

Chapter 6

Everyday Mobilisation: Tibetan Struggle for a Nation in Exile

Refugees often show a tendency to search for a victim-based identity (Jacoby, 2014). Identification of a common enemy also leads them to categorise their group identity in terms of how it differs from their enemies. Such a tendency also acts as a means of coping with the psychological and social sufferings caused by forced displacement. Social identity theory sheds light on this phenomenon by analysing how identifying a common enemy makes group boundaries less permeable, helps identify a clear-cut out-group prototype and builds a group's political identity that is significant in devising their social and political projects. It results in much stronger group identities than those that lack such characteristics (Huddy, 2001). Further, Barth (1981) asserts that a significant portion of the meanings of in-group identity are created at its boundaries, interactions, and dialogues with a well-defined out-group enemy. For refugees, the loss of their homeland and the subsequent weakening of their national identity supports such assumptions as they prompt a need to reaffirm their group identity by contrasting it with an outgroup opponent. Bar-Tal (2007) highlights that the construction of enemy images serves to solidify collective narratives of victimhood and resistance, which are critical in influencing the development of a feeling of togetherness within a group. Often rooted in collective memory, such narratives overemphasise historical grievances and injustices inflicted by the identified enemy. It, in particular, motivates a refugee group to preserve cultural and national identity even in exile.

The psychological process of identifying an enemy also functions as a coping mechanism for refugees, enabling them to channel frustration and make sense of their suffering. Allport's (1954) scapegoating hypothesis suggests that attributing one's miseries to a specific rival simplifies

intertwined socio-political realities and reduces feelings of helplessness. Bar-Tal (2007) extends this perspective by arguing that these enemy images help groups maintain psychological resilience, as they provide a cognitive framework for understanding their plight and induce a sense of moral superiority. Furthermore, Staub (1989) notes that shared perceptions of an enemy can strengthen ingroup solidarity, promoting cohesion and mutual support among displaced individuals. However, this tendency is not without its risks. The perpetuation of enemy images contributes to intergroup hostility, hinders integration into immediate surrounding or host nation's societies, and sustains a culture of conflict (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Smeekes, 2015).

In addition to its psychological and social functions, identifying an enemy encourages the preservation and transmission of collective memory. Bar-Tal (2007) highlights that societies in conflict often develop narratives of collective victimisation, which serve as a tool for guaranteeing intergenerational continuity of national identity and group values. Refugees frequently construct and disseminate these narratives within their communities, framing their displacement as a direct consequence of the enemy's actions. This practice not only reinforces group identity but also motivates efforts to maintain cultural preservation and frame their discourse of justice.

The Tibetan refugees' identification of China as a common enemy has remained central to their collective identity and sense of purpose in exile since their exodus to India. Rooted in the experience of displacement and cultural suppression following China's annexation of Tibet in 1950, this identification reinforces a shared narrative of collective victimisation. Their stories of lost nations construct an image of Tibetans as victims of historical injustice inflicted on the most peace-oriented nation. This story has been a recurrent theme in their appeal for cultural preservation and political projects. Also, it helps them preserve their distinct identity across

generations. Additionally, the focus on a common enemy reduces the permeability of the Tibetan group identity. Identifying China as the source of their suffering creates a clear boundary between “us” and “them,” making it less likely for Tibetans to assimilate fully into host cultures or other external groups.

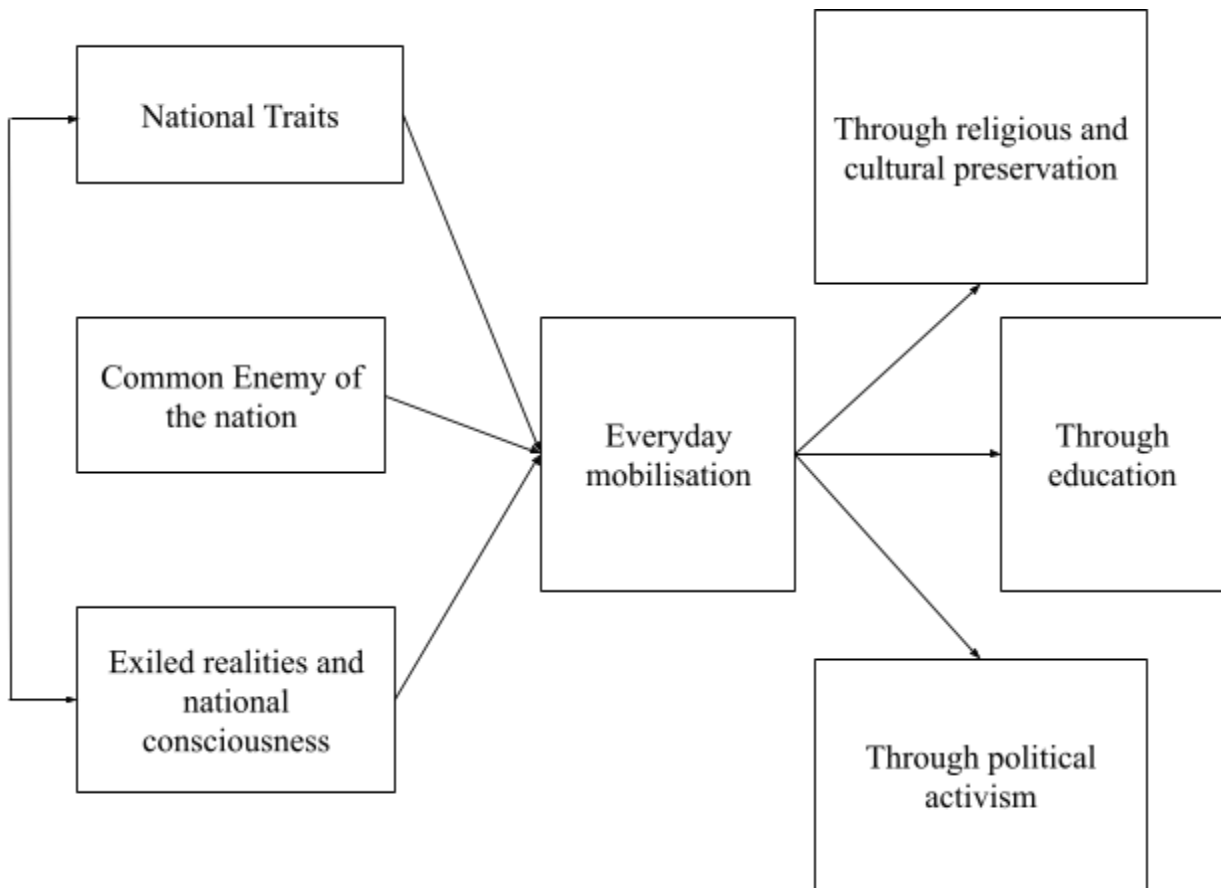


Figure 1.3. Schematic representation of the interconnectedness of the themes and subthemes.

Figure 1.3 represents how the interplay between three defining themes - national traits, the common enemy of the nation, and exiled realities and national consciousness - results in a mobilisation process that shares characteristics of everyday phenomena. Further, everyday

mobilisation is observed in the behaviours and decision-making processes of the Tibetan refugees, who share a common intention of contributing towards their national cause. These contribution efforts are channelled into three instrumental tools, namely cultural and religious preservation efforts, education, and political activism. The chapter attempts to provide academic validation to such assumptions by analysing the voices of the studied population and discussing the findings in great depth.

Common Enemy of the Nation

It is better to start this section by sharing one of the observations from the field notes, which is self-explanatory about the sense of this particular theme.

Extract 36. (Observation note: Place - Pandoh, Day - 18 March 2019)

Today, I observed an unusual game played by some Tibetan children. It is so interesting. I witnessed a few children playing a game. Children were speaking in their own language. My gatekeeper translated it for me. In short, in the game, a boy was supposed to be a Chinese spy who had come to their settlement to plan a conspiracy against them. The rule for identifying the spy is that everyone has to randomly pick a colour from a box and the one who picks red is the spy. Once identified, the spy had to immediately cross a borderline without being caught while the others had to catch him to put him in jail (a circular space in the ground marked by wooden sticks) before the spy crossed the border.

In general, the participants' discussion on the Tibetan conflict centres on the concept of dictatorial annexation, where the struggle becomes a derivative force of power essential to unite or mobilise a nation, making 'the identification and definition of an enemy' a primary task of

nationalist discourse. Here, too, just as respondents' identification with the motherland and common traditional values assisted in the justification for the distinctiveness of Tibetan identity, the categorisation of an enemy (China) gave them a common purpose to live and die for. All the respondents hold negative attitudes towards China and recognise Chinese occupation as the sole factor for Tibet's lost tranquillity and prosperity. Recalling from childhood memories, one of the respondents shared experiences of exposure to violence and atrocity in the following words:

Extract 37. (P13-Ma-F-34-In)

So, when I was small, I remember everything from 1989. Maybe I was 5-6 years old. There was a big fighting between China and Tibet, and so many people, so many Tibetan people were killed. In front of my eyes, they are putting some [thinks loudly] bomb-like things among people. The smoke will spread, smoke [tries for better word presumably], and smoke [gestures like 'all around']. It's what we breathe, and it becomes difficult to breathe. And I remember when I was small and when I was going to school, I saw these situations in Tibet. The participants routinely perceived China as a threat using their nationalist frames, as no participant blamed China for their subjective sufferings in exile but put their national concern over individual interest. For instance, their intense resentment is directed towards how the Chinese government is treating their brothers in Tibet, the Chinese policy to disengage Tibetans from practising their religious and cultural values, and the intentional exploitation of Tibet's geographical richness.

Another participant expressed a similar view about China in the following words:

Extract 38. (P27-Sa-M-25-Out)

First, they [China] came for land because Tibet has a very small population with a big land area and a huge geographical area. Once they completely invaded Tibet, now they wanted to destroy Tibet. Even though I am not sure about China's real motives, I know that they have evil motives towards China. Like what a colonizer wants? A colonizer wants to destroy everything in that nation. China shares the same motive.

Further, such perception remains relative to the participant's understanding of their nation as a victim of unjustified and intentional harm repeated over time, which their peaceful nation never deserved. For instance, when we asked a participant (P6) about his feelings for Tibet as a nation, he expressed mixed feelings; where at one level, he is proud of its historical and geographical richness, but at the same time, he expressed sadness about how a virtuous nation is suffering under the reign of China.

Extract 39. (P6-My-M-37-In)

However, together, there is also sadness because the country where there was total peace, where there was no kind of military base and like that, you know, it was taken by the communist party and destroyed, you know. About 6000 monasteries and 1.2 million people were killed. 20 % of our population was killed under Chinese forces. So, going back there, everybody keeps their culture, but they are always in fear. You can't bring Dalai Lama's photo outside; you can't hang Dalai Lama's photo; you can't use the Tibetan national anthem and all those kinds of things. When you see that in a free country, you can do anything you want, and in your own country, you are not allowed to do many things, which are our own culture; our own religion is not allowed to apply those things.

Inferring such interviews from Bar-Tal's (2009) concept of collective victimhood, it also becomes evident how such narration provides a sense of moral superiority and strength for resilience. The participant's assumption of Tibet as a land of 'total peace' before the Chinese occupation accentuates a moral dichotomy and sketches the image of Tibetans as peace-oriented spiritual beings who are the victims of an aggressive oppressor. These lines also align with the popular political discourses that treat the memory of their historical trauma as central to their cultural and national identity.

The participant further argued for concern over the eradication of his nation's religious and cultural values. In comparison, China claims to liberate Tibetans from orthodox and conservatism through their government policies. However, he recognises all such policies as a threat to the existence of 'Tibet-ness.'

Extract 40. (P6-My-M-37-In)

So if Tibet doesn't get free and the Chinese stay by force in Tibet, in the school, they are putting the wrong history and wrong language, and instead of Tibetan words, they put Chinese words inside. They teach the children in this way. So they are trying to mislead and destroy our culture, our religion and everything. So for this reason, if you know all these things, Tibet must get free as soon as possible.

As is apparent here, the most intense discontent among the participants is China's everyday surveillance and strict scrutiny to control the Tibetan's freedom to exercise their indigenous belief system. Such intense discontent is found to be more of a fear among one of the interviewed participants, who spent sixteen years living in Tibet under the Chinese government, as apparent from one of the following field notes:

Extract 50. (Observation note: Place - Sarnath, Day -10 March 2023)

After the interview with a participant who fled Tibet at the age of sixteen.

I: it is my research work.

R: Oh, I thought something else. I was hesitant, you saw that, I was afraid!

I: why afraid?

R: I first thought that you are from media! Then I thought you can be a spy!

I: (surprisingly) spy?

R: Chinese paid person! I told you that I ran away from there. So I was afraid.

The interaction and the content are strong enough and concerns reflect that even after escaping from Tibet, she cannot completely escape from the possibility of China's clutch. However, most respondents share beliefs about China's wrong intentions. I continue using the examples of the same respondents (P6) due to the comprehensiveness of their explanation style. I further asked, "What makes Tibetans around the world come together for their country?" To this, the participant, in his conversation, evoked an appeal for saving Tibet, reciting how the internal affairs of his occupied nation have consequences at a global level, thus stressing the urgency of the outside world to be determined before it is too late.

Extract 51. (P6-My-M-37-In)

Three countries are under China. If you remove these countries, China will become very small on the map. They have a very big population. Their interest becomes their land, their people, you

know. They need land, and that's why they are destroying Tibet. They have the second-largest forest in the world. They cut almost 60-70% of wood. If it's their own country, they will not destroy that one. Okay! So Tibet is the peak of the world, and the water is very important. Now, all the nuclear waste China buys from Germany, France, and Europe, and they throw where? They throw all this in the Himalayas. In Tibet, they throw! They make a lot of money because the world doesn't know where to throw! China buys, and where do they throw? They throw in Tibet.

Notably, irrespective of such rival blaming, the participants acknowledged the political ideology of the communist Chinese government as their enemy but not the people of China.

Extract 52. (P30-By-F-23-In)

It is important to understand that when we say that China is our main enemy, we do not mean the common Chinese people. We do not mean that the common Chinese people are beating Tibetans in Tibet or that they are the main cause of our problems. We mean that the government of China, which is basically the communist government, is trying to remove Tibet from the map of this world. If you look at the history, you will see that the communist party believes in dictatorship. Also, if you look at the present cases, you will see that even the Chinese people are fed up with them, but they cannot say anything because everyone fears communist leaders.

Another participant, in a similar vein, pointed out that the fight is against the communist Chinese government and not the Chinese people:

Extract 53. (P8-By-F-29-In)

The Chinese government can do anything. I mean, I am not against those Chinese people. They are normal people; they are the same as us, but I am against the Chinese government! Those communist governments!

Here, the participant's assumptions indicate that the ruthless aggression of a political system is responsible for their nation's misery and categorises the ordinary Chinese as helpless as Tibetans are themselves. In this sense, a state institution becomes a target against which they organise their fight. The political struggle for Tibet's welfare is oriented toward disempowering the political system whose policies are responsible for their pains and discontent rather than the common Chinese population who are part of such political boundaries.

Thus, it is observed that the basis of participants' nationalist sentiments lies in the unanimity of fellow members in repelling the common enemy that dominates the idea of the common welfare of the in-group members. However, in Tibetan refugees, such repulsion is out of necessity as the threat appears genuine, supported by verifiable assertions. Given the following conditions, the later section will explore the strategies Tibetans are left with for their independence movement without compromising the intrinsic aspect of their group identity. The subsequent section includes understanding the 'leadership influences' and their role in identity continuity, as well as guiding and articulating social norms for national identification among the interviewed participants.

Exiled Realities and National Consciousness

The lived experiences of Tibetan refugees in exile reflect one another dimension, where their national pride and sense of security from identifying with Tibet are challenged by their realities of 'refugeeness' (Dobson, 2004). Stephen Dobson conceptualises refugeeness as a condition of

being a refugee, not just as a legal or political status but as an embodied and lived reality shaped by displacement, lack of recognition, legal issues, a sense of temporary-ness and a longing for home. For Tibetan refugees, this consciousness comprises the daily negotiations of identity, memory, and belonging, determining their exile experience. Further, Tibetan refugees live in a state where their cultural and political existence is both preserved and reconstructed in exile to a degree that it started looking more real than Tibet itself. It provides a glimpse into the past of Tibet before China's annexation. However, it also creates a divided consciousness among these refugees, where their aspirational identity as Tibetans, ingrained in their traditional attributes, conflicts with their lived reality as refugees facing marginalisation and uncertainty. The divided state of Tibetan refugees highlights the struggle between a 'desired self,' tied to the concept of a free Tibet, and an 'actual self,' shaped by the constraints of displacement, which eventually reveals the unreliability of self-categorisation in diasporic contexts, where national pride coexists with the alienation of exile. Such phenomena are also observed in the interview process, where participants struggle to find meaning in their overstay in India.

The participant's strong identification with attributes of cultural and religious values, the symbolic presence of the Dalai Lama and clear-cut identification of an enemy helped maintain intergroup differences. It also facilitated perceiving the utilitarian value from identifying with these distinctions. Such utilitarian values are drawn from the participant's nationalist sentiments as they interact more intensely with the idea of Tibet as a nation than as a geographical space of the priest in a priest-patron relationship with the outside world. Further, this divides participants' perception of Tibet into two dimensions: first, a nation of ethnic richness and second, the same nation suffering from being deprived of its legal status and striving to seek identity validation from the out-group members.

When asked about their views on China's stand on Tibet, participants based the independent state of their nation on cultural and religious distinctiveness. Such categorization shaped the cognitive awareness of our participants that the legitimacy of the independent status of a nation depends on the continuity of its offered ethnic distinctiveness. For example, a participant expresses an unwavering justification concerning the impossibility of the Tibet-China configuration.

Extract 54. (P5-Ma-M-57-Out)

Tibet is an independent country, Tibet is not a part of China. We are a separate country, Tibet's identity is separate, and if Tibet and China had a common identity, we should not have said that Tibet or China are different. However, our identity is different, culture is different, religion is different, tradition is different, then how will we be one?

Another participant's words highlight how they, at an intragroup level, associate a sense of pride with their belonging to Tibet. However, at the same time, they suffer from an identity crisis when comparing their national status with the other nations' legal status. When we asked, "What do you think about your identity?" a 47 years male participant explained the need for an identity in an individual's life in the following words;

Extract 55. (P3-By-M-47-In)

It is as if we, as human beings, need an identity (emphasises). Yeah! We need an identity. For example, if it's Tibetan, Indian, or American, we should have an identity. If there is an identity, there is a proud feeling, Oh! I am Tibetan and have my own country, so this is the right way. But right now, our country and our identity are suppressed by the Chinese government. We have to

struggle for that one. Not only the refugees who came to India or some other country, but we need to identify our own Tibetan identity. People living in Tibet need that identity.

At first glance, this participant's response shows that the distress in his life is due to being denied a fundamental right to have a nation of his own, as such conflicts brought a sense of an identity crisis among the participants. However, further elaborating on these feelings, it can be understood that an identity crisis also signifies the consciousness of not being recognized by the out-group members. He continued with such unsettling feelings in the following way:

Extract 56. (P3-By-M-47-In)

Yeah, we need our freedom back. Our nation should be free from other country's operations, from the Chinese! We need freedom and we need identity for our own community and they have to recognize Tibet as an Independent country so that we have our own identity. It is very necessary.

Here, the felt need to attain freedom from the Chinese occupation does not simply explain a desire for a validated identity but also the hardship that follows from the lack of it in an exiled land living a refugee's life. Another 34-year-old female participant (P2) shared a different perspective on her refugee experience in India. We asked her, "How do you feel about you living in India?" and she replied,

Extract 57. (P2-Ma-F-34-Out)

It feels good. But we do have one problem. We find it very difficult to find places. We can't buy land. We don't have our own home. We live in houses for rent. It's difficult for us to live on rent, where we live, people over there will disturb us by saying, leave this house and all, and then also increase the rent, which makes it more difficult for us.

In addition to sharing a feeling of instability and not owning anything, she also showed concern about the lack of opportunities for economic growth and the future of refugee youths in an exiled state. She continued;

Extract 58. (P2-Ma-F-34-Out)

We are many. We don't have jobs. Children are also there, studying, and then they will grow up to find jobs after some time. In India, they can't get Government jobs, they will get only private jobs. Nowadays, private jobs don't pay that much.

These instances of being denied equality for over six decades are a constant reminder of her consciousness about her refugee identity. Other participants also share a similar sense of instability and deprivation.

Extract 59. (P19-Sa-M-26-Out)

I want to go back to Tibet. Although we consider India as a second home for the freedom it has given us, we lack opportunities compared to Indians. We lack opportunities in every sector, including education, academic or other co-curricular levels, and we are behind in other fields, too. If we want to apply for a job, they ask for an Indian identity, so we don't have an Indian identity. So these are all our issues. Also, I think we would not face such problems if we went back to Tibet. There are more opportunities for us in Tibet. Even though we have freedom in India to practice our religion and tradition, Tibet will also have such freedom. The landscape is beautiful there as it is located at a very high altitude.

The excerpt highlights the divided reality that follows from the participant's identity of being both a Tibetan and a refugee. On the one hand, he feels gratitude towards India for providing a

space where he can enjoy freedom of religious and cultural practices. However, this sense of belonging is challenged by the realities of refugee lives that involve a lack of opportunities in education, employment, and other aspects of life, which is the direct result of being deprived of legal citizenship status. Such deprivations are a constant reminder of Tibetans' status as outsiders in India.

Further, imagining Tibet (free Tibet) as a place where their struggles would meet rewards, where opportunities are sufficient, and where freedoms are naturally guaranteed promotes an idealised vision of what the participant believes his homeland could provide. Further, the duality in the participant's identity reflects a divided sense of non-belonging in the present and the hope for a future where he can finally belong. However, insecurity related to a lack of economic and career opportunities is mainly experienced by those living outside the settlements who run small-scale businesses for livelihood or students pursuing higher education and worried about their careers. On the contrary, few participants from inside the Tibetan settlements felt more stable and appeared satisfied with the career opportunities provided to them by the Tibetan government-in-exile.

Irrespective of the discussed differences, almost all participants shared an everyday awareness of being a refugee and living in a space that neither defines their true identity nor belongs to them. For instance,

Extract 60. (Observation note: Place - Pandoh, Day - 17 March 2019)

After the interview, the participant asked me to have tea with him. He has a grocery store and sells tea as well. He asked me about my native place and my family. The talk was about my work.

I saw the Tibetan flag and asked him:

I: Such a big Tibetan flag in your shop?

P: To show my national identity. Without my Tibetan identity, I am just a refugee. I want locals to know me by my Tibetan identity rather than for my refugee identity.

Besides the profound sense of non-belongingness, this refugee identity remains a pilot to all their cognitive and affective endurings. On evaluating the self-definition in comparison with the out-group members' non-refugee status, these accounts together provide a brief understanding of how the participants interact with the questions of 'what we are as Tibetan', 'what we are as a refugee', and 'what we should be as citizens of a nation'.

Everyday Mobilisation

In the present context, the term mobilisation encompasses more than explaining institutional or organisational strategies to mobilise available resources to promote individual participation in a social movement. Here, everyday mobilisation corresponds to understanding our participants' oriented thought processes, which share the common intention and motivation (contributing to the Tibetan cause) behind their everyday rational life choices from nationalist sentiments. Rational because our analysis records that the participants are aware of their nation's strength compared to their enemy as they know they cannot secure Tibet's freedom through wars (P5: *China, this is such a powerful country, with China we can't fight. We don't have that much electronics and power, veto power, missile power, nothing is there! We are refugees!*) and no other country is ready to support them openly (P5: *No country can support us because China is a very powerful country. No country can go in front of it and ask for Tibet. All countries are selfish*). Irrespective of the constraints mentioned, the participants perceive opportunities available in daily life - ranging from dietary, clothing, education, and settlement preferences to

collective protest participation - as a tool for continuing their struggle for their nation's cause. Such strategies allow the participants to perceive themselves as contributing actors of their nation without compromising their true 'Tibetan ethnic' identity, thus creating a balanced approach for negotiating between the ethnic and national identity. These social actions also adhere to the norms of cultural and religious values. Further, group commitment to these strategies comes from their belief in the efficacy of such approaches, as reflected in the 34-year-old female participant in the following words.

Extract 61. (P13-Ma-F-34-In)

Our lives are going on and may finish soon, but the next generation will continue, and our struggles will continue until we have freedom! So these are the most important things we need to continue. If we stop this, the whole world will forget about Tibet's freedom, or Tibet's name will vanish. So it's very important to keep these small things running.

Another participant shares a similar efficacy feeling as:

Extract 62. (P28-Sa-F-25-Out)

I want to give this message to future Tibetan generations, to Tibetan children and to youngsters to never give up, never stop preserving their culture, never stop praying and never stop making an effort for a better future. It is okay! It is all right! It may take time, but we, of course, will get our freedom back one day.

Our analysis observes that the participants mainly utilise three approaches of mobilisation tools to continue their struggle for Tibet's independence- i) through cultural and religious preservation, ii) through education, and iii) through political activism. The respondents intend to achieve

numerous psychological purposes through these three approaches, discussed in the following subsections.

Through Cultural and Religious Preservation

When I asked the participants about their preference for residence, almost all the respondents (irrespective of whether they belonged to a settlement or lived outside the settlements) chose to live inside the settlement, stating religious and cultural advantages as a potent reason. In their minds, Tibetan settlement in India developed as a space essential for the continuity of Tibetan purity and provided a protection shield from out-group influences. For instance:

Extract 63. (P10-By-F-29-In)

We prefer to live in settlements. Settlement is an idea for group feeling. Fifteen thousand people form a settlement, or maybe more, to preserve the culture and language. If we are scattered, we will sink with other nations.

Such approaches can also be compared to boundary-making activities (i.e., creating and maintaining a spatial distance from the host society), highlighting political activism in exile (Bloch, 2023). However, religious and cultural preservation strategies partially accord with exercising them in daily behaviour. Participants' effort to represent their ethnicity on every possible occasion highlights the vitality of practice and representation for the continuity of Tibetan identity. It is evident in the reply of one of the participants who answered our query about the preservation of Tibetan tradition and culture:

Extract 64. (P16-Sa-F-27-Out)

I know that politically, I cannot do anything about the Tibetan cause, but if I preserve my own culture and pass down what I learn about Tibet's traditions to the next generation, or even if I give birth to my child, I think I can still contribute about Tibet. I study the Pali language and want to pass down my own cultural values to my children to the future generation. So, if I learn Tibetan Sutras and share them with others, I think it is a contribution to Tibet's cause.

Another participant shares a view which points out that representing Tibetan culture and tradition at every potent occasion is an act of cultural and religious preservation, and it encourages others to continue such tradition, too:

Extract 65. (P9-Ma-F-51-Out)

When you go to Dharamshala on the 10th of December or Dalai Lama's birthday, you will learn about Tibetan dress. If you go to take a video, all of our culture will be on display there, dress and all.

Such practices make a critical point of how an event of their religious leader's birthday transforms into a symbolic space to display how a Tibetan's life is supposed to be. Further, another participant's account of ethnic representation informed us about the embedded political interest in such approaches. As she puts in,

Extract 66. (P8-By-F-29-In)

As I told you, like language, our parents and then the way we [think while speaking], maybe through our traditional dress, in our college when we have some college festival we used to wear our own traditional dress. It's a way, and we are representing our own community, our own ideology, our own society, we are representing that!

These accounts, in turn, help us understand the valued aspect of Tibetan nationalism and how bringing such concepts into actual life actions introduces a sense of performing national duties among its practitioners.

Apart from preserving and representing religious and cultural values, the continuation of such aspects depends on passing them on to the next generation. During the fieldwork, I observed one such phenomenon in the Bylakuppe settlement when I was attending a morning prayer in Sera Jay monastery.

Extract 67. (Observation note: Place - Bylakuppe, Day - 4 December 2019)

Today I attended the morning prayer in Sera Jay monastery. Since it is Wednesday thus it means that the prayer is going to happen in a more ritually engrossed manner and relatively more devotees have attended. I noticed that parents with young kids (especially mothers) were more focused on teaching them how to perform the prayer in the right way. They seemed occupied with the nitty gritty of the prayer positions. Women are telling their children to chant, how to bow, and how to perform other rituals.

The observation underlines a common intention in which these parents ensure their traditions sustain longevity, reinforcing Tibetan identity in exile by focusing on cultural transmission rather than personal devotion. More similar acts were observed throughout all three places of fieldwork. Such acts suggest that these are more than religious practices; they are a form of resistance that connects cultural preservation to the broader national struggle for a free Tibet. The community sustains its social movement and asserts its resilience through such everyday practices.

Through Education

Although the participants perceived continuing religious and cultural practices as serving the national cause, at the same time, they acknowledged that transferring such virtues to the next generation through educational setups is equally pertinent. They perceive education as one of the most powerful tools for Tibet's cause. For instance,

Extract 68. (P2-Sa-M-25-Out)

There are plenty of platforms from which we can stage our protest, but, as His Holiness also said, education is one of the best means of achieving our freedom, and I absolutely agree with him.

For this reason, most participants who were literate had received their primary schooling from Tibetan Children's Village (TCV). When we asked a 50-year-old female about the reason for sending her children to TCV, she replied:

Extract 69. (P14-Ma-F-50-Out)

Why do we send our children to Tibetan schools? Because to learn our language, they should know how to wear our dress and about our food. This is why we send our children to Tibetan school more frequently. We also do not know much Tibetan because we were born and raised in India. If our children do not go to Tibetan school, their Hindi will become pure, and they will forget our culture and language.

Such intentions were also found in participants pursuing higher education at Tibetan universities. For instance, one participant explained that she particularly opted to pursue her PhD in the Pali

language to keep her culture and language alive. She thinks education is an important tool for keeping their social movement alive.

Extract 70. (P16-Sa-F-27-Out)

I am studying the Pali language, and in the Pali language, we have so many texts about Sutras, which are the words of Buddha. I will translate them into the Tibetan language to benefit the Tibetan community because I know how important it is for my country. I have friends who escaped to India just to learn the Tibetan language, and if it vanishes, then the motivation to fight for our nation will also go away.

Such decisions become a significant indicator of participants' commitment to their national identity when comparing the advantages of receiving education from Indian schooling boards in terms of job and career opportunities. For instance, another mother prioritises sending her children to TCV over nearby Indian schools. She lives outside the settlement, which means she has to send her children to the hostels of TCV at the early age of six. Further, she stated the cultural and religious importance behind such decisions in the following words:

Extract 71. (P2-Ma-F-34-Out)

P: Tradition, culture is not here [in Indian schools]); that's why we send our children to Tibetan schools so they don't forget our culture. There, our everything is there, our language is there, everything is there, our prayers, etc. All our cultures are taught there, and that's why we educate children from there (TCV). And if they study with Indian children, then they will forget our culture. That's why we send our children to...

I: Do you think like that?

P: [Emphasises] Yes, that is why we send our children to study so far from us.

Her powerful stress on “*that is why we send our children so far from us to study*” conveys a sense of sacrifice that, like her other participants, also expresses behind their life choices. Participants’ other expectations from education include developing leadership and scientific competency that should be enough to challenge China. For instance:

Extract 72. (P5-Ma-M-57-Out)

I would like to give a message that they should quit doing Aatmadahan (Self-immolation); they are the new generation, and they need education and study to free our nation. This will be better because nowadays education is everything. Mahatma Gandhi was there. He got an education and did so much for his nation. Subhash Chandra Bose and Chandra Shekar Azad fought for the nation, but M K Gandhi did it without Aatmadahan (Self-immolation). We need to think about the nation, and we need to think about education. Through education, we can free Tibet from China.

Notably, all three Indian freedom fighters mentioned here were educated revolutionaries who strengthened India’s freedom movement through their leadership qualities and skills. Thus, having similar expectations, the participant’s hope points toward the importance of education in their freedom movement and a way to protect fellow Tibetans from adopting unjustified or self-harming means of protest. A similar expectation is reflected in our conversation with an 18-year-old class higher secondary grade student motivated to study hard and challenge China, the nation’s enemy.

Extract 73. (P4-Ma-M-18-Out)

P: We will study hard.

I: Ok.

P: Study hard, and we will get our freedom back.

I: Ok, how do you think you will get your freedom back? What do you have to do to get your freedom?

P: Study hard, yeah!

I: Ok.

P: Then, then we will challenge China.

Thus, participants expect cultural and religious preservation from their primary schooling, whereas they perceive higher education as a way to strengthen their nation's potential regarding modern political affairs. No matter how divided it appears between tradition and modernity, these two contrasting expectations are bonded by their common objective of Tibet's freedom.

Through Political Activism

So far, the discussion highlights how the participant evaluates the rationality of their life decisions against the expectations of their contribution to attaining national goals. In the same context, many participants argued against taking Indian citizenship for the longevity of their social movement, as they perceived such trends as betraying loyalty to one's own nation. Such as:

Extract 74. (P2-Ma-F-34-Out)

We feel good about taking Indian citizenship, but if we take that, how will we tell that we want our nation? How will I shout to get freedom for our nation? If I take Indian citizenship, I cannot

shout for my country. I will become an Indian citizen; this is why I don't take that. We think it's nice, but we want our country back. If we get it, at least our children can live.

Similarly, a student from the CIHTS explains his reason for not taking Indian citizenship:

Extract 75. (P26-Sa-M-26-Out)

I want to hold my Tibetan identity, so I want to continue with my Tibetan citizenship, which means my refugee identity. How would I say I have an awareness of Tibet, Tibetans and its suffering if I lose my Tibetan identity? How would I say that I care about Tibet if I take up Indian citizenship?

There is a divided attitude between Tibetans living in high-income countries such as the USA or Canada, and lower-middle-income countries like India when it comes to availing citizenship in a foreign country. Meanwhile, both Tibetans and their government-in-exile perceive taking US and Canadian citizenship as strengthening their national cause (Bentz, 2023; Hess, 2006). On the contrary, Tibetan refugees in India are discouraged from applying for Indian citizenship because the act will weaken their political struggle, and it is seen as an act of betrayal (Coelho, 2023; McGranahan, 2018). Even though the Indian constitution allows Tibetans born between 1950 and 1987 to apply for citizenship and also those refugee children whose parents have Indian citizenship, the culture of refusal of Indian citizenship is categorised as an act of patriotism, which will strengthen the political mobilisation in exile (Coelho, 2023; McGranahan, 2016). Thus, for this participant, being heard as a refugee is more critical for securing the political future of her nation and future generations than availing of the benefits of Indian citizenship.

Also, for her, being heard as a refugee is more critical for securing the political future of her nation and future generations than availing of the benefits of Indian citizenship. These mobilised approaches should be understood as individuals' indirect contributions to increasing the probability of Tibet's independence. However, our analysis labelled direct contributions to the nation's cause as those actions of participants which involved organisation, participation, and execution of collective actions that demand extra effort, such as political protest. Why are we associating it with the phenomenon of everyday life? Because most participants agree that participation in political protest has become an integral part of their sense of responsibility for lives. For instance, one participant said: "*No, those protests are like our routine*", and one participant who failed to perform such responsibility due to her work commitment shared the feeling of guilt in the following words:

Extract 76. (P13-Ma-F-34-In)

No, no, no, because I am a Tibetan, I have some responsibility. They are also Tibetan; they are protesting for our country, so I am also responsible. I feel ashamed because if I am not going because I am not comfortable walking, I also need to support them; because I am Tibetan, I feel responsible. This struggle is not only for them. It is a struggle for all.

However, differing from such a guilt-ridden mindset, a participant from the CHITS justified not participating in the Uprising Day 2023 in the following way:

Extract 77. (Observation note: Place - Sarnath, Day - 10 March 2023)

After taking the interview, I was having coffee in the CIHTS's canteen. The female participant I had interviewed came and joined me. The conversation moves around my work. She talks

inquires about my institution. Her female friends came and joined us. They asked her about her absence in the Protest.

Female 1: I didn't see you in the morning, in temple (referring to the Two Lions Temple).

Female 2: I didn't go.

Female 1: Why?

Female 2: I had to attend a class.

Female 1: Was it more important than participating in the event?

Female 2: For me, every day is Uprising Day. For me attending my class is as important as participating in Uprising Day, because ultimately, I am contributing to my nation by learning the Pali language. If I learn, I can teach to the next generation.

A slightly different perspective on the nature of political protest and collective participation is expressed in one of the participants' (P1) words which shows that even though the decision to participate in political protest is their own and without any pressure, facilities provided by the higher authorities for facilitating such occasions indicate the mobilisation strategies at the institutional level. He explains:

Extract 78. (P1-By-M-40-In)

At that time, we know everything. So they [the settlement authorities] arrange buses and our monastery, and if you want to go, you can go, and if you do not want to go, then do not go. Nobody forces you to protest.

Even though fundamental motives remain the same behind protest participation, these individuals further identified different aspects of protest movements. For example, a 47-year-old male participant distinctly explained how they utilised the available resources to spread awareness about the suffering of their group members under the Chinese authority and stressed the importance of representing the Tibetan cause through protest.

Extract 79. (P3-By-M-47-In)

No. We could not go to Dharamshala, or the Chinese embassy or China to protest, but we had given a referendum to our own district administrator or any head office of this Karnataka state. So we just put a memorandum and gave our signatures and campaigns and gave a lot of pamphlets, distributions of how the Chinese had occupied our country and what torture they had given to our people. We wanted to spread this information through the representatives of India and whoever in other countries. Through those representatives, we are protesting these things.

As the conversation continued, his responses helped us understand that these political protests are not associated with fixed schedules. However, they are organised at different times to serve different purposes. He discussed how sometimes these protests are executed as a reaction to recent human rights violations in China.

Extract 80. (P3-By-M-47-In)

It is as if somebody has self-immolated, for example, in Tibet, then we want to know why he has self-immolated. If he has done this for the country, then we have to support him. If he had died for his personal needs, nobody would have come. So if he died for the country, then all, because we want to preserve our own culture, our own nationality, so everybody feels that if a single

person can do such things in a communist country, then why can't we do it in a democratic country? We can come together and request our authority to give a memorandum to all other people to make a little peace in our country.

Another participant described how contributing to the Tibetan cause has become a part of their refugee lives.

Extract 81. (P23-Sa-M-28-Out)

We think of Tibet in daily life, and whatever we find in our reach, we try to upload it on Facebook and YouTube, so that more people will become aware of our Tibet and the situations in Tibet. So, for Tibetans, it's like a normal life; it's everyday life. We do this kind of activity every day, and it's not something special here. We also do such activities in normal life. We also try to gather PhD scholars, those writers for the Tibet's cause, or try to find someone from Tibet who recently escaped to exile, we try to call them in here in our college and request them to give some speech regarding the Tibetan community, try to motivate the student, try to get some kind of energy. This kind of activity also happens in our normal life, daily life.

At first, these accounts signify an active contribution to the welfare of the nation's interests and attempts to empower one's group status through protest participation. However, a significant portion of our participant's intention for such participation was directed towards freeing Tibetans in Tibet from suffering under Chinese authorities. Such phenomena can be understood from a different perspective. In a diasporic situation, if one segment of a population belonging to the same group suffers in an unreachable place, identity becomes a central factor for another segment to relate to their pain and adopt a politically active life dedicated to the sufferer's rescue.

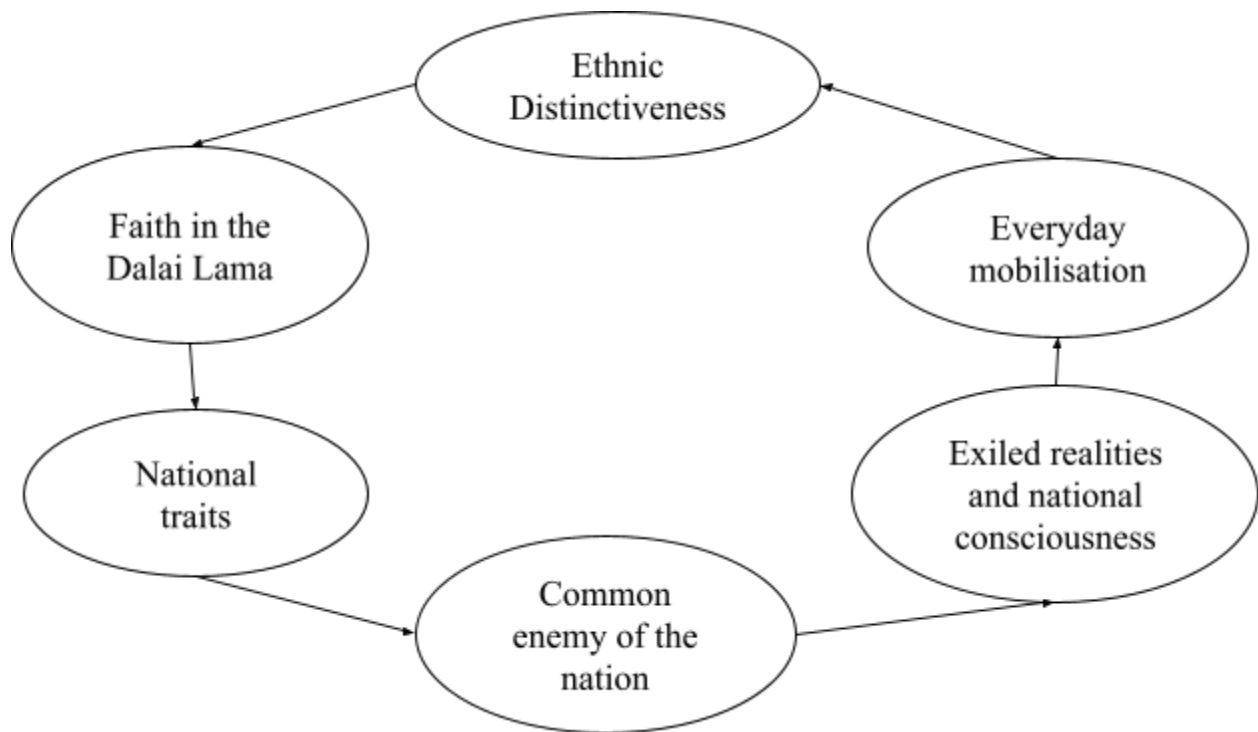


Figure 1.4. Schematic representation of the cyclic nature of the factors discussed in the Tibetan mobilisation process.

Inferring the findings of the previous and the present chapter in continuation, it becomes evident that the proposed phenomena of ‘*everyday mobilisation*’ is not the end-product of the other mentioned factors but exists in cyclic form (as illustrated in Figure 1.4). It is critical to understand that the cyclic nature of the Tibetan mobilisation process is the most prominent factor that has maintained sustainability in their social movement in the diaspora for the past six and a half decades.

Summary

This chapter discusses the last three themes of the thesis, including the '*common enemy of the nation*', '*exiled realities and national consciousness*', and '*everyday mobilisation*'. The first central theme of the present chapter - the common enemy of the nation - discusses what psychological relevance (such as coping mechanism and group cohesion) the categorisation of an enemy plays in the lives of Tibetan refugees and how they perceive their enemy through the value window of their ethnic identity. While discussing the second theme- exiled realities and national consciousness - the chapter outlines how the contrasting realities of the exiled Tibetans as belonging to Tibet and their experiences of refugees in India instigates a feeling of uncertainty and instability among them that further motivates to continue their struggle of returning back to Tibet. The final theme of this chapter and the thesis are both the end product of the findings and define the cyclic nature of the political life of Tibetan refugees. The last theme, '*everyday mobilisation*', consists of three subthemes: '*through religious and cultural preservation*', '*through education*', and '*through political activism*'. In its essence, the last theme illustrates how the Tibetan social movement is part of a larger struggle strategy which is found to be deeply embedded in the cognitive and behavioural frames through which our participants perceive their status, negotiate between national and refugee identity, organise their way of life, and make mobilisation an everyday phenomenon.