, this should not be understood as a real recognition of some kind of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. The British used the fiction of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet to counteract Russian influence.
The Manchu imperial army tried to reassert its influence in 1910 by invading the country and occupying Lhasa, but the 1911 revolution in China overthrew the Manchu Empire, and a Sino-Tibetan peace accord was signed after the repatriation of the troops surrendered to the Tibetan army. The Dalai Lama reasserted Tibet’s full independence, internally by issuing a proclamation, and externally in communications to foreign rulers in a treaty with Mongolia.

The fall of the Manchus and the Status of Tibet till 1950

Tibet’s status following the expulsion of Manchu troops is not subject to serious dispute. Whatever ties existed between the Dalai Lamas and the Manchu emperors of the Qing dynasty were nullified with the fall of the dynasty. From 1911 to 1950, Tibet avoided undue foreign influence and behaved in every respect as a fully independent state. It maintained diplomatic relations with Nepal, Bhutan, Britain, and later with independent India. Relations with China remained strained. The Chinese waged a border war with Tibet in order to incorporate it in the Chinese republic, claiming all along to the rest of the world that Tibet was part of China.

In 1913, Tibet was engaged in repelling the Chinese attempt to establish its authority over Tibet by force of arms and declared its independence. The British were afraid of the disturbances at the Indian border, and in an effort to reduce the Sino-Tibetan tensions,
which had implications for the security of India’s north eastern border, they convened a tripartite conference in Simla in 1913. In the Conference, the three states met on equal terms. The Chinese delegates were reminded by their British counterpart that Tibet entered the conference as ‘an independent nation recognizing no allegiance to China’. This Conference was, however, unsuccessful as it failed to resolve the differences between Tibet and China. Nevertheless it was significant in Anglo-Tibetan friendship and was reaffirmed with the conclusion of bilateral trade and border agreement. In a joint declaration, Great Britain and Tibet bound themselves not to recognize Chinese suzerainty or other special rights in Tibet unless China signed the draft Simla convention, which would have guaranteed Tibet’s greater borders, its territorial integrity and full autonomy.

From 1911 till the Chinese invasion in 1949, Tibet conducted its international relations primarily by dealing with the British, Chinese, Nepalese and Bhutanese diplomatic missions in Lhasa, but also through government delegations travelling abroad. After India’s independence replaced the British mission in Lhasa by an Indian one. During the World War II Tibet maintained its neutrality, despite strong pressures from the United States, Britain and China to allow passage of military equipment through Tibet. Its independent foreign policy is perhaps demonstrated by the country’s neutrality during the Second World War. Despite strong pressures from Britain, the US and China
to allow the passage of military supplies through Tibet to China when Japan blocked the strategically vital "Burma Road", Tibet held fast to its declared neutrality, which the allies were constrained to respect.

The international relations of Tibet were focused on neighbouring countries. Tibet maintained diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with countries in the region such as Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Mongolia, China, British India, and India after independence. Internally, the government of Tibet levied tax, issued its own currency, ran the country's postal system, issued postage stamps and commanded a small army. Therefore, when Tibet faced the Chinese invasion at the close of 1949, it was a de facto independent state. Tibet possessed all the attributes of independent statehood recognized under international law: a defined territory, a population inhabiting that territory, a government, and a demonstrated capability to conduct inter-state relations. The 1949 Chinese aggression constitutes an aggression on a sovereign state, a violation of international law or the fundamental rights of the Tibetan people to independence. The International Commission of Jurists' Legal Inquiry Committee on Tibet, in its study on Tibet's legal status reported:

Tibet demonstrated from 1913 to 1950 the conditions of statehood as generally accepted under international law. In 1950, there was a people, a territory, and a government that functioned in that territory, conducting its own domestic affairs free from any outside
authority. From 1913 to 1950, foreign relations of Tibet and countries with whom Tibet had foreign relations are shown by official documents to have treated Tibet in practice as an independent state.

The Chinese Takeover of Tibet and the UN

The unprovoked Chinese aggression and the eventual forced occupation of Tibet in 1950 called for UN intervention. The Tibetan government wrote to the Secretary-General of the UN on 7 November 1950, appealing for the world body's intervention. It said:

Tibet recognizes that it is in no position to resist the Chinese advance. It is thus, that it agreed to negotiate on friendly terms with the Chinese government. Though there is little hope that a nation dedicated to peace will be able to resist the brutal effort of men trained to war, we understand that the UN has decided to stop aggression wherever it takes place.

This appeal effectively presented the Tibetan Government's view of their historical relationship with China and of events from 1911 to 1950. Tibet found support from a most unlikely source, E1-Salvador. On 14 November, Hector David Castor, the Chairman of E1-Salvador delegation telegraphed the UN Secretary-General requesting that "invasion of Tibet by foreign forces" be added to the agenda of the UN's primary responsibility "to maintain international peace and security" as cited in paragraph of Article 1 of the UN Charter. The proposed
draft resolution asked not only for the condemnation of the Chinese occupation but also for the creation of a special committee to develop proposals for UN regarding actions that could be taken.

The invasion of Tibet, the Tibetan appeal to the UN, and EL-Salvador’s action on behalf of Tibet forced India and Britain to weigh carefully their own national interests against their historical connections with Tibet, and their moral and legal obligation to assist her at this critical time.

A content analysis of the diplomatic communications between the governments of India and China hints that India’s unwillingness to take a strong stand on the issue was camouflaged with the high sounding idea of “peaceful negotiations”. India, being a successor of British Indian government and an immediate neighbour of Tibet, was the country to which Tibet was of utmost concern. So the Indian non-committal approach provided a lead to the other governments in formulating their policies with respect to Tibet.

During the nine years that followed, after the Chinese Peoples Liberation Army had entered Tibet with the declared purpose of “liberation”, and after the unsuccessful Tibetan appeal to UN, Tibet witnessed the Khampa uprising of 1956 and the revolt of 1959. The Chinese accentuated the general discontent of the Tibetans by consistently violating the ‘Seventeen-point Agreement’, signed in 1951.
Under the agreement, the Government of China gave a number of undertakings. It promised to maintain the existing political system of Tibet, to maintain the status of the Dalai Lama, to protect freedom of religion, and to refrain from adopting coercive measures in the matter of reforms in Tibet. In fact, a report submitted to the International Commission of Jurists by its Legal Inquiry Committee on Tibet investigated the violation of the above mentioned undertakings of the 'Seventeen-point Agreement'. Their findings also mentioned violations of 1948 UN Convention on Genocide as well as of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights places the classic liberties side by side with social and economic rights.

In 1959, 1961 and 1965, the UN General Assembly passed resolutions indicating grave concern over the violations of fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people, the suppression of distinctive cultural and religious life, and the autonomy that the Tibetans had traditionally enjoyed. On 20 December 1961, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the cessation of the practices that deprive the Tibetan people of their right to self-determination. A careful reading of the UN debate demonstrates that the resolutions that followed 1965 took into account the violation of provisions under Article 1 and 55 of the UN Charter. These resolutions showed grave
concern for the hardship on the Tibetans, particularly on the exodus of refugees, and considered that these events violated the UN Charter.

The 1994 report of the Conference of International Lawyers on issue relating to self-determination and independence for Tibet has concluded that the Tibetan people do have the right to self-determination, which is being denied. In its recommendations, the Conference also made requests to the UN and other international bodies to act in regard to the right of self-determination of the Tibetan people.

Internationally, the issue of Tibet again started gaining fresh momentum in the mid-80s. Discussions around the Tibetan issue intensified with the passing of resolutions at the United Nations and in various parliaments including the European Parliament. A variety of independent groups also took serious interest in the Tibetan issue viz. Permanent Tribunal of People’s Sessions on Tibet Verdict in 1992 in France, Conference of International Lawyers in 1993 in London, World Parliamentarians Convention of Tibet in 1994.

This momentum was brought about by some important factors. Firstly, the Western countries and the Dalai Lama very vehemently criticized the change in the world scene after the brutal suppression of pro-democracy movement of 1989 in China. Dalai Lama’s peace initiatives with China also considerably attracted lot of western moral
support that culminated in his getting the Nobel Peace prize in 1989. Secondly, the Tibetan diaspora living in the western countries have been making rapid encroachment into the cultural consciousness of the west. They have also made a broad support base in the western countries. The most remarkable aspect of this effort is the inroads the Tibetans have made in the US Congress, which passed legislation giving scholarships and immigration visas to the Tibetans and declaring Tibet as an “occupied nation”. Thirdly, the Soviet disintegration and the collapse of Communism have helped revive nationalist aspirations in Eastern Europe and across the world. Tibetan exiles have been quick to point to the parallels between Tibet and the post-Soviet independent republics.

The disintegration of the Soviet order and the resultant establishment of the US led world-order have also strengthened the China as a power to be reckoned with in Asia. The Chinese effort to woo the Central Asian republics and the emerging China, Pakistan and Iran axis in the Asian strategic theater has been a predominant cause of concern for the western world. The stated transfer of Hong Kong to China on 1 July 1997 along with the ever-elusive internal market of China will further increase its strength. So the growing Chinese power is an uncomfortable variable for the western economic and strategic planners. Logically, the increase in Chinese power will also strengthen its diplomatic position at the UN as well as the informal floors of
diplomacy. And the Tibetan issue is expected to be a major indicator of it.

The Tibetan issue is the classic example of informal diplomacy that is being widely practiced in the current world order. Formal diplomacy and its practices are only exercised by the states having had an independent existence and an international recognition that means UN membership. Tibet lacks both. But the Tibetan diaspora along with the Dalai Lama’s government-in-exile have been successful, as far as the exercise of informal diplomacy is concerned, in generating an opinion around the world in favour of their cause. The informal diplomacy has kept the Tibetan issue alive and has reached it at the pre-negotiation stage, which is negotiation about negotiation.

The Tibetan informal diplomacy also converges with the trade related interests of the countries negotiating with China. So, the Tibetan issue is expected to bounce back with a renewed vigour in the current world situation netted with economic and trading blocks. The current western concern over Tibet, despite its hollowness, underpins the above argument. So it may be concluded that the Dalai Lama’s lack of power to negotiate on equal terms with China is being compensated by popular western pressure on it. The increased western pressure has also hardened Chinese position on the Tibetan issue. This is not to be suggested that popular western pressure must
cease but the level of support has to be elevated to political and diplomatic action in order to produce adequate impact on the Chinese policy towards the Tibetan question. But the Chinese veto at the UN blocks the possibility of any positive incentive from China so far as negotiations over Tibet are concerned. Nevertheless, the informal diplomacy at the UN to resolve the Tibetan question is an important exercise in creating media events in order to keep the issue alive in the face of growing Chinese power. The Tibetan situation is a 'no win' situation where it is always feasible to have the informal diplomacy working to facilitate the zero-sum game to a positive-sum game.

**Objectives of the study**

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

- (a) To review the historical status of Tibet vis-à-vis China.
- (b) To analyze the informal diplomacy of the Dalai Lama and his supporters at the UN.
- (c) The role of informal diplomacy with reference to Tibet
- (d) To examine the UN resolution on Tibet as well as other related bodies resolution on Tibet
- (e) To analyze the role of India in Sino-Tibetan conflict resolution.
- (f) To analyze the role and efficacy of informal diplomacy by inter-national actors in conflict resolution.

Chapter I attempts to examine the historical evolution of Tibet since the seventh century and the changing pattern of Sino-Tibetan relation in historical prospective. This chapter explores how the
Buddhist revolution brought about both ideological and structural transformation in Tibet. Buddhism created 'non-coercive regime' which depended on others for military support, tracing the beginning of patron-Lama (Cho-Yon) relationship between the Tibetan priest rulers and the Emperors starting with the Yuan dynasty (1297-1368) down to the Manchu dynasty.

Chapter II examines Tibet's pre-1950 status, and the way it emerges out of the dynamics of the politics of British imperialism in South and East Asia. The British sought to politically reshape the resilient, flexible and informal inter-state diplomacy into a competitive, and hierarchical one induced with power-policies and militarism – a hallmark of imperialism and also highlighting the development of diplomatic intercourse between Tibet, China and Britain since eighteen century.

Chapter III attempts a content analysis of the diplomatic communication between China and Tibet over the unprovoked Chinese aggression and the eventual forced occupation of Tibet in 1950. Subsequently, it also deals with the Tibetan attempt to garner international support for the issue in terms of informal diplomacy, which culminated in an appeal to the United Nations Secretary-General on 7 November 1950, expressing the general discontent over the situation prevailing in Tibet.
Chapter IV deals with the UN Resolution passed at UN in 1959 on the 'Question of Tibet'. This chapter explores the issue of Tibet and informal diplomacy at the UN behind the spurt of activities carried out by the western countries to articulate the Tibetan issue internationally. Presenting factual details to hold the argument with a special emphasis on the systematic violation of the Tibetan human rights by the People’s Republic of China.

Chapter V deals with the UN Resolution of 1961 on the 'Question of Tibet' and with the final appeal to the UN made in 1965. This chapter reviews the debate and evaluates the role of UN in articulating the issue of Tibet at the informal floors of diplomacy.

Chapter VI concludes with a discussion of the relevance of the role of the UN in the resolution of the 'Tibet question'. It also discusses the chief international legal principles that bear on the systematic violation of the Tibetans human rights by the People’s Republic of China. It gives a review of Tibet's record at the United Nations for future activity on behalf of the Tibetan people.

Though a sincere attempt has been made to make the study as comprehensive as possible, the present work is confined to the study of the Tibetan issue as an example of informal diplomacy, which is being widely practiced in the current world order. The emphasis is on the informal diplomacy at the UN to resolve the Tibetan question is an
important exercise in creating media events in order to keep the issue alive in the face of growing Chinese power.

Finally, with regard to the technical question of romanisation, there are several accepted systems at present. The most often used in English speaking countries is the standard romanisation for place names, and Wade-Giles transcription for other technical terms or proper names. The system has been followed throughout the present work proper and that I have rendered Tibetan terms and names in more familiar Roman forms.