

## **A Tibetan refugee school in Ladakh, North India: A historical analysis with a future perspective**

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This paper examines the historical background of Tibetan refugee society and explores the features of a Tibetan refugee school located in the Ladakh region of North India. More specifically, it analyses the characteristics and role of such a school from the perspective of both Tibetan and local Indian students. Education is universally recognized as a pivotal means for children and adults to actively participate in the transformation of their societies. This denotation is further heightened when subjects are seeking shelter in a society which is itself impoverished for lack of physical and financial resources. The first Tibetan refugee school was established in India in 1960. At present the number of schools has increased to 73 both in India and Nepal and these schools accept not only Tibetan children but also local children from host countries. Yet, there is not much research which examines and analyses the essential characteristics of such schools with the socio-cultural context of a refugee community. Our research along with fieldwork over a period of three weeks in 2016 revealed that: (1) Protection and education of underprivileged children of Tibetan refugees within the school is imperative, (2) Providing children with Tibetan traditional education while offering modern education and varied life choices to the next generation is vital, and (3) For local Indian students, Tibetan schools may function as affordable low-fee private schools providing quality Tibetan education. Some issues Tibetan refugee schools face are particular to them as there are not many Tibetan schools which offer senior secondary-level education as a path to tertiary education. Also, there are areas of incompatibility between classical Tibetan pedagogy and modern education.