METHODOLOGY

Buddhism has always found a favour with the native and foreign scholars more particularly the orientalists from the west. The metaphysical doctrines of the creed and their logical and epistemological implications have been comparatively well studied. But save a few works such as Austine Waddles *Buddhism and Lamaism of Tibet*, none has especially discussed the status and role of Lamas in Buddhist society. Austine Waddles work too only discusses the status of Lamas only cursorily and dismisses it in one single chapter mainly laying emphasis on their daily routine and the curriculum they follow in the monastery.

The present researcher had to devise a plan to extract the relevant material from the living sources comprising three different kinds of people at three different levels of education and understanding. As our main thrust was the sociological study of Young Lamas we had first to develop a personal acquaintance with this group. Monks to whom the Young Lamas were entrusted were our second concern as they were the people who administered in monasteries and were supposed to interpret the *Dhamma* for the benefit of the laity. Our third group comprised common masses who were dependent on *Gompas* more importantly to achieve suitable merits for *Nirvana*.

Pertinent to mention it here is the fact that the people - monastery relations are for all practical purposes symbiotic in nature. The three i.e monastery, its monks and the general masses constitute one single whole of Ladakh society. They are intertwined, interdependent and mutually beneficial to each other.
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Keeping in view the general characteristics of Ladakh society where literacy rate is more than 62% (2001 census) and religion is more a way of life, our most important tools to build our thesis were "Interview Schedule" person to person contact and Non-participant observation. We especially tried to meet and Interview the monks and the Young Lamas which formed the bulk of our subject.

We had, for the paucity of time and the rugged inhospitable terrain to delimit our study to only three important monasteries of Hemis, Lamayuru and Likir. And as each monastery had hundreds of young Lamas as inmates we had to restrict our selves to the study of a sample comprising hundred young Lamas from all the three Gompas.

Besides Interview schedule we administered a brief questionnaire relevant to our study to the learned monks and the learned officials from the general masses directly involved with the affairs of the monastery.

We also made use of the secondary sources in the shape of books, pamphlets, handouts issued occasionally by the monasteries, articles and journals. We also visited the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies at Choglamsar and discussed many of our problems and issues at hand with them.

However, our study is mostly based on our field study and person to person contact. We also found time to visit the common people residing in the vicinity of a monastery. During our discourses with them we also tried to locate their economic relation with the monastery. We could draw comfortable comparisons of the houses who had a living member as a monk in some monastery.
Apparently it seemed that the house with a monk amongst them enjoyed greater social status and some economic prosperity.

We had devised a tripartite interview schedule for our thesis comprising relevant questions for three distinct groups whose views were supposedly relevant to our study. The groups were:

1. The monks directly involved in the affairs of the Gompa and responsible for the welfare of the young Lamas.
2. The common people who contributed towards a Gompa and were dependent for their socio-religious functions on it.
3. The young Lamas who were our foremost concern and were the main thrust of our thesis / study.

Before applying the interview schedule and questionnaire to the respondents a pre test was done on five percent of the sample population. The pretest revealed that most of the questions seemed unintelligible to the respondents, therefore the desired responses were not forthcoming. The investigator standardized the research tools with the help of language experts at Cultural Academy Leh and Buddhist Institute Choglamsar, Leh.

**Hypothesis:**

The hypothesis characterize the following presumptions:

1. Modernization as a challenge is affecting the form and organization of traditional lamahood.
2. The young lamas are discriminated / exploited by the powerful / senior lamas.
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ISSUES:

1. To study and analyse the reason for choosing (or being chosen for) the path leading to Lamahood.
2. To observe the living conditions of Young Lamas within a monastery and find the possibilities for further improvements there in.
3. To trace out the reasons behind the decline of Lama-people ratio in Leh.
4. To find out the category / class of the people who still believe in donating their children in the name of religion.
5. To find out the reasons behind the declining trend towards religious education and impact of education.

OBJECTIVES:

1. The present work is undertaken with a view to retrieve and preserve information on the functioning of an institution that is fastly dying down in Leh and its sub-urbs due to inevitable factors (eg. Modernity)
2. To evaluate the outcome of the traditional education imparted in these institutions.
3. To suggest the means for making the institution socially more viable.

Methodology