CHAPTER – 5
SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY IN TIBETAN SOCIETY: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

If we observe around us, we find that every society is heterogeneous in nature. Everywhere society is divided into various groups or classes, social, political, economic and religious. In this chapter social stratification expressed in social hierarchical pattern in Tibetan society, as it existed in Tibet as well as in exile have been discussed in light of their continuity and change.

The process by which individuals and groups are ranked in a more or less enduring hierarchy of status is known as stratification (Ogburn and Nimkoff, 1950:343). According to Landberg (1958:89) a stratified society is one marked by inequality, by differences among the people that are evaluated by them as being “lower” and “higher”. According to Raymond Murray “a social stratification is horizontal division of society into “higher” and “lower” social units.” Every society is divided into more or less distinct groups. Even the most primitive societies had some form of social stratification. Sorokin (1947) pointed out “Unstratified society with real equality of its members, is a myth which has never been realized in the history of mankind”. He writes, “Social stratification means the differentiation of a given population into hierarchically superposed classes. It is manifested in the existence of upper and lower social layers. Its basis and very essence consists in an unequal distribution rights and privileges, duties and responsibilities, social values and privations, social power and influences among the members of a society. In a society inequality of status or rank differentiation is the distinguishing feature of social
where there is social stratification, there is social inequality. Although men have always dreamt of a word in which there are no distinctions of rank and all are equal. Yet the hard fact is that a society attaches different rights and perquisites to different positions. Some individuals and groups are rated higher than others on the basis of opportunities and privileges that they enjoy. Stratification tends to restrict interaction, so that there is more interaction of a given sort within strata than between strata.

SOCIAL HIERARCHY IN TIBETAN SOCIETY

The hierarchical pattern in a society is generally taken as an index to the social inequalities to which people in the society are subjected. Thus social hierarchy is a pattern of ranking involving superordination and subordination on account of which some individuals and groups are rated high than others, and such differences in rating go differences in opportunities and privileges.

In a study of social change, as in the present context, the hierarchical pattern of the traditional society is an important factor which needs a close observation and analysis. In the case of Tibetans any significant change can be visualised through the comprehension of the change, if any, in the hierarchical pattern and in values traditionally attached there.

The Tibetan society continued to be organised upon the typical Tibetan hierarchical pattern until the Chinese occupation. The traditional Tibetan society is divided into two major classes- aristocrats and serfs. This division is based on pattern of land holdings, economic and political statuses. The landed property was shared by three institutions: The church (Gum-ba)- lands granted to the Lama dignitaries; the state (Ku-dra)- the public properties; mainly assigned to different offices in the government and the family estates. All these
had the attached serfs to work on them. In reality, the serfs and their belongings together formed the estate. The family estates were further divided into: Official feudal estates (*Ge-ri-kh*) and private holdings of the nobility (*Jeo-rik* or *Ger-Pa*): and small percentage of land owned by commoners, subjects of state, church or the nobility (Tsung-Lien and Shen-Chi Liu, 1953:103). The landholding pattern therefore signified a person's status in society. According to Pissel (1972:54) Tibet was also a land without a monetary economy and because of this there was very little difference in point of wealth between the poor and rich, except for the great lords or abbots, a very small minority who ruled as it were by "divine right", a right which was never questioned or considered since Tibet was most religious of all lands. According to Turnbull and Turnbull (1968:68) "A Tibetan noble is accorded respect because of the responsibility he shoulders and not because of his birth in the nobility. This is because any person can become a noble by entering Government services and acquiring an official position. Frequently, it is the sons of these officials who enter service. The nobility is not strictly a hereditary class. The noble who face their descent in several ways continue to hold the status forever. They may the members of Dalai Lama's family and right from the 7th Dalai Lama (1708-57). The father and brothers of the Dalai Lama who were commoners were ennobled and given patrimony estates.

The next important groups among nobles were *de-bon*, who traces their origin to early royal families such as *Lha-rgyari* and *Rag-Kha-shang*. The early territorial rulers such as the *Mdo-mkhar-ba, Rdo-ring*, *Bla-brang mying-pa* and *thon-pa* families also came under this category. The third category *mi-dra*, were those who traced their origin to *he ennobled ones by the Dalai Lama, for their services to the country. Lastly the *gyu-ma*, are considered as the common lords
depending on the residual character of the ancestral property. Nobility brought a high social, economic and political status in the society and so no one liked to part with it. However, they had heavy responsibilities and very little freedom. They were also always at the beck and call of the central government when in session or not. For their services they received a vast area of landed property, attached with serfs, from the central government. The nobility was most respected by their serfs and the common people. A noble was addressed in a respectful vocabulary, other than used among them. The nobles and the serfs thus formed two hierarchical endogamous strata (Arakeri, 1998:92).

Goldstein (1971:522) states: “It was fundamental to the Tibetan system of society that serfs were linked primarily to an estate rather than to the families or the institutions. The ties of the loyalty and affection between the serfs and lords played an important role in the operation of the system. Serfs were divided into tax payer (Khral-pa) and small householder (Dud-chung). The latter were again divided into two groups- bound and unbound.” The serfdom and lord relationship was maintained through parallel discent; i.e. daughter serving the lord of the mother and the son the lord of the father. Thus the lord and the serf were interdependent on each other where the needed labour was provided by the bound dud-chung in return to certain amount of land received from the lord. The serfs of unbound type had to pay very small amount of the tax in terms of cash which varied from lord to lord in terms of sex, age and serf’s productivity. This structure of Tibetan society was formed on the basis of fulfilling one’s livelihood in that society.

The Tibetans claim that their traditional occupation was much better, wherein they had no troubles in earning their livelihood. They were also happy regarding protection, food, shelter, law and order they
received from their immediate superior group. Ritual and social obligations of each other were also fulfilled properly. In very rare cases the lord used to be very cruel and selfish, and demanded heavy taxes and the serfs ran away to other places. It was one of the duties of the local officials to see that the serfs were looked after well. The serfs never ran away from a lord. Whenever they did they neither got job nor security and also the law on their side without the lord. Further, they were heavily punished if they were traced. On the other hand, run-away serfs were never accepted by any leader or a noble of another village suspecting them to be thieves (Ku-ma). Thus the attachment of a serf to a noble was strictly maintained (Arakeri, 1998: 95).

On the basis of socio-economic and ritual factors, we can classify the traditional Tibetan society as follows:

**Division (1): Priestly Class- The Lamas**

a) The highborn wealthy or learned monks,
b) The lower clergy- Illiterate ones

Monks who belong to higher castes stood at the top of the social hierarchy. They readily visited all the households (high and low classes) to conduct rituals and worships and accepted all types of foods. Among the monks wealthy or learned monks, who most of the time functioned as officials, claimed superiority over the lower clergy who were generally illiterate, and were entrusted with manual jobs of the monastery.

**Division (2): Nobility**

a) Descendents of early kings,
b) Descendents of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s kin,
c) Descendents of those who are ennobled for their services to the country.
Nobility claims the second top most position in traditional Tibetan social hierarchy. In social hierarchy, they not only claimed the highest position but also a higher seat. They were given priority over all others in performing communal rituals. In marriage ceremonies they formed an endogamous group. They did not accept cooked food from lower groups. A person belonging to lower caste always had to respect upper castes people. Though, they were endogamous but they could marry from rich businessman and rich peasants, the group immediately below them. Under such situations, children born by such a union could not claim the status of nobility. Women of lower group were always considered as second wife and always considered lower to first wife.

Division (3): Descendents of yogins, mediators and nature controllers, or the descendents of the senior Lama (Ngk-pa) in whose case marriage is legally allowed.

It is considered as origin to a yogin, mediator of the descendents of the senior Lamas who were allow to marry and have children (Nying-ma-pa sect).

Division (4): Rich people - lords and officials (Jinda or Ge-ri-kh and ger-pa).

They were those people who held land in tenancy from the state or the church. They were rich and claimed higher position than all the common people.

Division (5): Common men (Pha-lba or Me-mong).

First stage: (a) Peasant (Shing-ba)
(b) Nomad (Drok-pa)
(c) Trader (Chong-ba)

Second Stage: (a) Idol worker (mud), (Jum-so-wa)
(b) Stone cutter (Do-so-wa)
(c) Potter (Zan-khem-ba)
(d) Tailor (Chem-so-wa)

It included common people. These were peasant, nomad, and trader at the upper level and the artisan castes like the potter, tailor and stone cutter at the lower level of the group. Peasants produced food from their lands and nomads provided shelter and food by their livestock’s resources, the trader formed the interlink between the two. Thus they stood at the same level. A trader, if very rich, could claim superiority over the other two in his economic strata. The artisan castes stood below the peasant, nomad and trader.

Division (6): Craftsmen

1st Stage (a) Goldsmith (ser-so-che-mo-la)
(b) Silversmith (Ngu-su che-mo-la)

2nd Stage (a) Coppersmith (Sang-so-wa)
(b) Blacksmith (Ghar-shan)

It consisted of smiths. They were considered lower because of impure bone in them. Because of this they had less ritual value. Although they were rich yet they could not claim higher position in the social hierarchy.

Division (7): Lower Castes

1st Stage (a) Fisherman (Nya-pa)
(b) Hunter (Ling-ba)
(c) Shipbuilder (Leather) (Ko-ba)

2nd Stage (a) Descendants of ex prisoners (Ku-ma)
(b) Beggar (Pango/gjawa)

It included fishermen, hunters and ship builders belonging to the lower castes. Ex-prisoners and their descendants had no social, political or ritual status because they had committed serious crimes.
such as murders. Next came the beggars who were dependent on upper castes for their food.

**Divison (8): Outcastes**

(a) Butcher (*Shem-ba*)

(b) Corpse dispatcher (*Tam-den*)

Butchers, next to the beggars, slaughtered animals. *Tam-den* occupies the lowest position in hierarchy who disposed off the dead. Tibetans viewed him as a person waiting for some one to die so that he could earn his living.

Tibetan hierarchy resembles that of Hinduism in concept of purity and pollution. Few notions of purity and pollution regarding commensality are also observed. A noble as a man from the very high strata accepts cooked food and *chang* from a common man (*phal-ba*), only if served in an separate plate and glass. Whatever hierarchical distinctions existed in the Tibetan society had become absorbed and assimilated in the total life of the nation that there were hardly any irritants or outcry of oppression. The hierarchical system existed and was accepted in almost all parts and segments of life. In this respect there was an element of complementarily which bound together all the hierarchies in an intricate web. Each hierarchical relationship had its reflection in another. This system of hierarchy was governed by the principle of reciprocity. Thus they help each other in every stage of life. According to Shen and Lieu, “In Tibet the rule was that everyone should behave according to his own status and hierarchical position. Just as an inferior should behave as an inferior, a superior will not be exempted from censure if he does not behave like superior. They also add that in Tibet a person came into contact with a Tibetan and marked the latter’s manner, address and language the particular hierarchy to which he belonged, whether a layman or a Lama, became
absolutely clear. Reversely, from how the Tibetan spoke and the manner he adopted towards the person it became equally clear what rank or hierarchy the Tibetan assigned the person to” (Shen, Lieu, 1952:121).

How the hierarchies had become an inalienable and an important part of the lifestyle of the Tibetans can also be gained from the proper arrangements made for the New Year’s Day special audience given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his people, which are considered as a very gala occasion to the Tibetans. On this day the positions and the types of seat, the different sitting arrangement, and the different types of scarves and other sartorial differences showed in an exact manner the hierarchical position of the assembled people. These were not only accepted but treated with a high degree of sensitivity. There was a set of protocol for the Dalai Lama and other temporal and religious functionaries right from top to the grassroots level and no one could tolerate any deviation from the traditional norms in formal as well as informal spheres. It is reported that prior to the Lhasa uprising there was an incident in which the Chinese authorities deliberately gave an affront to the Dalai Lama by violating the traditional hierarchical and protocol norms. The incident aroused the strongest feelings of anger and revenge among the Tibetans. At that moment the atmosphere became very tense in Tibet and the whole country was not prepared to tolerate any undignified and discourteous conduct towards the most exalted one. The seriousness of the offence was considered so great that thousands of agitated Khampa tribes were ready to take revenge against the Chinese. The change from the above state of strong emotional attachment to hierarchical prestige and protocol is glaring in the present set up of the Tibetans in India. The old protocol is no longer feasible in the present
circumstances; the Tibetans cannot escape the impact of greater egalitarianism in India. As a result, though the Tibetans may still be nourishing the memory of their elaborate traditional protocols and privileges, they find it practically impossible to strictly continue the same practice in India. They are maintaining a small part of their hierarchical structure.

The status was considered great importance in traditional Tibetan society. This status was as much operative among the religious system as among the lay folk. Admittedly, what various Tibetologists seem to emphasize is that class conflict, if any, did not betray at the manifest level in Tibet. Tibetan sources also by and large, deny its existence. In fact, the nature and state of development of the Tibetan economic stricture hardly offered any scope for formation of class consciousness. Whatever references to such hatred have very recently come are by way of analysis of the causes for the Tibetan’s failure against the Chinese (Norbu, 1974:189). The Chinese made concerted efforts to arouse the “class consciousness” among the Tibetans and thereby to overthrow the old practice of making the rich richer and the poor poorer. Thus they hoped to ensure the sympathy and cooperation of the vast majority of the people. Thus, the first task of the Chinese was to “awaken the class consciousness of the masses” (Peissel, 1972: 53).

CASTE SYSTEM IN TIBETAN SOCIETY

In the context of Tibetan social hierarchy another question which arises: was there any caste system, particularly in the Indian sense, in Tibet? Was there any class mobility that the Tibetan class system permitted? Like the Indian caste system the Tibetans also have the notion of the purity of blood etc. Bougle, a French scholar, writes “In a society the different groups, of which that society is composed repel
each other rather than attract, that each retires within itself, isolates itself, rather than attract, that retires within itself makes every effort to prevent its members from contracting alliances or even from entering into relations with neighbouring groups” (Madan, 1977:106). It means members of a particular caste will have relations only within themselves in socio-economic and political aspects. This is not so in complete form among the Tibetans, though their class groups are based on the rules of marriage preferential and economic standing. Thus marriage of a commoner and an aristocrat is possible and is allowed in Tibetan society. The nature of differentiation is economic only. The notion of purity of blood forces them to marry within their endogamous unit. In practice, whatever its basis, a pollution principle causing two broad divisions, like Savarna (privileged class) and a Avarna (under-privileged class) as in India, did exists in the Tibetan society. Persons engaged in certain occupations were subjected to a high degree of segregation. A few rules which govern the notion of conmensality in caste system prevail in the Tibetan society. This is because of Buddhism, which holds true to its ritualhood in all aspects and walks of life. In this way to some extent, social mobility is possible in Tibetan society.

In India caste system is not as rigid as was in Tibet. Butchers, hunters and smiths, especially blacksmiths, were known as ‘impure bones’- a term applied to the occupations which the non-violent Buddhists considered the most sinful.’ According to them, the butchers kill animals, hunters kill wild animals and the blacksmiths forge tools of violence. Thus all these people are unholy and bad in the Buddhist religious sense. The “impure bones” in Tibet could not share meals with the rest of community, they married within their own group, and the sons were not allowed to take up the monastic career. However,
these ‘impure bones’ fully participated in the total life of the community. A strange kind of ambivalence was betrayed by the Tibetan Buddhist society in this respect. Though Buddhism originally started as a rebellion against caste orthodoxy and rigidity, in the Tibetan case at least, it created such rigid discrimination itself. There is not any definite information available if an ‘impure bone’ could rid himself of this stigma by changing his occupation. In addition to these groups, such other functionaries as the undertakers, i.e. the carriers and disposers of cadavers were also regarded not only as impure but also as untouchable. Keeping in mind all disparities in the Tibetan society it may very plausibly appear striking that there was very little discontent at least at the manifest level. Actually the fact is that primarily it was the religious aura which enveloped the life of the people that made all the inequalities appear natural, normal and non-injurious to the eyes of the Tibetans. The all-powerful Tibetan religion gave its sanctions to the inequalities consequence by the hierarchical network and the stratification pattern. Tibetan religion also evolved a comprehensive rationale to give legitimacy to all socio-economic distinctions and disparities.

TIBETAN OCCUPATION AND ITS MOBILITY

Historical records reveal that the land was owned by the state, which provides a large section to the nobles or aristocrats and to monasteries. A system of obligation connected with land tenure was prevalent. The revenues, either in kinds or by service, were returned by the nobles to the state. As a rule the nobles served as officials to the government. Gradually they acquired rights on the property and consequently these rights became hereditary. They could also maintain certain properties, obtained from other landlords. It was
mentioned that the monasteries owned larger properties than the nobles. The revenues were returned by the welfare of the state.

The peasants and tenants who had to cultivate the granted farmland of nobles or aristocrats and monasteries might hold a stretch of and as a support of their own households. They rendered their service to the noble landlords either in kind or made available the services of a member of their households to the landlords. The other members of the peasant households were free to run their own business or to undertake any other job. There were peasants on the larger estates who availed small amount of land directly from the government. Considering the merits and demerits of the ancient social system, contemporary, H.H. the Dalai Lama and his advisors (Tibetan Cabinet) planned to reform Tibetan economy before 1959 though it was not possible to implement it due to Chinese invasion in Tibet.

Tibetan monastic economy was enriched with its enormous property which was used for the upliftment of monasteries and the respective inmates. It was reported that (Harrer, 1956) the monasteries availed the offerings from the followers and governments which include yaks, sheep, goats, silver coins, butter, statues, icons, relics, lumps of gold, silver, costly metals, precocious stones, gems and others. This wealth did not serve the needs of common Tibetans except a grant for occasional loans and advances.

The majority of the common people, misers, in town or urban areas were involved with the trade caravans to maintain a link between rural-urban setups, nomads and agricultural communities. Beyond these it helped the Tibetans to communicate with other Himalayan countries especially with India and China (Michael, 1986).
Generally the traders and private entrepreneurs the economically active groups in town were designated as *tsong-pa* in the villages and in nomadic arena they were called *tral-pa*, and *du-chung* respectively. It was reported that *tral-pa* constituted more than half of the rural population. As an obligation these groups of people render their service to the monastic authority, aristocrats and the estates belonging to the government by cultivating their land and tending their herds. In return for their services they were allowed to stay in the communities. The sons of *tral-pa* inherited their own land from father in succession but the restriction of selling their land was imposed on them.

The *du-chung* were the landless labourers and mostly they preferred business such as trade or transport. They moved frequently and participated in other economic pursuits. The existence of numerically same number of *du-chung* were observed in town or urban areas also (Michael, 1986).

On the basis of lease system the land was offered to the landless labourers by the beneficiaries. Due to some unrecorded reason the population growth in Tibet during this period was static. There was surplus land available and therefore there was no conflict between the various segments of population over land resources. The people in Tibet was by and large self-contained.

Tibet being one of the highest plateau of the world with high altitude, rugged terrain and large tracts of land was absolutely unfavourable for cultivation. In certain regions annual crops could be grown, especially in the river valleys. Which include barley as the main crop with an occasional crop of rice and wheat. Seasonal fruits for example apple, peach, apricot, walnut, pear, grapes and among vegetables tomatoes, potatoes, onions, raddish, mushrooms deserve
mention specially in places where water for irrigation was available. Mustard, maize, beans were also grown in small quantity. Yak, *dzo* (cross breed of Indian cow and Tibetan Bull) were the cattle for in Tibet. Meat and wool were procured from animals like sheep, yaks, dzomo (hybrid of female yak and bull) and *dri* (female yak).

The available literature highlight that Tibet was very rich in mineral resources which include a wealth of both ferrous and non-ferrous metals, as well as non-metallic deposits. The various reports highlight the availability of iron, magnesium, chromium, coal, arsenic, vitriol, borax, graphite, azurite, crystal, sulphur, mica, barite and talcum. Apart from these, the biggest copper mine in Asia lies buried in Tibet (Tibetan Review, 1989). But it was not exploited for commercial purpose due to the fear of supernatural forces. Tibetan economy was based on raw materials and indigenous leather goods and wood products which were their own resources to be used for their staple food, woolen clothes, making shoes and tents. Animal bones were used for making musical instruments. Tibetans exported excess goods to India and other neighboring countries and imported inadequately available materials like brick tea, porcelain, silk, iron copper, cotton, textiles rice, sugar and other requirements either from China, Nepal or India (Richardson, 1962).

Some studies have reported that due to lack or organization, trading was not very successful in Tibet. Though agriculture and animal husbandry was the primary and staple modes of occupation the existence of secondary and ancillary occupations like trading agro-industrial commodities such as carpet weaving, carpentry, forestry, hunting, service, leather craftsmanship were common. Beside these jewelers, blacksmiths, fortune forecasting, magic, indigenous healers also did exist in Tibet.
Tibetan art and craft survived through trade and industry with a creation of relics like prayer wheels, rosaries, idols, portable images, statues, shortens, thankas (Tibetan painting), butter lamps, prayer cylinders, mani stones, musical instruments, khata (ceremonial scarf) etc.

Tibetans practiced barter in business transaction though national currency existed in Tibet. In Tibetan society, men and women folk actively participated in economic pursuit of special mention in this sphere was that majority of Tibetan women were engaged in small retail business. They managed family business and shops whereas long, arduous journeys for the sake of commercial dealings were served by the men folk (Moraes, 1966).

With a review of traditional economic pattern the focus would be on the quantum of change on respective attributes which are gradually coming up among the immigrant Tibetans in India.

Changing Pattern of Occupation

We have discussed in this chapter about traditional socioeconomic structure in Tibet with emphasis on the hierarchical system and patterns of stratification and their occupation. The process of change which has affected the Tibetans in India, to which the present study was also directed, is now being outlined in the perspective of the past and the present, with the aim to show and assess the various changes as well as the quantum of achievement in the refugee’s effort at continuing the traditional system. This study has also taken into account the self evaluation of the Tibetan respondents in the above respect in order to measure their reactions to the interrelated process of continuity and change.

All Tibetans, unlike as in Tibet, now almost have an equal status and position in this society except those who belong to the category of
“impure bones.” 90% of respondents said that here in new place they
do not have any class or caste system. The traditional groupings which
existed in Tibet have also undergone change. Most of the families
have taken to new occupations such as carpet-making, farming,
trading etc. This has brought them enough money. Tibetans here in
new place do not think themselves in terms of old groupings like
peasants, nomads, traders, artisans etc. Here in Dharamsala, Kullu,
Manali, Pattikuhl and 15 Mile Camp there is no facility of land for
agriculture for Tibetans. So, most of the Tibetans are either engaged in
sweater selling or some other business for their livelihood. Education,
in traditional Tibetan society, was given only to higher strata. But, now
every child receives education here in India. People of lower social
strata, of “impure bones,” can also join monastery as monks. As
householder they can now invite Lamas to their homes and provide
them food. Here any body can take part in community level rituals and
functions without any restrictions.

The educated younger generation as a result of all these
changes, is more susceptible to the rapidly changing world. On the
other hand, older people are less susceptible to such changes but they
are also accepting the changes.

CHANGING PATTERN: PRESENT SCENARIO

In the host country the immigrant Tibetans were rehabilitated by
Government of India. They were being provided small land tenure
system was not applicable in this situation so the conventional status
hierarchy did not exist in the contemporary Tibetan society in India.

The economic pattern, as manifested (Annexure IIIC) focused
that majority of the people of the sample population were now
engaged in business or administrative services (either in Tibetan
local polity or offices of Government of India). A small percentage
practiced agriculture but that did not constitute the sole of source of economy. A tiny proportion of the entire sample population had been absorbed in the security service and quite a few had been engaged in road construction work. Common sight was that Tibetan men, women and even children moved frequently all over India and had established a strong hold on the woolen garment distribution agencies. In winter they moved almost to every town in the plains to sell both superior and economical quality knitwear which they purchased from Ludhiana (Punjab) at factory price, Their business ran either by hawking or through temporary stalls. Shops were even hired for better display.

Catering and restaurants business were popular among them especially in tourist sports for serving delicious traditional Tibetan and Chinese cuisine. Tibetan female folk also participated in these establishments. The traditional trend of participation of women in business was maintained by them even in the Indian situation.

Rehabilitation schemes which were carried out by the Government of India since 1959, facilitated the immigrant Tibetans initially with road-side work. Gradually they got settled in different settlements and selected different types of occupation to fulfill their basic needs.

It may be concluded that business is the common means of livelihood adopted by majority of the sample. The reasons that are framed through the findings the comments include certain criteria as mentioned below:

In addition business is an independent means of earning one’s own livelihood where literacy is not a demanding pre-requisite. The responses highlight that it is difficult for them to join in any official job because of their different nationality and language and
problem of illiteracy specially amongst the elderly folk. The mobile business of woolen garments do not usually require any license or permission. Secondly, most of these businesses are carried out beyond the preview of taxable income or establishment cost.

It is reported that monastic life exhibit significant change in the host country, apart from studies and religious services. Though as a convention, monastic authority receive donation in cash or in kind either from common people or from foreign agencies. Monks earn money from Tibetan communities for the practise of rituals and rites through the monastic authority. Apart from these services, monk and nuns render their service either through cultivation of the allotted land of the monastery for their livelihood or through traditional crafts and arts (Michael, 1986).

Over the years if cultural practices have undergone change the basic institutions of Tibetan community that now resides in India have also been subjected to enforced changes. The traditional economic structure that existed in Tibet during the pre-migration phase is eroded for all practical purposes.

The traditional economic base of migrant Tibetans in India is being gradually replaced by business and service sector. Tibetans have failed to become an integral part of peasantry in the country. Agriculture has been reduced to a mere symbolic holding on to the land. This is primarily due to small land holdings which have been granted to them on compensatory grants. Secondly agricultural production is so meager that it cannot even sustain small families. Trading which comes naturally to Tibetans has been taken up as a major economic pursuit. Thereby second hand or rejected hosiery, woolen garments, goods and imitation stones from industrial township like Ludhiana are sold by them to gullible tourists who purchase
them, sometimes in the name or imported goods. A sizeable section of Tibetan population has consequently acquired wealth and prosperity which in traditional economy may have eluded them.

In this context a common parameter is the established eating habit or the individual which needs to be highlighted with the changing economic base. It is commonly said that an individual might find it easy to adapt to a changing economic structure, dress style, jewellery and other popular traditions but it is extremely difficult to change habits of the palate. Tibetans since their migration to India have been striving hard to preserve the distinctive food and food habit in India.

After migrating to India, a great deal of occupational shift has taken place among the Tibetans. Here in new place and new environment the service and business have emerged as two occupational divisions. The expansion of service opportunities has taken place not only in the Dalai Lama’s establishment but also in the various service institutions created by the Tibetan Administration in exile for the benefit of Tibetan refugee population.

Occupational change, though it is important but did not fully indicate the change in real class positions. The respondents were asked about their monthly household income. The categorisation of the sample household according to the reported monthly income is represented in the Table. This was collected through an open ended question. Some of the respondents both in Dharamsala as well in Kullu District hesitated to tell the household income. So, they did not tell anything, about household income.
Table 5.1 Average Monthly income of household in the studied areas of Dharamsala and District Kullu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Monthly Income (in Rs.)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Up to 1000</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1001-2000</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>25.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>2001-3000</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>17.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>3001-4000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>4001-5000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>5000 and above</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Did not tell</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>24.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Now, in India the old feudal Tibetan class system, based on assets, has lost its very basis, notwithstanding the fact that some members of the old nobility might have been able to transfer some portions of their movable assets, but not the land which was the main determinant of class status. However, the power structure represented by the Dalai Lama’s establishment helps them to maintain their power status to some extent. No doubt, most of the old nobility-cum-administrative bureaucracy still sticks to the formal power positions, but they are much lack lusture in their economic aspect. One of the respondent Mr. Pema from Dharamsala, said that the monthly income of these higher people is similar to that of Tibetan construction labour. Those who were poor in Tibet have become somewhat rich because one gets the wages of labour, whereas in Tibet the same appropriated by the upper strata. For one thing, the Tibetan mind was hardly prepared for the contingency of the homeless refugee state. It is natural because of result of being forced out of their land. In India, these refugees are living completely in new environment and interacting with new social system. Here in India the aim of saving their traditional norms and values still continues to sustain the minds and
hearts of a majority of the Tibetan refugees. But the maintainance of the same in India, for reasons not far to seek, has been just of a symbolic kind and many of old traditions and practicing them in the existence of upper and lower social layer. Its basis and very essence consists in an unequal distribution rights and privileges, duties and responsibilities, social values and privations, social power and influences among the members of a society. In a society inequality of status or rank differentiation is the distinguishing feature of social stratification; where there is social stratification, there is social inequality. Although men have always dreamed of a word in which there are no distinctions of rank and all are equal. Yet the hard fact is that the society attaches different rights and perquisites to different positions. Some individuals and groups are rated higher than others on the basis of opportunities and privileges that they enjoy. Stratification tends to restrict interaction, so that there is more interaction of a given sort within strata than is declined.