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Human Rights in Occupied Tibet: A Succinct Study of Consistent Atrocities and Genocide

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ABSTRACT

The discussion surrounding Tibet and China has been a prominent topic of global conversation for a considerable period of time. Tibetans have advocated for self-determination and engaged in nonviolent efforts to establish an independent state. Tibetans in exile have undertaken many initiatives to garner international assistance and backing, including the establishment of student organisations worldwide to advocate the restoration of their autonomous statehood, organising peaceful demonstrations against the Chinese government's acts of violence, and engaging in writing endeavours to reinforce their objections. China flagrantly violates the Human Rights of Tibetans, posing a grave threat to the preservation of Tibetan culture. Nevertheless, the international community appears to be taking no action. Accusations of human rights breaches and deliberate cultural destruction are grave charges levelled against China. This could be termed cultural annihilation or cultural genocide in general terms, involving deliberate acts that go beyond the physical and biological dimensions of a population in the pursuit of destroying its broader institutions. The research will extensively examine cultural genocide, a heinous crime that warrants significant attention. However, this research encompasses more than just this aspect and also addresses other international legal norms. This research paper will examine critical human rights issues, including the deaths of political prisoners resulting from torture and lack of proper medical care, the People's Republic of China's failure to provide sufficient education, high child mortality rates, forced sterilizations, and maternal health concerns, especially in Tibetan areas. The paper will also explore religious persecution and the struggle for self-determination among Tibetans. This paper attempts to grossly analyse the violation by China on Human Rights of Tibetan people. This study will use a multi-dimensional methodological approach involving doctrinal and analytical strategies as well as qualitative fieldwork. Secondary materials engaged include books, research papers, and international reports. Historical analysis contextualized Tibet's socio-political status before and after its annexation, while thematic categorization of issues such as religious freedom, resource exploitation, and cultural genocide provided a structured framework for analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Tibet has endured significant repression from the People's Republic of China for a long time. Despite efforts from world leaders, it seems unlikely that international pressure will substantially improve the human rights situation in Tibet. There has been a growing global focus on many problems related to Tibet. The rising repression and atrocities on the Tibetan population have prompted the PRC to concentrate on legal grounds before the international community for the present protests. The Tibetan government-in-exile, coupled with its supporters who fight for a free Tibet, has attempted to raise the questions related to human rights violations in Tibet due to the Chinese occupying regime (Democracy, 2016). Due to stringent surveillance by the Chinese government, establishing information exchange between Tibetans and the Tibetan people in exile has proven very challenging. "China is ranked at the bottom of the World Freedom Index" (Classement de la liberté de la presse, 2016; RSF, 2016), indicating its authoritarian nature.

Tibet's pursuit of economic, political, religious, and cultural independence is protected by two key rights: the right to maintain its territorial integrity and the right

to self-determination. The International Commission of Jurists acknowledges Tibet's historical assertion of sovereignty. China maintains its historical claim and hence rejects Tibet's right to self-determination. Self-determination, identified within the United Nations Charter-Chapter 1, Article 1 (2), shall be regarded as one of the essential principles which serve in favouring the promotion of friendly relationships among nations. The cause of Tibet's demand for self-determination is grounded here. The principle of self-determination is one involving the whole people as against particular groups or classes of people. In that, the uniqueness of the entity Tibet qualifies its case of self-determination. For instance, the United Nations has on several occasions, in 1961 and 1965 called for China to recognize the Tibetans' right to self-determination. Yet China has ignored such calls from the United Nations.

In 1980, Hu Yaobang made a visit to Tibet and carried out a comprehensive assessment of the consequences resulting from two decades of communist governance. He discovered that the implementation of forced collectivization had completely devastated the economy. The insufficient infrastructure and complete reliance on

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China evoked memories of colonisation for him. However, what is interesting is that until December 2015 the total political Tibetan prisoners are 2081 and of these 967 are monks which include the arrested, missing and convicted (Democracy, 2016). Many Tibetans have protested against Chinese oppression of them. It is said that over 140 citizens self-immolated. The Chinese regime accuses the Dalai clique of provoking such acts. Tenzin Phuntsok died in the same year protesting Chinese policies and rule in the Karma Township, Chamdo, Tibet Autonomous Region Tibetan Dies after Self Immolation in TAR – Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 2011). As far as the reaction of this People's Republic of China was concerned, it conducted some punitive measures against family members and other villages included herein mentioned (Annual Report | United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2016). However, individuals at several instances faced worse kinds of situations where Chinese government participants resorted to prolonged activities in the nature of torturing.

In May 1990 two prisoners belonging to the Tibetan spanning a bid to escape from Drapchi prison were put to death, Unknown to the authorities, hundreds of printed posters were left on the streets of Lhasa with threatening messages for the government officials. Should any injury, direct or indirect, happen to the life of that national Tibetan hero presently imprisoned. Forcing the unity of the people of Tibet; the prima facie liable communists Chinese shall not only not be spared, rather the reprisal shall come from within this organization. This shall give the communist Chinese aggressors full accountability,” (Schwartz, 1994). This strong religious faith in conjunction with passionate commitment to the principles of non-violence has prevented any viable movement for independence from rising. On March 4, 1992, when the United Nations Human Rights Council voted against a resolution that explicitly accused China of human rights violations in Tibet, the Tiger Leopard Youth Association sent a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the United States, and the Tibetan government in exile. In the letter, the Association expressed its concern that the Tibetans might resort to violent methods in their pursuit of independence for their homeland (Schwartz, 1994).

In the research analysis, 4 broad provisional categories were identified. These include: Religion, Freedom, Dignity of life, and Culture & Language. Based on the provisional categories, a more critical analysis emerged into the following 7 themes:

1. Tibet before and after annexation by China
2. Religious Freedom
3. Culture & Language
4. Exploitation of Natural Sources
5. Cultural Genocide in Tibet
6. China's strategy in Tibet & Cultural Violation
7. International Community role in Tibet

Significance of the Research

The country faced several notable human rights concerns, such as substantiated accounts of unlawful or arbitrary homicides, including government-sanctioned extrajudicial killings; instances of individuals vanishing without explanation; acts of torture and instances of severe, inhumane, and debasing treatment or punishment by the government; unwarranted apprehension or confinement; individuals detained for political reasons; cross-border suppression targeting individuals situated in foreign nations; grave issues pertaining to the autonomy of the judiciary; unwarranted or illegal intrusion into personal privacy; and severe limitations on freedom of speech and media, including censorship.

An issue that worries us is the ongoing infringement of religious freedom and the Chinese government's enforcement of laws designed to subordinate religious activities and beliefs in order to fulfil the political agenda of the state. This issue extends beyond mere propaganda and persuasion. Instead, these policies infringe upon the liberty of numerous Tibetans to peacefully enact or articulate specific fundamental elements of their religious convictions; and they are enforced by the utilisation of coercion, brutal suppression, and incarceration. An ongoing campaign of “Patriotic Education” has been particularly prominent in its efforts to undermine and eliminate the influence of the Dalai Lama in Tibet. However, the Chinese authorities have recently taken a more forceful approach by placing specific monasteries and temples under secular, government-supported administration. This is done with the aim of exerting greater government influence over Tibetan religion.

Objectives of the Study

Following are some objectives of the study on “Human Rights in Occupied Tibet: A Succinct Study of Consistent Atrocities and Genocide.” These are:

1. To analyse the socio-political and cultural impact of China's annexation of Tibet on its historical identity and autonomy.
2. To investigate the extent and mechanisms of human rights violations in Tibet, including political repression, cultural genocide, and religious persecution.
3. To analyze the socio-economic impact of forced relocations and displacement on Tibetans.
4. To evaluate China's exploitation of Tibet's natural resources and its implications for the region's socio-economic and environmental sustainability.
5. To explore the role of international organizations and exile communities in advocating for Tibetan autonomy and addressing human rights violations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research is based on primary and secondary sources, and relevant information has been collected for this study from several sources. To gain recognition in relevant fields, the researcher employs this method to thoroughly

explore a wide range of sources, including articles, texts, booklets, handouts, seminar presentations, notes, newspapers, national and international research papers, and websites. In conducting this research, I utilised a doctrinal approach, relying solely on consultation of academic materials pertaining to the subject area. The research method approach used historical and analytical of human rights violation in Tibet by China based on field work which is through the use of questionnaires or interviews. In doing so, I focused on identifying the current deficiencies and ensuring that my research was specifically designed to address these deficiencies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The detailed analysis below covers the themes that emerged after the elaboration and refinement of categories.

The Historical Background of Tibet

Shangri-La is an isolated and elevated location that is renowned for its unique, magical, and harmonious paradise with breathtaking landscape. Although Tibet was formerly considered a paradise, it is not appropriate to use such term when human rights are being severely abused. Tibet saw its zenith as a sovereign realm under the reign of the illustrious monarch, Songtsen Gampo, between the years 627 and 649. King Songtsen Gampo formed a marital alliance with a princess from China, so establishing a definitive relationship with China for the first time. Tibet was exposed to Buddhism in the seventh century, which subsequently became the most prominent feature of Tibetan culture. China and Tibet were not under one governance until the thirteenth century. The Mongols exerted hegemony over both nations, establishing a multifaceted relationship with each. Chinese historians argue that the Mongol empire's control over Tibet signifies the integration of Tibet into China. However, some argue that Tibet and China were included into the Mongol empire as distinct nations.

A century later, the prevailing form of Buddhism was established by a monk named Tsongkapa (1357-1419). The order he established is called the Gelukpa Order of Buddhism, which is also referred to as the Yellow Hat Sect because to the yellow hats worn by its adherents. Three prominent monasteries, namely Ganden, Drepung, and Gendundrup, were founded as part of this particular branch of Buddhism. A century later, the prevailing form of Buddhism was established by a monk named Tsongkapa (1357-1419). The order he established is called the Gelukpa Order of Buddhism, which is also referred to as the Yellow Hat Sect because to the yellow hats worn by its adherents. Three prominent monasteries, namely Ganden, Drepung, and Gendundrup, were founded as part of this particular branch of Buddhism. The person who was mentioned eventually assumed the title of the First Dalai Lama, a designation that signifies "Ocean" and connotes immense wisdom.

The theocratic system, in which the Dalai Lamas wielded both political and religious authority, reached its zenith under the Fifth Dalai Lama from 1617 to 1682. Subsequently, their influence waned, although it persisted until the twentieth century. The last imperial dynasty in China and Tibet was Qing from 1644 to 1911. Organized by the ethnic group known as Manchus. Tibet was regarded by the Qing dynasty as the part of their empire but actually the Tibetans had quite a lot of freedom, and the Tibet had never been a Chinese province. But in 1912, the Republic of China overthrew the imperial dynasty and stated that Tibet as their territory. In their opinion, they had a rather different opinion of the Tibetans. In February 1913, the thirteenth Dalai Lama which began the independence movement and ordered Manchu and Chinese governments and military out.

Before 1950, Tibet can be described as a quasi-feudal theocracy. After this, the Chinese turned on a number of facets of Tibetan life, Political, Cultural and Religious spheres. When in October 1950 the PLA advanced into eastern Tibet and the western part of it the Tibetans offered hardly any resistance. This is due to the policy of land reform and self-reform of the lamas who lost their power and made the region unstable. The leadership of the People's Liberation Army was seized through a one week and six days battle. Unfortunately, because to China's status as a permanent member of the Security Council, the global community refrained from taking any action.

As such, the Sino-Tibetan talks began and reached their end in the signing of the Seventeen-Point Agreement on 23rd May 1951. This was a completely packed with references towards the plight of the Tibetans, and for a significant number of years after this, there was much calm as well. But in march 1959 rebellion take place in Lhasa which is against Chinese rule in Tibet and demanding for freedom. At first the Chinese were merely observers; suddenly Chinese forces attacked and within a week, put down the uprising. The event mark the end of the attempt at creating a state of union between China and Tibet which led the Dalai Lama to flee to India and start his exile from March end. He accused the Chinese government of oppression of the Tibetan people and of failing to honor its promise to grant them that kind of status as agreed in the Seventeen-Point Agreement.

Following the Dalai Lama's exile, the Chinese authorities endeavoured to implement socialism, as was already the prevailing practice in other parts of China. They established the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) in 1965 to accomplish this. The establishment of the TAR did not translate into autonomy; it was instead a conduit through which the Chinese authorities extended their consolidation in Tibet. Nevertheless, it was still ahead of the People's Republic of China the most difficult years that the country was to experience. At the time, the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was Mao Zedong who in 1966 began the Cultural Revolution

which lasted until 1976. The Red Guards caused extensive destruction and severe damage to numerous monasteries and cultural institutions. Furthermore, the religious persecution escalated, with the deliberate destruction of sacred texts and the imprisonment, torture, and execution of several monks and nuns.

Tibet before and after Annexation by China

Tibet is often perceived in Western culture as a “Shangri-La,” a pristine utopia untouched by industry, commercialization, or pollution. This perspective was reinforced by the geographical isolation of Tibet, situated at the highest point on Earth, and its few visits by Westerners. The monasteries, being deeply rooted in Buddhism, were influential institutions that regarded any outside influence or interaction as potential risks to their ongoing dominance. The infrastructure was virtually non-existent, and the nomadic or pastoral communities continued to live in the same way they had for millennia until China launched an invasion from 1949 to 1951. In the ‘Unveiling the truth – The sufferings in Tibet’, the old interviewees have a common experience to share. They narrate how China exploited the rich and wealthy Tibetans when it annexed Tibet in 1959. The Tibetans

were tortured and killed. “Our life became very much like that of a wandering dog in the distant places. There was not enough food or clothing. We faced many problems such as being subjected to the three punishments of squeezing, beating and rounding up. Therefore, forceful ruled and being made to plead guilty for something we were not responsible for” (Unveiling the truth – The sufferings in Tibet). The older generation recounts their experiences of their parents’ arbitrary arrests and subsequent executions by the Chinese authorities. Many individuals were even prohibited from visiting their loved ones. A significant number of Tibetans were left without parents, facing severe deprivation and starvation. Some were subjected to the “Hat of Malevolence,” which caused immense suffering. Additionally, it’s acknowledged that the Machu (Yellow River) was blocked by deceased bodies in specific regions like Dengshong, Denglag, and Domdoo. Sons were forced to perform dance rituals where their fathers were cremated, and vice versa. Several respondents reported that the Chinese government seized their assets and arrested them. Many lost their families and became orphans at a young age, subsequently facing numerous challenges in their pursuit of a dignified life.



Figure 1: Map-1-Tibet Political Map as an Autonomous Region
Sources: Tibet Library of Congress. 1969

Tibetans resorted to consuming grass and excreting excrement due to a lack of food. Following the annexation, some interviewees were promptly convicted and subsequently served a prison sentence lasting 7 years. The military deprived them of sustenance, garments, and possessions. Approximately 5% of the Tibetan people managed to live by 1958. A significant number of monks and Tibetan civilians, both religious and non-religious, were apprehended and subjected to severe physical and psychological torment. “They execute individuals they desire to eliminate and apprehend those they desire to detain” (Revealing the Reality - The hardships in Tibet). The Interviewees harbour a profound conviction that China will persist in subjecting them to torture, with no foreseeable end to their anguish.

Additionally, they have a sense of unity with their fellow countrymen who are living abroad, believing that this solidarity will contribute to their achievement of liberation, which is the only way their suffering will cease. They propose that Tibetans, both within and outside Tibet, should take action to regain control of Tibet. They believe that collective action is the sole approach (Overcoming Fear). The older generation believes that the Dalai Lama’s return to Tibet and his interaction with all Tibetans are necessary prerequisites for him to effectively pursue the goal of achieving liberation for Tibet. Furthermore, it has been disclosed that a significant number of young Tibetans living under Chinese rule are not familiar with the teachings or presence of the Dalai Lama. The viewers are overwhelmed by the footage clandestinely shared by the narrator. “What Remains of Us” While the older generation expresses profound concern for the Dalai Lama’s safety upon his return to Tibet, they also view his homecoming as the sole source of hope.

The younger generation proclaimed their aspiration to flee Tibet and seek refuge in either India or Nepal by undertaking the perilous journey across the Himalayas. (Report - Infiltrating Tibet undercover) Annually, a minimum of 3000 Tibetans make an effort to flee. An interviewee, who successfully escaped but faced significant challenges, said that on September 30th, 2006, a group of 75 refugees, including 13 children, embarked on a month-long journey. The group was observed by Chinese bodyguards. The individuals were equipped with firearms and initiated shooting towards the group. The Western climbers documented the activity. Additionally, they assisted Lobsang Chocden in concealing their identity, ultimately leading to a successful escape. Jamyang Samten was apprehended and transported to a correctional facility, where he claims to have been incarcerated, subjected to questioning, and subjected to acts of torture.

Religious Freedom

The majority of Tibetans practise Tibetan Buddhism, which has been a fundamental aspect of Tibetan culture and identity for centuries. Following the Chinese conquest of Tibet in the 1950s, the Chinese government

has implemented a series of oppressive laws to suppress its practice. Currently, in Tibet, there is a prohibition on providing traditional monastic education in monasteries, which is a crucial component of Tibetan Buddhism. Monks and nuns, on the other hand, are exposed to routine “patriotic education” and other political initiatives that fundamentally contradict the essential principles of Tibetan Buddhism. Monastic institutions have seen a shift from Buddhist instruction to political indoctrination, with monks being influenced to serve the interests of the Beijing government and being assigned the role of docents at monasteries. The Chinese government frequently imposes limitations or cancels religious festivals, prohibits monks from visiting communities to perform religious rituals, and exercises strong supervision over the actions of religious leaders and gatherings of Tibetans. Individuals advocating for religious freedom are frequently accused of engaging in political activities and are unjustly associated with the “Dalai Lama and his associates”. As a result, they face severe penalties. A major issue in Tibet currently revolves around the persecution, incarceration, torment, and severe punishment of lamas and other Tibetan spiritual figures due to their allegiance to the Dalai Lama. Having a depiction of the Dalai Lama or any item that signifies reverence towards him and other spiritual mentors is considered ‘political’ and seen as a lack of commitment to the state and the Communist leadership, leading to punitive measures. The Chinese government’s promotion of Tibetan cultural preservation and substantial expenditure in renovating monasteries might be seen as a strategic endeavour to stimulate tourism in Tibet.

The Enforced Disappearance, Detention, and Sentencing of Tibetan Religious Leaders

Till date, organized extrajudicial disappearances, arrests, and harsh punishment of the Tibetans particularly the monks are reported in Tibet. These are arbitrary detentions, torture, and conviction of several Tibetan persons of interest, the majority of whom are religious practitioners and fervent supporters of the Dalai Lama. Choekyi Nyema is the name of the building that houses the eleventh Panchen Lama, who is Tibet’s second most important figure. Since May 1995, the Panchen Lama has not been seen in public. Only two months after the Dalai Lama declared Gedun Choekyi Nyema the 11th reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, Chinese officials abducted Gedun Choekyi and his family, then introduced Gaylene Norbu as the Panchen Lama in November 1995. This building cannot be seen now, since that time of Choekyi’s life. From the very beginning, the Chinese government turn-down the successive demands of various foreign human rights organizations to mediate with him. In October 2013 the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child made a concluding observation on the report of China that recommended the Chinese authorities to promptly give permission for an impartial specialist to visit Gedun Choekyi Nyema to verify his state of health and his living conditions.



Figure 2: Map-2- Buddhist Religious Population in Tibet
Sources: Tibet Library Congress, Religious Map

Tulku Tenzin Delek, a prominent Buddhist spiritual leader, is well-known for his philanthropic work in Karze, eastern Tibet (Ch: Ganz Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province). He established schools, medical facilities, orphanages, and homes for the elderly in the region. In April 2002, he was arrested at his monastery in Nyagchu along with his attendant, Lobsang Dhondup. Due to his influential role in promoting public welfare and Tibetan Buddhism, the Chinese authorities saw him as a threat to “Social Stability.” Consequently, Tulku Tenzin Delek and Lobsang Dhondup were accused of orchestrating an explosion in Chengdu and sentenced to death. Lobsang was executed on January 26, 2003, but Tulku’s sentence was commuted to life imprisonment on January 24, 2005, following international outcry. His imprisonment led to the cessation of his initiatives. According to a 2004 Human Rights Watch report, schools failed due to lack of leadership and funding, and aged care facilities were shut down due to financial constraints. Additionally, his healthcare facilities in the Karze region were closed.

Interference Over Reincarnation of Lamas and Tulkus

Tulku Tenzin Delek is a prominent Buddhist spiritual figure who is renowned for his philanthropic efforts in Karze, located in eastern Tibet (Ch: Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province). He has accomplished to establish educational entities, healthcare centers, homes for abandoned children, as well as homes for the elderly in the same region. In April 2002 he was arrested from his monastery in Nyagchu, accompanied by his attendant Lobsang Dhondup. Due to his prominent position in promoting public welfare and maintaining Tibetan Buddhism, the Chinese authorities considered him a potential risk to “Social Stability”. For this reason, Tulku Tenzin Dalek, with Syl Lob song Dhondup,

planned an explosion in Chengdu and thus, they were sentenced to death. Lobsang was executed on 26 January 2003 while though, Tulku’s punishment was commuted from death to life imprisonment on 24 January 2005 due to international protest. They have therefore stopped upon the incarceration of Tulku Tenzin Dalek, the person behind the mentioned initiatives. Still, a report released by Human Right Watch in 2004 reveals that schools witnessed rapid failure due to poor leadership and no adequate funding. All the windows and doors of schools were vandalised and everybody left in December 2003. As a consequence of inadequate funds, two aged care facilities were closed down from the report. Also, his healthcare with healthcare facilities in the Karze region have been shut down.

Culture & Language

Tibetans are establishing organisations to safeguard their language and culture within their communities. The interviewees expressed concerns about the potential erosion of their cultural heritage, prompting them to establish these associations in Tibet. Despite adverse circumstances, they have successfully operated these organisations. Tibetan language is taught in order to safeguard it from potential endangerment. They hold the belief that they constitute a minority, and China has undertaken the relocation of Han Chinese individuals in Tibet. Tibetans refute all assertions made by China on the enhancement of Tibetan culture and the preservation of the language. In order to safeguard the language and culture, it is believed that China should relocate all Chinese residents from the Tibetan regions. In his lecture, the Dalai Lama expressed his concerns about the potential loss of our culture and language, highlighting the imminent threat of genocide faced by our people. The very survival of Tibet is at risk of annihilation.

Tibetan sexpress concerns regarding the preservation of their culture and language, since they observe that even in Tibetan workplaces, Chinese is predominantly spoken. Tibetan students in universities are compelled to acquire proficiency in the Chinese language. They perceive learning Tibetan as futile and believe that the younger generation struggles with speaking the language. China has constructed educational institutions in regions such

as Golak, compelling Tibetans to enrol their children in these schools. They have observed that there is a lack of mutual understanding between the older and younger generations due to a difference in language. A significant number of Tibetans hold the belief that seeking refuge in India and obtaining education at schools founded by the Dalai Lama is a preferable course of action.



Figure 3: Picture-1- Tibetan History and Culture, Nomadic Practice

Sources: Tibetan Cultural Heritage Sites

Exploitation of Natural Sources

Tibet possesses significant wealth and influence due to its expansive territory and abundant natural resources. In the documentary 'Unveiling the Truth - The Sufferings in Tibet', the interviewee states that the Yak holds significance to you not because of your affection for the animal, but due to your need for its blood. Tibetans perceive Chinese communists as lacking empathy towards Tibet and being only motivated by the desire to exploit Tibet's abundant natural resources. They disclose that they are compelled to reside in 90 concrete buildings, since the nomadic community is being coerced into establishing permanent settlements in these "Socialist Villages". All items in Tibet are available for purchase. Gold, silver, the main source of uranium and even oil were found. Tibet has become at once a land which offers useful resources for making profitable monetary gains and a dump for the careless disposal of waste. Tibet complains that China has taken everything from it. The issue of Tibetan natural resources might be likened to the problem of "Blood Diamonds," which refers to diamonds obtained by unlawful means and sold to finance acts of significant violence, including genocide and human rights abuses.

The blood diamond trade is recognised as the global problem and many illicit organisations in several countries are involved in the smuggling of these jewels. Television and other media sources report that the mineral resources in the Himalayan region may be as valuable as 600 billion yuan (United States \$100 billion). Tibet is believed to hold rather vast chromium and cuprum (copper) reserves that exceed those of the rest of mainland China. At the same time, twelve other mineral deposits are among the Top Five in the entire country.

Environmental Protection

A core aspect of Tibetan culture is the deep admiration and reverence for the natural environment, a sentiment passed down through generations since ancient times. The Bon tradition held lakes, rivers, and mountain paths as sacred. This reverence for nature grew even stronger when Buddhism became the dominant religion among Tibetans. Buddhism teaches the interconnectedness of all phenomena, reinforcing this profound respect for the natural world. Tibetan government policies have historically reflected a deep respect for the environment and the diverse species it supports. When the fifth Dalai

Lama assumed power in 1642, he issued a decree to protect animals and the environment. In 1940, Regent Tagdra enacted an environmental order stating that from the Iron-Dragon year onwards, no domestic animals should be killed for meat on specific days each month across all villages and towns in Tibet.

The Origin and Evolution of Tibetan Culture

Namkai Norbu who was a lecturer at University of Naples focusing on topics of Tibetan linguistic and cultural history claims, in the book “The Necklace of gZi: A Cultural History of Tibet, that the civilization culture of Tibet has a traceable ancestry of around 3000 years. More scholars seem to think the indigenous methods of agriculture as well as pastoralism found in this region have been operational for up to two thousand

years. The origins of the Tibetan people are also traced to “the nomadic, non-Chinese Qiang tribes, who herded sheep and cattle in eastern Central Asia up to the furthest north-west borders of China many centuries before the Christian era.” In the book A Cultural History of Tibet by two authors, David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, it is written: ‘This fact is reflected to this day in the extensive farming arrangements of Tibet that always contain a strong hint of animal raising. The propensity of the Tibetan-speaking peoples appears to have been to migrate further westward across the southern region of the Tibetan highlands at the onset of the Christian era.’ This statement is partially supported by available literature, which also enables tracing of the migration trends of some important clans from northeastern Tibet to the central parts of the country.



Figure 4: Origin and Evolution of Tibetan Culture and Custom

Sources: Tibetan Cultural Heritage Sites

The early westward and southward migration of Tibetan-speaking peoples through the Himalayas into what is now northern and central Nepal is evidenced by the survival of ancient Tibetan dialects in these regions. According to Tibetan legend, Nyatri Tsenpo (127 BC) is recognized as Tibet's first ruler. Before his reign, as previously mentioned, there was an established Bon tradition. In his book, “Drung, Deu and Bon: Narrations, Symbolic

Languages and the Bon Tradition in Ancient Tibet,” Namkhai Norbu explains that the kingdom of Zhang Zhung, the birthplace of the Bon tradition, once had its capital at Khyunglung, near Gangkar Tise or Mount Kailash. Namkhai Norbu states that Zhang Zhung's core region was the present-day Guge area in western Tibet, though its influence spanned almost all of central and eastern Tibet. The cultural concepts and beliefs of Bon

significantly shaped the minds of the people in Sumpa, Asha, Minyak, and the Yarlung valley, laying the foundation for the rulers who would build the Tibetan kingdom.

Cultural Genocide in Tibet

Culture, as a part of international human rights, is something recognized since the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, although it has received much more attention more so during the 1990s and together with the rise of indigenous peoples movements. Until this point, it remains a necessity to maintain peace and stability, upholding the right to culture and how to face the issue on “Cultural Genocide,” or the non-physical eradication of an ethnic group. International human rights frameworks, especially Article 8 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), aim to protect such groups and their cultural selves. Nonetheless, cultural rights remain the most poorly understood and underdeveloped aspect of human rights, especially in terms of scope of enforceability, judicial construction, and scope. This is also a very contentious and complex issue in the dispensation of cultural rights to minorities or indigenous peoples. Although incorporated into human rights law, there is still a lack of clarity concerning how cultural rights are related to other classes of human rights. Occupation of Tibet by China is negative colonialism

because it deprives Tibetans of their culture’s inherent right and prohibits them from laying claim to independence. In 1989, the French jurist defined Tibetan culture in the language of cultural genocide, a phrase used later by critics of governance in Chinese Tibet.

During his arrival in India in 1959, the Dalai Lama reported that Chinese officials had already destroyed more than 1,000 monasteries in eastern Tibet. Testimonies from the refugees say that the uprising in Lhasa triggered the Chinese attacks to the 17th century old palace in Lhasa and also to three key monasteries in that region. After these actions, more monasteries were also attacked by Chinese officials. Irreplaceable records and literature were burned, sacred statues vandalized, and thangka wall hangings removed in a systematic manner. Lama’s and monks were martyred, sent off into labor camps, or even sent back to their natal villages. Only some elder lamas remained at Drepung Monastery close by to Lhasa mostly only to serve the few western visitors from Eastern Europe who might occasionally pass by, but smaller monasteries remained until early 1960s when further rounds of Red Guards attacks wiped out religious life. As recently as 1967, the Dalai Lama was reporting that nearly all of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions had been eradicated in Tibet. Lately, he has accused the Chinese of trying to destroy Tibetan identity by destructive means.



Figure 5: Picture-3- Tibet Identity, Cultural and Capital Lhasa

Sources: Tibetan Cultural Heritage Sites

According to a report, China is systematically destroying the cultural heritage of Tibet by eradicating Tibetan Buddhism and religious traditions, dismantling the education system, causing social disintegration, promoting lawlessness, fostering communal discord, encouraging

uncontrolled greed, and contributing to a significant increase in the sex trade and alcoholism.

The paper “Cultural Genocide in Tibet,” published by The Tibet Policy Institute, highlights the ongoing perpetration of crimes of genocide, as declared by Lobsang Sangay,

President of the Central Tibetan Administration. According to him, the Chinese are actively engaging in the eradication of Tibetan religion and language, as well as forcibly displacing Tibetan nomads. Additionally, they are systematically relocating people from mainland China to the Tibetan Plateau. He stressed that citing data of Freedom House for 2017, Tibet is among the lowest rating free countries in the world. Such policies unrelentingly implemented in these four areas have deprived the Tibetans of their cultural and linguistic rights and have negative impact on their traditional lifestyle. "New migrants from China are flooding the region owing to the new railway line and he has an administration post in place which is in support of the migrants while the Tibetans are turning into a marginalized group in their own homeland," he added.

China's Strategy in Tibet & Cultural Violation

The research highlights the discrepancy between China's external image and its internal policy as a significant concern. While China presents itself as a multinational state on the global stage, it adopts an imperial approach while addressing its domestic affairs. Over 149 Tibetans have self-immolated in response to China's denial of entry to His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Tibet. According to the research, if China appoints its own Dalai Lama, the non-violent nature of the movement may be compromised. Prior to 1950, after the fall of the Qing dynasty, the territory now known as the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) existed as a largely autonomous political entity. Tibet printed its own currency and stamps and maintained diplomatic relations with several countries. Tibet claimed sovereignty over three provinces: Amdo, Kham, and Ü-Tsang. However, in reality, it exercised control only over western Kham and Ü-Tsang. In 1950, China annexed eastern Kham into Sichuan and integrated western Kham into the newly formed TAR. In the early 20th century, following the Qing empire, Tibetans accused Ma Bufang, a Chinese Muslim commander and governor of Qinghai, of enforcing policies to assimilate Tibetan regions into Chinese culture and promoting Islam. The Tibetan historians reported during his period of rule heavy taxation and even enforced conversions. In the year 1949, following the successful Chinese civil war, he sought to include in the People's Republic of China the "five nationalities" as defined under the Communist Party leadership. In pursuit of this, Lhasa-based Tibetan government was represented in Chamdo, Kham, which had been the city border. It had been the place of considerable strategic significance-the town itself being a key base. Ngabo was instructed to wait there until reinforcements from Lhasa came to attack the Chinese forces. On October 16, 1950, the People's Liberation Army advanced toward Chamdo and reportedly captured the village of Riwoche, thus making it possible to possibly cut the road to Lhasa. Ngabo and his men retreated to a monastery where they were captured and taken by the People's Liberation Army. Ngabo replied to Lhasa that

instead of going to war, there may be a possibility of surrendering without arms. It is within your discretion whether Tibet will gain its liberation with peaceful methods or through force. The only condition imposed was that he should issue a telegraph to PLA forces and request them to advance till Lhasa. Ngabo accepted the Seventeen-Point Agreement that outlined the terms that in respect of Tibet being an integral part of the People's Republic of China the state would be granted rights to exercise autonomy over its government. In August 1951, with no other state offering them support the Dalai Lama telegraphed to Mao that he agrees with the agreement. This thereby meant that the delegates had to sign an agreement, which thus decided the fate of the Tibetan administration.

While Chinese historiography calls it the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet, the Dalai Lama considers it a sort of colonisation, and the Tibetan Youth Congress agrees that it was actually an invasion. Some of the reasons why the Chinese government justifies its exercise of dominance over a region it considers as part of its historical homeland are advances in health and economic development. The Dalai Lama has said that China itself has actively promoted the influx of Han Chinese into this region.

Economic

Prior to the treaty, Tibet's economy consisted largely of subsistence agriculture. The local food supply, too, suffered from the burden imposed by the 35,000 Chinese troops stationed there during the 1950s. On one visit to Beijing in 1954, the Dalai Lama was told by Mao Zedong that he planned to move 40,000 Chinese farmers to Tibet. During the Great Leap Forward in the 1960s, Chinese officials compelled Tibetan farmers to grow maize instead of barley, which was the customary crop in the region. Agricultural yields were insufficient, resulting in widespread famine among the Tibetan population, leading to the starvation of thousands. The Cultural Revolution, which took place from 1966 to 1976, was instigated by Mao and executed by the Gang of Four with the participation of students and labourers affiliated with the Communist Party of China. Its primary objective was to safeguard Maoism as the dominant ideology in China. The process involved an internal conflict within the party aimed at eradicating any political resistance to Mao. The Cultural Revolution left a deep impact across China, and Tibet was no exception. The Red Guards targeted individuals they accused of betraying communism, leading to the plundering and destruction of over six thousand monasteries. Monks and nuns were forced to leave their monastic lives and adopt a conventional lifestyle, with those who resisted facing imprisonment. The prisoners were subjected to harsh manual labor, torture, and in many cases, death. Premier Zhou Enlai managed to intervene and control the Tibetan Red Guards, preventing any damage to the Potala Palace.

A Culture without Boundaries

What is most striking while studying these two historical periods is the stability of the institution of the Dalai Lama as compared to the number of different rulers in China and India at these periods. So, for 317 years, the Dalai Lama institution remained politically legitimate, beginning with the fifth Dalai Lama establishing political control and ending with the 14th Dalai Lama having to escape Tibet. While China and India witnessed revolutions and famine that in one way or the other interrupted the governance system and even overthrew a ruling dynasty, Tibet did not stage peasant uprising or famine. Tibet today could be described as a culture without a country, a civilization without a civilization. However, never has the cultural appeal of the Tibetan exotica been as powerful as it is at the current time. It is quite remarkable that the Tibetans were indeed capable of asserting themselves in exile. The credit for this goes mainly to Buddhism with its call for such principles like compassion and non-violence which have become part of Tibetan traditions. This has developed and still elicits the interest, appreciation, sympathy, and admiration of

several non-Tibetans who help the Tibetans to learn and appreciate this culture at different places in the world and especially in the APT and other traditional Tibetan zones outside Tibet. Thus, the Tibetans have remained able to retain the philosophical crux of their identity as well as the profound values of their civilisation though they have comparable contact with the global impacts they came across.

International Community Role Play in Tibet

For many years, Tibet has faced severe oppression by the People's Republic of China (PRC). Despite mounting international pressure, the human rights situation in Tibet remains dire. There is an increasing global awareness of the many issues plaguing Tibet. Protests against the rising tyranny and atrocities committed against Tibetans have forced the PRC to defend its actions before the international community. Meanwhile, the Tibetan government in exile and activists fighting for a free Tibet have tirelessly worked to highlight the human rights abuses happening in Chinese-occupied Tibet (Democracy, 2016).



Figure 6: Tibetan People's Human Protection Movement in Various Countries

Sources: Central Tibetan Administration Site

Due to stringent surveillance by the Chinese government, establishing information exchange between Tibetans and the Tibetan people in exile has proven very challenging. China ranks at the bottom of the World Freedom Index, highlighting its authoritarian nature (Classement de la liberté de la presse, 2016; RSF, 2016). Tibet stands by two key legal principles: the Right to Territorial Integrity and the Right to Self-Determination. These principles support Tibet's quest for economic, political, religious, and cultural autonomy. The International Commission of Jurists recognizes Tibet's historical sovereignty. However, China asserts its historical claim over Tibet, denying Tibetans the right to decide their own future. The UN Charter, especially in Chapter 1, Article 1 (2), upholds self-determination as a core purpose of the United Nations. This principle emphasizes equal rights and the ability of peoples to determine their political status. This argument bolsters Tibet's case for self-determination, which is a fundamental right belonging to entire populations, not just specific groups or individuals. Hence, Tibet's distinctive nature as a separate entity substantiates its claim for self-determination. The United Nations has often urged China, including in 1961 and 1965, to uphold Tibet's right to self-determination.

Findings

This research has examined the widespread human rights violations in Tibet and their impact on the region's socio-cultural fabric. Tibetan nomads have been forcibly relocated to remote areas under the pretext of development, depriving them of land and livelihoods, and plunging many into economic hardship without adequate governmental support. Access to healthcare and traditional Tibetan education remains insufficient, while women face involuntary sterilization, and political prisoners endure severe physical and psychological abuse. The ongoing suppression of religious freedom in Tibet exacerbates the crisis, forcing Tibetans to renounce their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. Yet, the Dalai Lama continues to stand as a symbol of hope for many Tibetans, embodying their dreams of justice and self-determination. The growing presence of Han Chinese and assimilation policies jeopardize the preservation of Tibetan culture and language. China's renaming of Tibet to "Xizang" is emblematic of its efforts to erase Tibetan identity.

CONCLUSION

Global responses, including from the United Nations and major powers like the United States, have been inadequate, leaving Tibetans without meaningful support. Protests in and beyond Tibet often result in repression and detentions, underscoring the need for more robust international action. While the majority of Tibetans advocate for autonomy through the Dalai Lama's middle-way approach, China's lack of meaningful reforms diminishes hope for resolution. Tibet, with its distinct culture and spiritual identity, continues to fight for survival against systemic oppression. Global solidarity and legal frameworks must be strengthened to uphold

Tibetans' right to self-determination and protect their heritage from extinction.

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