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The case of Tibetan refugee schools in India

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To His Holiness the Dalai Lama
&
the Tibetan refugees

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Abstract

History education is often deemed essential to the construction of national identity and to the project of nation-building. History teaching, in particular, serves to promote and legitimize a certain category of historical knowledge as the official knowledge and participates in the reproduction of the existing social relationships. However, the issue of how sub-nation groups like refugee communities construct their ethnonational identity and the image of their historical legacy via the teaching of history is an understudied one. As such, this research examines role history teaching plays in engendering a collective national identity for the Tibetan refugee children in India. By employing critical discourse analysis of the history textbooks of the Tibetan refugee schools and thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews held with fifteen history teachers, this study analyzes the key features of nation-building project of the Tibetan exiles and how it manifests itself in the curricular and pedagogical practices of history education.

The findings of the research show that the teaching of history in the Tibetan refugee schools carries an overriding burden of political and cultural agenda. The discursive repertoires present in the textbooks construct an image of a lost homeland for the young Tibetans born in exile and offer them a victimized subject position. The results also indicate that the history education is deployed to subvert the dominant Chinese colonial narrative on Tibetan history and Sino-Tibetan relationships, and to reveal the colonial nature of the Chinese rule in Tibet. Yet it fails to question the traditional power structure of the Tibetan society. In stark contrast, it perpetuates the dominant Buddhist narrative of Tibetan history. Therefore, it is reasoned that the deployment of critical and decolonial pedagogy in the teaching of history is selective and is guided primarily by political motivations rather than by its interest in questioning power and domination.

Based on the findings of this research, it is argued that refugees and other communities in diaspora generally live in a vulnerable socio-political climate where the use of history for the construction of a collective ethno-national identity is more pertinent and urgent. Under such a scenario, the disciplinary goals of the teaching of history remain subservient to the pursuit of nationalist goals. It is also argued that India's pluralistic and flexible system of education, which allowed the Tibetan refugees to develop a mother-tongue based schooling with a culturally-relevant curriculum, provides an interesting model that can potentially benefit multicultural countries in addressing the question of diversity and representation in education.

Keywords: History education, nation-building, refugee education, national identity, Tibetan refugees

TURUN YLIOPISTO
Kasvatustieteiden tiedekunta
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Tiivistelmä

Historian opetusta pidetään usein keskeisenä kansallisen identiteetin ja kansakunnan rakentamisen projektissa. Historian opetusta käytetään erityisesti tukemaan ja legitimoimaan sellaista historiallista tietoa, jota voidaan luonnehtia viralliseksi tiedoksi, ja uusintamaan olemassa olevaa yhteiskuntajärjestystä. On kuitenkin vähän tutkimusta siitä, miten erilaiset vähemmistöt (sub-nation groups), esimerkiksi pakolaisyhteisöt, rakentavat etnis-kansallista identiteettiään ja kuvaa historiallisesta perinnöstään historian opetuksen avulla. Tämä tutkimus tarkastelee sitä merkitystä, joka historian opetuksella on Intiassa tiibetiläisten pakolaislasten kollektiivisen kansallisen identiteetin muodostamisessa. Tutkimus koostuu tiibetiläisten pakolaiskoulujen historian oppikirjojen kriittisestä diskurssianalyysistä sekä viidentoista historian opettajan puolistrukturoitujen haastattelujen temaattisesta analyysistä. Näiden analyysien perusteella tarkastellaan Tiibetin pakolaisten kansakunnan rakentamisen projektin keskeisiä piirteitä sekä sen ilmenemistä historian opetussuunnitelman toteutumisessa ja pedagogisissa käytänteissä.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että historian opetuksella on Tiibetin pakolaisten kouluissa hyvin voimakas poliittinen ja kulttuurinen agenda. Oppikirjojen diskursiiviset repertuaarit rakentavat nuorille maanpaossa syntyneille tiibetiläisille kuvaa kadotetusta kotimaasta ja tarjoavat heille uhriutuneen alamaisen asemaa. Edelleen, tulokset osoittavat, että historian opetusta käytetään kumoamaan Kiinan dominoivaa koloniaalista narratiivia Tiibetin historiasta ja kiinalais-tiibetiläisistä suhteista sekä paljastamaan Kiinan Tiibetissä harjoittaman vallankäytön koloniaalista luonnetta. Opetus jättää kuitenkin kyseenalaistamatta tiibetiläisen yhteiskunnan perinteiset valtasuhteet. Sitä vastoin se toistaa ja säilyttää dominoivaa buddhalaista narratiivia Tiibetin historiasta. Voidaankin päätellä, että kriittistä ja dekoloniaalista pedagogiikkaa sovelletaan historian opetuksessa valikoivasti ja ensisijaisesti poliittisten

pyrkimysten ohjaamana sen sijaan että sen avulla kyseenalaistettaisiin vallankäyttöä.

Tämän tutkimuksen tulosten perusteella voidaan väittää, että pakolaiset ja muut diaspora-yhteisöt elävät yleensä herkässä yhteiskuntapoliittisessa tilanteessa, jossa historian käyttö kollektiivisen etnis-kansallisen identiteetin rakentamiseksi voidaan kokea erityisen asiaankuuluvaksi ja tärkeäksi. Tämän skenaarion vallitessa historian opetuksen taitopainotteiset tavoitteet jäävät alisteisiksi nationalistisille päämäärille. Voidaan myös väittää, että Intian pluralistinen ja joustava koulutusjärjestelmä, joka on sallinut Tiibetin pakolaisten kehittää omakielistä koulutusta ja kulttuurisesti sensitiivistä opetussuunnitelmaa, tarjoaa mielenkiintoisen mallin, joka voi olla hyödyllinen monikulttuurisissa valtioissa, joissa pohditaan kulttuurisen moninaisuuden huomioimista koulutuksessa.

Asiasanat: Historian opetus, kansakunnan rakentaminen, pakolaisten opetus, kansallinen identiteetti, Tiibetin pakolaiset

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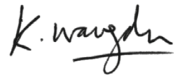

Kalsang Wangdu
27 May 2019

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 How the journey began

In the spring of 2008, as Beijing gears up to host the Summer Olympics for the first time, troubles were brewing in one of its most restive regions - the Tibetan region which covers nearly one-fourth of China's current territory. At the beginning of March that year, the Tibetan protests broke out, first in Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), and then quickly spread to other Tibetan areas in the neighboring provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan. Protests were also staged by Tibetan students studying in universities in Beijing and other Chinese mainland cities (Barnett, 2009). It has turned into one of the biggest and the most widespread Tibetan protests against the Chinese rule since the People's Republic of China's annexation of Tibet in the 1950s. In its wake, the Tibetan unrests of 2008 have laid bare the simmering tensions that continue to exist between the two sides for over half a century.

The protests inside Tibet were simultaneously matched by protests against the Beijing Olympics torch rallies held in major cities around the world, led by the Tibetan exiles and their supporters. As protests spread across the Tibetan Plateau, the Tibetan exiles hold protest rallies in different parts of the world to express solidarities with their brethren inside Tibet and to garner international attention and support for its cause. Amalendu Misra (2003) reasons that the Tibetan "diasporic nationalism does not augment in isolation but grows in tandem with the political forces within Tibet" (p. 190). In the northern Indian town of Dharamsala, the seat of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGiE) and the capital of Tibetan exiles, normal life was put on a hold. Day after day, protest rallies, candle vigils, hunger strikes were held; shops and businesses run by Tibetans remained largely closed. I was at that time working as a newly-appointed headmaster in a Tibetan refugee school, located some thirty kilometers from Dharamsala. It is a K-12 residential school with more than a thousand Tibetan children studying in it at that time. Most of the children have left their parents in Tibet when they were very young and trekked across Himalaya for days and months to receive a meaningful and culturally-relevant education in Tibetan exile schools in India. As news of the protests in Tibet

spread among students like wildfire, many of them felt that sitting in the school was like betraying their nation in distress. Therefore, a large number of students fled to Dharamsala or elsewhere to take part in solidarity protests, vigils, rallies and hunger strikes without permission from the school administration. For many days, the school could not function properly. Emotions were running high as many students were visibly concerned with the safety of their parents in Tibet. The school administration had hard time convincing students that the best thing they can do for Tibet at that moment was to study well. In the mid-year issue of the school newsletter, a student wrote a poem reflecting on the role of students in the Tibetan freedom struggle and thoughtfully concluded:

> Teachers teach for Tibet
> Monks pray for Tibet
> People protest for Tibet
> Students study for Tibet
> (Tibetan Children's Village School, 2008, p. 3)

Later, many Tibetan refugee schools decided to suspend most of the after-school sports and cultural programs planned for that year and in their stead organized prayers for the sake of Tibetans who lost their lives during and in the aftermath of the protests. China cracked down heavily on the protestors, and over a hundred Tibetans were killed by the Chinese security forces and many more were arrested (Barnett, 2009). The year of 2008 turned into a year of mourning for Tibetans, especially those in exile, and even the Tibetan Losar or the Lunar New Year celebration was suspended the following year (Moynihan, 2009).

As a second-generation Tibetan refugee born in India and schooled entirely in Tibetan exile education system, I am well aware of the story of how Tibet was lost to Communist China in the 1950s and possess some degree of understanding on the current repressive situation inside Tibet. Growing up as a young child in a politically-charged environment, I have heard the first-hand story of my parent's flight from Tibet in 1959 and that of many other Tibetans in our refugee settlements in India. As the Tibetan author Tsering Wangmo Dhompa (2014) relates: "those of us born in exile inherit Tibet by inhabiting the memories of our elders" (p. 196). These inter-generational transmissions of memories were later on reinforced, elaborated, reenacted and legitimized via participation in community-wide events and rituals that include political protests, theatrical performances highlighting Chinese tortures in Tibet, exhibitions, talks, and lectures, etc. These socially-acquired stock of knowledge and values receive the stamp of legitimation and validation through formal school education. The Tibetan exiles have set up a large network of schools in India and Nepal with a curriculum that teaches both the modern subjects as well

as Tibetan linguistic, cultural and historical knowledge. However, what surprises me in the case of the 2008 Tibetan unrest, was the scale of the Tibetan protests inside Tibet and the intensity of reaction of the Tibetan exiles, especially the younger generations. The bulk majority of the protestors inside Tibet were young people who possessed no living memories of an independent Tibet and were supposedly raised under the bosom of communism. Correspondingly, the Tibetan protestors in the diaspora were mainly second or third generation refugees who have not seen their homeland at all. The 2008 Tibetan uprising was followed by more than 150 cases of self-immolation protests both inside Tibet as well as in the Tibetan exile community (International Campaign for Tibet, 2018).

In 2010, I embarked on my first journey abroad and for two years I attended Teachers College, Columbia University in the city of New York to pursue a master's degree in education. This has brought me into direct contact, for the first time, with Chinese students from Mainland China. Generally, our perceptions on Tibet's history, its relationship with China, and the current situation were often diametrically opposed to one another. Like many Tibetan exiles, I believed that Tibet was a completely independent country and that China had illegally occupied it in the 1950s and oppressed the region since then. Therefore, our perception falls within the reductive binary of Chinese oppression and Tibetan resistance. Whereas, most of the Chinese students with whom I have had exchanges, view Tibet as an inseparable part of China at least since the Thirteenth Century CE, and that China had peacefully 'liberated' Tibet from its feudal system and the Western imperialistic design in the 1950s and brought tremendous progress and happiness to the region. It represents the Han-centric and chauvinistic view that perceive ethnic minorities in China (like Tibetans, Uyghurs, Mongols, etc.) with domesticated differences and often portray them as ungrateful recipients of the largesse of the Chinese government. Many of them view the establishment of the Chinese rule in Tibet as Han big brothers' gift of liberation and development to backward Tibet (Yeh, 2013). Therefore, it was often difficult to have a reasonable debate on the Tibet-China issue between the two sides.

These personal experiences left me contemplating on the processes of both primary and secondary socialization that play a crucial role in shaping our perceptions and worldviews. It entices questions such as how are our deeply held views developed and maintained? Why is it that Tibetan exile students, many of whom are second or third generation refugees born in exile, feel strongly about political events unfolding in Tibet? What mechanisms prepare these young Tibetans to take up this role? In what ways do the exiled Tibetans impart a nationalistic education within the framework of the Indian education

system? How is it that average Chinese and Tibetans (especially the exiles) have such different worldviews of the reality vis-a-vis Tibet and its relation to China? It can be said without hesitation that the ways in which we were brought up at homes and within the community, and the kind of education received at schools, must have played a significant role in shaping our perceptions, values, and worldviews. As an educator, I feel that the systems of education in general and how history is remembered and taught in particular are major factors in molding us into who we are today. These personal reflections and questions play a key role in the design and implementation of this research. In particular, it sets out to explore the specific case of history teaching in the Tibetan refugee schools in India.

Until the 1950s, Tibet existed as a self-governed country for much of its history (Shakya, 2001; Schaik, 2012). It has a distinct sense of history, culture, and language which are markedly different from its neighboring countries, including China. However, soon after the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949, China militarily invaded Tibet, leading to the flight of the Dalai Lama and the then Tibetan government into exile in India. Primarily located in India, this small refugee community of about 150,000 Tibetans remained a politically and culturally vibrant entity even after more than 60 years in exile. With a Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGiE) headquartered at Dharamsala in India, the Tibetan refugees have managed to preserve their cultural heritage and keep alive a political struggle for freedom in Tibet. They have set up a large network of schools and cultural institutions in India and other parts of the world to nurture a new generation of Tibetans who would become custodians of their cultural heritage and torchbearers of their political struggle for freedom from the Chinese rule. Educational documents and political speeches fondly describe Tibetan children as the "future seeds of Tibet" (*Ma-'ong bod-kyi son-rtsa*). Currently, these schools in India are affiliated to and accredited by the Central Board of Secondary Education, under the Union Government of India. However, at the primary and middle school levels, the Tibetan administration uses its own curriculum and textbooks, making it the primary sites for the project of nation-building in exile. The Department of Education of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile oversees a total of 68 Tibetan refugee schools in India and Nepal with an enrolment of over 19,000 children (Department of Education, 2018).

1.2 The research objectives

Modern nation-states use education as one of the primary instruments in the project of nation-building. In this regard, schools hold a special niche as one of

the most important distributors of 'official knowledge' and play a pivotal role in engendering children into loyal citizens and national subjects. To a considerable extent, school curricula and textbooks act as gatekeepers and influence learning experiences children receive at school. In this way, school experiences possess a certain power of shaping and determining children's future and their place in society. Among the school subjects, the teaching of history is considered as an important agency of constructing an 'imagined' national identity. This is because history education is closely associated with socializing children into national historical consciousness. Thus, the teaching of an officially-sanctioned, but rather largely 'invented', national past becomes crucial to the project of nation-building and national identity construction.

However, to date, the role of history education in nation-building project and construction of national identity has been studied primarily in the context of large nation-states like China, India, or the United States of America (Kumar, 2001; Vickers, 2006; Wang, 2008; VanSledgright, 2011). Sub-national communities or stateless nations and those groups on the margin like refugees, immigrants, and ethnic minorities live in a more vulnerable socio-political climate where the use of history for construction of ethnonational identity is more urgent and pronounced. This area is under-researched and hence there is a remarkable gap in our knowledge concerning the role of history teaching in the project of nation-building and national identity construction amongst refugees and other sub-national communities. Therefore, the primary purpose of the doctoral study is to address this research gap by examining the role of history teaching in nation-building and national identity construction in the context of the Tibetan refugee communities living in India. In particular, this research focuses on understanding how the nation-building project is reflected in the curricular and pedagogical practices of history teaching. In doing so, it extends the field of research in history education and national identity construction by investigating the ways in which nation-building and the construction of national identity occur within the context of a refugee community.

As such, this doctoral study investigates the manner and the extent to which the Tibetan nation-building project manifests itself in the curriculum, the contents of primary-level social studies and middle school Tibetan history textbooks, and the pedagogical practices of history teaching in five Tibetan refugee schools in India. The primary focus of this research is on understanding the nature of the nation-building project of the Tibetan exile community and the role history education plays in it. The key research questions that guide this inquiry are as follow:

1) How does the project of nation-building and construction of national identity manifest itself in the Tibetan social studies and history textbooks in the Tibetan refugee schools?
2) How do history teachers perceive history education and its role in the nation-building and construction of national identity in the Tibetan refugee schools?

1.3 Significance of the study

The findings of this study contribute to the existing knowledge base concerning the role of education in the project of nation-building, especially in the domain of history teaching in schools. In particular, this research offers fresh insights on the role history education plays in the production of political and national consciousness, and in engendering loyal and patriotic national subjects in the context of refugee communities. The case of Tibetan refugee communities in India presents interesting possibilities for redefining the contours of refugee-host relationships and implications such reimagining can have on both parties, particularly on refugee self-reliance. With increasing refugee and diaspora population in many countries, the question of how to integrate them into the mainstream culture while according due respect to their ethnic and cultural identity is becoming crucial for policymakers and educators globally. Therefore, this research provides new insights on how sub-national communities and peripheral groups like refugees use the teaching of history to impart a sense of ethnonational identity to its younger generations. The findings of this research are especially relevant to multicultural countries in responding meaningfully to their diverse population and representation of their histories and perspectives in school education.

Apart from its theoretical contributions and global implications, the research also enhances our existing knowledge of the Tibetan diaspora communities. Tibetan refugees have been a subject of scholarly study for many decades. Most of these studies have their focus on three broad domains – historical study particularly relating to the events of 1959 and their escape (Avedon, 1997; Shakya, 2001; Conboy & Morrison, 2002; Schaik, 2012); studies on their political struggle and movement (Misra, 2003; Powers, 2004; Falcone & Wangchuk, 2008; Roemer, 2008; Mehrotra, 2013); and the studies pertaining to Tibetan culture and spirituality, especially that of the Tibetan Buddhism (Dreyfus, 2003; Rinpoche, 2012). The schooling of Tibetan refugees has received scant scholarly attention (Maslak, 2008; Phuntsog, 2018), and even lesser attention on history education per se (Liu, 2015). Therefore, this study contributes to the existing literature by shedding light on the schooling contexts

of the Tibetan refugee community, and more specifically on the nature of the teaching of Tibetan history.

1.4 A snapshot of this dissertation

This dissertation is divided into two parts. The Part-One contains five chapters discussing the research backgrounds and contexts, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and the research methodologies. The Part-Two has four chapters discussing the findings gleaned from the critical discourse analysis of the primary-level social studies and the middle school Tibetan history textbooks, and the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted with the history teachers in five Tibetan refugee schools in India. A summary of the key findings of the study, its limitations, and direction for further research are presented in the final chapter. The details of each chapter are as follows:

The first chapter *"Introduction"* begins with an autobiographical and personal reflection on events that influence the design and conduct of this study. The autobiographical reflection also shed light on the researcher's positionalities vis-à-vis the subject of this research. The chapter also situates this study in its proper disciplinary contexts and discusses the research design, significance and the key research questions addressed in it.

The second chapter "*Theoretical frameworks and Literature review*" discusses the major theoretical and conceptual frameworks pertaining to the politics of school education, history education, and national identity construction. It also carries a brief literature review of the important works on historical consciousness, history didactics and their role in the project of nation-building and construction of national identity. The chapter locates this research within the boarder theoretical and disciplinary fields, and provides frameworks for analyzing the research materials.

The third chapter *"Tibetan refugees and their education system"* offers a historical overview of the circumstances leading to the exile of a large number of Tibetans into India, and their reconstructive and restorative projects in exile. A special focus is given to the development of a separate school system for the Tibetan refugee children within the broader framework of the Indian education system. This chapter provides background information on the research context at a more macro-level.

The fourth chapter "*Tibetan Children's Village: the research context*" discusses the micro-level contexts and settings of the five Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) schools located in and around Dharamsala in India, where the data for this study were collected. It provides a brief overview of the

institutional history of the TCV; discusses both the formal and informal curriculum of the TCV schools; and presents a sketch of the key features of the school culture. Therefore, chapter three and four in tandem describe the research contexts and backgrounds.

The fifth chapter *"Research design and methods"* dwells on the methods and instruments employed for data collection and data analysis. It elucidates on the procedures followed in designing data collection instruments; selection of field sites; and the ways in which actual field visits and data collection were carried out. More importantly, the chapter provides an in-depth exposition on data analysis methods deployed in the study, namely, critical discourse analysis and thematic analysis, and steps followed during the analysis and writing. It also discusses other methodological issues like research ethics and the researcher's positionalities.

The sixth chapter *"Decolonial narratives: Analysis of primary social studies textbooks"* discusses the findings gleaned from the critical discourse analysis of the primary-level (grade 1-5) social studies textbooks. In particular, the chapter analyzes key discourses present in the textbooks; discursive repertoires and constructions used to support the prevailing discourses; and the possibilities for action that entail from those constructions. Throughout this chapter and the next, a macro-social constructionist approach is followed by making available the broader historical and political contexts to make sense of the discourses present in the textbooks.

The seventh chapter *"Lamaist narratives: Analysis of middle school history textbooks"* presents the findings of critical discourse analysis performed on the middle school (grade 6-8) Tibetan history textbooks. It problematizes and deconstructs the dominant Buddhist narratives of Tibetan history and offers insights into the role of traditional power structures within the Tibetan society in perpetuating a single narrative.

The eighth chapter *"Past in service of the present: Analysis of interviews with history teachers"* discusses and interprets the semi-structured interviews conducted with fifteen social studies and Tibetan history teachers in five Tibetan refugee schools in India. In particular, the analytical focus is brought on the teachers' perceptions on the goals of teaching Tibetan history and its relevance to the project of national identity construction in exile.

The ninth chapter *"Nation-building in exile: Discussion and conclusions"* summarizes the key findings of the research and their theoretical and practical implications. It discusses the limitations of this research and suggests directions for further research. The chapter also offers some recommendations to the Tibetan exile education system, especially those relating to the teaching of history.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND LITERATURE REVIEW: HISTORY EDUCATION AND NATIONAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

This chapter situates the research within broader theoretical and conceptual frameworks pertaining to politics of school knowledge, history education, and national identity construction. The theories and concepts discussed herein provide useful interpretative frameworks to the study on one hand, whilst the study also offers fresh insights and pushes the boundaries of the existing theories and concepts, especially in the domain of refugee education. As such, major theoretical positions discussed in this chapter are employed as the lenses to problematize the teaching of history in the Tibetan refugee schools and its relations to the project of nation-building in exile and construction of Tibetan national identity. The chapter traces major developments in the field of history education, and also carries a review of some of the important previous researches examining history education and its role in the project of nation-building in various cultural and political contexts. It presents a summary of the key findings gleaned from these researches. In doing so, it locates this study within the traditions of research on history didactics.

2.1 The politics of education

Modern mass education is perhaps one of the most influential agencies for socializing and acculturating younger generations into the values and legacies considered important by their adult world, especially the power-wielding dominant groups. Sleeter (2002) rightly argues that "since schools serve as an instrument of socialization of the young into society, the role of school curricula in shaping the consciousness of the young is important" (p. 10). Modern schooling's capacity to mold identity and character of children is staggering due to universalization and nationalization of the modern education system. Today, in many countries, a certain level of basic education is deemed compulsory and is provided free of cost to all children. Countries around the world make attempts to ensure that children go to school and receives an education that is

approved by national authorities. This means that in many countries, particularly in newer nation-states or post-colonial states, the majority of children receive a similar kind of education in terms of curriculum contents and perspectives presented in them. Therefore, it can be argued that the modern education system is one of the most comprehensive mechanisms of engendering citizenship and steering human societies towards certain visions of the world. It plays a crucial role in producing human subjects with certain visions and beliefs about themselves and the world. The nature of schooling is also representative of the existing power relations of society. In this sense, the education system as a whole is highly political in its character. John Fiske (1989) succinctly sums up the nature of knowledge in the following lines:

> Knowledge is never neutral, it never exists in an empiricist, objective relationship to the real. Knowledge is power, and the circulation of knowledge is part of the social distribution of power. The discursive power to construct a commonsense reality that can be inserted into cultural and political life is central in the social relationship of power. (p. 149-150)

Modern nation-states, in varying degrees, use their national educational apparatuses as important vehicles of nation-building project, dissemination of citizenship values, and construction of national identities. Michael W. Apple (2004) in his book *Ideology and Curriculum,* argues that education is a political act and to highlight the latent ideological and political nature of education, he wrote that the "schools are particularly important as distributors of the cultural capital, and that they play a critical role in giving legitimacy to categories and forms of knowledge" (p. 43). Thus, school education assigns the status of 'official knowledge' to certain bodies of knowledge. What counts as 'official' and 'legitimate' knowledge often ignore or suppress the knowledge and experiences of communities from marginalized social locations, such as, ethnic minorities, women, people of color, and others. Despite the general perception that tends to perceive educational institutions like schools and universities as factors for bridging socio-economic disparities, Apple sees them as primary instruments through which unequal power is maintained and reproduced. Apple (1993) further argues that schools tend to "define some groups' knowledge as the most legitimate, as official knowledge" (p. 222). What is remembered and what is forgotten is an expression of power. While highlighting the manifestation of power relations in school education, he didn't rule out the counter-hegemonic possibilities.

School knowledge, mainly encapsulated in the forms of textbooks, are highly ideological and political. Textbooks are cultural artifacts of a particular kind and participate in the reproduction of certain worldviews. As such, they

remain a highly contested site of knowledge production, and the struggle over textbook contents resembles a larger struggle for power and domination. Apple (2014) elucidates:

> They [textbooks] signify, through their content and form, particular constructions of reality, particular ways of selecting and organizing that vast universe of possible knowledge. They embody what Raymond Williams called the selective tradition: someone's selection, someone's vision of legitimate knowledge and culture, one that in the process of enfranchising one's group's cultural capital, disenfranchises another's. (p. 49)

Apple's argument about the links between power structure and knowledge production is built on the Gramscian concept of 'hegemony'. Antonio Gramsci (1971) showed how the hegemony of ruling elites is made to appear legitimate and normal through the production and distribution of certain ideologies, beliefs and values. Thus, bourgeois hegemony is maintained and reproduced through the 'manufacture of consent' via a variety of agencies including media and public education. The hegemony is internalized and becomes embedded in human consciousness to the extent that people accept it as the common-sense or the natural order of things. Highlighting the role of education, Apple (2004) argues that schools create and recreate forms of consciousness that enable social control without having the dominant groups resorting to overt mechanisms of domination. Stuart Hall (1988) also concurs:

> Ruling ideas may dominate other conceptions of the social world by setting the limit on what will appear as rational, reasonable, credible, indeed sayable or thinkable within the given vocabularies of motive and action available to us. Their dominance lies precisely in the power they have to contain within their limits, to frame within their circumference of thought, the reasoning and calculation of other social groups. (p. 44)

Thus, the hegemony of common sense is not just an outwardly imposed ideology, but also an organized cluster of meanings, rituals, and practices that are lived by people in their daily lives. Schools, hidden in the mask of neutrality and myth of meritocracy, help create people with certain meanings and values who see little or no alternative to the existing socio-economic and political order. It is through the internalization of hegemony that the existing unequal power relations and structures of society are maintained and reproduced.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) also argue that school education is mainly about the reproduction of the existing social relationships. According to them,

public schooling plays a primary role in the selection, distribution, and perpetuation of the cultural capital of dominant groups. Cultural capitals refer to non-financial social assets and accumulated cultural knowledge that bestow power and promote social mobility. By promoting cultural capitals of dominant groups, schools participate in reproducing and perpetuating the existing power structures and social inequalities. This social and cultural reproduction is achieved through both formal corpus of school knowledge as well as the so-called hidden curriculum – norms and values that are implicitly taught and learned in the schools without being mentioned. Quite often, the perpetuation of the cultural capitals of dominant groups puts minoritized and marginalized groups at the receiving end. According to sociologists Bowles and Gintis (1977), schools in capitalist societies were the key instruments of producing loyal subjects imbued with a conformist attitude to the authority of work patterns. As such, the school curriculum embodies a socio-politically implicit consensus around what is worth knowing, especially from dominant groups' perspectives. It shapes and defines students' learning experiences to a great extent and ultimately tends to determine their place in society.

The selection and organization of knowledge in school curriculum involve both conscious and unconscious choices. It appears that the exposure and opportunity children receive at school determine, to a great extent, what they are likely to come to know and value, and greatly influence how communities react to everyday happenings around them. Educators have looked at this curricular-instructional gatekeeping as a way of altering the intellect of students and influence their morals (Kumar, 2002; Thornton, 2005). Thus, educational texts like textbooks are important sites for reproduction of power relations, as well as, conversely, important sites for disrupting the existing power structures. Apple (2014) wrote: "conflicts over texts are often proxies for wider questions of power relations" (p. 49). Therefore, struggle over what counts as school knowledge is intense, particularly in subject areas like social studies and history. Evans (2003) elucidates on the political currency history as a school subject holds for ruling regimes in the following lines: "even democratic governments see in it [history] a means of strengthening national identity, and in the hands of an authoritarian state it can become a tool for political indoctrination" (p. 7). Battiste (1998) describes extreme forms of ideological indoctrination via education as 'cognitive imperialism' – "a form of cognitive manipulation used to discredit other knowledge bases and values and seeks to validate one source of knowledge and empower it through public education" (p. 15). Generally, the predominance of political and cultural agenda in school education privileges one narrative or perspective over others, leaving little space for children to explore alternative perspectives and other sources of knowledge. Such formulations

tend to fix children to see and think in a particular category and have the tendency of stifling critical thinking and independent inquiry. Following this discussion on the politics of education in general, we now turn to the specific contexts of history education and politics involved in its curricular and pedagogical practices.

2.2 The politics of history education

Amongst the school subjects, social studies in general and history in particular, are considered as the primary fields through which ideological and political agenda are imposed, negotiated and contested. A change of political regime in many countries necessitates reviewing or rewriting of history textbooks. In 1998, when the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party came to power in India, school history textbooks were rewritten with communal and Hindu nationalist agenda (Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust, 2002). In a similar fashion, Harrison (1971) considers the Chinese Communist Party's rewriting of Chinese history as "the most massive attempt at ideological reeducation in human history" (p. 15). Such blatant political interventions are primarily due to the nature of history as a school subject and its political currency for regimes exercising power. A version of history that is systematically taught via public education tend to become a part of the society's collective lore and memories. Therefore, ruling groups often turn to history to legitimize their rule, to cement social cohesion and to garner popular support for their policies and actions. The teaching of history plays an important role in fostering a collective cultural and ethnic consciousness (ethno-cultural nationalism) and engendering national subjects with shared political goals and citizenship (political nationalism).

The teaching of history is thus viewed as an important instrument for engendering a collective consciousness of the past and fostering a sense of shared nationhood and solidarity (Carretero, van Alphen, & Parellada, 2018). Collective memories shared by a community influence how people react to their current circumstances. A sense of shared history is the key to the construction of the collective identity of a community. Arthur Marwick (2001) succinctly puts it this way: "it is only through a sense of history that communities establish their identity, orientate themselves, understand their relationship to the past and to other communities and societies" (p. 32). Far from dead and bygone, we carry historical memories within us. James Baldwin (1966) further elucidates by stating that we are "unconsciously controlled by it [history] in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do. It could scarcely be otherwise, since it is to history that we owe our frame of reference, our identities, and our aspirations" (p. 175). Therefore, it is vital for ruling elites to control and

influence what is remembered, celebrated, or forgotten as part of teaching history to youngsters. Other subjects like science or mathematics are generally seen as more neutral and apolitical fields, even though in some countries attempts have been made in the past to inject political agenda in them as well.

According to Peter Seixas (2004), an understanding of and belief in a shared common past "opens the possibility for commitments to collective missions in the future" (p. 6). Taught via historical narratives, the knowledge of past is aimed at pursuing a variety of political and social goals, including but not limited to, constructing a collective national identity of citizens; legitimizing ruling regime's mandate to rule; justifying policies or actions; mobilizing masses into action in the face of contemporary challenges, etc. The construction of a collective national identity demands from its subjects a sense of loyalty and allegiance, which could be called upon to defend their 'motherland' during times of conflict.

History of a common past can be used for constructing a multitude of identities such as ethnic, religious, linguistic, gendered, as well as national identities. The tendencies of using history teaching for the purpose of construction of national identity appear more pronounced in newly formed nation-states and communities undergoing conflicts. Foster and Crawford (2006) argue:

> In states which consider their existence to be under threat, or in state which are struggling to create an identity, or those which are re-inventing themselves following a period of colonial rule, teaching of nationalistic and mono-cultural form of history can prove to be the cement which binds people together. In its worst form the manufacture and teaching of such an official past can create, sponsor, maintain and justify xenophobic, hatred, racism and the obscenity of ethnic cleansing. (p. 6-7)

Krishna Kumar (2002), in his seminal studies on the teaching of modern history in India and Pakistan, noted that the pedagogic space is wider in older nation-states and stable democracies (like some of the western European nations) whereas, in younger nation-states or post-colonial states, the goal of nation-building assumes a predominant character in its education system. He wrote that the "political leaders and the other elite of newly established nation-states tend to perceive education mainly as a means of imparting a strong sense of national identity to the young" (p. 5). However, even in some of the established nation-states, the desire for returning to a nationalistic and canonical approach to history teaching is seen in recent decades in countries like England (Haydn, 2012). Likewise, in the United States, the teaching of history a heroic national

past, rendered from the perspective of dominant white majority, has continued unabated in many schools (VanSledright, 2011).

Moreover, sub-nation groups like a refugee or immigrant communities and minoritized ethnic groups have generally exhibited a similar tendency towards using education as a means of asserting national identity and emancipation from the situations in which they found themselves (Dodds, 1986; Dryden-Paterson, 2017). Richard J. Evans (2003) concurs: "Seldom does history seem so urgently relevant or important as in moments of sudden political transition" (p. 5). This framework is reflected well in the Tibetan refugee education. Studying in a politically charged Tibetan refugee school, Dawa Norbu (1976) recounted his school experiences in the following lines:

> I studied with a burning intensity. The school was like a battlefield, and every word I could master was like knocking off an enemy… I used to compare my lot with others – for instance, compared with the forced labor in Tibet under the Chinese overlords, my study was a delight. (p. 4)

In the next section, a brief discussion is presented on the ways in which the meanings and scope of terms like collective memories and historical consciousness have been interpreted and conceptualized.

2.3 Collective memories and historical consciousness

Ever since the so-called 'historiographic turn' of the late twentieth century, terms like collective memories and historical consciousness have become widely used in various fields of studies. Collective memory is often understood as how common masses beyond the history profession understand the past (Seixas, 2004). The coining of term 'collective memory' is attributed to the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. Halbwachs (1980) suggests that three types of memories are involved in organizing and remembering knowledge of the past. Firstly, the 'autobiographical memory' stores and remembers an individual's lived experiences of events. Secondly, the 'collective memory' and heritage is constructed via social interactions between members of a community, and finally, 'historical memory' is the understanding of the past derived from historians' works. Thus, collective memory is understood as popular perceptions of the community or the nation's past, developed through inter-generational interactions. However, the difference between collective memory and historical consciousness is far from clear, and scholars hold divergent views on it. Some of the scholars tend to see them as synonymous, while others make a clear distinction between them.

Jörn Rüsen (2004) sees historical consciousness and collective memories as having similar meaning when he defines historical consciousness as "an operation of human intellection rendering present actuality intelligible while fashioning its future perspectives" (p. 67). At the level of ordinary people, the present is the point of departure and past becomes the reference point. Meanings constructed from this interaction between the present and the past are expected to guide the future course of action. Thus, historical narratives become the meeting ground for the past, present and the future. Krishna Kumar (2002) maintains that the communities store and transmit their collective memories as tacit knowledge to the young through various agencies of primary socialization. Often told orally through stories by the adult members of the community, the child acquires a rudimentary knowledge of the family and the larger community's past, its traditions, language, and appropriate behaviors through everyday social interactions and participation in the community life and events. This indiscriminate and complex stock of memory, Kumar argues, is "not open to rational enquiry or questioning" (p. 16). Therefore, when children enter schools, they already possess a complex understanding of who they are, and behaviors and attitudes valued and approved by their community. When the school processes and the culture and memories child brought from home interact in a positive manner, the tacit knowledge acquired at home is reinforced and legitimized. If there are serious dislocations between the child's home culture and the culture he or she encounters at school, then the child may be pressurized to unlearn and reconstruct certain aspects of his or her existing knowledge and memories of the social world (Bank, 2002; Oakes and Lipton, 2007; Nieto, 2010).

However, writers like Hans-Georg Gadamer (1987) defined historical consciousness as having "full awareness of the historicity of everything present and the relativity of all opinions" (p. 89). Far from the ordinary people's perception of their community's past, this definition calls for a critical reflection and understanding of the past in its own contexts. Such definition of historical consciousness can be said to exist only among professional historians, intellectuals and a certain section of the educated public. A similar position is held by Peter Novick (1994) who sees direct links between historical consciousness and critical historicism, in sharp contrast with the collective memory of people, which is intermingled with popular myths and legends. It calls for the application of a rigorous scientific approach to understanding the past in its own light by subjecting historical sources to processes of contextualization and critical examination. Thus, they tend to see historical consciousness as more of an intellectual and academic understanding of the past, held ostensibly by historians, whilst collective memories as people's

general knowledge of their past. By relying on a critical study of remains left by the past, historians quite often challenge and deconstruct collective memories of the past held by general masses, which are submerged in fabrications and larger than life images of personages.

Notwithstanding this dichotomy between the professional perception of history and the popular perception of history, Peter Seixas (2004) argues that the abbreviated definition of historical consciousness provided in the journal "History and Memory" offers an interesting middle ground. The aforementioned journal describes historical consciousness as "the area in which collective memory, the writing of history, and other modes of shaping images of the past in the public mind merge" (Seixas, 2004, p. 10). Seixas concludes by saying that this definition is inclusive and is consistent with the growing literature on European historical consciousness.

Thus, we can take collective memory and historical consciousness as people's general perception and understanding of their nation's past, acquired via agencies of primary and secondary socialization, school education being chief among them. Historical consciousness can be understood as having awareness about the past of a community or a nation. In that sense, every human possesses a certain level of historical consciousness. The only difference is in the depth and thoroughness of the awareness about the past that different individuals possess. Generally, common people's historical consciousness is engendered through everyday social interactions, and thus the awareness about the past is interwoven with myths and prejudices. Whereas historians and other intellectuals who construct an understanding of the past based on the critical study of primary and secondary sources possess a more nuanced awareness of what happened in the past. Although historians' historical consciousness can be regarded as more accurate and nuanced, we cannot discount the importance of the ordinary people's historical perceptions, because that is one of the key factors catapulting masses into collective actions. With this general discussion on collective memories and historical consciousness, the following section provides a detailed exposition on various theorizations and conceptualizations of history education.

2.4 Conceptualizing history education

The teaching of history as a school subject has been an important part of public education since its inception. Over the centuries, keeping abreast with changing socio-political circumstances, the approaches and goals of history education have evolved significantly. But these changes have not been linear or unidirectional and there has been a considerable movement back and forth.

Scholars of history education and didactics have conceptualized approaches to history education and goals pursued in a variety of ways, although not entirely different. In this section, some of the theoretical conceptualization of approaches to history education is discussed.

2.4.1 Approaches to history education

VanSledright (2011) divided the approaches to history education more broadly into two main categories. Firstly, the ***collective memory approach*** to history education adopts "an inspiring, commemorative, heritage-infused" (p. 13) narrative. The storyline of this approach is dotted with 'great wars and great men' and presents a linear historical progression culminating in the formation of the nation-state. Highly selective and reductive in its presentation of historical narrative, the project of collective memory is often mired with processes of mythologization, valorization, and glorification of certain aspects of the past convenient to ruling hegemonic groups. As such, this approach seeks to build students' allegiance to the nation-state and places a great deal of emphasis on fomenting social cohesion. He further explains: "a subtext of the narrative register of official textbooks with their embedded celebrations of nation-state collective memories involves conveying a message designed to wrench a measure of national *unum* from a potentially excessive and divisive *pluribus*" (p. 64-65). Therefore, collective memory approach communicates and perpetuates a monocular perspective of dominant groups to the exclusion or even suppression of alternative histories from marginalized social locations. An important characteristic feature of the collective memory approach is the authoritative and omniscient tone of its narrative. Nation-state's collective memory is often presented as a *fait accompli* and teachers and children generally treat it as 'given knowledge'. Consequently, classroom pedagogy in this approach privileges acquisition rather than the construction of knowledge, and persistent instruction becomes the norm. It treats history as 'given' or 'received' knowledge. In the context of the United States of America, VanSledright (2011) highlighted that the collective memorialization of history teaching resulted in a "freedom-quest narrative" – a national saga of relentless march and progress toward liberty and equality. In this narrative, minoritized and dispossessed groups like the Native Americans and the African Americans play little role, and the narrative is centered around the Anglo-Caucasian groups' movement towards realizing the 'manifest destiny'. Likewise, by analyzing *History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*, Christine E. Sleeter (2002) shows the preeminence of "American creed, which

extols equality and freedom" (p. 12) in the curriculum thereby privileging Euro-American perspectives at the cost of perspectives of marginalized groups. Therefore, collective memory approach to the teaching of history generally perpetuates the perspective and worldviews of dominant groups, and participates in the reproduction of the existing social inequalities.

Secondly, the ***disciplinary approach*** to history education, on the contrary, advocates inquiry-oriented curricular and pedagogical practices. This approach focuses on knowing *how* as opposed to collective memory approach's singular focus on knowing *that.* It treats children as mini-historians or historians-in-making and essential co-partners in the construction of historical knowledge and understanding in the classroom. Thus, its epistemological stance is rooted in the constructivist learning theories which regard knowledge as essentially products of social construction. Foster (2012) argues: "true historical appreciation requires greater respect for evidence, an appreciation that other interpretations exist, and a critical and rational examination of competing claims to historical truth" (p. 54). Therefore, in addition to knowledge acquisition, the processes of knowledge construction are examined and problematized in this approach. VanSledright (2011) described this investigative approach to history teaching in the following lines:

> Reading and making sense of the residua of the past, attempting to cull together ideas and defending them by working with a concept of evidence, evaluating claims made by others, and working from a carefully honed, criterial framework that allows one to sort less from more powerful claims. (p. 25)

In this approach, history textbook holds no special epistemological and pedagogical position in the classroom teaching where a variety of primary sources and materials are brought into consideration. It entails the acquisition of critical and analytical mindset. As opposed to privileging the dominant group's perspectives, the curricular and pedagogical practices of the disciplinary approach acknowledge competing and marginalized histories as legitimate knowledge.

Taking a step further, Seixas (2000) argues that there is also a ***postmodern approach*** to history education, characterized by the postmodernist traditions of questioning foundations, examining assumptions, and doubting authority. He highlighted that the postmodern critiques of history education are centered around four main premises – the narrativity of history, the positionality of historians, the limitations of progress as the metahistorical plot, and the textuality of sources. Thus, the postmodern approach destabilizes the very foundations of historical knowledge. If the disciplinary approach to the

teaching of history calls for providing students with the tools of historiography alongside historical interpretations, the postmodern approach problematizes the tools of historiography itself by pointing out their positionalities and historical contingencies.

Nonetheless, these two broad categorizations of approaches to history education, the collective memory and the disciplinary, is upheld by other scholars as well. Peter Lee (2012) distinguishes between *memory* and *history* and argues that history in a disciplinary sense places greater demands on validity and truth than memory. He further elaborates: "if we teach history *as* history, we will be handling on cognitive ethics which are closely related to democratic values" (p. xii). Cognitive ethics include respect for evidence, analysis of evidentiary claims, analyzing the past in its own terms and contexts, taking stock of multiple perspectives, etc. Carretero, Asensio, and Rodríguez-Moneo (2012) identified three approaches pertaining to history education and its relation to the construction of national identity. Firstly, the '*Romantic approach*', widely popular since the mid-nineteenth century, utilizes the teaching of history for promoting national identity and engendering social cohesion. This is akin to the collective memory approach, wherein history is deployed in the service of the nation-state, and its affective functions are highlighted. Secondly, the '*Empirical approach*' that gained currency in the 1970s, considers history education as a cognitive enterprise and focuses primarily on knowledge transmission and acquisition of historical inquiry skills. Thirdly, "*Civic approach*' of more recent origin treats history teaching as an important tool for developing students' civic competencies and democratic values. Elie Podeh (2000), researching on the teaching of history in Israel, has found three predominant approaches, viz, the national, the academic and the synthetic approach. However, these approaches cannot be seen as watertight categories, as they often overlap and intermingle in the lived realities of the classroom situation. Carretero, Asensio, and Rodríguez-Moneo (2012) pointed out that despite the rise of the empirical and the disciplinary approaches, the traditional nationalist romantic approach still holds a large sway over history education in many countries.

School history education is a highly contested domain with considerable debate on the functionality of the two approaches – the collective memory and the disciplinary one. This debate pertains to the social purposes of education in general and history education in particular. Carretero, Asensio, and Rodríguez-Moneo (2012) locate this debate in the tension that exists between two major theoretical positions of the nineteenth century viz. "the critical rationality of the enlightenment period and the emotionally based individualism and romanticism" (p. 1). They further wrote: "identifying the purpose of history

education revives the tension between the enlightenment and romantic objectives and issue of whether history teaching should produce educated citizens of the world or patriotic nationalists" (p. 2). Similarly, Peter Seixas (2017) saw this as the tussle between "political demands to use school history to promote national solidarity, and a liberal educational vision of history to promote an engaged, literate, critical citizenry" (p. 593).

The devastating outcomes of the two World Wars and the dangers posed by xenophobic and nationalistic history teaching warranted reconsideration of approaches to the teaching of history in schools. Alongside, the rise of cognitive and socio-cultural theories of learning led to a rethinking of goals of history education and approaches thus required. The traditional collective memory approach or the dominant approaches to history teaching have been criticized for their lack of student engagement in the disciplinary processes of history (Seixas & Morton, 2013). Even though the nationalist approach to history curriculum and instruction is deeply entrenched in many countries, the calls for a more disciplinary-oriented approach, one that focuses on historical literacy or historical thinking, are getting more vociferous (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Thornton, 2005; VanSledright, 2011; Seixas & Morton, 2013). Seixas and Morton (2013) critiqued the traditional approach in the following words: "what has passed for history curriculum in schools has rarely paid close attention to historians' methods and ways of thinking. As educators, we have been content to tell stories about the past… this approach does not aim high enough" (p. 3). In the next section, some of the important concepts in the disciplinary approach to history education are discussed.

2.4.2 Historical thinking concepts

In the broader field of education, there has been a growing trend emphasizing thinking skills and competencies over mere knowledge acquisition. This is reflected in the higher-order thinking skills movement that came to influence all school subjects in the last several decades. This comes with the rise of progressive constructivist pedagogy which calls for children's active engagement in the processes of knowledge construction. In close alignment with the general trends in education, many history education scholars advocate a predominantly disciplinary-oriented approach to history education which is characterized by investigation and inquiry into the past (VanSledright, 2011; Seixas & Morton, 2013; Counsell, Burn & Chapman, 2016). These scholars have developed extensive theoretical and procedural prepositions on how to

pursue historical thinking via history education. Some of the major concepts are discussed in the following paragraphs.

VanSledright (2011) and others have categorized the history domain knowledge into two types based on their nature – substantive knowledge and procedural knowledge. The **Substantive knowledge** are the ones we call as the 'content knowledge' or the subject matters. They are the 'stuff' of history subject. According to VanSledright (2011), substantive knowledge can be further divided into two groups. Firstly, the *Foreground or the First-Order Conceptual and Narrative Ideas and Knowledge*, comprising of stories about the past told mostly in a chronologically-ordered fashion and are often explanatory in their style and diction. It includes substantive knowledge such as facts, dates, historical actors, and events that make up the content of a historical narrative. Secondly, the *Background or the Second-Order Conceptual Ideas and Knowledge*, are the concepts and organizing ideas that historians impose on the past in order to generate and construct a meaningful historical account. This involves the practice of researching, interpreting, and making sense of evidence left by the past. Such concepts or organizing ideas include the notion of cause and effect, historical significance, change and continuity, evidence and sourcing, historical contextualization, human agency, colligations (for example the Enlightenment era, the Industrial Revolution era), etc.

Procedural knowledge, on the other hand, refers to the analytical methods and tools that historians brought to bear on the available historical evidence to interpret them and to construct meaningful and defensible accounts of the past. It includes strategic practices and rule-guided processes established within the community of historians on the accepted methods of historical inquiry. Such disciplinary and metacognitive knowledge in the domain of history education include, among other things:

- *Sourcing*: it involves locating and working with historical sources, attributing them, assessing their reliability, etc.
- *Contextualizing*: this process consists of invoking proper contexts or background knowledge for meaningful interpretation of the sources. 'Thinking historically' warrants keeping a check on presentist reading of the past, influenced by one's contemporaneous socio-cultural moorings. To understand the past, one needed to understand how people thought in that past. This requires studying and analyzing the past in its own terms.
- *Corroborating*: it involves reading and analyzing one source in relation to other sources on a given topic of study and comparing them to construct a nuanced account of the past.

- *Perspectivity*: this requires incorporating a variety and often conflicting perspectives on a historical issue or event to construct a balanced and more complete account of it.
- *Argumentative reading and writing*: these involve reading accounts of past with a critical and dialogic bend of mind, and developing evidence-based defensible accounts of past.

This tripartite structure - first-order domain knowledge, second-order organizing ideas and concepts, and second-order disciplinary practices and strategies – forms the key features of the discipline of history (Figure 1). Lee and Ashby (2001) encapsulated the difference between substantive and procedural knowledge in this way:

> [S]ubstantive history is the content of history, what history [is] about…procedural ideas about history… concepts like historical evidence, explanation, change are ideas that provide our understanding of history as a discipline or form of knowledge. They are not what history is 'about' but they shape the way we go about doing history. (p. 310)

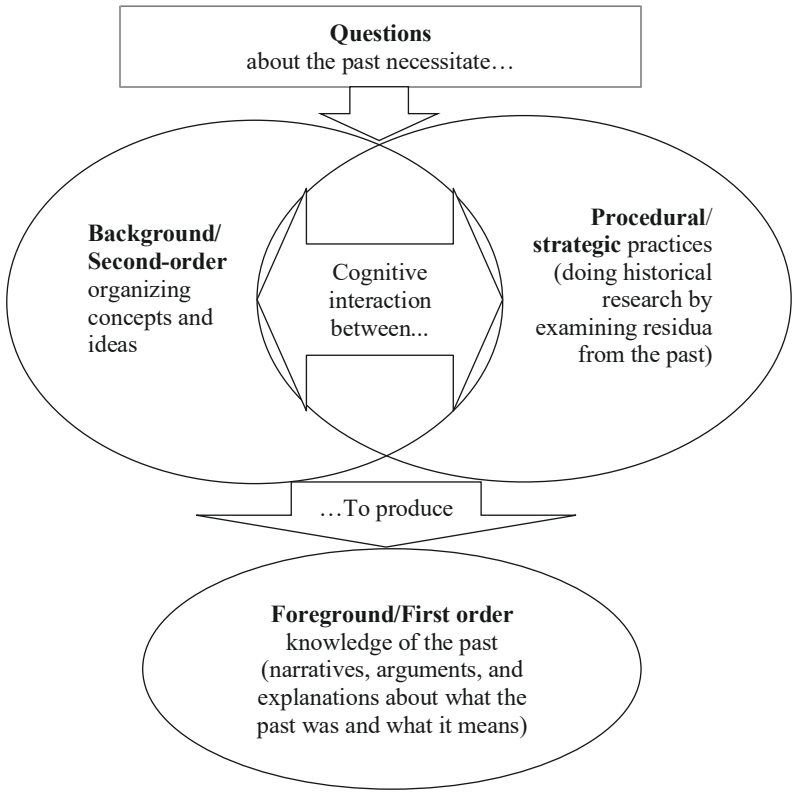

Figure 1: A characterization of the relationship between types of domain knowledge (VanSledright, 2011)

The Traditional approach to history teaching privileges first-order knowledge, leading to classroom pedagogy characterized by direct instruction that result in a superficial understanding of the past. For students to acquire deep historical understanding, the classroom pedagogy needs to focus on the second-order concepts of historical thinking and treat them as *sine qua non* for historical understanding. The classroom teaching needs to go beyond what is on the surface, that is the first-order historical narratives, and dig deeper into the practices of second-order concepts and procedures.

VanSledright (2011) identified three epistemological stances seen amongst students of history in relation to the levels of disciplinary knowledge and competencies they have acquired (Table 1). Firstly, the ***naïve realists*** (copiers) accept knowledge and perspectives presented in the history textbook at *prima facie.* They see historical accounts as isomorphic to past itself and treat them as 'given' or 'received' knowledge. Therefore, naïve realists accept historical knowledge presented in the textbook as *fait accompli* and the focus is primarily on acquisition rather than critical examination and construction of knowledge. Students who are exposed mainly to collective memory approach to the teaching of history tend to possess a naïve realist position. They lack intellectual wherewithal to examine historical accounts. Secondly, the ***naïve relativists*** (borrowers) see historical accounts as just someone's perspective. They also lack intellectual tools to differentiate between defensible from less defensible accounts of the past. They tend to take all interpretations of the past as valid and important. Thirdly, the ***critical pragmatists*** (criterialists) see historical accounts as products of social construction and hence believe in its multiperspectivity. They impose disciplinary criterion to assess legitimacy, authenticity, and defensibility of historical accounts and question their evidentiary and knowledge claims. Such criteria-laden tools include assessing evidence, invoking proper historical contexts, considering views from different positions and locations, etc. to distinguish better historical accounts from the poorer ones. They perform a critical reading of the text.

Table 1: VanSledright's epistemological/knowledge/novice-expert level matrix

	LEVELS		
	Novice	*Competent*	*Expert*
Epistemic stance	*Copier*: no distinction between past and history. Past comes to us unmediated. *Borrower*: history is	*Moderate criterialist*: history results from mediation by investigators via rule structures yet needs more knowledge about rule structures in order to	*Strong criterialist*: investigator mine the past in order to develop historical interpretations via a rule-guided process overseen by experts who shape and reshape the

	just opinions.	apply them effectively.	rules.
Type	Naïve realist-Naïve relativist	Relativist-pragmatist	Strong critical pragmatist
Knowledge			
First order	Little to weak	Moderate/strong in some areas, weak in others	Very deep in areas of expertise
Second order	None	Moderate to strong	Very strong/deep
Strategic	Little to none	Moderate to strong	Very strong/deep
Reading approach	Meaning is in the text; reader can get the main idea by reading carefully. Reading is unidirectional, from text to reader without mediation. Reader is subservient to the text's authority.	Reader engages the text in a transactional approach. Reader interprets the text based on cues and structures provided by the author. Assessing and evaluating text are crucial but other interpretation development strategies can be more limited.	Transactional reading approach. Reader and author engage in 'conversation'. Deep strategic capability and knowledge reservoirs assist in reading. Expert reader assumes power over the text and uses the text for his/her purposes.
Who?	Most K-16 learners who have received a strong content-knowledge focus. Some history teachers	Some college students who have taken historiography and research-methods courses. Some history teachers	Some history graduate students. Some history teachers. Most historians.

Source: Adapted from VanSledright (2011, p. 72)

Peter Seixas and Tom Morton (2013), in their book *The Big Six: Historical thinking concepts,* advance and operationalize the idea of historical thinking by outlining six major concepts and by providing a practical handle to them (Figure 2). These concepts are akin to what is known as the second-order concepts. The six historical thinking concepts are:

1. *Historical significance*: It involves critical processes of establishing the significance of past events for study and considering the question of who decides which historical events are significant. In other words, it considers and problematizes the question of how we establish the significance of historical events.
2. *Evidence*: It considers questions like how do we know what we know and what evidences are there to support a historical claim? This concept incorporates most of the procedural concepts discussed before such as sourcing, contextualizing, corroborating, etc. Seixas (2017) explains

that the text (evidence), the context (in which the source was produced), and the questions (that arise from contemporary concerns in the present) interact dynamically.

3. *Continuity and change*: It involve taking stock of questions like how can we make sense of the complex flows of history, what has changed and what has remained the same? Seixas (2017) argues that "continuity and change co-existed, and the puzzle is to figure out how much of each there was, for whom, in any particular period in the past" (p. 600).
4. *Cause and consequence*: This tackles issues such as what causes certain events or what impacts do they leave, and how can we establish causal relationships between various events and actions.
5. *Historical perspective*: It requires the past to be understood in its own context by reigning in one's presentist judgments, and by bringing forth the contextual knowledge to make a meaningful reading of the past.
6. *The ethical dimension*: This dimension relates to passing moral and ethical judgments on past actors and their actions, and coming to terms with legacies of past crimes and injustices.

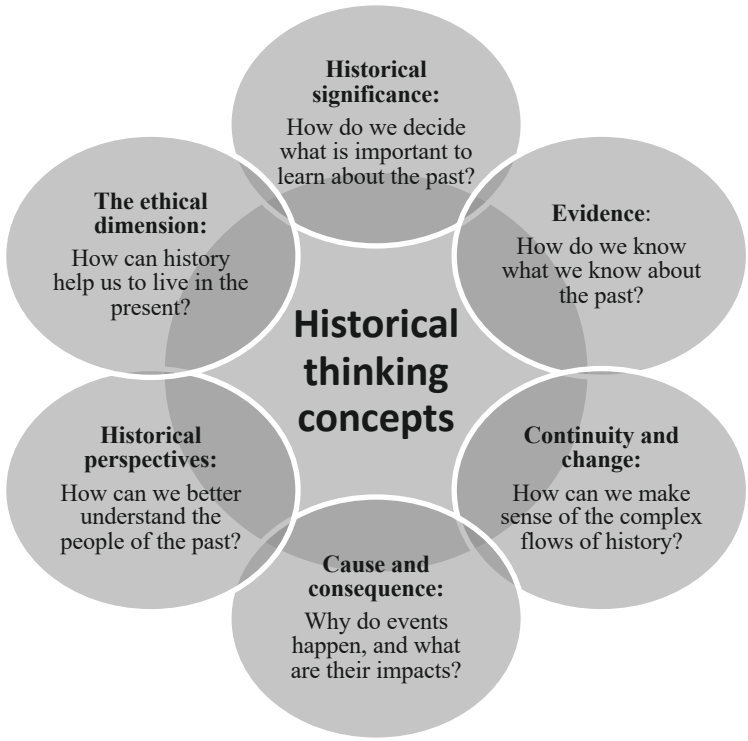

Figure 2: Six historical thinking concepts and their guiding questions (Seixas & Morton, 2013)

Juxtaposing the two predominant approaches to the teaching of history, namely the collective memory/nationalist approach and the disciplinary approach, with the six historical thinking concepts, Table 2 shows how the two approaches warrant different sets of practices and expectations concerning the six historical thinking concepts. It presents a general overview of how the two approaches would differ in terms of pursuing each of the six historical thinking concepts.

Table 2: Differences between the nationalist and the disciplinary approach in pursuing historical thinking concepts

Historical thinking concepts	***Nationalist approach to history teaching***	***Disciplinary approach to history teaching***
Historical significance	Students are taught historically significant people and events from the perspective of dominant groups. Their significance is predetermined and not open to critical examination.	Classroom instruction focuses on assessing the assumed significance of historical phenomenon from multiple angles and students are taught criteria for assessing historical significance. Students are encouraged and given resources to identify voices from the margins.
Evidence	Classroom instructions rely heavily on history textbook and treat it as *fait accompli.* There are fewer opportunities for students to engage in the critical analysis of primary sources.	Classroom instruction brings forth a range of sources from different perspectives and students engage themselves in analyzing primary sources of a particular historical topic. Students are encouraged to question evidentiary claims.
Continuity and change	Significance of historical changes and continuities are judged from the vantage point of dominant groups. Students see change as either progress or decline for all and periodization are perceived as fixed.	Changes and continuities are studied from a variety of perspectives, especially from the marginalized social locations. Students understand that change can be progress for some group while decline for some other group, and that alternative periodization are plausible.
Cause and consequence	Causes and consequences of events are predetermined and given by textbook, primarily viewed from the dominant groups' point of view.	Students are taught to attribute multiple causes/consequences, analyze complex interrelationship between them, assess their relative significance, etc.
Historical perspective taking	Historical events are told primarily from hero's perspectives. Classroom instruction makes little efforts to bring historical contexts	Students are taught to study historical events from a variety of perspectives and in proper historical contexts. They make historical contexts available and avoid presentist reading of the past.

	into consideration.	
Ethical dimension	Ethical judgments are predetermined by the textbook writers, or students make ethical judgments based on their present-day beliefs. Classroom instruction fails to establish links between the past and current issues.	Students recognize ethical judgments and stances in texts and assess them with the help of their knowledge of historical contexts. They establish links between current issues and the past, consider ethical obligations of present-day generations.

Sources: Seixas (2017) and Peck (2018).

Therefore, the development of historical thinking concepts has made a significant contribution to the theory and practices of disciplinary approach to the teaching of history. With the limitations of collective memory approach, the call for pursuing disciplinary goals of history education is gaining grounds, at least in the domain of research in history education and in a number of progressive schools in many countries (Counsell, Burn & Chapman, 2016; Seixas & Morton, 2013; Seixas, 2017; VanSledright, 2011). The new directions for history education can be explicated in two important ways. The first one deals with teaching contents or the 'stuff' of history subject. It calls for denationalizing history education by taking the focus away from ethnocentric accounts. For example, in the context of Europe, many have called for shifting the focus of history education from the construction of national identity to the construction of more inclusive European identity. Some have even advocated for the adoption of 'world history' as an antidote to ethnocentrist or national history. Luigi Cajani (2007) wrote: "historical ethnocentrism can be overcome by a world vision of history, a vision not from the bottom, from an ethnic centre, but from the top, encompassing the human experience as a whole" (p. 6). The *Council of Europe* (2011), in its recommendations on intercultural dialogue and the image of the other in history teaching, vouched for "positioning national culture and history in the European context and to positioning European culture and history in the world perspective". Likewise, various recommendations have suggested the adoption of multiperspectival approach to the teaching of history, especially in conflict and post-conflict areas. This is due to the excesses of ethnocentrist history which often portrays 'the other' in a stereotypical manner. For instance, *Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe's* 2009 recommendations underscores the importance of bringing in multiple perspectives to "contribute to greater understanding, tolerance, and confidence between individuals and between peoples of Europe" (p. 3). Therefore, on subject contents of history, it calls for inclusion of balanced, multiperspective, and global history. Secondly, on pedagogical and methodological issues, the new directions advocate a disciplinary-oriented approach. As shown throughout

the discussion on disciplinary approach to history education and historical thinking concepts, the new direction espouses an active engagement of children in knowledge construction and in the disciplinary processes of history.

These theories and concepts of history education provide an important lens to analyze the teaching of history in the Tibetan refugee schools. For example, the research investigates history textbooks and interviews with the history teachers to understand the nature of history teaching in the Tibetan refugee schools, and goals pursued therein. It would be interesting to analyze how these different currents of history education are reflected on the teachers' way of teaching, their thinking about history education and its goals, and the selection and organization of the textbook contents. In the next section, a brief discussion is carried on various theoretical positions pertaining to the rise of nationalism and construction of ethnonational identity, which forms an important part of this research.

2.5 Nationalism and ethno-national identity: a theoretical perspective

Following the cataclysmic world wars in the first half of the 20th century in which nationalism played an important part, various theories explaining the origins of nations, ethnonational identity and nationalism have been put forward (Özkırımlı, 2000). In this section, some of the major theoretical positions on the formation of nation, ethnonational identity and nationalism are discussed to provide frameworks for interpreting and understanding the findings of this research. Scholars and theorists have advanced various typologies of theories concerning nation, ethnonational identity and nationalism. One of the most widely used typologies is the binary model of primordialist and modernist perspectives, with an additional ethno-symbolist position occupying a middle ground between the two polar extremes.

2.5.1 Primordialist perspectives

Primordialism, although largely discredited now, is a major theoretical position on the question of nation and national identity. The protagonists of the primordialist perspective do not form a monolithic group. Rather there are significant variations in their postulations leading to further subdivision into various typologies such as the naturalists, the perennialists, the sociobiologists, the cultural primordialists, etc. However, in general, primordialists see nation and nationality as naturally-given and innate. It assumes that there exist certain

primordial, irrational attachments based on objective group characteristics such as blood, race, language, religion, region, etc. The sentiments attached to one's family and by extension to one's ethnic community, they argue, stems from "a certain ineffable significance…attributed to the tie of blood" (Shils, 1957, p. 142). They contend that the primordial attachments may not be defensible by the logic of rationality but exert powerful influences. Clifford Geertz (1993) summarizes primordialist position in the following lines:

> By a primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the 'givens' - or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed 'givens' – of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born to a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, customs, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves. (p. 259)

Firstly, amongst the primordialists, those who were labeled as the ***naturalists*** hold the most extreme position. They believe that nations and national identities are predetermined and 'naturally-fixed'. This view has found widespread proponents amongst the nationalists in many countries around the world. Özkırımlı (2000) identified a number of recurring themes in nationalist historical narratives told from a naturalist point of view:

1. The theme of antiquity claiming the ancient roots to their nation.
2. The theme of golden age highlighting a chosen glory.
3. The theme of the superiority of the national culture.
4. The theme of periods of recess highlighting a period of subjugation or decadence.
5. The theme of the national hero who would rescue the nation from the 'period of somnolence'.

These themes shared by nationalist historical narratives provide useful frameworks for analyzing the Tibetan history textbooks of the Tibetan refugee schools.

Secondly, the ***sociobiologists*** add genetical and biological dimension to the primordialist perspective on nations and nationalism. They establish continuity between kinship and ethnicity. The leading proponent of the sociobiological approach was Pierre van den Berghe (1978) whose three principles of sociality highlights the importance of biological relatedness in human sociality. The principle of *kin selection* emphasizes the power of human biological relatedness in cementing social cohesion. Ethnicity and race are seen as an extension of kin

selection to a wider community, and this extended kinship or superfamily is perceived as sharing a common ancestry, either real or imaginary. The principle of *reciprocity* underlines human tendency for cooperation for the sake of mutual benefit. Kin relationships ensure a higher possibility of cooperation. The principle of *coercion* shows the use of force for a one-sided benefit and imbalance of power within an ethnic group of between ethnic groups.

Thirdly, the ***cultural primordialists*** focus on people's beliefs and perceptions in the sacredness of assumed 'givens of social existence', thereby generating a strong sense of attachment and emotion. Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz are generally considered as the key proponents of the cultural primordialist perspective. Eller and Coughlan (1993) sum up three main ideas associated with cultural primordialists:

1. *Apriorism*: Primordial identities and attachments are 'given', *a priori,* underived, and prior to all experience and interaction.
2. *Ineffability*: Primordial sentiments are inexplicable by the logic of rationality and therefore cannot yield itself to sociological analysis, but they exert powerful influence on individuals and societies. In other words, these sentiments are ineffable, overpowering, and coercive.
3. *Affectivity*: Primordial identities and sentiments essentially deal with affection and emotion.

In the nutshell, primordialism stresses the continuity of the pre-modern ethnic characteristics in the rise and maturation of modern nations. It considers 'assumed givens' as the solid foundation for the formation of ethno-national attachments and identity. Primordialist position is heavily criticized for failing account for the fluidity and malleability of ethno-national identity (Özkırımlı, 2000).

2.5.2 Modernist perspectives

The modernist paradigm, on the other end of the spectrum, endorses a constructionist approach to understand the rise of nations and national phenomenon. Like their predecessors the primordialists, the modernists also do not form a coherent and homogeneous group. Aside from certain common denominators, exponents of the modernist perspectives hold different and often conflicting positions. They argue that the national phenomenon is a 'modern' one, thereby locating its emergence to the last several centuries. Modernists believe in the 'invented' or 'constructed' nature of the nations and nationalisms and highlight the role of various modern phenomena such as capitalism, industrialism, the emergence of the bureaucratic state, urbanization, secularism,

and others in the emergence of nations. They primarily stress a master variable in explaining the formation of nations and nationalism. As such, the modernist camp can be divided into three main groups emphasizing different aspects of modern processes – economic, political, and socio-cultural.

Firstly, those who highlight the role of economic factors in engendering the growth of nations and nationalisms point to major **economic transformation**s that took place in the last several centuries. For instance, Tom Nairn (1981) emphasizes the rise of capitalism and the concomitant uneven development in creating the conditions for the rise of nations since the Eighteenth century. He contends that nationalism is "determined by certain features of the world political economy, in the era between the French and Industrial Revolutions and the present day" (p. 332). Michael Hechter (1975), on the other hand, sees the rise of nationalism as products of what he termed as the 'internal colonialism', that is national core dominating and exploiting the peripheries economically for their benefits.

Secondly, a group of modernist theorists underscores the importance of **political transformations** in giving rise to the national phenomenon. They see nations and nationalisms as a form of politics, especially as associated with the development of the modern state. Locating the genesis of nations and nationalisms in power struggles amongst the elites, Paul R. Brass (1979) regards ethnicity and nationality as the study of processes by which "elites and counter-elites within ethnic groups select aspects of the group's culture, attach new value and meaning to them, and use them as symbols to mobilize the group, to defend its interests, and to compete with other groups" (p. 40-41). His approach has been labeled as 'instrumentalism' which considers the establishment of nations as 'politically induced cultural change'. Another leading exponent was E. J. Hobsbawm (1990) who sees nations and nationalisms as products of 'social engineering'. He contends that the national phenomena are 'invented traditions': "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly and tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (p. 1). Hobsbawm identifies three key inventions, namely the development of mass primary education, the invention of public ceremonies, and the mass production of public monuments.

Thirdly, the modernists also explain the rise of nations and nationalisms by taking recourse to **social and cultural transformations** since the Eighteenth century. Ernest Gellner, in his seminal work *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), argues that in pre-modern time, due to lack of cultural homogenization, there is no nation. He sees the rise of nationalism as a result of the spread of standardized, homogeneous 'high cultures' over the entire population. Gellner

wrote: "nationalism is, essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society… it is the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals held together above all by a shared culture of this kind" (p. 57). Benedict Anderson was another leading exponent of the modernist paradigm, especially highlighting the socio-cultural factors in giving rise to the national phenomenon. He views nations as 'imagined communities' since there is no possibility for members of a nation to know each other. According to Anderson (2006), the cultural genesis of the modern nations could be located historically at the intersection of three developments: a change in the conceptions of time, the decline of religious communities and of dynastic realms, and the rise of print capitalism.

2.5.3 Ethno-symbolism

Between the two polar extremes of primordialist and modernist perspectives, ethno-symbolists occupy a middle ground. They concede to the modernist argument that the nations and nationalism are modern phenomena, essentially arising in response to changing political, economic, and socio-cultural circumstances since the 18th century. However, they also pay considerable attention to analyzing the influences of pre-modern ethnic collectivities and its associated sentiments in the process of forming modern nations. According to Conversi (1995), ethno-symbolist approach "rejects the axiom that nations may be *ipso facto* invented… that they rely on a pre-existing texture of myths, memories, values, and… symbols" (p. 73-74). In so doing, they try to transcend the polarization between primordialism and instrumentalism. Ethno-symbolists see the emergence of modern nations and nationalisms as the culmination of long historical processes of ethnic formation, stretching far back to the pre-modern era. In doing so, they conceive the formation of nations and the rise of nationalism in *la longue durée,* that is, over a long period of time. For instance, John Armstrong (1995) emphasizes symbolic boundary mechanisms, those cultural markers that ethnic groups use to differentiate one another, and once established, these markers tend to become durable and strong. He contends: "myth, symbol, communication, and a cluster of associated attitudinal factors are usually more persistent than purely material factors" (p. 9).

Anthony D. Smith is one of the leading proponents of the ethno-symbolic perspectives. He argues that the pre-modern *ethnie,* a term he used to refer to ethnic collectivities of the past, are the roots of the contemporary nations. Those *ethnie* were said to possess six key attributes: "a collective proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more

differentiating elements of a common culture, an association with a specific homeland, a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population" (Smith, 1991, p. 21). Smith (1995) furthers his contention by saying that modern nations:

> Emerges out of the complex social and ethnic formations of earlier epochs, and the different kinds of *ethnie*, which modern forces transform, but never obliterate. The modern era in this respect resembles a palimpsest on which are recorded experiences and identities of different epochs and a variety of ethnic formations, the earlier influencing and being modified by the later, to produce the composite type of collective cultural unit which we call 'the nation'. (p. 59-60)

The phenomenal rise of modern nations and the concomitant sense of nationalism are multivariate and complex in their nature. Therefore, no single theoretical approach can account for its complexity and multivariability. While primordialism is criticized for ignoring the fluidity and malleability of ethnic identities, modernism is accused of overemphasizing the instrumental functions of ethnic identity at the face of massive political, economic and socio-cultural transformations, and ignoring the emotive power of pre-modern ethnic identity. Therefore, any account of the rise of ethno-national identity must pay heed to all these factors as well as the peculiarities of each context.

Cornell and Hartmann (2007) advocate a constructionist approach to ethnic identity construction and criticize the extremities of both primordialism and instrumentalism. However, they draw ideas from both primordialism and instrumentalism and consider ethnic identities as essentially constructed on the assumed primordiality of ethnic characteristics. Cornell and Hartmann see ethnic identity construction as a 'reciprocal fluxion' between assignment and assertion:

> Ethnic groups and identities form in an interaction between assignment—what others say we are—and assertion—who or what we claim to be. This interaction is ongoing. It is, indeed, a "reciprocal fluxion," and there is nothing absolute about the process or the end product. Ethnic and racial identities and the groups that carry them change over time as the forces that impinge on them change, and as the claims made by both group members and others change as well. (p. 75)

To this assignment-assertion paradigm, they add another dimension of thickness-thinness of ethnic identity. As such they identified four categories - assigned and thin, assigned and thick, asserted and thin, asserted and thick. For example, a thick-asserted ethnic identity governs and dominates an individual's

life comprehensively. In a similar fashion, Jenkin (2008) perceives ethnic identity construction as a dialectical process between an externalized and an internalized identification. Bringing in symbolic interactionist perspective, he "emphasize[s] social construction and everyday practices; acknowledge change as well as stability, and allow to recognize individuality in experience and agency as well as the sharing of culture and collective identification" (p. 165). He also argues that assignment and assertion of ethnic identity operate within the existing power relations of society.

The preceding sections provide an in-depth discussion on some of the key theories and concepts in history education and nationalism and national identity construction. These theories and concepts offer useful tools to analyze how Tibetan national identity conceived and transmitted via the teaching of history in the Tibetan refugee schools. It is against these theoretical backdrops that we now review some of the previous research in the field of history education and its role in the construction of national identity.

2.6 History education for national identity construction

Generally, history education is expected to realize a variety of goals. According to Christian Laville (2004), the teaching of history attempts to pursue two primary goals. First one is the formation of citizens who are well informed with a critical bend of mind, which is important for meaningful participation in a democratic society. This goal is primarily intellectual in nature as it is aimed at nurturing well-informed and responsible citizens who can think and decide independently. Secondly, as noted in the previous sections, the teaching of history is expected to contribute to the project of nation-building, construction of national identity, and to foster in its citizens a sense of belongingness and solidarity.

The pursuit of the above goals requires different curricular and pedagogical approaches. History pedagogy in the service of democracy is meant to nurture free thinkers, and therefore demands greater pedagogic space and epistemic openness in the textbook contents as well as the teachers' methodological considerations and creation of classroom culture. Whereas the teaching of history devoted to the nation-state is geared towards producing loyal and docile subjects, and as such presentation of a one-sided master narrative is important. Tensions exist between these two goals in the area of curricular conception, selection and organization of textbook knowledge, teachers' pedagogical practices, and construction of classroom ethos. In many countries, the intellectual goals of history education remain subservient and secondary to

political and nation-building goals (Podeh, 2000; Kumar, 2002; Wang, 2008; VanSledright, 2011).

As it is evident from the above discussions, understanding of the past is crucial to the construction of both personal and collective identity. Collective identity can be described as real or imaginary distinctive social, historical and cultural characteristic features shared by a social group, often expressed in the form of shared solidarity and a sense of belongingness. Identity is discriminatory in the sense that it is defined in relation to the others. The process of constructing individual or group identity is dynamic and an ongoing one. It is primarily through a sense of history that human societies differentiate themselves from one another; give meanings to who they are; and establish their relationship with others. Beliefs about a common past, preserved, remembered and transmitted through institutions, traditions, and symbols, is a crucial instrument in the construction of collective identities in the present. In this regard, John R. Gillis (1994) points out that "the notion of identity depends on the idea of memory" (p. 3). Although there are various agencies for acculturating younger generation into the legacies of the past, the primary responsibility is shared by the teaching of history in schools. Because of its scale and evenhandedness in distributing and legitimating an officially approved version of the past, the teaching of history in schools can be regarded as one of the most important agents of building a collective historical consciousness which forms the basis of a group's identity.

Volkan (2005) highlights that historical narratives often invoke two types of memories of the past, in order to engender a nationalistic collective identity. Firstly, the narrative of "chosen trauma" recounts the group's suffering and humiliation at the hands of others, leading to a trans-generational transmission of a sense of shared victimhood. Secondly, on the contrary, the narrative of "chosen glory" celebrates the group's triumph and successful exploits of the past, thereby instilling in its youth a sense of worth and pride in the group membership. The nationalist narratives presented in the contemporary school history textbooks in many countries are replete with these two types of memories. Zheng Wang (2008), in his study of the patriotic education campaign in China, explicates that the Communist regime during Mao's era relied primarily on the victor narrative to legitimatize the Communist Party's rule. This narrative presents the rise of the Communist Party as heralding a period of glory and success for China. However, as the Party's ideological fervor declined by the 1990s, the regime embarked upon a victimization narrative, whipped up mainly by dwelling on what they called as "one hundred years of humiliation" at the hands of Western and Japanese imperialism. Thus, the narratives presented in the school textbooks change

from "China as the victor" to "China as the victim" to meet the prevailing circumstances and to bolster the Communist Party's claim to power (Wang, 2008).

In the case of the history of Tibet taught to Tibetan refugee children in the exile schools in India, this dual narrative structure is also visible. For the Tibetan refugees, who had experienced and continue to experience decades of Chinese oppression, glorification of the Tibet's independent past becomes an important political project. Tsering Shakya (2001) wrote: "regaining the past has become a necessary act of political invocation, which allows them to escape from a reality which has deprived them of their future" (p. xxii). The Tibetan exile school textbooks tend to describe the seventh Century CE as Tibet's golden era when Buddhism became the state religion and the Tibetan empire spread far and wide in Central Asia. Written from a Buddhist point of view, this celebration of chosen glory conveniently ignores the perspectives of the minorities within Tibet, like the followers of Bon religion (Liu, 2015). Conversely, the Tibetan exile textbooks highlighted the sufferings caused by the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950s and its rule since then, to transmit a sense of 'injured selves' to the construction of the identity of the Tibetan youngsters, and thereby potentially mobilizing them into collective action against the Chinese rule.

Therefore, this dual framework of valorization and victimization of historical narratives provides an interesting lens to analyze how events of the past are selectively celebrated, remembered or forgotten to construct a collective identity, and how each constructive project is representative of existing power relations in society. These selective traditions need to be problematized in the view of existing power relations in the larger socio-political arenas. It is important to critically examine what has been deemed worthy of being taught and the possible reasons behind the selection and organization of school knowledge.

This role of history teaching is further enhanced by two important factors in schools. Firstly, as Krishna Kumar (2002) pointed out, children in the schools can be regarded as "captive audience". Although children are not utterly passive in the process of constructing knowledge, they largely remain impressionable. In many cases, children lack opportunities and support to exercise their analytical faculty of mind in order to build a critical understanding of the information or perspectives presented in the textbooks. Secondly, despite the revolution in information technology and mass media, in the bulk of schools, textbooks are the widely used educational resources and both teachers and students treat them as authoritative. Officially published and prescribed textbooks carry the sacredness and authority of print. According to David

Olson (1989), "written texts are devices which separate speech from speaker… makes the words impersonal, objective and above criticism" (p. 241). The centrality of textbook culture has serious ramifications on children's access to alternative sources of knowledge and perspectives.

This situation is further exacerbated by the close nexus between the textbook knowledge and examination system (Kumar, 2002; Letourneau & Moisan, 2004). In many countries around the world, high-stake examinations are still regarded as the primary medium of assessing learning outcomes, thereby greatly enhancing the value of knowledge presented in the textbooks. Students are often tested on the basis of their ability to regurgitate information and perspectives presented in the textbooks. These factors leave limited space and opportunities for children to explore multiple perspectives and other sources of knowledge.

In the following paragraphs, two cases are examined to highlight the use of education in general and history teaching in particular, for the purpose of constructing a collective national identity. Firstly, Krishna Kumar's (2002) study shows how Indian and Pakistani schools teach their shared historical past in vastly different ways. Despite sharing a common past, the historical narratives presented in the Indian and Pakistani school history textbooks hardly meet and are often antagonistic in nature. For example, the Partition of 1947 which led to the division of Indian sub-continent into two countries, India and Pakistan, is recounted and interpreted very differently in both the countries. Pakistani textbooks celebrate the event as gaining freedom from the Hindu domination, whereas Indian textbooks describe it as painful mutilation of one country. As history is often written from a contemporary frame, it can be argued that these "rival histories" presented in the history textbooks correspond to the existing hostile relationship between the two countries.

Secondly, Elie Podeh (2000), in his study of the Israeli education system, identified three main approaches to the teaching of history. The academic approach calls for the application of a more scientific approach to the study of history, requiring critical analysis of materials presented in the textbooks. He said that this academic school of thought remains largely marginalized in the Israeli education system. The nationalist approach to the teaching of history stresses the social function of instilling Zionist values and attitudes in students. In this approach, historical narratives present a simplistic and one-sided story, written in highly emotional tones. Here references to Arabs were largely absent, or even negative. This approach has remained predominant in Israeli education. The third approach is a synthesis of both academic and the national approaches, presenting a more inclusive and non-partisan view of history without abandoning the national and social goals. He noticed that, as the

Israeli nation becomes more stable and confident of its existence, there is a move toward this synthetic approach.

The above discussions and the case studies have shown that there are direct links between the teaching of history and construction of a collective national identity. It is virtually impossible to dissociate the presentation of historical narratives in the school textbooks from politics of the present. The present circumstances determine the ways in which the past is viewed and presented. Thus, the teaching of history is always of contemporary concern. The pedagogic space available for schools and teachers to pursue intellectual goals of history education depends a lot on the prevailing political and social circumstances. In many member countries of the European Union, changes are already afoot, replacing the singular focus on 'national' history with a broader perspective of 'European' history. However, for countries with diverse ethnic and cultural groups, each with its own historical and cultural backgrounds, the challenge of coalescing an inclusive collective national memory is immense.

It is also important to note that with the advent of globalization and information technology, schools' monopoly over knowledge distribution is coming under greater challenge. Electronic and other forms of mass media have diminished the role of teachers and textbooks as the sole purveyor of knowledge. A survey conducted in England suggests that close to 85 percent of the students' knowledge come from outside the school and sources other than their teachers (Podeh, 2000). This may be more representative of the global north where countries have witnessed tremendous technological advancement in the last several decades. In the light of these developments, the role of history education in engendering a collective national identity may seem uncertain in the future.

2.7 Identitarian education amongst refugees, minorities and sub-national groups

Refugees, immigrants, minorities, and other sub-national groups have been largely at the receiving end of education. In many countries, these communities face critical challenges of having access to education. In this section, several case studies are discussed to highlight the range of educational experiences of these communities from the margin. According to a report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2017), only about 61% of refugee children attend primary school, and nearly two-third of them do not make it to secondary school. It is estimated that about four million refugee children are out of school in 2017. Therefore, in the domain of refugee education, the

discourse is confined mainly to providing access to education and creating a safe haven for children. The question of transmission of the language, culture and national identity of refugee children, via education, rather remained largely peripheral. In this respect, the schooling of Tibetan refugee children in India presents a unique case of linguistically and culturally-relevant education within the framework of the host nation's education system. Other more recent examples include the experiences of Syrian refugees in Turkey. In the last several years, the number of refugees fleeing conflicts in Syria has been disproportionately high. Turkey hosts one of the largest concentrations of Syrian refugees, estimated to be about 2.6 million in 2016 (Deane, 2016). Under this emergency, the Turkish government provided Syrian refugees with access to some form of linguistically and culturally-relevant education. To meet the specific needs of the Syrian refugees, a modified and limited Syrian curriculum was adopted with Arabic as the language of instruction (instead of Turkish) in the temporary education centers (Deane, 2016). Turkish authorities recruited Syrian volunteer teachers and provided them with some form of professional development and support. Despite these initiatives, education of Syrian refugees in Turkey continue to face tremendous challenges. There was a lack coordination amongst education providers resulting in the use of least nine different syllabi in Turkey (Deane, 2016).

Educational experiences of immigrants and minorities also share similar trajectories in many countries. For example, in the United States, the school education is organized around the dominant groups' perspectives and cultural capitals. The English-only emphasis in many states in the US resulted in discrediting immigrant child's home language and perceiving bilingual education as diversion of resources (Crawford, 2008). Likewise, the perspectives and voices from the margins, like those of Native Americans and African Americans, were either suppressed or misrepresented (Sleeter, 2000; VanSledright, 2011). Analyzing the *History-Social Science Framework* for schools in California, Sleeter (2002) noted:

> By claiming to tell a multicultural story, the *Framework* masks the ideology of its own story. One way to identify whose experiences center a narrative is to examine the people who appear in it. I counted people who were named for study in the *Framework's* course descriptions. Of the 96 named Americans, 82% were male and 18% were female. They were 77% white, 18% African American, four percent Native American, one percent Latino, and zero percent Asian American. (p. 14)

In Northern Europe, Sámi, an indigenous people who live in the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia, have been subject to varying

degrees of assimilation over the course of centuries. Currently, in Norway, Sámi education has advanced furthest and is mostly provided within regular Norwegian schools, and Sámi pupils have the right to be taught at least their native language regardless of where they live (Aikio-Puoskari, 2009). Whereas in Finland and Sweden, Sámi education is largely confined to Sámi area. Aikio-Puoskari (2009) noted:

> A vast majority of Sámi pupils are only taught the [Sámi] language as a subject: they have the main language of the country as their language of instruction. In all three countries a small minority of pupils learn through their own language. (p. 232)

On China, Edward Vickers (2006) analyzes how school history textbooks define Chineseness vis-à-vis its representation of the so-called minority nationalities. China has fifty-five officially recognized ethnic minorities who are often at the receiving end of the Chinese nation-building project. Vickers argues that the primary goal of education for China's minority nationalities has been to encourage patriotism towards China and to foster a sense of nationhood. However, the state-led exercise to define the Chinese national identity, often exclusionary and mainstream, resulted in the production of an inequitable ethnic and language hierarchy where the Han majority and the Chinese language occupy the centerstage. This has led to the production of a narrow mono-linguistic and mono-cultural model of what it means to be 'Chinese'. School education and particularly the teaching of history privileges the Han-majority's perspectives and cultural capitals. Vickers highlighted that the function of history teaching in China has always been to moralize and acculturate the minorities. Minorities appear sporadically in the national master narrative, often as recipients of Han majority's generosities and largesse. While the school history textbooks present a highly simplistic and Han-centric nationalist narrative, celebrating the glories of Chinese civilization, Vickers pointed out that the emphasis is placed on conveying "one China principle as the key moral and political message of the texts" (p. 31). Even in the Tibetan language curriculum, Bass (2008) shows that the textbooks celebrate the Chinese communist heroes whereas the Tibetan cultural heroes were excluded or glossed over. Likewise, in mass media, ethnic minorities in China are portrayed as distinctive, potentially separatists, and visible, whilst the majority Han are seen as normative, patriotic, and invisible (Zhao & Postiglione, 2010). Underscoring the importance of political allegiance to the Communist Party, the Party Secretary of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, Chen Kuiyuan (1994) said:

> The success of our education does not lie in the number of diplomas issued… It lies in the final analysis, in whether our graduating students are

> opposed to or turn their hearts to the Dalai [Lama] clique and in whether they are loyal to or do not care about our great motherland and the great socialist cause. (p. 2)

This is because China's rule in ethnic minority regions like Tibet and Xinjiang (populated by Uyghur Muslims) are often contested with periodic outbreaks of separatist movements.

In the Middle East, due to the protracted Arab-Israeli conflicts, the history education in Palestine presents an interesting case. Palestinian national identity in education is an important issue due to the external challenges posed by the state of Israel. Following the creation of Palestinian Authority in the 1990s and the publication of its first textbooks in 1998, the representation of Palestinian national identity vis-à-vis the Israeli Other is a bone of contention between the two sides (Murray, 2008). A member of the first curriculum development team, Dr. Ali Jarbawi, reflected:

> What Palestine do we teach? Is it the historic Palestine with its complete geography, or the Palestine that is likely to emerge on the basis of possible agreements with Israel? How do we view Israel? Is it merely an ordinary neighbour, or is it a state that has arisen on the ruins of most of Palestine? (as cited in Moughrabe, 2001, p. 14)

The first textbooks generally presented the Palestinian narrative, which Moughrabe (2001) described as "native in conflict with a settler colonial movement" (p. 7), and the establishment of the state of Israeli in 1948 is presented as a disaster for the Palestinians. However, in its effort to keep away from unresolved political issues, the textbooks do not carry map of both Israel and Palestine. The first-generation Palestinian textbooks were criticized by Israeli organizations like the Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace, which alleges that they demonize Israel and incite hatred and anti-Semitism. However, Nathan Brown, a prominent researcher on the Palestinian politics, argued that the allegations were largely exaggerated and false. Brown (2003) wrote: "The Palestinian curriculum is not a war curriculum; while highly nationalistic, it does not incite hatred, violence and anti-Semitism. It cannot be described as a 'peace curriculum' either" (p. 99). In 2002, a team of Israeli and Palestinian teachers developed a history textbook together that includes narratives from the both sides on the same historical events. On many issues, the two narratives hold vastly different positions. For example, the war of 1948 is hailed in the Israeli narrative as 'the war of independence' whereas the same event is called as 'the catastrophe' in the Palestinian narrative (Steinberg & Bar-On, 2009).

2.8 Conclusion

In the above sections, major theoretical positions and perspectives on three key domains related to this research are discussed, namely, the politics of schooling, history education, and national identity construction. This research is situated at the intersection of these three domains, and therefore, draws heavily from their traditions. In many ways, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks derived from these three domains are linked to one another. For example, the politics of history education can be subsumed within the broader politics of school education, and different approaches to history education can conceptualize national identity construction differently. These theories and concepts concerning history education and the construction of national identity provide useful frameworks and lenses to analyze the specific context of history education in the Tibetan refugee schools in India. The chapters discussing research findings take these theoretical concepts as frames of reference.

Firstly, the theoretical insights derived from the politics of schooling and official knowledge are helpful in unveiling the interplay of power and hegemony in school history knowledge production within the Tibetan refugee education. For instance, the analytical processes deal with the questions of whose knowledge or perspectives are included in the school history textbooks, and what hegemonic discourses are being countervailed or perpetuated by them. Secondly, conceptual ideas concerning the extant approaches to history education such as 'nationalist' and 'disciplinary' approach provide useful analytical frameworks for problematizing the teaching of history in the Tibetan refugee schools. These theoretical insights are deployed in analyzing the contents of Tibetan social studies and history textbooks as well as the teachers' interview data relating to the goals of history education. Thirdly the theories and concepts pertaining to the construction of national identity offer interesting lens to analyze national identity construction via the teaching of history in the Tibetan Children Village schools. Therefore, the theoretical frameworks and conceptual ideas relating to the politics of school education, the politics of history education, and national identity construction serve as the pivots for conducting the analysis.

3 IN EXILE FROM THE LAND OF SNOW: TIBETAN REFUGEES AND THEIR EDUCATION SYSTEM

Tibet's encounter with modernity, including modern mass education, was rather abrupt, albeit wrought in by the Chinese occupation of it in the 1950s. In March 1959, after an unsuccessful uprising, Tibet's spiritual and political leader the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and around 80,000 Tibetans fled the Chinese occupation of their homeland and sought political asylum in India. As Tibetan culture faces an uncertain future in the wake of Chinese occupation and its repressive rule, the Tibetan refugees became determined to preserve their cultural heritage in exile. This is reflected in their early efforts to rebuild and replicate Tibetan cultural and religious institutions in India and the importance placed on guarding their cultural heritage. But the loss of the country also made them acutely aware of the importance of modern education. As such, alongside the preservation of cultural identity, the introduction of modern education receives a top priority in their reconstruction project. Now, after about 60 years in exile, the Tibetan refugee community had grown from strength to strength and is considered as one of the successful refugee communities in the world (Bhutia, 2010; Phuntsog, 2018). It is argued that much of the success owes to their efforts in education. Within the span of two generations, the Tibetan exile community was able to transform itself into a highly literate society. According to the Second Tibetan Demographic Survey of 2009, the literacy rate was about 80 percent (Planning Commission, 2010).

This chapter traces the development of Tibetan educational system in exile (primarily in India) and explores major developments and transformation in the school curriculum over the last sixty years. It also provides some background information on the state of education in the pre-1950 Tibet, and the conditions in Tibet since the establishment of the Chinese rule in the 1950s. These contextual and historical overviews provide settings for the research data to be understood and interpreted meaningfully.

3.1 Traditional Tibetan education

Tibet and its civilization have a long history, with its earliest kings dating back to the second century BCE. By the time of its Thirty-third king Songtsen Gampo in the mid-seventh century CE, Tibet had grown into a major political and military power in Central Asia. With royal patronage, Buddhism soon gained a strong foothold in Tibet. From the ninth century CE onwards, with the establishment of thousands of Buddhist monasteries, institutionalized education based on Buddhist philosophy developed extensively in Tibet. The curriculum comprised of five major disciplines, namely grammar and literature, Buddhist philosophy, the science of valid cognition (logic), medicine and healing, and arts; and five minor disciplines namely poetry, composition, synonymy, performing arts, and astrology (Dreyfus, 2003). One could pursue monastic scholasticism culminating in a Doctor of Divinity degree (*Geshe*). The great seats of Sera, Drepung, and Gaden, Tibet's three principal monastic universities, exceed enrollment level of more than ten thousand monks and attracted scholars from China, Russia, Mongolia, and neighboring Himalayan regions. By the end of the seventeenth century, around 26 percent of Tibetan male and 13 percent of the total population was living in monasteries (Goldstein, 1989). Nawang Phuntsog (1994) wrote: "non-discriminatory in age, gender, social status, and race, the monastic education in Tibet was indeed a precursor of universal public education" (p. 6). For several centuries, Tibetan scholars translated a large corpus of Sanskrit and Pali texts into the Tibetan language dealing primarily with Buddhist philosophy, ontology, cosmology and epistemology, and composed extensive commentaries and treatises. As a result of these religious-literary activities, Tibetan literature is seen to be among "the four oldest, greatest in volume and most original literature of Asia, along with Sanskrit, Chinese, and Japanese literature" (Tournadre, 2003. p. 2). Given Tibet's small population of around six million, this achievement in the field of literary production is remarkable. One of the most important pedagogical innovations was the deployment of intensive dialectical method in the study of Buddhist philosophy and logic. Apart from monasteries as the centers of learning, secular education was confined mainly to bigger towns on a private tutorial basis. For example, in the Tibetan capital Lhasa, prior to the Chinese occupation, there were over fifty privately run tutorial centers or schools that taught elementary math, Tibetan grammar, calligraphy, poetry and history, and two medical colleges that train doctors in traditional Tibetan medicine (Goldstein-Kyaga, 1993; Norbu, 1997; Taring, 1970). There were also a few government-run schools that trained monk and lay officials for government jobs.

Tibet's tryst with modern (western) secular education started only in the early twentieth century. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama was aware of the need for Tibet to modernize and introduce modern education. Thus, in 1913, he sent four boys from aristocratic families to study at Rugby School in England, and in 1923 the first English-medium school was opened in the town of Gyantse under the guidance of a British educationalist Frank Ludlow (Bell, 1987). But the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's modernization attempts met stiff opposition from the conservative clergy and aristocracy. Gyantse School was closed barely after three years of its establishment. Another English-medium school in Lhasa met a similar fate in the 1940s. However, by 1930s some of the wealthy traders and aristocrats were sending their children to be educated in Anglo-Indian schools in the northeastern Indian towns like Darjeeling and Kalimpong.

3.2 Occupation, exile and reconstruction

In October 1950, China launched military attacks on Tibet and quickly overran the resistance put up by the small ill-equipped Tibetan army. From 1950 to 1959, the Chinese occupying force and the Tibetan Government led by the young Dalai Lama maintained an uneasy coexistence. However, growing popular resistance against the Chinese occupation culminated in the 10 March 1959 uprising in the Tibetan capital Lhasa. Under the tense political atmosphere, the Dalai Lama fled Lhasa secretly on the night of March 17 and crossed into India by the end of the month. China launched full-scale military operations to quell the revolt and took full control of the region, subsequently dissolving the Tibetan Government by the end of March. Tibetans suffered heavy casualties; a classified People's Liberation Army Tibet Military Command document captured by Tibetan guerrilla fighters mentioned that from March 1959 to October 1960, over 87,000 Tibetans were 'neutralized' in the vicinity of Lhasa city alone (Jianglin, 2016). Tibetan cultural and religious institutions and practices suffered large-scale destruction and restriction, especially during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

The Dalai Lama's flight was followed by an immediate exodus of some 80,000 Tibetans into exile in India, Nepal, and Bhutan, including the religious heads of the four main sects of Tibetan Buddhism and other prominent cultural leaders. The Dalai Lama established the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGiE) in Dharamsala in northern India and started rebuilding their lives in exile. The TGiE was gradually developed into a democratic structure with seven Departments overseeing various affairs of the 'state' (Central Tibetan Administration, 2019). With the support of India and the other host countries, Tibetan refugees were resettled in 46 primarily agro-based settlements under the

Department of Home, TGiE. Aside from providing immediate relief and humanitarian assistance, the rehabilitation project was aimed at two primary ends – preservation of Tibetan cultural identity, and mobilization of the community into a political voice for Tibet. As a result, a large number of monastic and cultural institutions were replicated in exile, including Tibet's three principal monastic universities. Currently, the Department of Religion and Culture of TGiE oversees 262 monasteries, nunneries, and cultural institutions. Likewise, colleges and institutes were established to teach Tibetan traditional medicines, astrology, literature, arts, performing arts, etc. The 600-hundred-year-old Lhasa *Monlam Chenmo* (The Great Prayer festival), which was banned by the Chinese in Tibet after 1959, was revived in exile.

At the political front, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGiE) pursued a policy of seeking independence for Tibet through non-violence method until the 1980s. The issue of Tibet was brought to the UN General Assembly, resulting in the passing of several UN resolutions on Tibet. The Tibetan exiles organize protests and rallies, primarily in India, to draw international attention to the plight of their nation. Under its Department of Information and International Relations, TGiE currently has foreign missions in 12 countries based in New Delhi, Kathmandu, Geneva, Washington DC, Tokyo, London, Moscow, Brussels, Canberra, Pretoria, Taipei, and Sao Paolo. These 'Offices of Tibet' work to garner international support for the Tibetan cause. The 10 March 1959 Tibetan Uprising that took place Lhasa is commemorated in exile every year as the "National Uprising Day" with protests, hunger strikes, and rallies. In the late 1980s, with the death of Mao and the opening of China, the Dalai Lama and the TGiE established direct contact with Beijing. Since then, the official policy of TGIE shifted to what is termed as "Middle-Way Policy", seeking genuine autonomy for Tibet within the framework of the Chinese Constitution, and several rounds of dialogues were held with Beijing (Department of Information and International Relations, 2015). In 1989, the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his commitment to resolving Tibetan issue through dialogue and non-violence means. However, no resolution was reached with Beijing until now.

In the meantime, Tibet remained cut off under Beijing's tightfisted rule. The Cultural Revolution brought massive destruction and suffering to the Tibetan people. The Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGiE) claimed that about 1.2 million Tibetans died as a direct result of the Chinese occupation and rule, and that more than 6000 monasteries and cultural centers were destroyed. The death of Mao in 1976 and the purging out of the Gang of Four resulted in a brief period of liberalization. This brought the second-wave of Tibetan refugees fleeing into India. The Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre in Dharamsala

reported that 43,634 Tibetans fled to India between 1991 to June 2004 (Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 2004). The late 1980s and the early 1990s also witnessed the reemergence of pro-independence street protests, mainly in the Tibetan capital Lhasa, leading to the hardening of the Chinese policies on Tibet. In the spring of 2008, after an uneasy lull for several decades, massive Tibetan protests against the Chinese rule broke out in at least 100 different locations across the Tibetan Plateau (Barnet, 2009). This is tragically followed by some 152 self-immolation protests by Tibetans between 2009 to 2017 (International Campaign for Tibet, 2018).

3.3 Tibetan school systems in exile

After the Chinese occupation, modern education started inside Tibet rather slowly and tumultuously. In school education, the Tibetan language and culture were and still are, marginalized and denigrated to varying degrees (Bass, 1998 & 2008). In exile, Tibetans generally believe that lack of modern education was one of the main reasons why they lost their country, and this echoes repeatedly in the Dalai Lama's speech (Dalai Lama, 1999). This belief is fundamental to understanding the urgency with which modern education was embraced when many Tibetans became refugees, almost as a weapon to regain their lost nation. According to Tony Dodds (1986), education is a top priority among all refugees in helping them secure a better future while establishing "continuity with the past and restoring purpose to an otherwise meaningless existence" (p. 11). He further elucidates:

> Education plays a special role in helping individuals and communities to cope with the trauma of exile. Most refugees come from third world societies, which place the highest priority on education in national development programs. Small wonder then education becomes of special importance when an individual or family is displaced against their will. (p. 10)

Tibet's rich cultural heritage and the exigencies created by the occupation and exile were crucial factors in enabling Tibetan exiles to embrace modern education as one of the top priorities in their reconstruction and rehabilitation project in exile. This possibly explains how, starting from scratch, around 150,000 Tibetan refugees could now boost a high literacy rate and near-universal school enrolment of Tibetan children attaining school going age. In 2017, 1292 Tibetan students appeared in the Twelfth-Grade Indian national examination, and out of them, 1123 passed the exam with an overall pass percentage of 87 percent, outdoing the host country's average pass percentage

of 82 percent (Department of Education, 2017a). This section traces the development of various Tibetan school systems in India.

3.3.1 Central Tibetan Schools' Administration

After arriving in India in April 1959, the Dalai Lama immediately set up the *Council for Tibetan Education* to look after the education of Tibetan children. He fondly called them the "future seeds of Tibet" (*Ma-'ong bod-kyi son-rtsa*) and custodians of its rich cultural heritage (Pema, 1997). The Dalai Lama sought Indian Prime Minister Nehru's help in rehabilitating Tibetan refugees and especially in providing education to Tibetan children. He wrote in his memoir that Nehru took "such interest that it was as if he considered the matter to be his own responsibility" (Dalai Lama, 1991, p. 149). He and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile insisted on having separate schools for Tibetan children, despite Nehru's initial suggestion of distributing Tibetan children to Indian public schools (which would have been much easier). This shows that the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan leadership perceived a different kind of education was necessary for the Tibetan children in exile and reflects the role of cultural and identity politics. Thus, separate schools for Tibetan children were set up, and this was possible under Article 30(1) of the Constitution of India which stipulates that "all minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institution of their choice" (The Government of India, 2015, p. 14). Nawang Phuntsog (2018) concurred: "it is safe to assume that Tibetan schools, under the auspices of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, were beneficiaries of this [India's] inclusive language policy" (p. 88).

The setting up of separate schools for Tibetan refugee children was a part of a larger move to maintain a distinct Tibetan refugee community in India. Instead of assimilation into the mainstream Indian society, the Tibetan refugees were rehabilitated by setting up separate settlements or enclaves in different parts of India. Falcone and Wangchuk (2008) noted: "the preoccupation of the exile community with the preservation of tradition has resulted in a degree of "enclavement", or "emplacement" from Indian society" (p.165). This is in the interest of both Tibetans in exile as well as the host nation. For the Tibetan refugees, it allows them to organize themselves politically and preserve their cultural heritage. For India, the presence of the Dalai Lama and a robust community of Tibetan refugees are important political cards to countervail Beijing's moves across the Himalayan border.

As a result, the Union Government of India established the Central Tibetan Schools Administration (CTSA) in 1961, an independent body to spearhead the education of Tibetan refugee children, and the schools were called Central Schools for Tibetans (CST). Prior to that, in early 1960, the first residential school (later came under CTSA in 1961) for Tibetan refugees was opened in Mussoorie with 50 students. Similar schools sprang up in Shimla in 1960, Darjeeling in 1962, and Dalhousie in 1963 (Phuntsog, 1999). The Government of India financed and run these schools and recruited predominantly Indian teachers. All these schools were established in Himalayan hill stations where climatic condition approximated Tibet. A large number of smaller schools were also set up in all the major Tibetan settlements across India.

In early 2013, upon the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's (TGiE) repeated request, the Union Government of India decided to transfer the administration of CTSA schools to the Department of Education, TGiE, over the period of three years. The Government of India agreed to provide 430 million rupees per annum to the TGiE for running the schools, and its press release stated that the transfer would benefit the students through a better focus on their educational needs" (Press Information Bureau, 2013). By the time of writing of this thesis, the transfer process is still underway with a number of senior secondary schools yet to be transferred.

3.3.2 Growth of Tibetan-run schools

Along with the CTSA schools, gradually many schools were set up by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and primarily by autonomous NGOs like the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) and Tibetan Homes Foundation (THF), headquartered in Dharamshala and Mussoorie respectively. TCV was founded in 1960 by the Dalai Lama's sister Tsering Dolma (and later run by his younger sister Jetsun Pema) as a nursery to take care of Tibetan children whose parents were working on road construction sites in India (Tibetan Children's Village, 2019). With the initial batch on 51 students, TCV has grown into the largest Tibetan educational institution in exile, currently taking care of 41.5 percent of Tibetan refugee children, most of whom were/are orphans and destitute or Tibetan children sent from Tibet since the second wave of Tibetan refugees after 1980s. THF was founded by Rinchen Dolma Taring in 1962. It is interesting to note that these two premier Tibetan school systems in exile were set up female leaders and Tibetan children who grew from these schools fondly call them *Amala* (mother). In the 2018 school year, these two school systems run around twenty schools and taking care of about 50 percent of Tibetan children in exile

(Department of Education, 2018). Out of this desperate situation of displacement and poverty, develop a unique system of schooling encapsulated in words like 'home' and 'village' used in the names of the two school systems. Schools became more of a home and an integrated community that provides parental care and love to the children. The Tibetan exile schools, especially TCV has grown exponentially since the 1980s due to the exodus of the second wave of Tibetan refugees to India (Pema, 2005). Likewise, the Snow Lion Foundation (SLF) was established in 1972 to look after the health, education and social welfare of the Tibetan refugees in Nepal and it now runs nine Tibetan schools there. In 1999, schools which were funded and run directly by the TGiE were regrouped under Sambhota Tibetan School Society (STSS) (Department of Education, 2019). As a result of the political repression and lack of culturally relevant education in Tibet, even after 60 years, the exodus of Tibetan refugees is still an ongoing reality and Tibetan exile schools are still as relevant and important as it was in the early 1960s. According to Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre in Dharamshala, around 43,634 Tibetans fled to India between 1991 to June 2004, of which 60 percent are below the age of 25 (Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 2004). TCV schools in India alone received around 14,000 Tibetan children who fled Tibet between 1980 to 2010 (Yeshi, 2010).

However, the demographics are once again changing. Following the 2008 massive protests inside Tibet, China placed severe border restrictions leading to the strangulation of the number of Tibetan refugees fleeing across Himalaya to India. Since then, the number of Tibetan children fleeing Tibet had dropped dramatically from several thousand a year to less than a hundred. The Tibetan refugee settlements are also showing the strains of prolonged statelessness, leading to a growing number of youths immigrating to the west. Likewise, the community is witnessing a significant drop in the fertility rate - from 4.9 in 1989 to 1.18 in 2009 (Central Tibetan Administration, 2018). This could be due to multiple factors, such as the spread of education among the younger generation, family planning, youth immigration to the west, etc. The cumulative impact of these developments is the significant reduction in the number of students in Tibetan refugee schools, from nearly 25,000 in 2009 to about 19,000 in 2018 (Central Tibetan Administration, 2018).

As shown in Table 3, in the 2018 academic year, there are 68 Tibetan refugee schools with a total enrolment of over 19,000 children, of which over 33 percent are Indian students, especially belonging to the Himalayan belt that shares cultural and linguistic affinities with Tibetans. These schools are grouped into three main categories on the basis of their funding and administration. CTSA and STSS schools are funded and run by the

Government of India and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile respectively whilst the rests are financed and managed by autonomous Tibetan institutions.

Table 3: *Student enrolment as on 31 March 2018*

School system	No. of schools	No. of students	% of the share
CTSA	14	3664	19.2
STSS	22	2603	13.8
TCV	16	7904	41.5
THF	3	1719	9
SLF (Nepal)	9	1596	8.4
Private	4	1548	8.1
Total	68	19034	

Source. Department of Education (2018).

3.4 School curriculum

Keeping abreast with changing circumstances, the Tibetan refugee education system has evolved significantly over the last several decades with important changes and reforms in the school curriculum. In particular, the education system passes through three key phases reflecting major curricular changes and shifts. This section discusses the important changes that took place in the school curriculum over the last sixty years.

3.4.1 A borrowed curriculum

Research on the education of refugee and immigrant communities have revealed the traumatic process children had to undergo in the mainstream education and raised two main concerns regarding the impact of an assimilationist education (Dodds, 1986; Bank, 2002; Bell, Joshi & Zuniga, 2007; Nieto, 2010). First, it led to the loss of children's cultural and linguistic identities, and second, students' futures are handicapped by either underachieving or dropping out of school. The interplay between school and students' cultural backgrounds is an important predictor in determining student engagement and success. For Tibetan refugee children, the establishment of separate schools means that the process was less traumatic. However, due to its affiliation to India's Central Board of Secondary Education, the Tibetan refugee schools' formal curriculum seldom reflects Tibetan children's cultural, linguistic and environmental milieu, especially in the high schools.

The cultural and political agenda which are closely linked to national identity politics are at the heart of Tibetan exile education from the start. However, despite being able to establish separate schools for Tibetan refugee children, the Dalai Lama and his exile government had no resources to develop a culturally relevant curriculum and school system in the early years. Therefore, Tibetan schools adopted the Indian national curriculum with English as the medium of instruction. From the onset, the Tibetan refugee schools in India were affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi. The three-language formula was followed - mother-tongue (Tibetan), a modern foreign language (English), and a modern Indian language (Hindi). Other subjects include science, math, and social studies. Students choose different stream or track after the tenth-grade examination such as humanities, science, commerce, and vocational studies. From primary to secondary education, the Tibetan language subject became the main medium for transmission of the Tibetan culture. Thus, it not only deals with the nitty-gritty of Tibetan grammar and literature but also carries elements of Tibetan history, religion, culture, the way of life and other areas of Tibetan heritage. Likewise, in the informal curriculum, the Tibetan culture is given a prominent presence in the schools (see the next chapter for more details). Such kind of creative adjustment ensures provision for both Tibetan cultural and modern education, and helps in imparting a strong sense of national and cultural identity to Tibetan children. Nawang Phuntsog (1999) opined that the Dalai Lama's temporal and spiritual leadership provided fundamental hopes for Tibetan refugees and lessens the psychological traumas. The memories of Chinese atrocities played a significant part in catapulting Tibetan children to study hard. Dawa Norbu (1997) recounted in his memoir:

> I studied with a burning intensity. The school was like a battlefield, and every word I could master was like knocking off an enemy… Somehow, I was never tired or bored. I used to compare my lot with others – for instance, compared with the forced labor in Tibet under the Chinese overlords, my study was a delight… Besides, Tibet's tragedy was still clear in my memory, and I felt that I had to justify the advantages and benefits that I was fortunate to enjoy. (p. 245)

However, by the late 1970s, the crack in the educational system was becoming more apparent, especially in the CTSA schools where teachers were mostly Indians. The curriculum was meant for the mainstream Indian students, and like other minorities in India, Tibetan students were at the receiving end. There was a tremendous gulf between the home culture and the school culture, and Tibetan students clearly lacked what Bourdieu and Passeron (1990)

described as social and cultural capitals. Adoption of Indian curriculum means assimilation into India's nation-building project. An alarming trend was that English was fast replacing Tibetan as the language of education. Other concerns in the Tibetan refugee schools revolve around an alleged lack of Indian teachers' motivation, irrelevant curriculum, poor standard of teaching, and use of unfair means during exams. Student cohorts who had graduated from the CTSA schools and received university education attributed the decline of the educational standard to the lack of motivation and sincerity of non-Tibetan teachers and bureaucratic intransigence (Dhondup, 1985; Dorjee, 1986; Khangsar, 1986; Norbu, 1976; Tsering, 1986). These circumstances ushered in the next phase with significant shifts in the primary curriculum.

3.4.2 Mother-tongue based primary curriculum

Ever since the *First Tibetan General Conference on Education* held in 1972, the Dalai Lama had repeatedly raised the need for adopting the Tibetan language as the medium of instruction and reorient the school curriculum to meet the needs of Tibetans in exile (Yeshi, 2001). The concerns expressed by the Dalai Lama intimately linked to cultural and identity politics. Tibetan Children's Village heeded to this call. In 1985, TCV spearheaded a new move to vernacularize and Tibetanize the primary school curriculum and set up the Educational Development and Resource Center (EDRC) (Pema, 2005). This was a significant step as Tibetan refugee schools were, up until then, dependent on Indian curriculum and classroom materials. The Textbook Committees under the EDRC produced the first draft of the primary textbooks in the winter of 1985 itself and distributed them to all primary teachers. The initial textbook was designed in such a fashion that every printed page had a blank page facing it. Incorporation of the teachers' voice in the curriculum construction was significant in making it more relevant and meaningful. TCV started implementing the new vernacularized and Tibetanized primary curriculum from the 1986 academic year amid doubts and skepticism from the Tibetan exile community at large. One of the main fears was that the students might face difficulty during the tenth-grade Indian national examination which has to be written in English (Yeshi, 2001). The new primary curriculum entails using Tibetan as the medium of instruction up to fifth grade. The science and math textbooks were largely translations of the ones produced by India's National Council of Educational Research and Training, with the inclusion of some culturally-relevant materials. However, the social studies curriculum was created anew with contents covering Tibetan history, geography, the democratic

structures of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and the political situation inside Tibet. The first batch of student cohorts who were schooled through the new curriculum successfully passed the tenth-grade Indian national examination in 1994. By 1995, all remaining Tibetan schools had adopted the new primary curriculum, thus achieving universal vernacularization of primary education. In order to meet the growing needs for trained teachers in the new vernacularized and Tibetanized primary curriculum, TCV started a teachers' training college in 1995 (Pema, 2005).

3.4.3 Towards a Tibetan curriculum: The Basic Education Policy

Despite the success of Tibetanization of primary education, the general educational standard and particularly children's Tibetan language proficiency continued to remain a cause of concern. In 1991, the *Charter of Tibetans in Exile* was promulgated by the Parliament of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, in which a provision under Directive Principles stated: "an ideal education policy meeting the real basic needs of Tibet shall be formulated" (cited in Department of Education, 2005, p. 1). Based on this provision, a committee for drafting an educational policy was set up in 1997. However, the committee's draft policy, submitted in 2001 didn't mark any significant departure from the then existing system (Department of Education, 2005). Thus, under the first popularly elected Kalon Tripa (prime-minister) Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, a new move was started to rewrite a new educational policy. He presented his administration's preliminary ideas pertaining to education policy during the *Fourth Tibetan General Conference on Education* in 2002, drawing on ideas from both eastern as well as western sources (Department of Information and International Relations, 2006). A new draft committee was constituted in 2003. Finally, in 2004, after intense deliberations with Indian, western and Tibetan educationists, the Tibetan Parliament in exile unanimously accepted the committee's draft titled "*Basic Education Policy for Tibetans in Exile*".

The new policy is radically different from the existing education system in many ways. It calls for "a system of education having traditional Tibetan education as its core and modern education as its essential co-partner" (Department of Education, 2005, p. 5). The policy document defined traditional Tibetan education as comprising of Inner Sciences (*Nang-don rig-pa*, primarily Buddhist thoughts), Tibetan language, Valid Cognition (*Tshad-ma*, logic mainly derived from the Indian traditional practices called Pramana), Tibetan art and medicine. Endorsing mother-tongue based education, Basic Education Policy

stated that the Tibetan language should be gradually adopted as the primary language of instruction from the pre-primary level up to the highest research at university level. It calls for a delayed introduction of the second language (English) at fourth grade in order for children to develop a firm foundation in their mother-tongue. The policy's exposition on the aims of education is quite comprehensive, representing a fine amalgam of modern pedagogical principles such as the promotion of freedom and innovative thinking, and Tibet's traditional Buddhist values like altruism and upholding its heritage (Department of Education, 2005).

The Tibetan Government-in-Exile established an experimental model school in October 2005 and started implementing the new policy as far as possible. The experiment proved a runaway success with the enrolment in the experimental school steadily increasing each year. The partial implementation of the policy was later extended to many other Tibetan schools, mainly at the primary level. However, as a community operating in exile, the full implementation of the policy seems well-nigh impossible. Converting the medium of instruction to the Tibetan language requires preparation of the educational materials in the said language and teachers who can teach in it. It also entails setting up a separate board of education to regulate the schools and matriculation procedures. The Basic Education Policy implementation is an important issue of discussion in both public and political forums in the exile community. In 2015, the Tibetan Parliament set up an education committee to review the implementation of the policy in Tibetan schools, and the committee's 63-page report was discussed at length during the parliament session held in September 2015 (Shonu, 2015). At the time of writing this dissertation, the Basic Education Policy implementation is largely confined to primary level with a gradual move to experiment in some subject areas at the middle school level.

The Basic Education Policy effectively relocated the education system for Tibetans within Tibet's cultural heritage and indigenous epistemology. It can be seen as an attempt to reclaim one's heritage and history which are threatened by both the political occupation and exile, as well as by forces of globalization. Yet, despite inward-looking in its character, the new policy endorses progressive educational principles such as learner-centered pedagogy, critical thinking, authentic learning and assessment practices, etc.

3.5 Conclusion

From the initial move to establish separate schools for Tibetan children in exile to later attempts at gaining greater control over the curriculum via vernacularization and promulgation of the Basic Education Policy, the Tibetans

in exile sought to build an education system that caters to their specific needs and interests. The developmental trajectories speak to the identity insecurity of the Tibetan community in exile. As the community moves away from its original homeland in a spatio-temporal sense, the sense of identity insecurity gets heightened. This sense of identity insecurity caused by exile and displacement is further accentuated by restrictions China is placing on the expression of Tibetan cultural, linguistic and religious identities inside Tibet. Therefore, the Tibetan exile community sees education as an important medium to countervail this identity insecurity and seeks to bequeath a thick cultural and national identity to Tibetan youngsters in exile. The production of a Tibetan political and cultural subject is also achieved through primary socialization at home, and participation in community-wide festivals and celebrations as well as commemorative and patriotic rituals, etc.

This background chapter elucidates on the major milestone developments in the education system established by the Tibetan refugee community in India. It is in this context that the findings of this research are to be understood. In the next chapter, the specific school contexts of the Tibetan Children's Village are explored, where the materials for this research were collected.

4 TIBETAN CHILDREN'S VILLAGE: THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

This chapter discusses the specific contexts of schools run by the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV), the largest school system of the Tibetan refugee community in India. Nearly fifty percent of Tibetan children in exile attend TCV schools. The materials for this research have been collected from five TCV schools which are located in and around the town of Dharamsala in Northern India. The institutional history and school settings are described in this chapter in some details as these have a great bearing on the interpretation of the research findings.

4.1 TCV's institutional history

As described in the preceding chapter, the Tibetan Government led by the Dalai Lama and around 80,000 Tibetans fled into exile in 1959, following the Chinese occupation of their homeland. The Tibetan Children's Village came into being amidst the emergency created by this exodus, especially the need for taking care of orphan, semi-orphan and destitute children. Founded on 17 May 1960 in Dharamsala, where the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile had relocated itself after their arrival in India, it functioned initially as a nursery center. The center was then called the "Nursery for Tibetan Refugee Children" and its first batch consisted of 51 Tibetan refugee children gathered from the road construction camps in Jammu where their parents were working (Tibetan Children's Village, 2019). Tsering Dolma Takla, the elder sister of the Dalai Lama volunteered to look after the center, and at this initial stage, children were assigned to the members of the Dalai Lama's entourage. However, the Government of India stepped in and rented Conium House to accommodate all the children together. At that time, the center provided only basic care for children. When the children reached the age of eight, they were sent off to the Central Schools for Tibetans (CST), set up by the Government of India in various locations like Mussoorie, Shimla, Dalhousie, etc. where substantial numbers of Tibetan refugees have been resettled. But eventually, this arrangement could not be continued as all the CST residential schools were

filled to their capacity with Tibetan refugee children. This was when the Nursery began to expand itself into a full-fledged children's home and school under the leadership of the Dalai Lama's younger sister, Jetsun Pema (Tibetan Children's Village, 2007). TCV, since its inception, has the personal blessings of the Dalai Lama. Jetsun Pema (1997) recounted in her memoir:

> His Holiness [the Dalai Lama]… spent a lot of time at the [children's] village. The Dalai Lama was like a father to all the children. He spoke to them, saw how they were getting on with their Tibetan writing and always told them that they were the '*hope of Tibet' and the* '*seed for the future Tibet'* [emphasis added]. (p. 104)

TCV's growth into a premier educational institution for Tibetan refugee children can be divided into two main phases. During the **first phase (1960-1980)**, the nursery center underwent the most critical stage of establishing homes and classrooms for those children who need the greatest help – orphans, semi-orphans, and the destitute (Tibetan Children's Village, 2019). The institution sought help from private donors and international aid organizations, and construction works ensued for many years to cater to the growing number of children under its care. In 1972, the center was formally registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 as Tibetan Children's Village, and also became a full-fledged member of SOS Kinderdorf International. With TCV School at Upper Dharamsala serving as the main school and the headquarter, TCV established three more schools in Patlikuhl (1971), Ladakh (1975), and Bylakuppe (1980) to serve the Tibetan refugees resettled in these three locations.

However, following the death of Mao, China underwent big political transitions in the 1980s, and as a result, its policies on Tibet were relaxed to some degree and for the first time, Tibetans inside Tibet and those in exile were allowed to establish contacts. This period also witnessed several rounds of dialogues between the Dalai Lama's representatives and Beijing, and several Fact-Finding missions were sent to Tibet by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (Shakya, 2001). In this atmosphere of a comparatively relaxed political climate, the second wave of Tibetan refugees started pouring into India. Deprived of Tibetan language and cultural education during the Cultural Revolution, many Tibetan parents started sending their children to India, to be educated in Tibetan refugee schools. This created a new situation of emergency. The practice of smuggling Tibetan children, monks, nuns and lay people across the Himalayan border to India continued well up to 2008 when large-scale Tibetan protests in Tibet resulted in closing off of the border. From the early 1980s to late 2000s, each year, thousands of children, monks, nuns,

and lay people arrived in India. With CST schools already filled to its capacity with children of the first wave of Tibetan refugees, TCV responded to the new situation and began the **second phase (1980- 2010s)** of expansion. The institutional history on its website (Tibetan Children's Village, 2019) says: "thousands of children from Tibet flooded the main TCV at Dharamsala. To solve the overcrowding problem, TCV turned its poultry farm at Lower Dharamsala into a new residential school" in 1984. This was followed by setting up of two more schools for the 'new arrivals' – TCV School in Suja (1990) and TCV School in Gopalpur (1997). From the early 1980s to early 2007, TCV received around 11,768 Tibetan children from Tibet (TCV, 2007). In 2004, TCV established a school for high-achievers at Selakui.

Today, TCV has under its administration, a total of thirteen large residential schools and three day-schools, with a total enrolment of about 7904 children (Department of Education, 2018). This accounted for over 41 percent of Tibetan students' population in exile schools. TCV's role in education is not just confined to school education. It also runs three vocational training centers; three youth hostels for Tibetan youth pursuing higher education in Indian cities; A college, namely The Dalai Lama Institute of Higher Education, affiliated to the University of Bangalore; and provides scholarships to a large number of Tibetan students attending colleges and universities in India. In a recent interview to the Voice of America's Tibetan language program, the TCV President Thupten Dorje said: "about 50,000 Tibetan refugees have received some level of education from the TCV schools" (Voice of America, 2018). Therefore, it is the most important and the largest educational institution of Tibetan refugees in India.

The data for this research have been collected from five TCV schools located in and around Dharamsala, the capital of the Tibetan exile community and the seat of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. A short description about each school is given below (Department of Education, 2018; Tibetan Children's Village, 2019).

1. ***Tibetan Children's Village School, Upper Dharamsala*** serves as the main school. It was established in 1960 as the nursery. The Head Office of the TCV school system is also located within the campus of this school. It is the largest Tibetan refugee school in terms of student population. As on 31 March 2018, the school has 1556 students from K-12.
2. ***Tibetan Children's Village School, Lower Dharamsala*** is a K-10 secondary and was established in 1984. As on 31 March 2018, the school has 513 students, majority of whom are born in exile and pay tuition fees to the school.

3. ***Tibetan Children's Village School, Gopalpur*** is located some 25kms from Dharamsala and was set up in 1997. This school was built to provide education to the "new arrivals" from Tibet. As on 31 March 2018, the school has 768 students from K-12.
4. ***Tibetan Children's Village School, Suja***, is located some 60kms from Dharamsala and was established in 1990. As on 31 March 2018, the school has 1020 students from K-12, serving mainly to Tibetan children from Tibet.
5. ***Tibetan Children's Village School, Chauntra***, is located some 65kms from Dharamsala and is in close proximity to the TCV School at Suja. It was set up in the early 1970s and as on 31 March 2018, the school has 818 students from K-10. The school serves Tibetan children born in exile as well as those who fled Tibet in recent times.

4.2 TCV curriculum

TCV functions as an autonomous school system and therefore, it is not directly under the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGiE). However, TCV shares similar political and cultural agenda and worldviews with the TGiE. In fact, for most of the time, TCV has played a far greater role in the Tibetan exile education than the TGiE's Department of Education. It educated nearly half of the Tibetan refugee student population for many decades; spearheaded the move to vernacularize and Tibetanize the primary education in the 1980s; produced textbooks for primary-level math, science and social studies, and distributed them to all the Tibetan schools; trained primary-level teachers to teach in mother-tongue, etc.

TCV's mission statement is ubiquitous and appears on most of the official documents and artifacts such as the institutional website, Educational Manual, School Calendar, School magazines, etc. The mission and the nature of the organization are encapsulated in the following sentence:

> "The mission of Tibetan Children's Villages – an integrated charitable organization – is to ensure that all Tibetan children under its care receive a sound education, *a firm cultural identity* [emphasis added] and become self-reliant and contributing members of the Tibetan community and the world at large". (Tibetan Children's Village, 2007, p. xiv)

These four missions underpin all the formal and non-formal curricular programs of the TCV schools. Highly condensed in the second half of the sentence are missions of TCV. The first mission is to provide a 'sound education' to children under its care. The sound modern education is elaborated in other official

documents to mean modern school subjects like science and technology, math, foreign languages, social sciences, etc. The second mission of bequeathing 'a firm cultural identity' relates directly to the project of nation-building and national identity construction, and is often seen as the *raison d'etre* for TCV's very existence. In many official documents, this is explained in terms of teaching and learning of Tibetan language, history, politics, culture, and arts, etc. The *Minutes of the 31st TCV Education Development Council Meeting* states that "TCV is a Tibetan school. One of its main missions is to give the Tibetan children under its care an education deeply rooted in their culture and identity" (Tibetan Children's Village, 2016, p. 41). The second pillar of the TCV mission - Tibetan identity and cultural education - is seen as "the very purpose why TCV exists!" (p. 40). The official documents further elaborated the goals of TCV schools into the following seven points (Tibetan Children's Village, 2007, p. xiv):

1. Provide parental care and love
2. Develop a sound *understanding of Tibetan identity and culture* [emphasis added]
3. Develop character and moral values
4. Provide effective modern and *Tibetan education* [emphasis added]
5. Provide child -centered learning atmosphere in the schools
6. Provide environment for physical and intellectual growth
7. Provide suitable and effective life and career guidance for social and citizenship skills

The goals of education reiterated and reaffirmed the importance of Tibetan identity and culture alongside academic and intellectual growth. Since a large proportion of children studying in TCV schools 'new arrivals' from Tibet, providing parental care and love is also deemed as an important goal of the institution.

4.2.1 Formal curriculum

TCV schools are affiliated to and accredited by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) under the Government of India, New Delhi. As such TCV follows the basic curricular framework formulated by the CBSE. However, taking advantage of the leeway that the CBSE framework provides, especially at the primary school level, TCV has its own mother-tongue based curriculum and instruction for primary children since the 1980s. In addition to that, the school system also teaches the Tibetan language from K-12, and host of other Tibetan cultural and heritage learning through both formal and informal curriculum.

The education structure is divided into four main phases as described below (Tibetan Children's Village, 2007), and the subject-wise weekly period allocation is shown in Table 4.

1. ***Pre-primary education***: consisting of three-year Montessori education, catering to children of ages 3 to 5 and is conducted entirely in the Tibetan language with culturally-relevant Montessori materials and teacher guidelines developed by TCV itself.
2. ***Primary education***: consisting of grade one to five, roughly parallel to age group 6 to 11. The language of instruction for all subjects is Tibetan with textbooks developed by TCV and the Department of Education of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. The core subjects taught include Tibetan language, environmental studies, social studies, general sciences, and math. English as the second language begins from grade four. Alongside, TCV also provides classes for traditional music and dance, drawing, and computer and information technology.
3. ***Secondary education***: consisting of grade six to ten with Tibetan, English, Math, Science and Social Studies as the main subjects. The primary language of instruction changes to English from grade six, and the Tibetan language is taught as a language. For grade six to eight, Tibetan history is taught in the Tibetan language as a part of the social studies. Likewise, lessons are also provided on Tibetan Buddhism, traditional Tibetan music and dance, etc. Hindi is taught as the third language from grade six to eight.
4. ***Senior secondary education***: comprising of grade eleven and twelve, and at this level, students are tracked into three streams viz. Science, Humanities, and Commerce according to their choice. The language of instruction is English. However, the Tibetan language is taught as a language.

Table 4: Weekly (day 1-7) period allocation for subjects at different grade levels

Subjects	**Grade 1-2**	**Grade 3-5**	**Grade 6-8**	**Grade 9-10**
Tibetan language	16	8	6	7
English language*		9	6	7
Math	8	8	6	7
General science		4	6	6
Social studies		4	6 (4+2)	6
Riglam/value education	1	1	1	1
Computer		1	1	2
Library	2	1	1	1
Music	2	1	1	

Art	1	1	1	
Physical education	2	1	1	1
Guidance & counseling			1	1
Hindi			2	
TOTAL	**32**	**39**	**39**	**39**

Source: (Tibetan Children's Village, 2016).

*In 2015, TCV decided to delay the introduction of English as the second language to grade four by 2019 as per the Basic Education Policy of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

From the subjects listed in the formal curriculum of TCV schools, several subjects are intimately linked to the project of nation-building in exile and construction of Tibetan national identity. The key amongst them is the teaching of Tibetan social studies at the primary level which is an amalgam of contents related to Tibet's culture, history and politics, and the systematic teaching of the Tibetan history at middle school level. Likewise, the Tibetan language teaching from K-12 is an important component of nation-building in exile. India's CBSE has recognized the Tibetan language as one of its many subjects thereby allowing Tibetan children to sit for Tibetan language national examination at the tenth and twelfth grades. The diasporic existence puts the Tibetan exile community in a situation of 'linguistic anxiety' due to the pressure from the dominant languages of the host country. Under such a scenario of displacement and mainstreaming pressures, the importance of native language as a marker of an ethnic group's identity gets accentuated. Therefore, the language curriculum not only promotes the learning of Tibetan language but also transmits Tibetan cultural, religious and historical knowledge (Wangdu, 2013).

Other subjects relevant to the construction of Tibetan national identity are the teaching of *Riglam* (Tibetan Buddhist dialectical debate), Buddhist religious instruction, Tibetan traditional music, and dance education, etc. The project of nation-building and construction of a national identity is permeated across the other non-formal curricular areas and in the school culture.

4.2.2 Co-curricular programs

It seems informal curriculum or the after or before-school programs play an equally important role as is the case with the formal curriculum. Since TCV schools are residential schools, their students partake in various programs and events before or after school, or during the weekends. A closer look at the school diary (Tibetan Children's Village School, 2017) furnishes a diverse

assortment of programs and activities many of which are important to the project of nation-building and construction of Tibetan national identity.

All the TCV schools have school diary or calendar, a small bilingual booklet with information on school rules, list of members of various school committees, list of school holidays, lyrics of national and other important songs, and the monthly activity calendar. A close look into the school diary provides an overarching purview of the purposes and directions of the TCV schools. The co-curricular activities spread across the span of an academic year can be divided into four main categories on the basis of their nature.

- ***Games and Sports:*** Football, basketball, marathon, inter-house athletics meet.
- ***Literary and academic programs:*** Tibetan handwriting, Tibetan/English elocution, Tibetan/English poem presentation, Tibetan/English read aloud day, Tibetan/English debate, Tibetan/English book fair, Math/Science Day, Career day, Club day, class-wise Tibetan song presentation, community service day, etc.
- ***Cultural programs:*** A month-long after-school program called *Tibet Our Country*, annual Inter-house cultural competition (performing arts), Sing song evening, etc.
- ***Religious:*** Monthly Sung-choe (Buddhist religious instruction), Monthly Sangsol (Buddhist incense burning prayer), Monthly Soltsog (Buddhist ritual of offerings), a month-long Riglam (Tibetan Buddhist dialectical debate), annual Kagyur Reading (Mass reading of the entire Buddhist canon, consisting of more than a hundred volumes of scriptural books, usually completed in three full-day reading by older students and teachers).

Aside from the sporting events, the majority of the other co-curricular or after-school programs are directly or indirectly related to the project of nation-building and construction of Tibetan national identity. One of one the most important after-school program is the *Tibet Our Country Project.* This is a month-long after-school program where each class undertakes a student-led collaborative study on one aspect of anything related to Tibet's culture, history, geography or politics. The *TCV Educational Manual* states that the project is created "to develop an understanding of who we are as Tibetans – our culture, our language, and our way of life, our worldview, our history, our customs, our patriotism and a host of other elements that go into being a Tibetan" (Tibetan Children's Village, 2007, p. 194). At the end of the month-long study, on the concluding day, display, presentation and celebration are held in the school hall. Likewise, socialization into Buddhist heritage and way of life is an important

component of constructing Tibetan national, ethnic and cultural identity. During the field visit, an interesting 'Nationalism Week' (*Rgyal-zhen bdun-phrag*) celebration was observed in one of the schools. This week-long after-school program features various literary and cultural events such as essay writing, poetry recitation, sing-song, quiz, lectures, painting and calligraphy, etc. The central theme of all the events is nationalism, expressing one's love for Tibet. Figure 3 shows the stage decoration of a sing-song program during the week. The stage is full of Tibetan national flags of various sizes, and the participating children were all dressed in Tibetan traditional costumes. In the middle of backstage, there is a map of Tibet colored with the Tibetan national flag, and "I love Tibet" (*Nga bod-la dga'*) is written on it. The entire program was conducted in the Tibetan language and everything on the stage was written in it. The 'nationalism week' program and the stage décor shows the importance attached to national identity and nationalistic feeling. It deploys various symbols or markers associated with national identity such as national flag, map, traditional dress, language, etc. Later, it was learned that this kind of nationalism week program is also observed in other schools where the data were collected.

Figure 3: Nationalism week celebration at the Tibetan Children's Village School, Gopalpur. Photo source: The school's Facebook page.

4.2.3 The school culture

Every academic year, all the TCV schools observe, celebrate or commemorate a range of festivals and important events. The school dairy (Tibetan Children's Village School, 2017) carries a '*list of holidays'* during which schools remain closed, and students and staffs take part in the function of the day. Some of

these events are specific to school contexts whilst others are part of larger community-wide events and celebrations. The importance attached to observing and celebrating certain specific events or festivals reflect the socio-cultural and political leanings of the Tibetan community in general and the TCV schools in particular. The school diary listed sixteen holidays, some of which are specific to school context like – Parents Day observed on the Dalai Lama's mother's birthday (March 5); SOS Day on June 23 as TCV is a member of SOS Kinderdorf International; Teachers Day on September 5 as celebrated across India; TCV Founding Anniversary on October 23; and Children's Day on November 14 as celebrated across India. Five holidays are Buddhist religious events based on Tibetan lunar calendar – *Chos-'phrul Dus-chen* (Buddha's performance of miracles); *Sa-ga Zla-ba* (Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death); *'Dzam-gleng Spyi-bsang* (establishment of Samye, the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet in eighth Century CE); *Chos-skor Dus-chen* (Buddha's first sermon); *Lha-'bab Dus-chen* (Buddha's descent from heaven). Rest of the holidays observed are primarily political in its character - Tibetan National Uprising Day on March 10; Birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on July 6; Indian Independence Day on August 15; Democracy Day of Tibet on September 5 celebrating the establishment of democratic structure of the Tibetan exile polity; Gandhi Jayanti or birthday on October 2; and Nobel Peace Prize Day on December 10 celebrating the conferment of the said prize to the Dalai Lama in 1989 for his commitment to resolve Tibet issue through non-violence means. These political commemorations and celebrations uphold and bequeath a national memory of occupation, resistance, and struggle.

These festivals and observances show the schools and the larger community's efforts at socializing children into a certain religious-cultural heritage and political consciousness. Observation of a number of Buddhist religious events during which children engage themselves in rituals, prayers, and religious sermons highlights the predominance of Buddhism in the construction of Tibetan cultural identity. During the observation of events of political nature such as the Tibetan National Uprising Day, senior students partake in the protest rallies against China. The list of holidays also reflects a compromise Tibetan schools have made to function smoothly within the Indian system of education. For example, Indian Independence Day and Gandhi's birthday are celebrated by inviting local Indians to the school programs, and Teachers' Day and Children's Day are celebrated on September 5 and November 14 as in all Indian schools.

The school calendar also includes lyrics of national anthems and 'national' or official songs which are sung often during the school morning assembly or during festivals and commemorative events. The list of songs reflects school's

efforts at political socialization of children. The bulk majority of the songs are overtly political in their characters with lyrics that show no hesitation in using strong language. Communist China is described as "imperialist" and the "enemy of the faith", and Tibet is presented as "land of spirituality". The adoption of a national anthem after their arrival in India shows Tibetan exile's efforts at nation-building by creating modern signifiers of a nation.

1. ***National Anthem of the Great Nation of Tibet*** (*Bod rgyal-khab chen-po'i rgyal-glu*): composed by the Dalai Lama's junior tutor, Trijang Rinpoche, sometime in 1950s, its popularity as the Tibetan national anthem became established only in exile. It is banned in Tibet by the Chinese. Written in highly classical poetry, the lyric extols the radiance of Buddhism in bringing happiness to the people of Tibet and victory over the dark force of ignorance.
2. ***National Anthem of India*** (Written in Hindi): Indian national anthem is sung at various school and community-wide events.
3. ***The Wisdom of Knowledge*** (*Mkhyen-pa'i ye-shes*): is the TCV school song composed in a highly classical poetic language.
4. ***New Governance of Happiness*** (*Dde-skyid gsar-skyong)*: is a patriotic song eulogizing the Dalai Lama's leadership and the Tibetan system that blend religion and polity. It calls for unity amongst Tibetans of the three provinces.
5. ***Unity of brethren*** (*Spun-lda chig-sgril*): is a political song calling for unity between Tibetans from the three traditional provinces of Tibet. It reminds Tibetan people of the suffering under the Chinese and urges them to work for the cause of freedom.
6. ***People's Uprising Song*** (*Mi-mang langs-glu*): is a political song sung during the commemorative event of the 10th March 1959 Tibetan people's uprising against the Chinese occupation and rule. It calls for 'patriotic' Tibetans to rise up to drive out the 'Red Chinese' who are described as imperialists and enemy.
7. ***New Birth of Democracy*** (*Dmangs-gtso gsar-bzhad*): is a political song sung on the Tibetan Democracy Day observed every year on September 5. It celebrates the democratization of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.
8. ***The Melody of the Sixtieth*** (*Drug-chu'i dbyang-ldan*): is a song composed during the sixtieth birthday celebration of the Dalai Lama, and since then is sung every year during the Dalai Lama's birthday celebration on July 6.

9. ***March 10 Commemorative Song*** (*Gsum-bchu'i dran-glu*): is a political song sung during the commemorative event held every year on March 10 to remember the 1959 event.
10. ***Tibetan Youth Congress Solidarity Song*** (*Gzhon-nu'i mthun-gzhas*): is the official song of the Tibetan Youth Congress, the largest NGO of Tibetan exiles that spearhead majority of the protests and rallies against China.

Of the songs listed above, the *People's Uprising Song* and the *March 10 Commemorative Song* are the most politically-driven ones. These were composed in the early years of exile in the 1960s when the memories of occupation and repression were fresh and passions running high. With the adoption of Middle Way Policy (seeking genuine autonomy for Tibet, instead of complete independence) by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in the late 1980s, the tone of anti-China rhetoric in official documents and utterances has been reduced considerably. However, these songs continued to be sung, mainly by students every year during the March 10 commemoration events organized by political NGOs. The full lyric of the *People's Uprising Song* is translated and reproduced here:

Rise up!
For decades
From flesh to bone
We have been tortured by the enemy.

In the year 1959,
Patriotic people, out of desperation and without a choice
Stood up for the truth.
Rise up, rise up the people of Tibet,
Rise up in our support, people of the world.
Bear witness to the truth.

Looking after Tibet as his own,
The great protector and leader,
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
Is the leader of Tibetans inside and outside.

Enemy butchers with blood-stained hand,
Imperialist Red China will be driven out of Tibet.
Rise up, patriotic people.
(Tibetan Children's Village School, 2017, p. 11)

The 2017 School diary of the TCV School, Upper Dharamsala, carries 20 short and long quotations by the Dalai Lama. Most of them (19) are on the importance of education and human values such as compassion, etc. One quotation speaks about their life in exile and could be construed as somewhat political in nature: "From the day we became refugees, our basic objective was to rise to the very place where we have fallen down" (Tibetan Children's Village School, 2017, p. 3). It certainly represents the centrality of the Dalai Lama in the lives of Tibetan exiles.

4.2.4 A typical school day

The overwhelming majority of the children in the five TCV schools live within the campus in 'Homes' (about 20 children of mixed gender with a foster mother) for younger children, and 'Hostels' for senior boys and girls separately with a warden or a matron. Therefore, aside from school vacations, children live on the school campus. This allows TCV schools to organize a diverse assortment of co-curricular programs before and after the formal classroom teaching.

Children usually wake up early around 5:30am, clean their homes and the surroundings, clean themselves and have breakfast. Like a family, children living in each home/hostel eat daily three meals together in the dining hall. Before eating, they say a Buddhist prayer of offering. Following this, children assemble in the school hall from 7 to 7:30am for the morning prayer and meditation session, mostly lead by the school's religious/spiritual teachers. Prayers children read and recite daily include a devotional poem written by the Dalai Lama called "Words of Truth" (*Bden-tshigs smon-lam*) which is a plea invoking Buddha's compassion to the sufferings of the Tibetan people. It was written in 1960 for "restoring peace, the Buddhist teachings, and the culture and self-determination of the Tibetan people in their homeland" (Dalai Lama, 2019), and has since then become an essential recitation at the community and school prayers as well as at the political protests and rallies. One of the stanzas ran like this (Dalai Lama, 2019):

> May this heartfelt wish of total freedom for the whole of Tibet,
> Which has been awaited for a long time,
> be spontaneously fulfilled;
> Please grant soon the good fortune to enjoy
> The happy celebration of the spiritual with temporal rule.

Following the morning prayer, children head to their respective classroom for an hour-long self-study session. The formal opening of the school day begins at 8:45am with the morning assembly attended by all students and teachers, usually held on the school ground. Morning assembly starts with a short Buddhist prayer (invoking *Jamphel-Yang*, the Buddha of wisdom) followed by patriotic rituals like the singing of the Tibetan national anthem or one of the official songs. The school headmaster/headmistress makes official announcements. Each day, different activities were held during the morning assembly such as sharing of important news, reading advice or quotes, teacher's talk, etc. During the field visits, reading of the Dalai Lama's quotes or short advice was observed in many schools.

After the morning assembly, students return to their classrooms and the formal classroom teaching starts at 9am. There are 6-7 periods in a day, each with an hour duration. In between students get a short break and one-hour lunch break. The formal instructional session ends at 4pm. Following the end of the classroom teaching, children return to their homes or hostels, change their uniform, and join various co-curricular activities, mainly games and sports, for about an hour. Children return to their respective homes or hostels for dinner at 6pm, which is followed by the evening prayers. From 7 to 8:30pm, a self-study session is held either in the children's homes or in the classrooms. Usually once a week or once a fortnight, in lieu of evening self-study, children assemble in the school hall for literary or cultural programs like debate, elocution, song and dance or lectures. Children go to bed between 9 to 10pm.

4.2.5 A typical classroom

Most of the classrooms in TCV schools are similar in terms of their size and seating arrangements. Generally, each class has between 25 to 35 students. The rows of desks and chairs face the green chalkboard. The teacher's table and chair are on one side of the chalkboard. Near the chalkboard is the 'altar'. An altar is an important component of Tibetan Buddhist house where holy images or statues are put on display and offerings are placed in front of them. The altars in the classroom are relatively simple and modest. It has a framed wall-hanging image of *Jamphel-Yang* (the Buddha of wisdom) and/or the 14th Dalai Lama, adorned with traditional Tibetan white scarf. Right below the holy image(s) is the seven-bowl offerings of water and some flowers. The elaborateness of the altar differs from one classroom to another, but these basic elements are present in all the classrooms. Many classrooms have at least one Tibetan national flag on the wall, either big one printed on fabric or small flag

printed on paper. There are two soft-boards in each classroom, which are filled with students' essays and poems in Tibetan and English language. All the classrooms are decorated with charts containing academic contents, drawings, tables, formula, etc. in both the languages. There are also other charts containing images and contents related to Tibetan culture like the eight-Auspicious symbols, four-harmonious siblings, etc. There are no audio-visual technologies in the classroom.

4.3 Conclusion

As it is clear from the above description, formal and informal learning in the TCV schools lay considerable emphasis on providing Tibetan linguistic, cultural, historical and political education to the younger generation. These domains of learning are intimately linked to the project of nation-building and construction of the Tibetan national identity. Equally important are the school ethos - everyday rituals and celebrations that socialize Tibetan children into various political, cultural and historical legacies. A Tibetan exile succinctly summarizes this socialization in the following lines (Choephel, 2013):

> We were often told that India was just a temporary home and we must, one day, return to our real home in Tibet. As a child, I had difficulty trying to understand this concept but I used to sing *Long Sho* (stand up), the patriotic song, with passion, thumping my foot as hard as I could for the last line that tells the 'Chinese to get out of Tibet'. (p. 134)

The daily reproduction of Tibetan nationhood, like singing of the Tibetan national anthem during the morning assembly or seeing an image of Tibetan national flag on the classroom wall, plays important role in the construction and normalization of Tibetan national identity for children. Macro structures like national identity or nationalism are "created and reproduced at a 'micro' level, that is through social relations and routine practices of everyday life" (Özkırımlı, 2000, p. 231). He calls the integration of nationalism into everyday situations as 'everyday nationalism'. These subtle everyday practices and rituals are as important as the overt forms of teaching, especially the teaching of the national master narratives via history education, in influencing children's national identity development.

5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This chapter discusses several key research methodological issues: research design and the methodologies for data collection; the frameworks for data analysis; data organization and the analysis; and the issues concerning research ethics. The first issue deals with questions like what data to collect, where to collect them, and how to collect the required data. The second issue is concerned with the question of how to analyze the collected data in order for it to yield meaningful and reliable interpretative results. These issues were resolved by taking into consideration the overarching nature and purpose of the research, the specific research questions pursued, and the nature of research materials collected for this study. These were then juxtaposed with research methods that would provide more comprehensive and reliable answers.

5.1 Methodological considerations

As previously explained in the introductory chapter, this study seeks to address two key research questions, which are reiterated here:

1. How does the project of nation-building and construction of national identity manifest itself in the Tibetan social studies and history textbooks in the Tibetan refugee schools?
2. How does history teachers perceive history education and its role in the nation-building and construction of national identity in the Tibetan refugee schools?

In order to address these research questions, a conscious choice was made vis-a-vis the selection of research methods. In the subsequent stages, the following questions were considered and deliberated upon: what kinds of data would help answer the research questions in more comprehensive ways? What instruments would be most useful in collecting the required data? Where would those data be available and accessible? And what data analytical frames would yield meaningful interpretative results? The work on research methods and data collection began as soon as the work on this research project started in August 2015.

By the end of 2015, it was decided that the social studies and Tibetan history textbooks for grade 1-8, classroom observation and semi-structured interviews with primary social studies teachers and middle school Tibetan history teachers would produce the relevant data for answering the research questions. This is because the Tibetan refugee schools have vernacularized and Tibetanized curriculum and instruction at the primary level, making it an important phase of schooling for nation-building and national identity construction. Likewise, the schools teach Tibetan history to middle school students (grade 6-8) using the Tibetan language as the language of instruction, even though all other subjects are taught in English from grade 6 onwards. As explained previously, when children move to secondary level (grade 6 upwards), Tibetan refugee schools adhere more closely to India's Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum leading to significant reduction in the teaching of contents related to Tibet's history, culture and politics. Thus, primary and middle school classes are the primary sites for education in nation-building and construction of Tibetan national identity.

In addition, textbooks can be described as the most important curricular artifacts in school education. Especially in the South-Asian contexts, where Tibetan refugee schools are physically and pedagogically located, there is a strong tendency of relying primarily on a single textbook (Yashpal Committee, 1993; Kumar, 2002). Therefore, textbook analysis holds high interpretative value for this research. Since the curriculum documents and the textbooks acquire meaning only in the classrooms where children, teacher, and text interact in a complex relationship, the study of teachers' pedagogical practices and the classroom ethos are also indispensable for unpacking the complex dynamics of classroom teaching. It is the lived experience that is the crux of education. As such, it was decided to conduct classroom observations of social studies and Tibetan history lessons, followed by semi-structured interviews with the teachers whose lessons were observed. To gain a general understanding of the issues, the number of informants was fixed around 15 teachers. The interview and observation data were expected to help in gaining a deeper understanding of the role of teachers and their teaching in the project of nation-building agendas via social studies and history education. Since teaching is a highly autobiographical act in which teachers' identities and values play a tremendous role in shaping the classroom instruction, the study of their role as mediators between the state and the child is an important one to understand nation-building project in education.

It was decided to deploy critical discourse analysis and qualitative thematic analysis as the overarching methods for analyzing the research data. Critical discourse analysis is employed for analyzing textbooks, whereas the interview

data are subjected to a qualitative thematic analysis using both deductive and inductive coding approaches. These methods for data analysis were chosen primarily on the basis two reasons: firstly, they are well-suit for analyzing the types of data that the researcher has collected and secondly, these methods are appropriate for answering the research questions raised in this study. The following sections offer detail explanations about the selection of field sites; data collection procedures; and frameworks for data analysis.

5.2 Selection of the field site

Field sites are of prime importance to any research project. The selected field site should yield the best possible data with the help of which the research questions can be addressed adequately. This section explains how field sites were selected and how access is obtained for collecting the required data.

5.2.1 Selecting the field site

Since all the Tibetan refugee schools use single textbook uniformly, obtaining the primary social studies and middle school Tibetan history textbooks was a relatively easy task. Two key research sites were identified – the Department of Education (DOE) of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGiE) and the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV). This is because the DOE functions as the overarching body that oversees, among other things, the formulation and publication of curricular documents and textbooks, and TCV is the largest school system which is also involved in the production of primary level textbooks. The majority of the primary level environmental studies (EVS) and social studies textbooks were written and published by TCV until 2015. All the middle school Tibetan history textbooks, and since 2015 all the primary social studies textbooks were published by the DOE. All the required textbooks are available in these two sites. Likewise, the digital versions of some of the textbooks are openly accessible on the Department of Education's official website (https://sherig.org/en/).

As for the classroom observation and semi-structured interviews, five schools run by TCV, located in the state of Himachal Pradesh in North India were selected as the field sites. This selection is based on several important factors. Firstly, TCV is the largest Tibetan refugee school system with 13 large secondary and senior secondary schools, several vocational training centers, and a college under its administration. According to the 2018 school data, TCV schools have a total enrolment of 7904 students, which is 41.5 percent of the

total student population in the Tibetan refugee schools (Department of Education, 2018). Secondly, TCV has been at the forefront of Tibetan refugee education, spearheading the project of vernacularizing and Tibetanizing the primary education in the 1980s; preparing and publishing primary-level social studies, math, and science textbooks in the Tibetan language; and providing trainings to primary teachers to teach the mother-tongue based primary curriculum. Thirdly, a bulk majority of Tibetan children fleeing Tibet since the 1980s were admitted and educated in the TCV schools. These factors make TCV schools important sites for engendering and fashioning national identities for young Tibetans born in exile or fled Tibet in recent years. The five schools where data for this research were collected are:

1. Tibetan Children's Village School, Upper Dharamsala
2. Tibetan Children's Village School, Lower Dharamsala
3. Tibetan Children's Village School, Gopalpur
4. Tibetan Children's Village School, Suja
5. Tibetan Children's Village School, Chauntra

It was decided not to anonymize the field sites because these TCV schools are very large in terms of the number of children and teaching staff. Disclosure of information on the schools is deemed important for explaining the research context well. Besides, the identity of the teachers who were interviewed for this study is fully protected. They are anonymized with a code name, and there is no way the reader can tell who is from which school from the statements quoted in the finding chapters.

5.2.2 Gaining access

In order to gain access to the field sites, the researcher has followed three-tier steps. At first, communication was established with the Education Director of TCV. In the domain of education, Education Director has the highest authority in TCV schools. All the principals of respective TCV schools are held accountable to the Education Director. An email explaining the research project and requesting field access to five TCV schools was sent to the Education Director in the beginning of 2016. Secondly, following the Education Director's approval and support for the research, email and telephonic communications were established with the principals of the five schools, explaining the purpose of the research and how the researcher intends to collect the data. All the principals gave their consent for the school visits and assured their cooperation and support for the research. In early June 2016, the researcher met each principal and chalked out the schedule for school visits and

drew up a list of teachers whose lessons could be observed. Finally, each individual teacher was approached, and the researcher explained the purpose of the research and the types of data he intends to collect. Apart from one teacher, who expressed uneasiness in the lesson observation, all the other teachers readily gave consent to the researcher to observe their classroom teaching and to participate in the semi-structured interview. Teachers also gave their consent for audio recording of their lesson and the interview. Complying fully with the protocols of research ethics, the teachers were then requested to fill up and sign the consent letter. A copy of the consent letter was given to each teacher, and the researcher explained each clause one by one. In particular, the teachers were made aware of the fact that they can withdraw their participation any time in the process, and that their identity will be fully protected. In the qualitative thematic analysis (chapter 8), the materials from the lesson observations and the interviews are quoted anonymously.

5.2.3 Scheduling fieldwork

The main field visit was conducted between June to September 2016. An academic year in the TCV schools starts in March and closes by the end of December every year. Therefore, the field visit was purposely scheduled at a time when the schools were in the middle of the academic year. This ensures that the teachers have already taught a considerable share of the curriculum contents, making it possible for them to reflect on their experience. Unlike the start and the end of a school year, the teachers have a more settled and relaxed work ethos in the middle of the year, which makes it an opportune time for collecting research data.

5.3 Data collection

The actual work on data collection involves a number of stages. After finalizing the types of data to be collected, the next logical step was to design appropriate instruments for collecting the required data. This was followed by visits to the field sites and collecting the research data with the help of the instruments. This section describes how the instruments for data collection were developed and how the fieldwork was carried out.

5.3.1 Data collection instruments

As for the primary level social studies and middle school Tibetan history textbooks, it was decided to collect the textbooks that are currently in use in the TCV schools. Thus, it requires no instrument. For the observation of the social studies and the Tibetan history lessons, a checklist was developed to guide the observation. The lesson observation checklist was developed on the basis of the research objectives and was refined during successive doctoral seminars of the supervisors. The checklist was specifically designed to help the researcher to focus on gathering pertinent information relating to the role of teaching social studies and history in the project of nation-building and construction of Tibetan national identity. As such, focuses were placed on observing goals of the lesson, presence/absence of multi-perspectivism, centrality of the textbook, pedagogical and epistemic openness, opportunities for students to construct knowledge, etc. The checklist contains 11 guiding questions (for details, see Appendix 1). As far as the semi-structured interviews were concerned, an instrument consisting of four sections with a total of 12 questions was designed. The four sections include – 1) introduction, 2) teacher's perceptions on teaching goals, 3) teacher's perceptions on textbook contents, and 4) teacher's perceptions on pedagogical approaches (for details, see Appendix 2). The 12 questions were intended to serve as a flexible framework, allowing the researchers to ask follow-up questions.

5.3.2 Data collection procedures

For acquiring the required curricular documents and the social studies and the Tibetan history textbooks, the researcher first inquired with several TCV schools regarding the edition of textbooks that they were using in the academic year 2016. After obtaining the list of textbooks that TCV schools were using in the academic year 2016, the researcher paid a visit to the Education Council section of the Department of Education (which is responsible for curricular and textbook matters) and obtained digital copies of the middle school (grade 6-8) Tibetan history textbooks and the recently published grade 3 social studies textbook. The other textbooks – grade 1-2 environmental studies and grade 4-5 social studies were published by TCV. The researcher bought hard copies of all the textbooks from local bookstores. Two curriculum documents that loosely guide the school instruction are available online. The first one is the *National Curriculum Framework-2005*, published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (2005), Government of India, and the second one is the *National curriculum framework for pre-primary, primary and middle school*

education-2010 (Based on Basic Education Policy for Tibetans in exile), published by the Department of Education (2011), Tibetan Government-in-Exile. A total of eight textbooks obtained from the DOE and TCV, all written in the Tibetan language, are listed below in grade-wise order:

1. Tibetan Children's Villages. (2007). *Me-tok gsar-pa: Khor-yug shes-bya* (Environmental studies for class I).
2. Tibetan Children's Villages. (2013). *Me-tok gsar-pa: Khor-yug shes-bya* (Environmental studies for class II).
3. Department of Education. (2015). *'Dzin-dra gsum-pa'i spyi-tsogs rig-gnas* (Social studies textbook for class III).
4. Tibetan Children's Villages. (2009). *'Dzin-dra bzhi-pa'i spyi-tsogs rig-gnas* (Social studies textbook for class IV).
5. Tibetan Children's Villages. (2006). *'Dzin-dra lnga-pa'i spyi-tsogs rig-gnas* (Social studies textbook for class V).
6. Department of Education. (2002a). *'Dzhin-rim drug-pa'i slob-deb: Rgyal-rabs chos-'byung dang rigs-lam nang-chos* (Tibetan Reader VI Part II).
7. Department of Education. (2002b). *'Dzhin-rim bdun-pa'i slob-deb: Rgyal-rabs chos-'byung dang rigs-lam nang-chos* (Tibetan Reader VII Part II).
8. Department of Education. (2012). *'Dzhin-rim brgyad-pa'i slob-deb: Rgyal-rabs chos-'byung dang rigs-lam nang-chos* (Tibetan Reader VIII Part II).

After gaining access to the field sites, and the teachers' consent for classroom observation and semi-structured interview, the researcher had followed three key steps. Firstly, a pre-observation meeting was held with each teacher, usually one or two days ahead of the actual lesson observation. The objective of this brief informal meeting was to understand what (content) the teacher is going to teach, as well as goals and methods of the lesson. As such, the teachers were requested to bring a copy of their lesson plans and were asked to explain it to the researcher. However, only four teachers actually came with a written lesson plan. After the meeting, the researcher read the lesson content from the textbook and the lesson plan in detail. This preparatory stage was very helpful in many ways, including ensuring better focus during the actual observation. The second stage is the lesson observation. During the observation, the researcher sat in a corner of the classroom to avoid distraction and note down observations as per the checklist. The entire proceeding of the lesson was audio-recorded. When the students were engaged in small group tasks, the researcher went around and sat in some groups to gain a closer look at what and how students were discussing or performing the task. Thirdly,

following the lesson observation, a semi-structured interview was held with each teacher. The average length of each interview is about one hour. Eight interviews were held immediately after the lesson observation, whilst the remaining interviews were conducted a day or two later. During the interview, questions were asked as per the interview guide. However, the researcher also asked many follow-up questions to probe further and to gain greater clarity. The entire interviews were conducted in the Tibetan language and all of them were audio-recorded. In a nutshell, a total of fifteen primary-level social studies and middle-school Tibetan history teachers were interviewed for this research, comprising of ten men and five women. Majority of the teachers (13) were born in Tibet and later fled into India, and all of the teachers have received their school education and higher education from schools and colleges run by the Tibetan exiles in India. In the academic year 2016, the average duration of their service in the schools is 16 years.

5.4 Data analysis framework

As mentioned earlier, this study has deployed two key methodological frameworks – critical discourse analysis and qualitative thematic analysis - to gain deeper analytical and interpretative insights into the research materials. The following section discusses in some length the central features of critical discourse analysis and qualitative thematic analysis so as to provide theoretical underpinnings to the two approaches. This is followed by an exposition on the procedures involved in their application during the data analysis.

5.4.1 Critical discourse analysis of the textbooks

All forms of social practices can be understood as having discursive aspects (Burr, 2015). The materials collected for this research – textbooks with texts and images, interviews, classroom observations, and field visit data – all possess discursive dimensions. Textbooks are, perhaps, the most important and most widely used curricular artifacts that teachers and students rely heavily on to support learning. In the case of social studies and history subjects, textbook production is a highly contested domain, as evident from the literature review discussed in chapter two (Kumar, 2002; VanSledright, 2011). Given the nature of the research questions pursued in this study and discursive nature of the textbooks as the research data, a critical discourse analysis seems to be the most suitable analytical and methodological means to unravel the complex discursive meanings embedded in the textbooks.

Drawing on the works of social constructionist and poststructuralist scholars like Foucault, Fairclough and others, critical discourse analysis is employed broadly as the method for textbook analysis in this study. Critical discourse analysis primarily concerns itself with the task of revealing the operation of discourses within a text, and it often entails a close examination of subject positions offered by the discourse and the power relations embedded in them. It also involves deconstruction of texts to reveal implicit systems of oppositions that may inhabit or occupy a position within the prevailing or the dominant discourse. Critical discourse analysis is built around several key methodological propositions which are used in this study as analytical lenses to yield meaningful interpretative results from the research materials.

Firstly, as opposed to seeing our knowledge as the direct perception of reality, critical discourse analysts believe in the social construction of reality. They argue that the discourse ***constructs*** reality. This means that our knowledge of the reality is socially constructed and produced, and by extension, are provisional and dynamic in nature. For every prevailing discourse or the common-sense knowledge on a particular object, event or person, there are potentially multiple alternative and marginalized discourses (Burr, 2015). Foucault (1972) defines discourse as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p. 49). Hall (2001) clarifies the Foucauldian idea in the following lines: "Discourse, Foucault argues, constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about" (p. 72). People reference the culturally and linguistically available discursive resources to interpret and construct reality in a certain way. The concept of discursive resources is similar to what Potter and Wetherell (1995) call as "Interpretative Repertoires" - the linguistic resources that people draw upon in constructing their accounts. They described interpretative repertoires as "clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images… They are available resources for making evaluations, constructing factual versions and performing particular actions" (p. 89). Thus, critical discourse analysts emphasize the constructive force of language and see it as a site of struggle and conflict. Therefore, the task of a critical discourse analyst is to examine how discourse constructs the object or the reality and unravel alternative and competing discourses. It should examine the range of discursive resources or rhetorical devices that are deployed to fashion a particular version of reality. For example, this analytical lens is applied to critically examine how the social studies and the Tibetan history textbooks define and *construct* Tibet as the homeland by using a variety of discursive resources, and how this

construction potentially destabilizes and challenges other ways of defining and constructing Tibet.

Secondly, critical discourse analysis is concerned with the historical and cultural relativity of knowledge. For instance, the production of textbook as an educational and social activity is carried out within specific historicity. According to Krishna Kumar (2002), the texts used for the teaching of history "are particularly sensitive to contemporary culture and politics, for the reason that the writing of history inevitably constitutes a response to the present" (p. 49). As a socially-produced and historically-located artifact, history textbooks carry within them social messages and are fully comprehensible only by taking recourse to the context in which it was written or produced in the first place. As such, subjecting textual sources to a process of ***historicization*** is crucial for meaning-making. Therefore, the social studies and the Tibetan history textbooks used by the Tibetan refugee schools have been analyzed in this study by placing them in their historical and material contexts, and identifying political or cultural forces that may have influenced and shaped their production and dissemination. For example, the textbooks include chapters and references to the independent nature of pre-1950 Tibet, and this can be explained by situating it in the larger polemics about the question of the historical status of Tibet between the Chinese Government and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Bakhtin (1981) argued that every discursive utterance is dialogic in that it involves the intermingling of several voices. Therefore, deconstructing text to uncover possible discursive countercurrent or heteroglossic character of discourse is important to critical discourse analysis. In this regard, intertextuality is utilized as an important conceptual tool to analyze the textbooks. Unlike the micro-social constructionist approaches like conversation analysis or discursive psychology where the focus of the analysis is confined to situated use of language and micro-semantic processes, critical discourse analysis, on the other hand, places the text in its historical, cultural, racial and gendered contexts and interpret them accordingly. In this regard, Wodak (2001) posits that discourse has four levels of context: the actual and immediate use of language or text; the relationship between utterances, texts, discourses and genres; the extra-linguistic sociological and institutional context of discourse; and the sociopolitical and historical contexts. Critical discourse analysis, as part of the macro-social constructionist approach, places greater emphasis on the last two levels.

Thirdly, the examination of the role of **power** in discourse is an important component of critical discourse analysis. Power shapes how discursive frameworks produce the reality in certain ways, rendering it visible and understandable, while simultaneously suppressing or at least obscuring

alternative views of that reality. Therefore, in discursive practices, power is both productive and repressive. It allows as well as limits the possibilities of understanding the object. In this way, the production and dissemination of discourse are intimately linked to the existing power relations of the society. Taking discourse analysis one step further, Foucault (1972) points out that the discourse (such as texts) provides a way of representing knowledge and is always constituted and shaped by the existing power relationships of the society. He argues that knowledge is used to dominate and regulate social groups, via discursive practices, which facilitate or limit, enable or constrain what can be said and done, and by whom. Thus, the production and distribution of discourse and knowledge are reflective of the social distribution of power. He divided power into two main categories, namely the 'sovereign power' and the 'disciplinary power'. The 'disciplinary power' operates via the production of knowledge that helps to control society without the use of overt coercive methods. Discourses have tremendous implications for what people can do or say or what can be done to them, thereby producing normality against which they can monitor their own behavior. In a similar vein, Apple (2014) raises the question 'whose knowledge is of most worth' and argues that the productions of textbooks are intimately connected to the power relations of the society. While acknowledging that power is productive, both Foucault and Apple reject the notion that power is absolute. They highlighted that there are possibilities for engaging in counter-hegemonic discourse and that a particular discourse's domination is not always guaranteed. Revealing the role of power in the production of school knowledge, via textbook, is a major lens employed in this study. Questions such as these are posed to the research data - how does power determine what knowledge is produced and known, or which discursive practices are heard? What alternative versions are ignored or suppressed? Or in other words, how does school historical knowledge reflect the power relations of the society? For example, the power relations within the Tibetan society, and power dynamics involving other actors, especially China, were examined while performing the critical discourse analysis of the textbooks. The prevailing dominant ways of categorizing the world inevitably rest on suppressed or hidden oppositional conceptions. Therefore, the deconstruction of texts helps in revealing the latent oppositional alternatives on which the dominant perspectives depend. Fairclough (1989) talks about power operating at two levels – the power *behind* language (larger socio-political forces) and the power *in* language (constitutive power of language itself). Conceptual tools such as the 'politics of mention' and 'pacing' are deployed to problematize the selective tradition of school history textbooks as the primary carrier of 'legitimate' official knowledge. What is included or not included, and how the

selected knowledge is presented in the social studies and the Tibetan history textbooks is guided by particular ways of constructing reality and envisioning legitimate knowledge and culture.

Fourthly, intertwined with its socially-constructed and power-laden nature, discourses also furnish ***subject positions*** to the people involved in it. Subject positions may be offered, claimed, accepted or resisted depending upon the circumstances. Critical discourse analysts argue that the subject positions bestowed upon a person or a group of people by discourse come with a system of rights and obligations, possibilities and constraints on their utterances and social actions. What can be said or done and by whom can be influenced by one's positioning in the discursive field. In this way, production and dissemination of discourse are closely related to social action. Burr (2015) wrote: "different construction also brings with it, or invites, a different kind of action from human beings… Constructions of the world therefore sustain some patterns of social action and exclude others" (p. 5). Therefore, it highlights the performative functions of language. Once we are offered a subject position or voluntarily inhabit one, a certain range of actions become possible or inevitable. For example, if a person is positioned as a 'patient' in the medical discourse, he or she then may be subjected to various invasive practices. As such, discursive positioning possesses regulatory power. The distribution of subject positions is also reflective of the existing power structures of society. Therefore, critical discourse analysts look for positioning that are made available by the use of discourse, and kinds of action that becomes possible or appropriate with a particular discursive positioning. In the context of this research, the analysis unravels the subject positions offered to the Tibetans and other actors involved in the historical narratives, and the possibilities for action that ensue from these discursive positioning.

School textbooks, especially the primary-level ones, are highly ocularcentral in nature with **images** spread across its pages. Images are especially powerful for evoking affective and evaluative reactions (Baumgartner, Esslen, & Jancke, 2006). Therefore, the critical discourse analysis focuses equally on visuals as it does on the texts. All the aforementioned lenses are deployed for analyzing texts as well as images and other forms of representations. In addition to that, Gillian Rose (2007) offers a useful framework in her exposition on critical visual methodology. She argues that there are three sites where images are assigned meanings - the site of production, the site of the image itself, and the site of audiencing. Analyzing each site requires the researcher to look at three modalities, viz, technological, compositional and social. This can be roughly summarized in the following questions:

1. How is the image produced?

2. What is there in the image?
3. What are the social, economic or political relations, institutions, and practices that surround an image and through which it is seen and used?

In alignment with the key analytical frames of discourse analysis highlighted above, Willig (2008) provides a helpful guideline for conducting discourse analysis consisting of six stages (Figure 4). These stages should not be seen as rigid lockstep procedures but rather as offering a flexible framework.

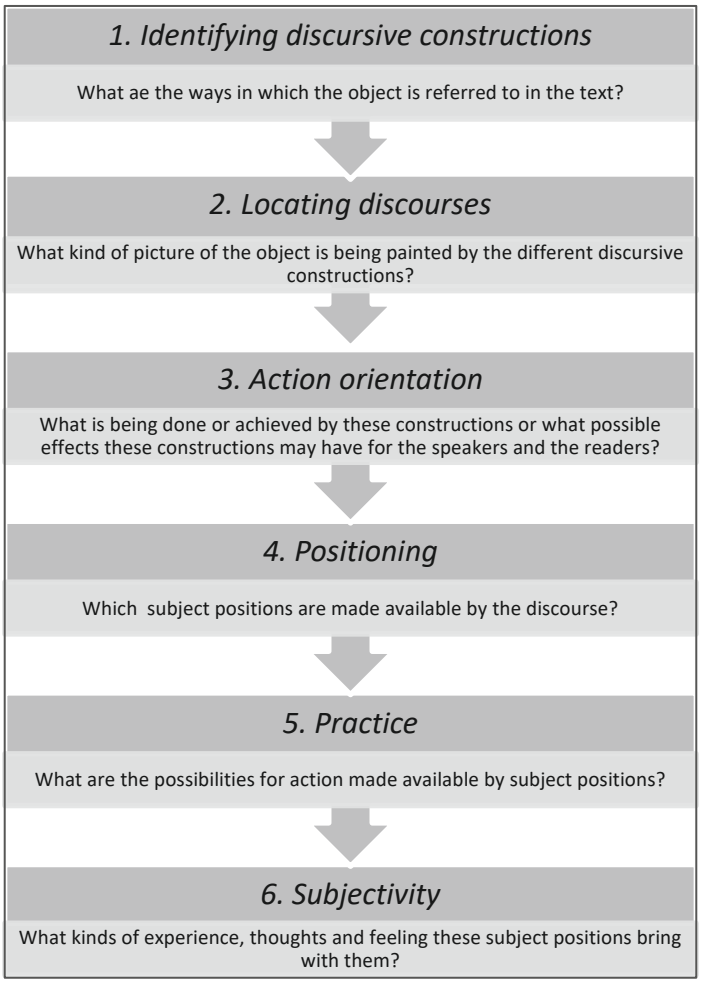

Figure 4: Willig's (2008) six stages to conducting critical discourse analysis.

To sum up, the following analytical questions were drawn from various traditions of discourse analysis, especially from the tradition of critical discourse analysis and Foucauldian discourse analysis. The research materials were then analyzed by posing these questions:

1. What kinds of discourses are present in the textbooks? How do the discourses *construct* the objects, the persons or the events?
2. What are the potential alternatives or oppositional constructions available?
3. What kind of *discursive resources* or interpretative repertoires are used in the textbooks to construct the object/person/event in certain ways?
4. How do the larger socio-cultural and historical *contexts* order and shape the discourses that are being generated?
5. In what ways are the discourses linked to the existing *power* relationships of the society?
6. What *subject positions* are on the offer, and what possibilities for action entail from the discursive positioning?

Using the analytical frameworks and tools described above, the social studies and the Tibetan history textbooks were analyzed by following certain steps. Firstly, textbooks were read a couple of times, and based on the reading, the contents of the textbooks were divided into two main parts – those dealing with general social studies topics like 'climate and weather', 'latitudes and longitudes', etc. and those dealing specifically with Tibet's history, culture and politics. Secondly, the subject contents related to Tibet were reread by posing the analytical questions described above. The analytical processes involve: locating the main discourses inhabiting the textbooks; identifying discursive resources used to support the discourse; historicizing the discourses by placing them within the broader socio-political and cultural circumstances; examining the power dynamics reflected in the production of the discourses; identifying subject positions made available by the discourses; and contemplating on possibilities for actions that come with the discursive positioning. The focus was placed not only on the selected content but also on the language forms in which it is presented as well as the use of corresponding images. Notations were kept on the margins of printout of the textbooks. Finally, the emerging themes from the critical discourse analysis were summarized and discussed against the backdrop of nation-building and construction of Tibetan national identity in diaspora.

5.4.2 Qualitative thematic analysis of the interview data

In addition to the critical discourse analysis of the textbooks, this research undertook a qualitative thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted with the social studies and the Tibetan history teachers. The thematic analysis involves a systematic search for key themes that offer a comprehensive

and valid description of the phenomenon (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman, 1997). The process entails identification of themes by subjecting the data to close reading and re-reading (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). It involves recognizing patterns and trends within the research data, and the emerging patterns colligated into themes which then form the unit for analysis and interpretation. It is a form of qualitative content analysis involving a process of systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data by assigning successive parts of the material to the categories of a coding frame (Schreier, 2013).

The three cardinal features of qualitative content analysis, as explained by Schreier (2013), can also be equally relevant to the qualitative thematic analysis. Firstly, the coding process in qualitative content/thematic analysis helps in the reduction of the amount of data, thereby helping researchers focus on the most relevant ones; namely those aspects of the data that relate to the overarching research questions. Secondly, it is highly systematic involving processes such as creating the coding frame, testing it by assigning segments of the material to the categories of the coding and modifying the coding frame as and when required. Thirdly, it is flexible as it allows construction of a flexible and comprehensive coding framework by using both theory-driven and data-driven coding approaches. These three features of qualitative content/thematic analysis help in providing a more valid description of the material.

Coding is a widely-used method for sorting and sifting the data, and by attaching labels to segments of the data, it helps in bringing researchers' analytical gaze focused on the pertinent themes. Through progressive focusing, it significantly reduces the data load and makes the task of analysis more manageable. Coding procedures help researchers see relevant themes or patterns in their data, making it possible for them to provide interpretations. This research adopted a hybrid approach of using both theory-driven deductive coding and data-driven inductive coding. It means a-priori template of codes was developed and applied on the data flexibly, whilst allowing new codes and sub-codes to emerge from the data itself. Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) suggested six stages to the coding processes, namely:

1. Developing the code manual
2. Testing the reliability of codes
3. Summarizing data and identifying initial themes
4. Applying template of codes and additional codes
5. Connecting the codes and identifying themes
6. Corroborating and legitimating coded themes

These six stages of data coding and those expounded by Schreier (2013) were employed in this study. Their frameworks were adopted more broadly to guide the coding of the research data in this study.

5.4.2.1 Transcription and translation

After conducting the interviews between July to August 2016, the researcher worked on simultaneous transcription and translation of the fifteen interviews from the audio-recordings. The transcription and translation were produced with due diligence, often consulting online Tibetan-English dictionary applications (like 'Tibetan' and 'Monlam-Dictionary', 'Monlam Grand Tibetan Dictionary') for certain Tibetan religious and cultural vocabularies. Some of the more specific Tibetan words/terms were bracketed in parenthesis and were included in the transcriptions. Wylie system of Tibetan transliteration is used throughout the monograph. Once a transcription-translation was completed, the text was revised and edited for language errors and typos.

5.4.2.2 Coding framework

After completing the transcription and translation of the interview materials, the researcher started working on building a flexible coding framework. As described earlier, both theory-driven and data-driven approaches were relied upon. The initial theory-driven codes were derived deductively from the theoretical framework, the research questions, and the interview guiding questions. This approach generated broader codes like 'nation-building goals', 'academic/disciplinary goals', 'learner-centered teaching', 'teacher-centered teaching', 'textbook-based teaching', 'multiple-source based teaching', etc. Based on the interview instrument, the coding framework was initially divided into three sections, namely the teachers' perceptions of teaching goals, textbooks, and pedagogy. Once this overarching coding framework was developed, it was used as a guide to go through three interview transcripts; apply and assign them wherever relevant, as well as create and assign new codes or sub-codes that emerge inductively from the data itself. At the end of this exercise, the coding framework was expanded considerably, with the inclusion of many new codes and sub-codes. All the sub-codes (which were to be assigned to the text) were provided with definitions, and in certain cases, further clarification notes or examples were attached to them.

This expanded coding framework was then piloted. A researcher in education, who is also well aware of the Tibetan refugee education contexts, was requested to apply the coding framework on the transcription of the interview conducted with the Teacher 9. By keeping the coding framework as a flexible guide, he was also requested to create new codes or sub-codes wherever necessary and note down suggestions for changes in the framework. In the meantime, the researcher of this study also applied the coding framework flexibly on the same interview transcript. The result of the trial shows a high

degree of inter-coder reliability, with around 80 percent matches in the codes assigned to various segments of the transcript. However, this trial proved instructive in a number of ways. Firstly, it led to further expansion of the coding framework with several new sub-codes. Secondly, some of the existing codes were renamed or rephrased to better reflect its intended meaning. Thirdly, the trial coder also suggested integrating some of the sub-codes in the section dealing with the teaching goals into a broader code titled 'political education'. Even though the sub-codes were retained to gain more analytical insights and clarity into the interview data, in the qualitative report writing, all the related sub-codes were discussed under one theme 'political education'. The trial resulted in the emergence of an updated and enlarged coding framework (see the appendix 3). The coding frame possesses three hierarchical levels – the main categories, the codes, and the sub-codes. Schreier's (2013) three requirements for developing a coding framework were taken as the guide. Firstly, the '*requirement of unidimensionality'* posits that each main category should cover only one aspect of the research material. For instance, the category of 'teaching goals' covers only those aspects of the materials where teachers discussed their teaching goals. Secondly, the '*requirement of mutual exclusiveness*' warrants that the sub-codes falling within one main category should be mutually exclusive. As such, each sub-code was defined clearly to establish its uniqueness. Finally, the '*requirement of exhaustiveness*' brings forth the importance of taking into account all parts of the research materials by the coding framework. This was achieved by keeping the coding framework flexible and allowing the opportunity to create and assign new codes and sub-codes throughout the application of coding processes.

5.4.2.3 Coding the data

Once the coding framework was ready, all the 15 interview transcripts were imported into *Atlas.ti* software MacBook version. The coding framework was also added to the software. Following this, each interview transcription was coded rigorously. Different colors were used to group sub-codes that fall under one category. The coding framework was used only as a guide, allowing new codes and sub-codes to emerge from the data itself. As the coding progresses, the coding framework was revised and expanded accordingly, by adding new codes and sub-codes as they were assigned to the text. Memos were also written whenever some thoughts or feelings arise and were linked to the relevant section of the transcript.

The coding of the entire interview transcripts on the Atlast.ti yielded 379 quotations attached to 30 sub-codes, which were broadly grouped into five main categories or themes, namely:

1. Teachers' perceptions on the teaching goals
2. Teachers' perceptions on the textbook contents
3. Teachers' perceptions on the pedagogical approaches
4. Teachers' perceptions on the nation-building challenges
5. The narrative structure of the textbook and teaching

In the final stage, the quotations attached to the 30 sub-codes were exported from the Atlas.ti into excel spreadsheets. This gives an opportunity to have a closer look at quotations attached to each code one by one and analyze them. With the focus much more narrowed down, it offered better insights into each sub-code and the quotations linked to them.

5.4.2.4 Writing of the analysis

After exporting all the sub-codes and the quotations linked to them, a systematic analysis was carried out by moving from the particulars to the general – from the sub-codes to the codes, and then to the categories or the themes. Firstly, a thorough reading of the quotations linked to each sub-code was done followed by establishing connections between various sub-codes that fall under a particular code. Similarly, all the codes in each theme were analyzed for patterns, similarities, and differences. Each thematic unit was then analyzed by explaining the general tendencies as well as the deviant cases.

Alongside, while interpreting the codes and themes, the researcher brought relevant contexts into the analysis as meanings of the participants' subjective experiences are embedded in its socio-cultural, cultural and historical contexts and locations. Likewise, themes that emerge from the analysis were interpreted in the light of the theoretical frameworks – whether the findings confirm, contradict or add new dimensions to the relevant theoretical positions. Therefore, wherever necessary, both relevant contextual information and theoretical frameworks were made available when discussing the research findings.

In the phenomenological traditions, writing of qualitative thematic analysis requires privileging the research participants' subjective point of view and acknowledging the context within which the phenomenon was studied (Leininger, 1994; Horsfall, Byrne-Armstrong, & Higgs, 2001). Its interpretive and analytical rigor is gauged in terms of the researcher's capability to demonstrate clearly how interpretations of the data have been achieved and to corroborate findings with excerpts from the interview transcript, thereby

providing readers direct access to the raw data (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). The participants' reflections, conveyed in their own words, strengthen the validity and credibility of the research (Patton, 2002). Therefore, the themes analyzed and discussed in this study were supported by verbatim quotations (translated from Tibetan to English) from the interview transcripts so that the processes of data analysis and interpretation remain grounded in the words of the research participants.

5.4.2.5 Lesson observation and field notes

The data gathered via classroom observations and other field notes were used primarily for triangulation purposes. The two main data for this research consist of the textbooks and the interview materials. The lesson observations and other field notes served as supplementary data as the semi-structured interviews were closely connected with the classroom observation. In fact, to a certain degree, lesson observations served as a point of reference during the interviews. They were invoked to corroborate, expand or contradict the findings gleaned from the analysis of semi-structured interviews or the textbooks. Critical episodes from the lesson observations were incorporated to highlight certain findings of the interview analysis. For instance, the interview focuses on the goals of teaching social studies and Tibetan history, and the teachers' claims pertaining to goals were analyzed by taking recourse to what was observed in the classroom teaching. There were cases where lesson observation and teacher's interview complement and support each other, whereas in some other cases, a gap was noticed between the two. Take the example of teachers' perceptions on teaching pedagogy. During the interview, many teachers claim that they predominantly use child-centered pedagogies and stress on student engagement. However, in the lived reality of actual classrooms, this was seldom observed. Most of the lessons observed were teacher-dominated with little opportunities for children to engage in meaningful construction of knowledge. Therefore, these supplementary data proved helpful in presenting a more complete analysis of history education and its role in the nation-building and construction of Tibetan national identity. They were used both to buttress certain points as well as to highlight some anomalies. On top of this, the data from classroom observations and field notes were used extensively to write the chapters (3 and 4) on the research contexts.

5.5 Research ethics and reliability

Ethical concerns pertaining to qualitative research have been diligently addressed throughout the processes of research design, data collection and maintenance, and data analysis and the writing of the qualitative report. Firstly, while designing the data collection instruments, due consideration was given to the ways in which classroom observation data were to be recorded, especially the question of whether or not to videotape the classroom teaching. Since video-taping of the classroom teaching would mean that many students will be recorded in the video, it poses many ethical concerns. Therefore, after in-depth consideration of pros and cons, it was decided to simply audio-tape the classroom teaching as that would help in gathering the required data. Secondly, prior to the actual data collection, authorizations and permissions were obtained from all the concerned authorities (like the Education Director of all TCV schools, principals of each school) and the research participants. For the lesson observations and the semi-structured interviews, written consent was signed by each participating teacher. The consent letter clarifies the purpose and nature of the data collection, and how the data will be kept and used. It clearly mentions that lesson observation will be audio-recorded, and the research materials gathered via classroom observation and semi-structured interview will be quoted anonymously and the identity of the participants will be fully protected. The research participants were also made aware of the right to withdraw their participation anytime during the course of data gathering and thereafter. Prior to signing the consent letter, the researcher and the participating teacher sat together and went over the eight-points listed in it. After the data collection, production of transcription was carried out assiduously. Research participants were given code number like 'Teacher-1', and any references to personal life in the interview that might expose their identity were omitted in the written transcription. The audio-recording and transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews are kept safely in an external hard-drive and are password protected. Finally, during the analysis and writing of the thesis, complete anonymity is maintained, and the research participants' identity remained fully-protected.

Likewise, the reliability and validity of the findings are of central concerns to this research, as they are all research. As such, a number of steps were taken to ensure that the data collection, data analysis, and the writing interpretative findings are reliable and valid. Firstly, the data and materials to be collected and the field sites were selected and decided carefully on the basis of the research questions and the guiding theories and concepts. The actual data collection procedures were followed and acted upon with due diligence and careful preparation. The semi-structured interviews were guided by carefully

pre-prepared questions, but at the same time flexible enough to allow the interviewer to ask follow-up questions and teachers to share their views openly. The classroom observations were also guided by a carefully-prepared checklist. Secondly, during the analysis, as alluded previously in this chapter, the initial coding framework was tested by two coders coding parts of the interview data independently, achieving a high-degree of inter-coder reliability. Finally, during the writing of the analysis, interpretations were backed and supported by direct quotes from the textbooks or from the interview transcripts. This direct access to raw data is of tremendous importance in privileging the local meanings of actions as interpreted by the participants themselves. The participants' reflections, conveyed in their own words, strengthen the validity and credibility of the research (Patton, 2002).

5.6 Challenges and reflections

As stated in the introduction, the researcher's own positionalities as a Tibetan refugee and an educator in the Tibetan refugee education system offer certain edges as well as pose challenges. Being an insider, the researcher possesses intimate knowledge of the research contexts including the language spoken by the participants. This provides access and insights into many areas which would otherwise have been somewhat difficult. Deep knowledge of contexts also allows the researcher to establish broader connections between history education, schooling, and life and struggle of a community in exile. However, as a member of the Tibetan exile community and having been schooled and socialized into its manifold legacies and values, the socio-historical locations of the researcher also pose challenges. This often requires the exercise of critical reflexivity and inhabiting the role of an insider as well as an outsider. It requires questioning of one's own assumptions and values and bringing forth a critical lens to the investigation. However, there is no denying the influence of one's socio-historical locations and positionalities on the research design and interpretation of the findings. Denzin (1986) rightly argued that "interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher" (p. 12). But critical reflexivity is exercised to mitigate and countervail overt forms of biases.

A number of challenges were encountered during the processes of data collection and analysis. These challenges were resolved by the application of critical reflexivity and taking recourse to the available resources. One of the major challenges pertain to the fact that the data collected were in the Tibetan language – both the social studies and Tibetan history textbooks as well as the interview materials. This requires enormous work on the translation. As for the

critical discourse analysis of the textbooks, only those portions of the textbook directly quoted in the finding chapters were translated from Tibetan to English. Whereas for the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, the entire interview materials were simultaneously transcribed and translated into English. It was a tedious process requiring a great deal of focus and hard work.

Conducting critical discourse analysis was a challenging task. As Fairclough (2001) admits, critical discourse analysis is "as much theory as method – or rather, a theoretical perspective on language…" (p. 121). Critical discourse analysis is an umbrella term which comprises of a variety of methodological positions. Because of its broad theoretical orientations and the lack of specific steps or procedures for analyzing a text, it was a grueling task to draw and build the analytical lenses that are well-suited for analyzing the research data and maintain a degree of faithfulness to the traditions of critical discourse analysis. This requires a lot of reading, going back and forth between reading and data analysis, and a certain degree of arbitrariness in terms of constructing the analytical framework.

During the data analysis and writing of the report, a certain gap started to emerge. In the hindsight, the researcher felt that several more follow-up questions would have yielded better interpretative results. For example, most of the teachers spoke about literacy in the Tibetan language as one of the major goals of teaching social studies and Tibetan history. However, some parts of the interview data collected in the summer of 2016 were not detailed enough to reveal whether the pursuit of literacy goal can be interpreted as part of the nation-building project of identity construction or promotion of intellectual development. Therefore, a follow-up field visit and supplementary data collection were carried out in the summer of 2018. During this field visit, eight of the original fifteen teachers were revisited and asked follow-up questions, especially those pertaining to literacy as one of the important goals of teaching social studies and Tibetan history. These teachers were the ones who highlighted literacy goals in the 2016 interviews. Their responses were incorporated into the analysis and writing of the qualitative report (chapter 8). Likewise, during the second field visit, additional data were collected on the school contexts such as information on after-school programs, school observations and commemorations, a typical school day, etc. These data further enriched the chapters explaining the school contexts.

6 DECOLONIAL NARRATIVES: ANALYSIS OF THE PRIMARY-LEVEL SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS

This chapter discusses the findings gleaned from critical discourse analysis conducted on the primary-level social studies textbooks currently in use in all Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) schools. The discussion is prefaced by a brief account describing the specific characteristics of the research contexts and the methodological approaches followed in the textbook analysis. This is meant to set the stage for meaningful interpretations of the research findings. Even though these issues have been dealt with in the preceding chapters (3, 4 and 5) in greater details, the relevant contexts are recalled and reiterated to establish explicit links with the interpretations of critical discourse analysis of the social studies textbooks of primary grades. The chapter identifies key discourses present in the aforementioned textbooks; analyzes constructive and performative functions of these discourses; identifies and analyzes discursive repertories that support and uphold the prevailing discourses in the textbooks, and; analyzes various subject positions afforded by them. It discusses these discourses in the light of broader Sino-Tibetan disputes and the circumstances of displacement and dispossession.

6.1 Research backgrounds

As discussed in the previous chapters (3 and 4), all Tibetan refugee schools in India are affiliated to and accredited by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). CBSE is a Board of Education for public and private schools, under the Union Government of India. Therefore, theoretically, all Tibetan refugee schools in India have to follow the basic curricular framework (the latest one being the National Curriculum Framework of 2005) and the textbooks prescribed by the CBSE. However, apart from secondary education where students have to face two high-stake matriculation exams at the end of tenth and twelfth grade, schools under the CBSE have considerable freedom to adapt school curriculum to meet their specific local needs and interests. This may be due to the fact that the CBSE serves a hugely diverse population in India with different cultural, linguistic, religious, ethnic, and historical

backgrounds. Thus, the CBSE framework is well-suited for the Tibetan refugee schools, as it allows integration of subject contents relevant for Tibetan children in the diaspora. The Tibetan exile authorities have made a perceptive use of this leeway to advance their cultural and political agenda via education. The entire kindergarten and primary education (grade one to five) were converted into mother-tongue medium in the 1980s with English as the second language, starting at fourth grade. This vernacularization leads to greater Tibetanization of the school curriculum, as more context-laden subject contents related to Tibet were integrated into all subject areas, particularly in the social studies.

The primary-level social studies and middle-school Tibetan history textbooks analyzed for this study can be grouped into two main categories. Firstly, at the primary level, the contents related to Tibet's history, politics and culture are integrated with general social studies subject contents. Therefore, there is no systematically organized or chronologically ordered teaching of Tibetan history in primary grades one to five. The grade one and two have textbooks called environmental studies (EVS) (*Khor-yug shes-bya*) having contents related to elementary sciences and social studies. The contents related to Tibet are minimal at this stage. For instance, in the Grade 1 EVS textbook, there is a single page 'introduction to our motherland Tibet'. From grade three to five, Tibetan refugee schools have social studies textbooks (*Spye-tshogs rig-gnas*), which contain subject-matters related to general social studies topics (like climate, vegetation, physical features, etc.) as well as those pertaining to Tibet. The amount of contents related to Tibet increases exponentially as children progress to higher primary grades (Table 5). At the upper primary level (grade four to five), more than half of the social studies textbook contents are directly related to Tibet.

Table 5: Contents of the primary social studies textbooks

Grade	*General contents (pages)*	*Contents on Tibet (pages)*	*% of contents on Tibet*
Grade 1	70	2	2.8
Grade 2	86	22	20.4
Grade 3	34	68	66.7
Grade 4	57	105	64.8
Grade 5	60	49	44.9

Sources: Department of Education (2015); Tibetan Children's Village (2006, 2007a, 2009, 2013).

Secondly, for the middle school level (grade six to eight), the history of Tibet is accorded the status of a separate subject. Titled as 'Dynastic history

and religious history' (*Rgyal-rabs dang chos-byung*), middle school Tibetan history textbooks present a systematic and chronologically ordered history of Tibet and religious history of Buddhism. However, this Tibetan history textbook is part of the social studies subject, which has three other textbooks in the English language prescribed by the CBSE on geography, Indian history, and political science. Prepared solely for Indian students, these three textbooks do not have any contents related to Tibet. Altogether, each of these four textbooks roughly carries 25 percent weightage in final assessment and are allocated an equal amount of instructional time (approximately two hours of instruction in a week).

6.2 Framework for analyzing textbooks

All educational programs largely depend on texts. Like many schools in Southeast Asia, Tibetan refugee schools rely heavily on textbooks. Textbooks serve as the de-facto curriculum and set the parameters for classroom instruction. During the classroom visitations, it was observed that teachers seldom go beyond the prescribed textbook. Thus, most of what is included in the textbook get taught without much questioning and critical discussion. Moreover, the Tibetan refugee schools use single textbook uniformly, one that is published or approved by the Department of Education, Tibetan Government-in-Exile. For the primary-level social studies and middle-school Tibetan history, there are no alternative textbooks that the teachers and students can refer to. The uniformity of a single textbook and teachers' fidelity to its contents have been corroborated by the data gathered through lesson observations and interview with the teachers (more detail discussion in Chapter 8). Consequently, the centrality of a singular textbook in curriculum and instruction enhances the value of textual materials analyzed in this and the following chapter.

As discussed in chapter five, critical discourse analysis is employed broadly as the method for analyzing the textbooks. The textbooks contents are deconstructed to reveal the prevailing discourses; to identify discursive repertoires that support the construction of the discourses; to analyze constructive and performative functions of the discourses; to place the discourses in their broader socio-political and historical contexts; and to perform analysis of power relations hidden in the discourses. As shown in chapter 5, critical discourse analysis is built around several key methodological propositions which are used as analytical lenses to yield meaningful interpretative results. Drawing on the traditions of critical and Foucauldian

discourse analysis, the textbook analysis conducted here is guided by four main analytical lenses.

Firstly, discourse analysts believe, in varying degrees, that the discourse ***constructs*** the reality. This means that our knowledge of reality is socially constructed and produced, and, by extension, are provisional and dynamic in nature. For every prevailing dominant discourse or the common-sense on a particular object, event or person, there are potentially multiple alternative and marginalized discourses (Burr, 2015). Therefore, critical discourse analysis unveils the discourses and shows how the construction of reality in a certain way is achieved by them.

Secondly, textbook production is both an educational and a social activity, carried out and performed within specific historicity. Meanings of a text and social messages they carry within them are fully comprehensible only by referring to the context in which it was written or uttered. As such, subjecting textual sources to a process of ***historicization*** is crucial for meaning-making. Therefore, the social studies and history textbooks used by the Tibetan refugee schools have been analyzed in this study by placing them in their proper historical and material contexts, and identifying political or cultural forces that may have influenced and shaped their production and dissemination. For example, the textbooks include chapters and references to the independent nature of pre-1950 Tibet, and their meanings can be fully appreciated by situating the discourses in the larger polemics about the question of the historical status of Tibet between the Chinese Government and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. This macro-level analysis of discourse by placing the texts in its proper contexts is an important lens for macro-social constructionist approaches like critical discourse analysis.

Thirdly, discourse reflects the existing ***power relations*** of society. Foucault (1972), in his expositions on discourse analysis, points out that the discourse provides a way of representing knowledge and is always constituted and shaped by the existing power relationships of society. He argues that knowledge is used to dominate and regulate social groups, via discursive practices, which facilitate or limit, enable or constrain what can be said and done, and by whom. Thus, production and distribution of knowledge are reflective of the social distribution of power. In a similar vein, Apple (2014) raises the question 'whose knowledge is of most worth' and argues that the productions of textbooks are intimately connected to the power relations of society. These insights have been used to analyze the textbooks in this study. Two key questions that guide the reading and analysis of textbooks are: 1) whose knowledge or perspective is being presented, and 2) how is it related to power relations of the Tibetan society or Sino-Tibetan relationships? The 'politics of

mention' and 'pacing' also provides an important framework for analyzing textbooks. Textbook, as the primary carrier of 'legitimate' official knowledge, essentially involves a selective tradition. What is included or not included, and how the selected knowledge is presented in the textbook is guided by a particular way of constructing reality and envisioning legitimate knowledge and culture.

Fourthly, intertwined with its social constructionist and power-laden nature, discourse also furnishes ***subject positions***. Subject positions that a discourse bestows upon a person or a group of people come with a system of rights, obligations, possibilities and constraints on actions and utterances. What can be said or done and by whom can be influenced by one's discursive positioning. In this way, discourses are closely related to the action. Therefore, textbook analysis pays close attention to the discursive positioning of various actors involved in it.

Using frameworks and theorization described above, the social studies and history textbooks are analyzed by following certain steps. Firstly, the textbooks were read in their entirety multiple times. Based on the initial readings, it was decided to divide the textbook contents into two main themes – the first, those dealing with general social studies topics like 'climate and weather', 'part of the body', etc. and the second, those dealing specifically with Tibet's history, culture and politics. Secondly, the textbook contents related to Tibet were read again and simultaneously subjected to critical discourse analysis. It entails identification of various discourses and discursive repertoires, subject positioning, analysis of power dynamics, etc. Following a macro-social constructionist approach, these Tibet-related contents are analyzed and interpreted by historicizing them and placing them within the larger sociopolitical and cultural circumstances. Such an approach is helpful in understanding the rationale the behind selection of a particular content or perspectives presented in the textbooks. The focus is given not only to the selected content but also to the form in which it is presented as well as the use of corresponding images. Finally, the emerging themes were summarized and discussed against the backdrop of nation-building and the construction of Tibetan national identity.

6.3 Primary social studies textbooks

In this section, a brief summary of Tibet-related contents in the primary level environmental studies (EVS) and social studies textbooks is given. It also provides a list of chapters in each of the textbook. While analysis of the

contents is carried out primarily in the next section, the summary here is sometimes accompanied by brief contextual information.

The nationalist and political agenda can be seen very early on in the Grade 1 EVS textbook (Table 6). Even though this textbook has only one page with contents related to Tibet, that single page turned out to be highly political in its character. It is presented in a conversational fashion by using a language of intimacy and fraternity, an important discursive device for enhancing persuasiveness of the account. With a little girl wearing traditional Tibetan dress *chupa* as the protagonist, the texts ran this way: "Hi *school mates*, today I am going to give you a brief introduction to *our motherland Tibet* [emphasis added]" (p. 3), accompanied by following four images and the corresponding descriptions (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Grade 1 EVS textbook (Tibetan Children's Villages, 2007, p. 3.)

1. An outline map consisting of the entire Tibetan Plateau with rivers, mountain ranges and lakes shown on it. This map covers all the areas inhabited by ethnic Tibetans, equivalent to traditional three provinces of Tibet as claimed by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. The caption says: "this is the map of Tibet".
2. An image of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama with Potala Palace in the backdrop captioned "His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the leader of Tibet".

3. An image of the pre-1950 national flag of Tibet with the caption: "this is the national flag of the great nation of Tibet".
4. An emblem featuring three mountain peaks and two snow lions upholding a wheel inscribed with following texts - 'the victorious Gaden Phodrang (name of the Government of Tibet led by the Dalai Lamas that rule Tibet from 1642-1959) with the caption: "symbol of a nation is called national emblem".

The textbook also has two characters, a boy and a girl, as the main protagonists, and their images are repeated throughout the textbook. Interestingly, the boy is wearing a beanie hat, representing the Tibetan national flag in its color and design, and the slogan 'Save Tibet' is written on it. His image appeared five times in this Grade 1 EVS textbook. This is a very brief yet a highly politicized introduction to Tibet. This is the first formal lesson on Tibet, and the emphasis is placed on representing Tibet as a separate *nation* with its own ancestral territory, national leader, national monument, national flag and national emblem – all modern criteria for statehood or nationhood. Such an early introduction to an idea of political and national Tibet can be explained by the circumstances surrounding the Tibetan refugee community and their struggle for freedom from the Chinese rule.

Table 6: Grade 1 environmental studies textbook

Chapter no.	Title	Chapter no.	Title
1.	Self-introduction	8.	Good conduct
2.	My body	9.	My school
3.	Parts of my body	10.	Plants
4.	We need food	11.	Animals
5.	We need clothes	12.	Water
6.	We need shelter	13.	Air
7.	Good habits		

Source: Tibetan Children's Village (2007a).

The subject-content on Tibet witnesses substantial increase (Table 7) in the Grade 2 EVS textbook. It has three chapters solely devoted to Tibet related topics, and elements of Tibetan culture are interspersed in other chapters that primarily deal with general social studies and science topics. However, the Tibet-related contents in this textbook are predominantly cultural in nature. Chapter twelve is about *Losar*, the Tibetan Lunar New Year, and how it is celebrated. Chapter thirteen is on 'Parents Day of Tibet', a tradition that the Tibetan refugees started after their arrival in India. It is celebrated on the birthday (March 5) of Dekyi Tsering, 'the Great mother' of the Fourteenth Dalai

Lama. It indicates centrality of the Dalai Lama in the Tibetan exile community as the highest spiritual and political figure. Chapter fourteen is on the 'Eight Auspicious Symbols' and their meanings – these are Buddhist symbols in Tibetan culture, widely used during ceremonies or festivities. In other chapters dealing with elementary social studies and science topics like food, clothes, and shelter, a number of Tibetan imageries are used such as Buddhist shrine, the portrait of the Dalai Lama, traditional Tibetan costumes, homes with Tibetan architectural designs, etc. These can be seen as attempts by the textbook writers to 'localize' or 'contextualize' the textbook contents in order to make them meaningful and relatable to Tibetan children. The boy wearing 'Save Tibet' hat reappears a number of times in this textbook as well. If the Grade 1 EVS textbook constructs a version of 'political and national' identity for Tibet, the Grade 2 EVS textbook seems to be doing it in the cultural domain.

Table 7: Grade 2 environmental studies textbook

Chapter no.	Title	Chapter no.	Title
1.	My home	8.	Animals
2.	Parts of our body	9.	Air
3.	Food	10.	Water
4.	Clothes	11.	Safety habits
5.	Shelter	12.	Tibetan new year
6.	Living & non-living things	13.	Parents day of Tibet
7.	Plants	14.	Eight auspicious symbols

Source: Tibetan Children's Village (2013).

The Grade 3 social studies textbook (Table 8) saw the return to explicit political themes, and by now the bulk majority of contents of the textbook are directly related to Tibet. It has a full-length introductory chapter on 'Tibet', in which political Tibet is equated with cultural or ethnic Tibet (roughly whole of the Tibetan Plateau) and presenting it as a separate and independent country. The chapter on festivals and commemorations focuses on two events, namely, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's birthday celebration on 6th July and the National Uprising Day on 10th March. The Dalai Lama's birthday celebration is not just a religious event; its political and national significance is underscored by the consideration that the Dalai Lama is the undisputed 'national' leader of Tibetans (despite complete devolution of the political power to elected leaders in 2011). The 10th March National Uprising refers to the mass protests and demonstrations against the Chinese occupation that took place in the Tibetan capital Lhasa in March 1959. Since then, Tibetan exiles have started a ritual of commemorating this uprising every year on 10th March, during which schools

remain closed and senior students take part in street protests and rallies. The chapter discusses the Chinese occupation of Tibet and causes leading to the uprising and its aftermath. This textbook also has some chapters on cultural aspects of Tibet, such as incense burning rituals and traditional crafts. Children experience these rituals as part of everyday school life. During the field visits, it was observed that a number of school events include performing rituals like incense burning and hosting prayer flags. Likewise, children regularly encounter traditional crafts like Thangka painting in school and in the wider community. The textbook also has two long chapters on 'Tibet's Nomads' and 'Yak'. Yak is an important animal on the Tibetan Plateau and is often considered as the national animal of Tibet. The chapter on nomads includes a popular song extolling the beauty of Tibet's natural environment and prosperity of lives of nomads. This is particularly interesting given the fact that Tibetan refugee children live in India, the majority of whom have no living memory or connection with the nomadic way of life and Yak. The Tibetan refugee settlements in India are agro-based or small business-based community, and only a microscopic minority of them engages in nomadic livelihood in the Indian side of the Himalayas. The decision to invoke occupation of ancestors, rather than one's immediate living members, shows the Tibetan refugee community's attempt to identify more with their past than with their present. From an educational point of view, it raises the pedagogical question of dislocation between the home culture and the school texts. This epistemic structure, geared towards fostering a connection with an imagined homeland, has the tendency of dislocating the child from the everyday living realities of his or her life. It ran contrary to the constructivist pedagogy, which espouses the child's construction of knowledge via local ethos and materials.

Table 8: Grade 3 social studies textbook

Chapter no.	Title
1.	Our world
2.	Continents & oceans
3.	Physical features
4.	Tibet
5.	Tibet's festivals & commemorations
6.	Incense burning
7.	Tibet's handicrafts
8.	Tibet's nomads
9.	Yak

Source: Department of Education (2014).

The overwhelming majority of textbook contents (Table 9) in the Grade 4 social studies are related to Tibet. Here again chapters on Tibet deal both with cultural and political themes. Chapter three is titled as 'Mountains, rivers and lakes of Tibet', and descriptions are provided on major mountain ranges, peaks, rivers and lakes on the Tibetan Plateau. Even though this chapter can be classified as a geography lesson, the locations of these physical features have a tremendous bearing on the notion of Tibet's territoriality as a political entity. Historically, physiographical features like Mount Kailash and Lake Kokonor (*mtsho-sngon po*, which is in the present-day Qinghai province) were regarded as important markers of Tibetan territory. This chapter has eight outline maps of Tibet in which Tibet is shown as covering the whole of Tibetan Plateau. Chapter four is on traditional Tibetan costumes. It offers a detailed explanation on types of costumes worn by Tibetans living in the three traditional provinces of Tibet: 1) U-Tsang - central Tibet, which is roughly equivalent to the present-day Tibet Autonomous Region; 2) Kham - eastern Tibet, currently incorporated mainly into the provinces of Sichuan and Yunnan, and; 3) Amdo – northeastern Tibet, which is most of the present-day Qinghai and a small portion of Gansu province. By defining Tibetans in terms of the three provinces, this chapter can be seen as making a tacit claim on the territoriality of Tibet. Likewise, it has several pages on monastic costumes, indicating the predominance of Buddhism in Tibetan society. The fifth chapter, which is on the 'National flag of Tibet', is directly political in its character. It gives a detailed exposition on the history of the Tibetan national flag and its various symbols and their meanings. The chapter also establishes a primordial link by highlighting that Tibet had various battle flags during the times of great kings around the seventh century CE. This is followed by a chapter on Potala Palace. Potala Palace is the most important heritage structure and was the winter residence of the Dalai Lama, who was the political and spiritual head of the country until his exile in 1959. Thus, the Potala Palace is not only an important architectural and heritage site; it was the center of political and cultural activities in pre-1959 Tibet. The textbook hinted at Chinese loot when it says:

> One thing that is especially important to know is that Potala Palace also houses the Treasury of the Tibetan government. The treasury has over many hundred years accumulated a large amount of gold, silver, valuables, and other priceless objects, and these were transported to China in 1959. (p. 111)

It also briefly mentioned the two stone pillars, which are found within the vicinity of Potala Palace. The Outer Pillar is described as having erected by the

Tibetan emperor Trisong Detsen (reign 755-794 CE) after defeating Chinese forces, thereby putting Tibet on an equal footing with China. Chapter seven discusses the 'Twelve Year Cycle', providing a detailed explanation on the Tibetan calendar, its zodiac signs, etc. It is deeply steeped in Tibetan Buddhism as most of the rituals and prayers are scheduled on days in accordance with the Tibetan calendar. Chapter eight is on traditional Tibetan medicine (*Gso-ba rig-pa*). It briefly traces the historical development of traditional Tibetan medicine, which is also deeply rooted in Buddhist heritage, followed by a description of how diseases are diagnosed and cured. Finally, in the section dealing with 'Famous Personalities', there is a biographical account on the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, as the political and spiritual leader of Tibet.

Table 9: Grade 4 social studies textbook

Chapter no.	Title
1.	Man and ages [evolutionary ages]
2.	A nation is a community
3.	Tibet's mountains, rivers and lakes
4.	Costumes of Tibet
5.	The national flag of Tibet
6.	Potala Palace
7.	12 Almanac cycles
8.	Tibet's traditional medicine
9.	Famous personalities

Source: Tibetan Children's Village (2009).

The social studies textbook for Grade 5 (Table 10) also contains considerable Tibet-related subject matters. Of particular relevance to this research is the fifth chapter entitled, 'Tibet: an independent country'. It traces the development of historical relationships between China and Tibet, and concludes by presenting a 17-point argument to prove the independent existence of Tibet prior to 1950s. The chapter began with five images; Potala Palace, Tibetan national flag, Tibetan national emblem, pre-1950s Tibetan paper currency note, and a pre-1950s as evidence of Tibetan independence in the past. It also explicates on the reasons leading to the Chinese invasion of Tibet, and destructions that ensued. In particular, it highlights the destructive impacts of the Chinese occupation and rule in three key domains – religion and culture, natural resources and environment, and population. Interestingly, the chapter concludes by encouraging children that "a new age of truth and progressive democracy is dawning all over the world, and thus it is sure that the Tibet's truthful cause will see its result" (p. 53). Images of Chinese torture and Tibetan

protests are included in the chapter to reinforce the binary notions of Chinese repression and Tibetan resistance. This is followed by a chapter introducing the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, its democratic structures, and the electoral system. This can be seen as a part of citizenship education in democratic practices. But by legitimizing the exile government as the Government of Tibet, it serves a powerful political purpose. Chapter seven discusses six important heritage sites of Tibet: 1) Samye monastery, the first Buddhist monastery built in the eighth century CE; 2) Yumbhu Lhakhang, believed to be the first fort in Tibet built by the first Tibetan king Nyatri Tsenpo in the second century BCE; 3) Palkhor Stupa, a Buddhist stupa constructed in 1418 CE, and; 4) three important wooden-block printing presses. The chapter also highlights destruction each heritage site underwent during the Chinese invasion and their later restoration by 'faithful Tibetan people'. It is interesting to note that, except for the printing press at Dege in traditional Kham province (present-day Sichuan), rest of the heritage sites mentioned in the chapter are to be found in U-Tsang province. This may represent the predominance of narratives of the U-Tsang over other provinces and peripheral areas. The next chapter deals with important Buddhist sacred sites such as Bodhgaya, believed to be the place where Buddha was said to have attained enlightenment; Nalanda, where Buddha gave the first sermon; the Boudhanath Stupa in Nepal; and Mount Kailash in Tibet. This indicates the predominance of Buddhist narratives in the textbook as a celebration and commemoration of Tibetan cultural heritage is defined solely in Buddhist terms.

Table 10: Grade 5 social studies textbook

Chapter no.	Title
1.	Latitudes and longitudes
2.	Climate and weather
3.	Maps
4.	The United Nations
5.	Tibet was an independent nation
6.	Tibetan Government-in-Exile
7.	Popular heritage sites of Tibet
8.	Some important Buddhist sacred sites
9.	Famous personalities

Source: Tibetan Children's Village (2006).

6.4 Findings and discussion

As history is largely taught from a contemporary frame, the discourses presented in social studies and history textbooks of the Tibetan refugee schools are analyzed in the context of larger socio-political circumstances surrounding the community. It is virtually impossible to dissociate the teaching of history from politics of the present. As such, Apple (2014) argues that in order to make sense of education, we must develop an understanding of the "material conditions in which it is practiced" (p. 23). In particular, texts used in educational institutions serve as important sites for reproduction and restructuring of existing power relations within society and vis-à-vis other societies. Therefore, social studies and history textbooks of the Tibetan refugee schools should be seen as a part of or even product of the larger political and historical debate surrounding historical status of Tibet and its relationships with China. As shown in the previous section, a considerable amount of subject-contents in the social studies textbooks are related to Tibet's history, culture and politics. These can have a tremendous bearing on the production of political and nationalist subjects via education. In the following paragraphs, some of the major themes that emerge from critical discourse analysis, pertaining to nation-building and Tibetan national identity construction via history teaching are discussed.

6.4.1 Constructing Tibet

The primary-level social studies textbooks of the Tibetan refugee schools deploy a number of discursive resources to construct an image of Tibet as the homeland for children to imagine and consume. This task holds special relevance and significance since a large number of Tibetan children attending these schools are born in exile and possess no lived memories of Tibet. Mostly second or third generation refugees, these children grow up with a borrowed memory of their homeland via a familial trans-generational transmission of memory through collective lore and commemorative rituals of the community, and more importantly through the exile schooling. Generally, long exile and change of generations tend to weaken the community's ties to its original homeland and the memory and history they have of it. During the fieldwork, a number of social studies and history teachers have expressed growing concerns over the younger generation's alleged lack of motivation to learn about their homeland and its history. Therefore, constructing an image of Tibet as their homeland, with its distinctive geographical and cultural markers seems to be a crucial component to the project of nation-building in exile.

This identification with Tibet as the homeland is established from the very beginning. In the Grade 1 environmental studies (EVS) textbook, the first chapter deals with "Introducing oneself", and in the opening lines, a little girl who is used throughout the textbook as the main protagonist introduces herself as: "my name is Lhamo. I am a *Tibetan* child. My motherland is *Tibet* [emphasis added]…" (p. 1). Making children introduce themselves in ethnonational terms at such an early age is not surprising, given the high plausibility of identity insecurity engendered by diaspora and distance from their homeland. The little girl is adorned in a traditional Tibetan attire *chupa* which also makes a possible statement about identity and dress, as *chupa* is often regarded by many Tibetans as the 'national' dress.

The discursive resources deployed by the social studies textbooks construct and present a fixed image of the homeland. It offers a reified image of Tibet as unchanging and static, almost in a time-frozen fashion. In their study analyzing maps filled out by Spanish students, Carretero, Alphen and Parellada (2018) found that "the students tend to plot current borders of Spain, Portugal, and France as permanent since as early as the eighteenth century. They tend to present borders as if they were always there" (p. 433). Here the textbook writers perform a similar task by presenting an unchanging image of Tibet throughout the course of history. Therefore, it adopts an essentialist representation of the Tibetan nation. Firstly, the school textbooks use a number of visuals and semantics repeatedly to create an imagined Tibetan national community with a bounded territorial space on the world map. In this regard, *territorialization and mapping* of Tibet as a political entity appears to be an important political project carried out by the primary social studies textbooks. All of the textbooks analyzed for this study carry a numerous map of Tibet consisting of the entire Tibetan plateau. For example, the political map on page 37 of Grade 3 social studies textbook shows Tibet, comprising of the entire Tibetan plateau, as a distinct country with East Turkestan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, and China as its neighboring countries (Figure 6).

Benedict Anderson (2006) points out that maps play important role in the "logoization of political space", as countries came to be imagined in terms of a "bounded territorial space". Maps are powerful cultural artifacts which help children 'see' Tibet out there on the world map with its standardized and distinctive size, shape and location vis-à-vis the neighboring others. Not only it increases the visibility of the imagined Tibetan national community, the mapping carried out by the exile textbooks sharply contradicts the claims made by the Chinese government which sought to define political Tibet only in terms of the western part of the Tibetan plateau, which is half the territory portrayed as Tibet by the Tibetan exile textbooks.

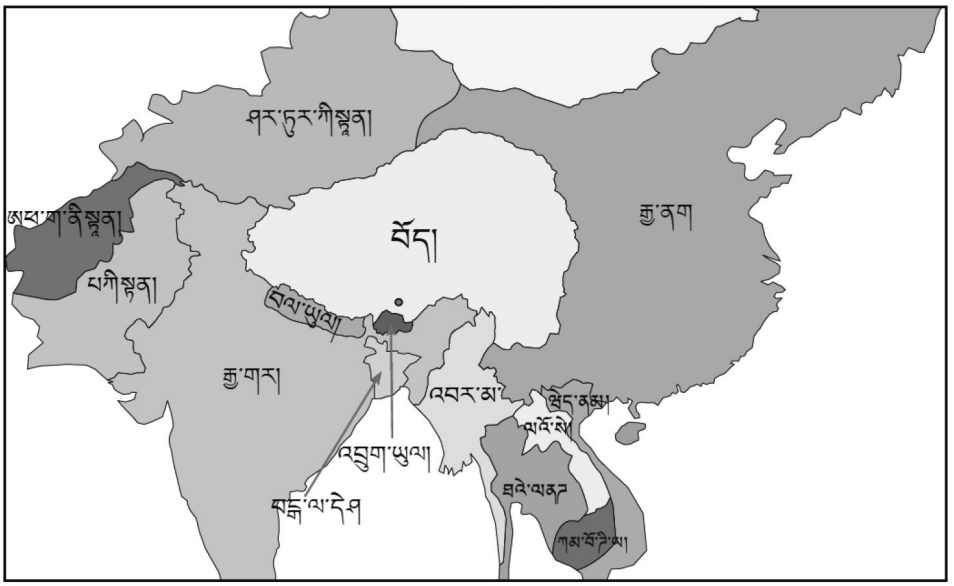

Figure 6: Map of Tibet with its neighboring countries, Grade 3 social studies. (Department of Education, 2014, p. 37).

Secondly, apart from an overt strategy like mapping, the primary social studies textbooks of the Tibetan refugee schools implicitly define the territorial expanse of Tibet and who are included as Tibetans in a variety of subtle ways. One such approach could be labeled as *peopling a space*. For example, the Grade 4 social studies textbook carries a chapter dealing with traditional 'costumes of Tibet'. It included the costumes worn by Tibetans living in the so-called traditional three provinces of Tibet namely, U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo, thereby peopling the entire geographical expanse of the Tibetan plateau. Therefore, the ways in which the textbooks define who the 'Tibetans' are or who are included as Tibetans have powerful implications on the construction of Tibet itself. In many other curricular areas, the primary social studies textbooks consistently upheld the three-province model when it comes to constructing and defining Tibet and Tibetans.

Thirdly, a variety of *geographical markers and cultural sites* are deployed as discursive repertoires in the textbooks to construct Tibet's geographical and cultural landscape. It is not surprising that many of these sites are from the region of Amdo and Kham which are not included in the Chinese demarcation of what is now called the Tibet Autonomous Region. For example, the textbooks use Lake Kokonor, located in the far northeastern corner of Tibetan Plateau in the present-day Qinghai province, and Dege Pharkhang, a traditional wooden-block printing press in Kham Tibetan areas in the present-day Sichuan

province, as geographical and cultural markers of Tibet. Thus, territorialization of Tibet in terms of a bounded space on the world map and inhabiting it with cultural, geographical and demographic markers help to construct an image of Tibet as the homeland for the children in exile. These constructions present a fixed, unchanging, and standardized image of Tibet.

Although demarcation shown on the political maps of Tibet used in the primary social studies textbooks is roughly coterminous with the areas inhabited by ethnic Tibetans, its political connotation is a subject to intense debate. A cursory look at the history of the region reveals the complexities of defining Tibet. Here it is helpful to make a distinction between *cultural/ethnic Tibet* and *political Tibet* (Shakya, 2001). The Cultural or Ethnic Tibet spans across the Tibetan Plateau with an estimated area of 2.5 million square kilometers, inhabited by ethnic Tibetans sharing similar linguistic and cultural heritage. Traditionally, it was divided into three toponymical regions (*Chol-kha gsum*), namely 1) U-Tsang, the central and western part of the plateau, 2) Kham, the eastern part of the plateau, and 3) Amdo, the northeastern part of the plateau. Prior to 1950s, the political Tibet existed in a variety of shapes and sizes under different historical times and circumstances. Between the seventh to the ninth century CE, the Tibetan Empire spread far and wide across Central Asia, including some areas of present-day India, Nepal, and China proper (Schaik, 2012). Following the collapse of the Tibetan Empire in the ninth century CE, the region disintegrated into many warring princedoms. This was followed by indirect Mongol rule in the thirteenth century – both China and Tibet were part of the Mongol Yuan dynasty that ruled from Beijing. When the Mongols transferred their rule to the Fifth Dalai Lama in the mid-seventeenth century, most of the areas inhabited by ethnic Tibetans came under his rule (Schaik, 2012). However, from the eighteenth century, the Tibetan government increasingly came under the influence of Manchu dynasty of China, and eventually became a protectorate while many parts of the eastern and northeastern Tibetan areas came under direct Manchu rule. In 1911, after the collapse of Manchu rule in China, the Tibetan government drove Manchu troops out of the Tibetan capital Lhasa and proclaimed its independence. From 1911 to 1950, central and western parts of the Tibetan Plateau, which were ruled directly by the Tibetan government, became de-facto independent (Schaik, 2012). However, the other half of the Tibetan Plateau on the northeast (Amdo) and east (Kham) were ruled by local chieftains with varying degree of control by the successive Chinese governments (Schaik, 2012). After the Communist victory in China and its invasion of Tibet, administrative restructuring took place leading to the creation of one Tibet Autonomous Region, nine Tibet Autonomous Prefectures, and two Tibet Autonomous Counties. Tibet

Autonomous Region (Ch. *Xizang*), a provincial level administrative region was created in 1965. Remaining nine Tibet Autonomous Prefectures and two Tibet Autonomous Counties were incorporated into the neighboring provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan.

The Tibetan exile textbooks overlooked these historical complexities and presented a fixed and reified image of political Tibet as comprising the entire Tibetan Plateau, thereby infusing a certain degree of immutability to the conception of Tibetan national community. On the contrary, China refers to political Tibet as only the Tibet Autonomous Region (western half of the Tibetan Plateau), which is equally arbitrary and reductive. The Tibetan and the Chinese construction of what comprises political Tibet can be understood in terms of the distinction between the concepts of nation and state (Guibernau, 2004). Tibetan exiles' definition of Tibet is based on the idea of Tibetan nation which covers all areas inhabited by ethnic Tibetans sharing a collective cultural and linguistic identity. The Chinese, on the other hand, demarcated Tibet on the basis of the Tibetan state that ruled the region until 1950s when it was incorporated into the People's Republic of China. Thus, both parties invoked the conception of Tibet that is favorable to their current agenda.

One of the most important discourses inhabiting the social studies textbooks for primary grades is the construction of Tibet as a separate and independent 'nation'. The textbooks are replete with imageries and representations that support this discourse. In particular, the textbooks appropriated characteristics of modern nationhood or nation-state to construct the case for Tibetan nationhood. Therefore, the contemporary normative symbols or markers of nation-states are used liberally in the textbooks to construct the Tibetan nation. As shown earlier, the Grade 1 environmental studies textbook introduces Tibet by using four images containing oft-cited markers of nation-states namely, the political map with a bounded territory, national leader, national flag, and national emblem. This theme is further advanced in the textbooks of subsequent grades. In the Grade 4 social studies textbook, a chapter on 'Nations and societies' goes on to argue that Tibet possessed "all the criteria a nation should have" (Tibetan Children's Village, 2009, p. 30). The same chapter carries national flags of many countries, including the 'national' flag of Tibet, which is put on the top of the list (Figure 7). Other nation-state symbols used in the textbooks include the national emblem, the pre-1950 Tibetan paper currency and coins, the constitution for Tibet drafted by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, etc. There is a full-fledged chapter on 'Tibetan national flag' in the Grade 4 social studies textbook, indicating importance the textbook writers place on the construction of Tibet as a separate nation. By using modern nation-

state referents, the textbooks appropriated contemporary political vocabularies in order to gain legitimacy for the Tibetan nationhood.

Therefore, the primary social studies textbooks accomplish an important task of constructing Tibet in its territorial, demographic, cultural and national dimensions. This construction is vital for its project of nation-building in exile, especially in the preparation of its younger generation for their role in the Tibetan freedom struggle spearheaded by the exile government. Apart from studying about Tibet as a nation in the social studies textbooks, children experience the nation in their everyday lived realities. For example, performing the nation is an important part of community-wide and school-wide rituals wherein performative aspects of the nation are highlighted. Such performative acts include raising the 'Tibetan national flag' or singing the 'Tibetan national anthem', especially during most of the official functions and gatherings. During the field visits, it was observed that most of the classrooms have at least one Tibetan national flag, and the Tibetan national anthem is often sung during the regular morning assembly of each school.

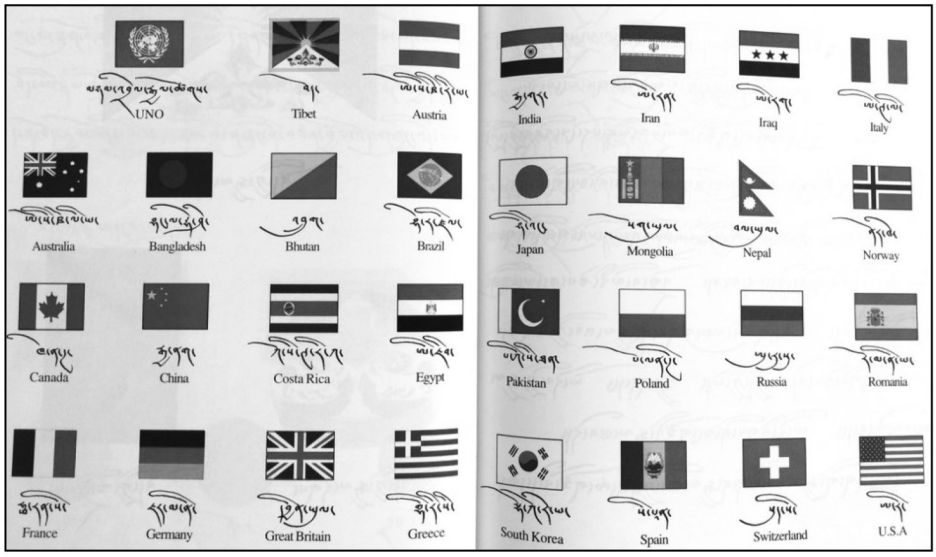

Figure 7: National flag of the UN and some nations. Grade 4 social studies. (Tibetan Children's Villages, 2009, p. 32-33)

6.4.2 Counter-hegemonic and decolonial narratives

The discourses on history and culture of Tibet presented in the primary social studies textbooks of Tibetan refugee schools challenge the dominant Chinese

discourse on Tibetan history and culture. For instance, as alluded previously, the construction of Tibet via deployment of various discursive resources in the textbooks counters and destabilizes the Chinese construction of Tibet. Therefore, the textbooks' exposition on Tibetan history and culture can be meaningfully interpreted only in the context of larger Chinese discourses on Tibet and historical relationships between China and Tibet.

In conflict situations, especially those of territorial and historical disputes, production and dissemination of knowledge that favors one's position or claim becomes an important political project. Following the occupation of Tibet, China launched massive propaganda to legitimize its claim over Tibet and to justify its annexation. This often involves rewriting or reinterpreting Tibet's history or Sino-Tibetan relations and often providing one-sided interpretations to certain events of the past (Powers, 2004). Continuing resistance and protests by Tibetans inside Tibet, and active political campaigns in international arenas by the Tibetan exile community resulted in Chinese state responses characterized by political repression and massive propaganda. The Chinese state propaganda materials proclaim Tibet as a part of China, at least since the thirteenth century, and describe the military invasion of the 1950s as 'peaceful liberation' of Tibet. For example, since the early 1990s, China issued thirteen White Papers on Tibet, the latest one being in 2015. Discussing the question of ownership of Tibet, the first White Paper issued in 1992, claims that: "in the mid-thirteenth century, Tibet was officially incorporated into the territory of China's Yuan Dynasty. Since then, although China experienced several dynastic changes, Tibet has remained under the jurisdiction of the central government of China" (Information Office of the State Council, 1992). The Tibetan government and community in exile refuted the Chinese claims and issued rebuttals to most of the White Papers. Often simplistic and reductive, they present their side of the story, arguing that Tibet was an independent country all throughout the history and was illegally occupied by China in the 1950s (Department of Information and International Relations, 1996, 2015). Likewise, in order to justify their annexation and rule, Chinese propaganda painted an absolutely dark picture of pre-1950 Tibet as 'feudal', 'oppressive' and 'backward' thus requiring the communist-led 'liberation' (Information Office of the State Council, 2015).

After the establishment of the Chinese rule in Tibet, the history of Tibet par se was not taught at all in public schools in the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas in the neighboring provinces of China. Having a separate history of Tibet in school education would be antithetical to the Chinese nation-building project which, despite its rhetoric of multiculturalism, is based predominantly on Han Chinese history and culture. Generally, schools in Tibet

use the centrally-formulated curriculum as in all other parts of China (Bass, 1998). In this officially-sanctioned history of China, Tibet and Tibetans, like other 'minorities' in the People's Republic of China (PRC), are reduced to insignificant footnotes in the grand narrative of the Chinese nation. In fact, schooling in the PRC is an important agent of constructing a 'Chinese nation' in which the Han majority claims the centerstage whereas the 'minority-nationalities' sit on the curricular periphery (Vickers, 2006). The goal of state schooling in China continues to be the imposition of a Chinese identity on the ethnic minorities. In this formulation, China is represented as the 'great motherland' and Tibet and other outlying minority regions as 'ethnic territories'. When Tibet was forcefully invaded and incorporated into the PRC in the 1950s, the Chinese communist propaganda portrayed this as "return of Tibet to the great motherland" (Norbu, 2001). As such, in the state-approved Chinese history, ethnic minorities like Tibetans appear sporadically when they are useful to the construction of the grand narrative of the Chinese nation and are forgotten for most of the time (Vickers, 2006). In other school curricular areas, Chinese language education is enforced at the cost of the minority languages like the Tibetan language, and homogenization is also promoted via promotion of festivals and national celebrations, which are primarily Han Chinese festivals. Therefore, school education in ethnic minority regions of PRC has been primarily about transmitting the cultural superiority of the Han majority. In Tibet, starting from the 1990s, Catriona Bass (2008) highlights:

> A renewed emphasis on ethnic unity and amalgamation… led to the reinterpretation of a separate Tibetan culture with its distinctive historic and religious traditions as unpatriotic. Thus while China's ancient traditions were celebrated, Tibet's pre-1950s culture were once again described in the curriculum as backward and oppressive. (p. 40)

These polemics about the historical status of Tibet and the larger dispute between the two sides seem to have played some role in the selection of subject-matters for the social studies textbooks of the Tibetan exile schools. On the question of defining 'Tibet', the textbooks consistently adhered to the 'three province model' (*Chol-kha gsum*) comprising of all the Tibetan inhabited areas, thereby rejecting the Chinese demarcation of Tibet as only the western half of the Tibetan Plateau (what they now called in Chinese as *Xizang* or the Tibet Autonomous Region). As shown in the previous section, the political map of Tibet included in the textbooks of Tibetan exile schools contradicted with the Chinese construction of Tibet. Likewise, on the question of the historical status of Tibet, contrary to the Chinese claims, the social studies textbooks of the Tibetan exile schools presented Tibet as an independent country until the

Chinese invasion of the 1950s. For example, in the lesson dealing with 'nations and societies' in Grade 4 social studies textbook (Tibetan Children's Village, 2009), reference to Tibet ran like this:

> Before 1959, Tibet was an independent country. It has all the things that a nation should have. China not only invaded Tibet but also inflicted tremendous sufferings on Tibetan people and destroyed thousands of monasteries. As such, Tibetan people are continuously fighting against the Chinese to gain independence. Now the Tibetan Government-in-Exile is the authentic government of whole of Tibet. (p. 29-30)

This argument is correspondingly accompanied by images of pre-1959 Tibetan national currency and coins, national flag, national emblem, and the cover of the constitution for future Tibet developed by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. In the pages that follow, the flag of the United Nations and the national flags of 30 odd countries are given, including the national flag of China. The national flag of Tibet is positioned at the top, right after the UN flag. This argument was further developed and expanded in the Grade 5 social studies textbook (Tibetan Children's Village, 2006). The chapter titled "Tibet was an independent country" gives a point-by-point refutation of the Chinese claim that Tibet was a part of China at least since the thirteenth century. It then advanced seventeen reasons why Tibet was not a part of China. The textbook urges children that "it is extremely important to know these historical evidence of Tibetan independence" (p. 45). Thus, it is evident that the social studies textbooks are in many ways a response to the Chinese interpretations of Tibet's historical status and Sino-Tibetan relations. These textbooks are designed to build the knowledge base of the Tibetan younger generation who are expected to assume their role as the international spokesperson for the Tibetan cause, and who would argue the case of Tibet on various international platforms. Many social studies and history teachers alluded to this task as an important goal of teaching social studies and Tibetan history during the interviews conducted at field sites, which will be discussed in chapter seven.

As it is evident from the earlier sections, the Chinese and the Tibetan side (especially the Tibetan exiles) hold positions and perspectives which are almost diametrically opposed to one another on the question of the historical status of Tibet and Sino-Tibetan relationships. A summary of differences in their position on a range of historical events and personalities is given in Table 11. These polemics, and especially the publication of official Chinese propaganda pamphlet "*Tibet: 100 Questions and Answers about China's Tibet*" in 1989 and their wide circulation prompted a team of international experts on Tibet to critically assess the claims made in the booklet, their efforts resulting in a book

titled *"Authenticating Tibet: Answers to China's 100 Questions"* (Blondeau & Buffetrille, 2008). The book deconstructed the Chinese claims and offered a nuanced and critical look at the history of Sino-Tibetan relationships.

Table 11: Differences in representation between the Chinese and the Tibetan exile narratives on a range of historical events and personalities.

Historical events and personalities	***Chinese official narrative***	***Tibetan exiles narrative***
Conception of Tibet	Xizang (Tibet Autonomous Region) with an area of 1.23 million square km. Remaining Tibetan areas are incorporated into neighboring provinces.	Entire Tibetan plateau or areas inhabited by ethnic Tibetans. The traditional three provinces with roughly an area of 2.5 million square km.
Pre-1950 Tibet	Feudal serfdom, backward with an oppressive ruling class exploiting the masses.	A largely peaceful and self-sufficient country, with rich cultural and spiritual heritage.
Chinese takeover of 1950s	Peaceful liberation of Tibet from oppressive ruling elites and western imperialist design, and the return of Tibet to the great motherland.	Military invasion and illegal occupation of Tibet by expansionist China.
Tibetan resistance	Counter-revolutionary reactionaries, separatists.	Freedom fighters and defenders of the faith (Buddhist religion).
10 March 1959 event	Separatist and counter-revolutionary activities.	National uprising by Tibetan people against the Chinese rule.
The Dalai Lama	Since 1990s, the Dalai Lama is vilified as separatist, a wolf in monk's robe.	The spiritual and temporal leader
Post-1959 Tibet	Era of rapid development in all fields.	An era of political and cultural repression, violation of human rights, etc.

Sources: The White Papers on Tibet issued by the Chinese government; The social studies textbooks of the Tibetan refugee schools.

By bringing to the fore the voices from the margins and by privileging the narratives of the oppressed group, it can be argued that the primary-level social studies textbooks of the Tibetan exile schools hold a decolonial epistemological and pedagogical position (Freire, 2005: Lissovoy, 2010) in some respects. Despite simplistic and reductive in its own ways, these textbooks attempted to challenge the dominant official Chinese narratives on Tibet and its historical relationships with China. It offers a counter-hegemonic discourse that could potentially destabilize the existing power-relations between the Chinese and the Tibetans. These textbooks and the narratives that inhabit them can be seen as attempts by the Tibetans, especially those in exiles, to reclaim their power and voice. Therefore, efforts put forward by the Tibetan refugees in developing Tibetan history textbooks and deploying them in the exile schools can be described as a project of restoring suppressed historical memories and fending off Chinese state-enforced amnesia.

6.4.3 Communicating collective loss

For the Tibetan exile schools, inter-generational transmission of a sense of collective dispossession and suffering seems to be crucial for providing a *raison d'être* for their existence and maintaining their political struggle for freedom in Tibet. This is similar to what Vamik Volkan (2005) calls as the transmission of "chosen trauma". He used the term "chosen trauma" to describe how a traumatized or persecuted group evoke the memory of a painful event of the past and assigning to it a great deal of affective and historical significance. Evoking a chosen trauma, Volkan argues, creates the condition for a sense of entitlement and provides the motivation for performing desired actions. According to him chosen traumas are generally evoked for two main purposes. Firstly, the "reparative" type uses the persecutory event to unite the group and engender its collective identity without harming the perpetrators. Secondly, on the contrary, the "destructive" type uses the painful event to increase the group's sense of victimization, and to vilify and dehumanize a real or putative enemy. Evoking chosen trauma for destructive purposes often endorses revenge and retribution. Production of a sense of victimization or injustice gives the necessary motivation to act politically.

The victim narratives presented in the social studies textbooks of Tibetan refugee schools are likely to transmit a sense of collective loss and suffering to the younger generations. The textbooks carry a range of stories and images that weave together a victim narrative, such as those pertaining to Chinese atrocities, Tibetan sufferings, and destructions wrought on Tibet by the Chinese

invasion. For example, the Grade 5 textbook dwells on the historical status of Tibet and highlights three destructive outcomes of the Chinese occupation, viz, death of around 1.5 million Tibetans; destruction of more than 6000 monasteries and cultural sites, and; destruction to nature and wildlife. The same textbook carries an image of a Tibetan man wailing as a gun-wielding Chinese soldier grab him by the neck. Similarly, the chapter on Tibetan heritage sites in the same textbook also highlights the destruction inflicted on Tibetan cultural and heritage sites by the Chinese, especially during the Cultural Revolution. For instance, on the destruction of Yumbhu Lhakhang which is regarded as the earliest fort in Tibet built by the first Tibetan king in second century BCE, textbook narrative goes like this: "In 1959, after the entire Tibet was occupied by China, countless ancestral legacies such as monasteries and forts were destroyed, and among them, Yumbhu Lhakhang's exterior and interior were destroyed in its entirety and left without a trace" (Tibetan Children's Village, 2006, p. 79).

Interestingly, the boy with the 'Save Tibet' hat who appears a number of times in the textbooks of grade one and two, also reinforces the sense of collective suffering and dispossession for Tibetans (Figure 8). Images like this, when subjected to a close analysis, can reveal discourses inhabiting them. The scopic regime of this particular image carries within it several discourses, somewhat hidden from the plain sight. A discourse relating to the Tibetan national identity is heavily present in it. The color and design of the beanie hat represent the Tibetan national flag, introduced in 1916 by the Tibetan government under the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. The flag was banned in Tibet after China annexed the region. Therefore, its use can be interpreted as an act of resistance and a call for nationalism on the part of the Tibetan exiles. The slogan 'Save Tibet' is written on the hat which underscores the Chinese occupation and repression in Tibet, and therefore, the urgent need to rescue or save Tibet. It thus advances a victim narrative and invokes chosen traumas. The flag and the slogan are seen or chanted most commonly at 'Free Tibet' protests staged around the world by the Tibetan exiles and their supporters. Similarly, Tibetans inside Tibet have raised the Tibetan national flag and chanted cries for freedom during most of the political protests, the most recent ones in the spring of 2008. The boy is also wearing a traditional Tibetan shirt which perhaps highlights the importance of cultural preservation, especially in the light of Chinese policies of restricting Tibetan cultural practices. However, this is not to imply that the textbook authors included these images intentionally to convey the messages interpreted here. They may have included them without much deliberation. But it certainly represents their internalized values and attitudes. Visuals are powerful ways of conveying multiple meanings. Through

images like this, the primary-level social studies textbooks positioned Tibetans as the victims of occupation and dispossession, and the Chinese state as the oppressor.

Figure 8: Environmental Studies, Grade 1, p. 2

However, the language of hatred and violence is largely absent in the textbooks, and as such the invocation of collective suffering may be intended for a 'reparative' and not for a 'destructive' purpose (Volkan, 2005). When describing China, the social studies textbooks neither use the word enemy (*Dra-bo*) nor does they advocate or endorse retributive actions. On the contrary, figures chosen for the 'Famous Personalities' chapter in Grade 4 and 5 social studies textbooks as role models for young people carry important social messages. The personalities include Nobel Peace Prize winner the Dalai Lama who is considered as a champion of love and compassion; Mahatma Gandhi who is known for his non-violent struggle for India's independence from the British rule; Austrian philanthropist and the founder of SOS Children's Villages Hermann Gmeiner; Swedish scientist and benefactor of Nobel Prize Aflred Nobel; Nobel Peace Prize winner and philanthropist Mother Teresa; and the former US president Abraham Lincoln who is known for his struggle against slavery system. Through these personalities, the textbooks seem to promote a non-violent approach to resolving conflicts and service to humanity. In the opening paragraphs of the 'Famous Personalities' chapter in Grade 4 social studies textbook, the emphasis is laid on accommodation and respect for diversity. It says: "[since there are] different viewpoints… it is important to pay attention to and respect others' viewpoints… having a mindset of pursuing one's own self-interest alone is not right" (Tibetan Children's Village, 2009, p. 144). Likewise, the Grade 5 social studies textbook urges children to take these figures as the role models and "strive to become good human beings" (Tibetan Children's Village, 2006, p. 98). Interestingly, the textbooks entirely ignored violent guerilla campaigns that many ordinary Tibetans waged to defend their

'nation' and to fight against the Chinese occupation from the 1950s up to late 1970s when last guerilla bases were dismantled. Carole McGranahan (2010) calls these violent episodes of the Tibetan resistance armies "arrested histories" as these were 'arrested' from entering into the annals of Tibetan national history. This may be due to the influence of the Dalai Lama who had championed a non-violent approach, and the stories of Tibetan resistance army seem incompatible with the exile Tibetan's official narrative of the Tibetan freedom struggle as a non-violent movement. In the spirit of dialogue and reconciliation, since the 1980s, the Middle-way policy of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile calls for genuine autonomy for Tibet, instead of complete independence and separation from China, and advocated for dialogue as the primary means of resolving the issue. Therefore, far from advocating retribution and violence, the textbook narratives favor reconciliation and dialogue, to the extent that past violent struggles were conveniently ignored. Hence the communication of collective suffering seems to be meant for uniting the Tibetan refugees and providing a justification for their current existence and their non-violent struggle for freedom in Tibet.

6.4.4 Imparting cultural knowledge

After Tibet was brought under the Chinese rule, there were concerted efforts by the Chinese authorities to restrict Tibetan cultural practices and the transmission of indigenous epistemologies, especially the study of Buddhism in monasteries and the use of Tibetan language (Bass, 2008). The distinctiveness of the Tibetan culture is often seen as subversive, potentially inciting separatism from China. Therefore, the thrust is on assimilation into mainstream Han culture and language. The Cultural Revolution era witnessed large-scale destruction of monasteries and cultural sites as Red Guards attacked what was deemed as the "four olds". Moreover, state schooling in China is an important instrument for Chinese authorities to impose a Han-centric curriculum to assimilate Tibetans and other ethnic minorities. From the 1990s, Catriona Bass (2008) shows in her study that the new Tibetan language curriculum of the schools removed Buddhist related contents entirely from the textbooks and were replaced with stories about Chinese communist heroes. This backdrop helps us to understand why the Tibetan government and the community in exile took on the preservation and promotion of Tibetan cultural heritage as one of their primary responsibilities. This task is often seen as related to the very survival of Tibetans as a distinct group. Hence it becomes an important political task. To this end, the Tibetan exile community established a number of monasteries and

cultural institutions; as well as Tibetan cultural contents were incorporated into the school curriculum.

The website of the Department of Education of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile stated that Tibetan schools in exile were set with twin-objective – providing quality modern education and preserving Tibetan language and culture. Therefore, as shown in chapter four, elements of the Tibetan culture were incorporated into both formal and informal corpus of school knowledge. The informal aspects include the socialization of children into Buddhist heritage and values. For example, during the field observation, it was noted that a typical school day starts with morning prayer and meditation session led by a spiritual teacher, and each school's yearly activity calendar is dotted with Buddhist festivals and ceremonies. Likewise, the Tibetan language is an important part of the school curriculum from K-12, and since language and culture are intertwined closely, the Tibetan language curriculum is an important medium of cultural education. The Tibetan language textbooks of all grades draw heavily on cultural contents (Wangdu, 2013). More importantly in the 1980s, mother-tongue based education was adopted at the primary level leading to a tremendous increase in Tibetan cultural contents in the social studies, science and math textbooks.

In particular, Tibetan cultural elements were incorporated into the primary-level social studies curriculum. As shown before, a substantial portion of the Tibet-related contents in the textbooks are cultural in nature, such as lessons on Tibetan Losar (New Year) and Eight Auspicious Symbols in Grade 2; Buddhist practices like incense burning, traditional crafts, nomads and yaks in Grade 3; traditional costumes, Tibetan lunar almanac, and traditional Tibetan medicine in Grade 4; and Tibetan heritage sites and Buddhist sacred sites in Grade 5. These are often written in a celebratory tone, extolling their long history and achievements of the Tibetan people. In sharp opposition to the victim narrative, this portion of textbook contents can be described as the 'victory narrative' or the 'chosen glory' (Volkan, 2005). The victory narrative highlights or even glorifies the past achievement of a social group and idealizes its so-called national heroes. Such victory and celebratory narrative may have been designed to impart cultural knowledge to the younger generation and to instill in them a sense of worth and pride in one's ethno-cultural and national membership. It also has a practical relevance as adequate cultural literacy is required for navigating complex everyday social life successfully. At the same time, victory narrative can engender social cohesion, and raise the necessary motivation and confidence of the community to work towards achieving their collective interests in the future.

The cultural contents of the primary social studies textbooks perform several constructive functions. First, it constructs Tibet as 'culturally' distinct from its neighbors, mainly China thereby serving a political object simultaneously. Secondly, it posits Tibet as having a rich and advanced cultural heritage. This is in sharp opposition to treatment Tibetan culture receive under the PRC. Rooted in cultural practices tracing back to ancient times, it affords Tibetan cultural identity a primordial link and long histories. For example, the chapter on "The Tibetan heritage" in the Grade 5 social studies begins its opening paragraph extolling Tibet's natural beauty and cultural achievements of its forefathers. A special emphasis is placed on highlighting the uniqueness of Tibet and its civilization, and locating its roots as far back in time as possible. The *uniqueness* and the *antiqueness* of the Tibetan civilization are expounded in a celebratory tone as the following excerpt shows (Tibetan Children's Village, 2006):

> Tibet, located on the roof of the world, has beautiful natural landscapes and clean air. As human settlement began very early on, [Tibet] witnessed an early spread of culture and civilization. Its cultural foundation is firm and widespread. It has a variety of artisanal and craft practices possessing unique artistic characteristics. With prosperous livelihood, its ancestors left many legacies and achievements. The world-renown heritage sites of Tibet speak to the intellectual capabilities of the Tibetan ancestors. (p. 75)

The heritage sites included in the chapter consist of Samye monastery, Yumbhu Lhakhang fort, Palkhor stupa, and three traditional wooden-block printing houses located at Narthang and Shol in central Tibet and Derge in eastern Tibet. For highlighting antiquity of the Tibetan cultural heritage, Yumbhu Lhakhang and Samye monastery are the most obvious choices. Believed to be built by the first king of Tibet as his fort in the second century BCE, Yumbhu Lhakhang is amongst the oldest buildings in Tibet. Likewise, built in the eighth century CE, Samye monastery is regarded as the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet. The three printing houses spoke about Tibetan achievements in the field of literary production and print culture. These heritage sites serve as discursive resources to support the prevailing discourse, that is to establish Tibet as a nation with a long history and rich and distinctive cultural heritage. It should be noted that, except for Yumbhu Lhakhang, all the other five heritage sites discussed in the textbook are Buddhist sites, including the printing houses where the bulk of the literary production relates to Buddhist texts.

Discourses presented in the social studies textbooks nearly equate Tibetan culture and heritage with Buddhist culture. As shown before, the cultural practices and heritage sites discussed in the textbooks are primarily related to

Tibetan Buddhism. Therefore, in this respect, it can be argued that the textbooks promote and perpetuate a dominant Buddhist perspective on the Tibetan culture. Non-Buddhist cultural practices such as those pertaining to indigenous Bon religion and others are largely absent. Being a Tibetan is often implicitly constructed as being a Buddhist. The chapter on "Good Habits" in the Grade 1 environmental studies listed several good habits including among other things a Buddhist practice of saying a prayer of offering before eating food. It states: "before eating, [we] make offerings to the Three Jewels [Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha]" (Tibetan Children's Village, 2007a, p. 39). Similarly, the lesson on "Tibetan Homes" in Grade 2 environmental studies shows Buddhist shrine room (*Mchod khang*) as an integral part of Tibetan homes. The conflation of Tibetan culture with Buddhism created a tendentious representation of Tibetan cultural identity as synonymous with Buddhist religion. Therefore, the construction of Tibetan cultural identity largely in Buddhist terms reflect the majoritarian power in the selection and organization of school knowledge.

The course of victory narrative of Tibetan cultural heritage is arrested and interrupted by the Chinese takeover of Tibet in 1950s. The narrative on each heritage sites turns bitter with the establishment of the Chinese rule, and the textbook highlighted how these heritage sites were destroyed especially during the Cultural Revolution era. For example, on Yumbhu Lhakhang, the textbook (Tibetan Children's Village, 2006) says: "In 1959, after the whole of Tibet was occupied by China, a countless number of Tibetan ancestral legacies like monasteries and forts were destroyed. Among them, Yumbhu Lhakhang's entire exterior and interior were destroyed leaving no trace" (p. 79).

Therefore, the victory narrative of Tibetan culture and heritage presents a discourse of Tibet as an ancient nation possessing a distinctive and rich cultural heritage. This discourse is upheld and supported by the deployment of a variety of discursive resources like heritage and cultural sites, symbols, rituals and practices. Consequently, it positioned Tibetan children as heirs to their ancestral legacies and inheritors of its long histories and rich cultural heritage. Such subject positioning may offer a sense of worth and pride, and a positive self-image, which is particularly important given the circumstances of dispossession and displacement the Tibetan community in exile (including children) presently live under. While the victory narratives certainly tend to boost their morale and anchor them to preserve Tibetan culture in the diaspora, the intermingling of victim narratives keeps them on their toes in their political struggle for freedom in Tibet.

6.5 Conclusion

As it is evident from the analysis, Tibet-related contents of the primary-level social studies textbooks can be grouped into two main themes – the political and the cultural. The political themes perform several important functions. Firstly, political contents of the textbooks, overtly or subtly, construct Tibet as a separate entity in its multiple dimensions – territorial, political, cultural, and demographic. These constructions not only offer a reified and standardized image of Tibet as the homeland and an imagined national community with shared linguistic, cultural and historical experiences, they effectively undermine the Chinese construction of Tibet. Secondly, political themes adopt a decolonial position by countering the dominant Chinese interpretation of Tibet's historical status and the Sino-Tibetan relationships prior to the 1950s. In doing so, it engages in knowledge production from the margins that destabilizes the dominant groups' narratives. Thirdly, the political contents also highlight the chosen trauma, especially those pertaining to the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950s and its repressive rule since then. As such, the narratives presented in the Tibetan refugee schools' textbooks attempt to raise the critical consciousness of Tibetan children against oppression and dispossession.

Apart from the overt political contents, the primary social studies curriculum also carries a fair share of what could be described as Tibetan cultural knowledge. Therefore, it functions to engender cultural reproduction and transmission, especially the dominant Buddhist culture. This task holds a special significance for the construction of Tibetan cultural identity, given the constraints posed by diasporic circumstances. Such cultural identity often serves as the foundation for constructing national identity (Norbu, 2003). From an educational point of view, the inclusion of local contents is crucial for making education meaningful to the community it serves. The dislocation between school and home is a tremendous challenge in diverse and multicultural countries, where dominant groups' cultural capital came to be perpetuated through public education. This is what Tibetans inside Tibet experience under the Han-centric curriculum that is bent on assimilating the ethnic minorities. Therefore, culturally-relevant and culturally-sustaining curriculum and instruction are widely held as the antidote to such hegemonic tendencies. In this regard, the Tibetan exile community makes creative use of the latitude afforded by the Indian system of education by incorporating into the school curriculum a number of contents that Tibetan children can relate to.

However, overriding political agenda and one-sided narratives leave little space for children to engage in genuine critical inquiry, explore alternative sources of knowledge, and participate meaningfully in the processes of

knowledge construction. For instance, while the discourse presented in the primary level social studies textbooks provides ample occasions for children to view Tibet as a separate and independent country, it obscures the inconvenient aspects of Tibet's subjugation by China is certain historical times. Therefore, the discourse allows as well as limits the possibilities of understanding Tibet in its various historical contexts. This theme will be further developed in the succeeding chapters dealing with middle school Tibetan history textbook analysis and the thematic analysis of the classroom observations and interviews conducted with social studies and history teachers.

7 THE LAMAIST NARRATIVES: ANALYSIS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

At the middle school level (Grade 6 to 8), the teaching of the history of Tibet assumes a more formal and coherent shape in the Tibetan refugee schools in India. As discussed in the sixth chapter concerning the primary level textbooks, the contents related to Tibetan history, culture and politics are integrated into the social studies subject. History, therefore, is not taught in any systematic and chronologically-ordered fashion in the primary grades. However, in the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) middle schools, the history of Tibet is taught separately by Tibetan teachers who had completed their undergraduate degree in the Tibetan studies. The middle school Tibetan history textbooks are different from the primary level social studies textbooks in two important ways. Firstly, the middle school Tibetan history textbooks focus solely on history, and therefore, contents related to geography and civics (political science) are largely absent. Secondly, since the middle school Tibetan history curriculum is a comprehensive introduction to the entire history of Tibet, the textbooks deal primarily with the history of Tibet prior to the Chinese communist occupation of Tibet in the 1950s.

This chapter presents the findings gleaned from a critical discourse analysis of the middle school Tibetan history textbooks. Since chapter five and six provided an in-depth explanation on the analytical lenses and procedures of the critical discourse analysis, these are not reiterated here. In a nutshell, the key analytical focus consists of identifying discourses and discursive constructions that support them; analyzing how discourse constructs reality in a certain way; contextualizing the prevailing discourses within the broader historical and socio-cultural milieu to provide meaningful interpretations; examining the role of power dynamics in the production and dissemination of discourses; and discursive subject positioning of various actors involved in the historical narrative, etc.

7.1 The middle school Tibetan history textbooks

Tibetan history is taught in the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) middle schools as part of the social science subject. The social science subject has four distinct parts to it – the Tibetan history, geography, civics and Indian history. For the Tibetan history subject, the medium of instruction as well as the textbooks are written in the Tibetan language, whereas the other three domains of the social science subject are taught in the English language and the textbooks used are the ones produced in English by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), India's apex educational and curricular body. Therefore, the middle school social science subject carries contents related to both Tibet (the historic and imagined homeland) and India (the existential homeland), and are taught in both Tibetan (the heritage language) and English languages (the dominant language). It shows the Tibetan administration's careful balancing act of localizing curriculum to meet the needs and interests of the community, while simultaneously remaining within the host country's educational framework.

The four sub-divisions of the social science subject, namely the Tibetan history, geography, civics, and the Indian history are accorded equal weightage in the final assessment, as well as an equal number of instructional hours – roughly two hours of instruction per week. The middle school Tibetan history textbooks, currently in use in the TCV schools were edited and first published in 2002 by the Department of Education, Tibetan Government-in-Exile. These textbooks were edited by two scholars of Tibetan studies, one of whom was a former teacher. Before publication, the draft textbooks were reviewed by a "High-level National Textbook Review Committee" comprising of eight members led by monk-scholar Samdhong Rinpoche who also served as the *Kalon Tripa* (prime-minister) of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile from 2001-2011. Majority of this all-male committee members were Tibetan language teachers. It can be thus argued that the textbook editors and reviewers lack specialization in pedagogical knowledge, especially those pertaining to history didactics. Since their first publication in 2002, these textbooks have been reprinted multiple times, but their contents were not revised. Therefore, unlike the visually-rich and pedagogically-progressive primary-level social studies textbooks, the middle school Tibetan history textbooks are poorly edited and designed, with very few visuals and other learning resources in it. These textbooks are also written in a more flamboyant and ornate language of a scriptural genre and are, to a certain degree, not child-friendly. During the field visit and the semi-structured interviews with history teachers, a number of

informants have alluded to this language issue and the problems it poses to children during teaching-learning processes.

The Grade 6 Tibetan history textbook consists of six chapters roughly covering the period from the beginning of the Tibetan civilization to mid-thirteenth century CE (table 12). This stretch of the period could be labeled as the ancient or early Tibet. The history section of the textbook has 42 pages in total including all the exercises at the end of each chapter. It begins with an introductory chapter on Tibet, providing a mythical and primordial account of the origin of its land and people. The remaining chapters deal primarily with the successive kings of Yarlung dynasty that ruled the region for nearly a millennium, from 127 BCE up until its disintegration in 842 CE. From the six chapters, two are solely on the Thirty-third king Songtsen Gampo and his reign, who is lauded as the doyen of Tibetan kings. His reign ushered in an era of successful military campaigns, territorial expansion and cultural development, and heralded the establishment of the Tibetan Empire as one of the most preeminent powers in Central Asia at that time. Adopting the dominant Buddhist narrative, the textbook bestows upon him the title "Dharma or Religious king" (*Chos-kyi rgyal-po*) (Department of Education, 2002a, p. 17). The period between seventh to ninth centuries CE is generally considered as the classical age or the golden period in Tibetan history, especially in the Buddhist historiographical accounts.

Table 12: Grade 6 Tibetan history textbook

Chapter no.	Title
1	The formation of Tibet's land and its inhabitants
2	Primeval society of Tibet
3	The power of the ancient Tibetan kingdom
4	Religious and political developments
5	From Trisong Detsen to Lang Darma
6	The era of the disintegration of Tibet

Source: Department of Education (2002a)

The Grade 7 Tibetan history textbook, with a total of five chapters, deals with what could be described as the medieval period – approximately from the early thirteenth to mid-seventeenth centuries (table 13). It begins with a chapter explaining the relationship between Tibet and Mongolia with a special focus on the nature of Preceptor-Patron relationship (*Mchod-yon*) between the two. This Preceptor-Patron relationship, which Tibetan lama rulers also established with the Manchu dynasty that ruled China from the mid-seventeenth century to the

early twentieth centuries, became one of the bases for the Chinese claim over Tibet. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the Tibetan exile school textbooks give considerable emphasis on discussing this issue, most certainly in their favor. The chapter also discusses the rise to power of Sakya house in Tibet with the support of Mongol kings. The next three chapters discuss three ruling houses – Phagdru, Rinpung, and Depa Tsangpa - that primarily ruled the Central Tibet in quick succession between the 1350s and 1640s. The last chapter carries short biographies of the First to Fourth Dalai Lamas. It is interesting to note that an entire chapter is devoted to the biographies of the First to Fourth Dalai Lamas, despite the fact that the first four Dalai Lamas held no political power, nor their religious positions were preeminent during that time (Schaik, 2012). The only exception is the Third Dalai Lama who was instrumental in building cultural relationships between his Gelugpa sect of Tibetan Buddhism and the Mongol rulers of the time (Adams, 2009). The institution of Dalai Lama rose to unparalleled political and religious supremacy mainly from the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama in the mid-seventeenth century.

Table 13: Grade 7 Tibetan history textbook

Chapter no.	Title
1	The Priest-Patron relationship between Tibet & Mongolia
2	Phagdru's reign
3	Rinpung's reign
4	Depa Tsangpa's reign
5	1st to 4th Dalai Lama

Source: Department of Education (2002b)

The Grade 8 Tibetan history textbook discusses the major developments that took place in Tibet over three centuries from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-twentieth centuries - the whole era of Dalai Lamas' rule in Tibet (table 14). The chapters are titled after the successive Dalai Lamas, but the contents also deal with the political and cultural transformations that swept the region during the period. Wielding both political and religious authorities, the institution of the Dalai Lama rose to a paramount height within these periods. The centrality of the institution of the Dalai Lama is reflected in the fact that the history of an entire nation is told through semi-biographical accounts of the successive Dalai Lamas. The chapters dealing with the Fifth, the Thirteenth and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama are most detailed owing to the major political and cultural shifts that Tibet experienced during their reigns. The first chapter is on the Fifth Dalai Lama and it traces how Tibet emerged as a unified entity under him in the

1640s. In the following chapters on the Sixth to the Twelfth Dalai Lamas, the influence of Mongols and Manchus, and the infighting among Tibetan ruling elites were discussed briefly. The chapter on the Thirteenth Dalai Lama highlights the British invasion of Tibet in 1904 and the Manchu invasion of Tibet in 1910 leading to his exile into Mongolia and British India respectively, and his efforts in securing Tibet's sovereignty following the expulsion of Manchu forces from Tibet and the proclamation of Tibetan independence in 1913. The final chapter dealing the current or the Fourteenth Dalai Lama covers the tumultuous period of the Chinese communist invasion of Tibet in 1950s, the resultant Tibetan uprising of March 1959, and the Dalai Lama's exile into India. It also briefly discusses the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's efforts in gaining international attention to the Tibet issue as well as the establishment of a democratic system in exile and institutions for cultural preservation. It ended with the conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama in 1989.

Table 14: Grade 8 Tibetan history textbook

Chapter no.	Title
1	The 5th Dalai Lama
2	The 6th Dalai Lama
3	The 7th Dalai Lama
4	The 8th Dalai Lama
5	The 9th and 10th Dalai Lama
6	The 11th and 12th Dalai Lama
7	The 13th Dalai Lama
8	The 14th Dalai Lama

Source: Department of Education (2012)

7.2 Findings and discussion

In this section, the major themes that emerged from the critical discourse analysis of the middle school Tibetan history textbooks are summarized and discussed. The discussion focuses on several key units of analysis: identifying discursive constructions used in the textbooks to build and support the prevailing discourses; making available the relevant contextual and background information in order historicize the textbook contents and the discourses that inhabit them; examining the relevance of the selected contents to the present-day polemics between the Chinese and the Tibetan sides; and problematizing

textbook contents to unveil the underlying power relations and dynamics within the Tibetan society as well as vis-à-vis other groups.

7.2.1 The Lamaist historiography

Traditionally, historiographical writings in Tibet were primarily dominated by two main genres – the dynastic histories (*Rgyal-rabs*) and the religious histories (*Chos-'byung*). Besides these genres, there are a massive corpus of biographical and autobiographical accounts (*Rnam-thar*), particularly hagiographies of high lamas and rulers. In close alignment with these traditions, the middle school Tibetan history textbooks are therefore titled as "Dynastic histories and religious histories" (*Rgyal-rabs dang chos-'byung*). The dynastic histories deal with the history of royal dynasties or royal houses that ruled Tibet in different periods of the past, whilst the religious histories dwell chiefly on the history of Buddhism in general as well as its advent and growth in Tibet. Even in the dynastic histories, exposition on each king and his court's propagation of Buddhism forms a major theme. As highlighted before, the Grade 6 Tibetan history textbook (Department of Education, 2002a) focuses on the ancient kings of Tibet. It is believed that 41 successive kings of Yarlung dynasty ruled Tibet nearly for a millennium from 127 BCE to 850s CE. The aforementioned textbook discusses only eight of them. There is no doubt that a middle school textbook cannot do justice to such a huge succession of kings. However, the selection of kings was primarily guided, as in the Lamaist tradition, by the king's achievements in promoting Buddhism in Tibet. Therefore, the historical significance (Seixas & Morton, 2013) of Yarlung kings and their achievements were established largely from a Buddhist perspective. As such, the textbook highlights the following kings (table 15):

Table 15: Tibetan kings and their achievements highlighted in the Grade 6 Tibetan history textbook

Kings mentioned	***Achievements discussed***
The first king Nyatri Tsenpo	The founder of Yarlung dynasty
The eighth king Drigum Tsenpo	Beginning of royal burial practices
The ninth king Pude Gongyal	Technological and agricultural developments
The twenty-eighth king Thori Nyentsen	The first advent of Buddhism into Tibet
The thirty-third king Songtsen Gampo	Patronization of Buddhism, the invention of Tibetan script, and the establishment of

	the Tibetan Empire
The thirty-eighth king Trisong Detsen	Propagation of Buddhism, the establishment of first Buddhist monastery and ordination of monks, expansion of the Tibetan Empire
The fortieth king Tri Ralpachen	Propagation of Buddhism by turning monasteries into landed estates, the continuation of the Tibetan Empire
The forty-first king Lhase Darma	Suppression of Buddhist faith and reinstitution of Bon faith

Source: Department of Education, 2002a

The genre of *Chos-'byung* or the religious histories rose to a predominant position during the Buddhist renaissance that engulfed Tibet from the tenth century onwards. This era witnessed the growth of what later came to be known as the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism, as well as massive translation and literary works were produced. It also saw the rise of lama rulers to political power in Tibet. These intellectual and socio-political transformations laid the ground for the emergence of *Chos-'byung,* the religious histories. Dawa Norbu (1997a) calls this "a new concept of history" wherein the focus is not on "what men and women did, but what anyone did for or against Chos [Buddhist religion]" (p. 363). Summarizing the main focuses of the traditional Tibetan historical writing, Schaik and Doney (2009) wrote:

> Historical writing in Tibet has been, by and large, a religious tradition. Tibetan histories have focused on the transmission of religious practices ever since the anonymous 'treasure' histories began to circulate in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. These wove together Buddhist cosmology, the history of Buddhism in India, and semi-legendary accounts of Tibet's imperial past, creating a grand narrative that established Tibet at the centre of Buddhist history. (p. 175)

The historical narrative presented in the textbooks of the Tibetan refugee schools remains completely faithful to the Buddhist rewriting of Tibetan history that has been the predominant narrative since the eleventh or twelfth century. It is difficult to establish and locate when this Buddhist rewriting of Tibetan history began or who were involved in its inception. There are scattered epigraphic evidence to suggest that a certain notion of divine kingship (not necessarily Buddhist) was present around the seventh century CE or even earlier, wherein the Tibetan kings were referred to as the *Lha-sras*, literally meaning the son of god or divine. Likewise, Doney (2015) showed that the

Tibetan king Trisong Detsen (742- c797) was described as a *Bodhisattva* king during his lifetime. In the Buddhist traditions, Bodhisattvas are believed to be beings who are on the path to enlightenment but deferred their final salvation in order to spread Buddha Dharma and help other sentient beings. By the twelfth century, this Buddhist grand narrative of Tibetan history had gained a strong foothold and come to influence the course of Tibetan historiographical writing in the subsequent centuries. The scholars of Tibetan Studies generally trace the concretization of Tibetan imperial mythology based on Buddhist narrative to the eleventh and the twelfth century (Davidson, 2004). In particular, it is traced back to an old text called *Bka'-chems ka-khol ma* (The Pillar Testament) said to have been retrieved from hidden treasure by the famous Buddhist master Atisha (982-1054 CE). The thirty-third Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo (617-647 CE) has been attributed as the author of this text, even though this is hard to establish. The text is primarily a biography of the king himself.

Bka'-chems (1989) is one of the oldest written texts in which Songtsen Gampo is alluded to as an emanation of Chenresig, a *celestial Bodhisattva* who is believed to be the Buddha of Compassion in the pantheon of Buddhist gods and deities. Songtsen Gampo is referred to in the text as "embodiment of Chenresig" (*Thugs-rje chen-po'i ngo-bo rgyal-po srong-btsan sgam-po*, p. 101). The text also places Tibet as 'the realm to be tamed or civilized' (*'dul-shing*) by the Bodhisattva Chenresig. It may be the beginning of the notion of Chenresig as the patron deity of Tibet (*Lha-bskal*) that later on gained widespread currency in the Buddhist narrative of Tibetan history and culture. In *Bka'-chems*, this spatial distribution of the 'realm of action' is described in a conversation between the Buddha and Chenresig.

> Chenresig supplicated [to Buddha]: "But in the north, the people of Land of Snow [Tibet] were not blessed by you, nor has the rays of your teaching spread there".
>
> Buddha said: "Since living beings born in the Land of Snow are not [Buddha's own] disciples, absolute darkness of ignorance leads them to reborn in lower realms; all those who die, instead of going up, head towards the lower realms like snowflakes falling into a lake. Therefore, in the future, Bodhisattvas like you will tame [them]. (p. 18-19)

In the course of centuries that followed, the narrative presented in *Bka' chems* was further expanded and elaborated by faithful Buddhist scholars and court biographers and historians. The main tenets of this storyline are more or less upheld in the major successive quasi-historical works of Lamaist persuasion like *The Red Annals* (1346), *The Blue Annals* (1478), Fifth Dalai Lama's the *Melody of the Spring Queen* (1643), and others. The post-imperial era witnessed what is

generally described as the *Later Propagation of Buddhism* (*Bstan-pa phyi-dar*) in Tibet. During this Buddhist renaissance, Buddhism for the first time gained a firm foothold over the general populace metamorphosing itself from a religion that was mainly confined to the royal court to a religion of the masses, and correspondingly the power shifted from kings to Buddhist lamas (Norbu, 1997a). This spread of Buddhism laid the ground for the growth and acceptance of the Lamaist interpretation of Tibetan history. Or conversely, reclaiming and interpreting the Tibetan history from a Buddhist perspective may have helped the spread of Buddhism as history is often used to legitimize claims to power. It may have helped people see the rise of Buddhism to a powerful position as a natural culmination of some divine predestination. Norbu (1997a) wrote: "the ancient Tibetan history was largely rewritten in terms of Buddhist logic during the Buddhist renaissance. The myth of Chos-rgyal [religious king] is an intellectual legacy of this period" (p. 363). The end result of this gradual sedimentation of Buddhist narrative is the construction of Tibet as a land pre-destined to be Bodhisatva Chenresig's realm of action from the very onset, and its important rulers like the king Songtsen Gampo and later the Dalai Lamas were believed to be the emanations or embodiments of the Bodhisatva Chenresig.

The establishment of divinity and the divine source of the Tibetan imperial power by later Buddhist scholars have much more to do with the politics of the time than with the business of writing about the past. These accounts may not be able to withstand a critical and evidentiary scholarship, but they certainly helped in ensuring the dominant position of Buddhist clergy in the Tibetan polity and society as Tibet came to be ruled primarily by Buddhist lamas since the twelfth or thirteenth century. It shows how engendering knowledge of collective memories, however ahistorical and mythical, is intimately linked to the preservation and perpetuation of the power structure of society. The Lamaist historiography, in their grand narrative of Tibetan history, deploys several important discursive constructions to support the prevailing discourse, some of which are problematized and analyzed in the following sections. Likewise, the Buddhist revisionist accounts of Tibetan history that relocate and trace the primordial links between Tibet and Buddhism led to the production of certain myths, some of which are also discussed below.

7.2.1.1 Mythologization of the past

In the narrative presented in the middle school Tibetan history textbooks, especially in the Grade 6 textbook dealing with the most ancient part of the Tibetan past, histories and mythologies have coalesced together into a seamless

story. Myths and legends are often presented as de-facto historical events or facts. Historical personalities or events are mythologized and reified, and the boundaries between history and myths remain porous. Such mythologization and reification sanctifies the historical accounts, putting it above the rationality and logic of the mundane world. Only in certain parts of the textbook that one finds the use of more balanced and tentative expressions like "it is said that" or "legend has it that". The textbooks writers have privileged the Lamaist sources that glorifies Buddhist religion and its advent and ascendency in Tibet, to the exclusion of more objective and alternative sources such as Dunhuang manuscripts (cache of documents dating back from fifth to early eleventh century CE, discovered in the caves in Dunhuang in the early twentieth century), pre-Buddhist texts belonging to Bonpo traditions, and others.

The textbooks carry Buddhist mythologies, many of which are presented as historical truth, without subjecting them to critical assessment. For example, the story of the origin of Tibetan people is told through a Buddhist myth. Even though the textbook admits that there are different interpretations concerning the origin of the Tibetan people, it only elaborated the Buddhist narrative and presented it as the main perspective. It says (Department of Education, 2002a):

> Of the different interpretations on the origin of the human race in Tibet, the main one is that the Tibetan ancestors… comes from the coupling of the Bodhisattva Monkey who was blessed by Chenresig [Buddha of compassion] and the Mother rock-ogress [who is also believed to be an emanation of perhaps the most important female deity in Tibetan Buddhism called Drolma] in the area of Yarlung Tsethang. (p. 3)

This perspective effectively Buddhicizes Tibetan history from the genesis itself and establishes primordial links between the two. It afforded an element of predestination to the narrative of Tibet as the blessed realm of Bodhisattva Chenresig. In privileging this interpretation, the textbook relocates the genesis of Tibetan people in the Buddhist cosmology and myth. This Buddhist narrative of mythical progenitors of Tibetan people, the *Monkey-Ogress,* began around the eleventh century CE with a text known as *Mani Kabhum.* This text is also attributed to Songtsen Gampo, but it is generally believed that three what is called as 'treasure revealers' (*Gter-ston*) are associated with its production between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Melnick & Bell, 2018). Treasure revealing is a phenomenon in Tibetan Buddhist tradition in which highly realized lamas produce scriptures or sacred objects through vision, memory, or physical extraction with a belief that these were hidden by some earlier historical figures. Matthew Kapstein (2000) summarizes that *Mani Kabhum* offers a new cosmological vision for Tibet with three evolving motifs: the belief

in Bodhisatva Chenresig (the Buddha of Compassion) as the patron deity of Tibet; the Thirty-third king Songtsen Gampo as an embodiment of Chenresig and his prime role in establishing Buddhism in Tibet; and the belief in agency of Chenresig in Tibet as being destined.

An interesting non-Buddhist myth told in the Grade 6 Tibetan history textbook pertains to the burial practices of the early Tibetan kings. It recounts: "from Nyatri Tsenpo [the first king] to the seventh king, *it is said that* [emphasis added] when they died, they disappeared into the sky via a sky-rope, and therefore, there were no dead bodies or burial sites for them" (Department of Education, 2002a, p. 10). This return to heaven ended with the eighth king, when he fought with one of his ambitious nobles, swinging his sword in the air thereby cutting the sky-rope. Since then, the textbook claims that the practice of royal burial (*Bang-so*) began in Tibet.

The textbook narrative then took a giant leap forward to the twenty-eighth king. In the Buddhist narrative of Tibetan history, the twenty-eighth king Lha Thori Nyentsen is accorded a special mention because it was believed that his reign heralds the advent of Buddhism in Tibet. The account of the arrival of Buddhism in Tibet is narrated in a highly mythical fashion in the textbook. It narrates (Department of Education, 2002a):

> "In 433 CE, when [the twenty-eighth king] was sitting on the roof-top of the royal palace… One day, rainbows filled the sky and a shower of flowers rained down; and it is said that heavenly music echoed as a natural occurrence. Accompanying sunray, *Pang-kong Chag-gyapa* and *Do-de zama-tok* [Sanskrit: Karandavyuha Sutra, a Buddhist text] written on golden papers, a golden stupa and *Cintamani* [a wish-fulfilling gem] fell down on the palace roof… Without knowing their meaning…[the king] put them in his treasury. This is recognized as the advent of Buddhism in Tibet. One night, in the king's dream, came a prophecy saying the meaning will be known after five generations. (p. 11)

Legends and myths certainly help deepen our understanding of the past and are in fact important sources for accessing the distant past. They provide interesting entry points to the study of the past. With critical assessment and cross-examination, mythologies can reveal aspects of the past or render the past comprehensible. But the problem arises when myths are conflated with historical facts, which the textbooks seem to be doing at many junctures.

7.2.1.2 The myth of Chos-rgyal, the religious kings

One of the myths created by the Lamaist narrative is the notion of some of the early Tibetan kings as *Chos-rgyal*. It literally means 'religious king' and was perhaps derived from a contemporaneous title *Dharma-raja*, conferred upon a number of Indian kings. Here the term *Chos* doesn't just mean religion in a more generic sense as the term is understood now, but it specifically means the Buddhist religion. This myth has not only survived until now in the popular culture, but it has also made its way into the school textbooks without critical evaluation. The Lamaist historiography confers this honorific title to three Tibetan kings: the thirty-third king Songtsen Gampo (617-647 CE); the thirty-eighth king Trisong Detsen (755-797 CE); and the fortieth king Tri Ralpachen (806-838 CE). They are known as the "the three religious kings, the lords of the ancestors" (*Chos-rgyal mes-dbon rnam-gsum*). In the Grade 6 Tibetan history textbook, the chapter on the thirty-third king Songtsen Gampo referred to him from the onset as the "*Chos-kyi rgyal-po*" (Religious king). It is generally considered that these three Tibetan kings played an instrumental role in establishing Buddhism in Tibet. The school textbook highlighted each king's contributions toward promoting Buddhism in Tibet. However, the extent of the spread of Buddhism during their reigns is open to debate. Norbu (1997) wrote:

> If chos-rgyals patronized and promoted Buddhism to the extent the Tibetans believed, then surely Lang Darma could not have shaken its foundations to the extent that they believed he did. It should be reiterated here that the royal patronage of Buddhism seems highly exaggerated. Only 13 temples were built during the Tsenpo [Tibetan kings] period and all of them were sponsored by royalty. (p. 368-369)

Some even see Songtsen Gampo's adoption of Buddhism as the court religion as a move guided primarily by political expediency to safeguard his own rise to power (Thinley, 1983).

Dawa Norbu (1997a) concludes, after analyzing ancient texts and pillar inscriptions, that the title *Chos-rgyal* seems to have emerged after the disintegration of the Tibetan Empire in the ninth century CE. He wrote (1997a): "so far, there is no evidence to prove that any of the Tibetan kings ever called himself or was called by his contemporaries Chos-rgyal" (p. 363). The title seems to be an expression of gratitude, posthumously bestowed upon kings who were believed to have patronized Buddhism. In stark contrast, the early Tibetan kings were known by the title *Tsenpo* (*Bstan-po*). Tsenpo in the common parlance means mighty, powerful, strong, violent which are anything but antithesis to the notion of the religious king. The southern face of Lhasa Shol Pillar (circa 760s CE), believed to be the oldest surviving Tibetan writing,

began by saying "During the time of *Tsenpo* Khri De Tsug Tsen" (the name of the thirty-eighth king with the title Tsenpo) (Richardson, 1985, p. 6).

From a critical history point of view, terminology like *chos-rgyal* provides an important entry point for students to develop a nuanced understanding of the discipline of history (Seixas & Morton, 2013; VanSledright, 2011). Pedagogically, it can be treated as a great teaching resource to teach about the interpretive and contested nature of history; how certain interpretation reflects the positionality of the writer; and the availability of multiple other constructions of the same event or the personality. On the contrary, if one perspective is promoted as an objective historical fact as the Tibetan history textbooks seem to be doing, it can potentially result in a biased viewpoint or even xenophobic tendency. In this regard, the textbooks fail to take advantage of the 'teachable moments' that various historical interpretations present to us. Disciplinary approach to the teaching of history advocates critical examination of historical events and their interpretations, and significance attached to them in the narrative (Seixas & Morton, 2013; VanSledright, 2011).

7.2.1.3 Songtsen vs Darma: The divine and the evil

A comparative analysis of the discursive constructions deployed to create an image of the thirty-third king Songtsen Gampo and the forty-first king Darma highlights the Buddhist rewriting of Tibetan history in its most stark form. Their cases provide a classic example of invocation of emblematic historical figures that populate the terrain of nationalist historical accounts. Such figures are often divided into two dichotomous camps - heroes and villains. Songtsen Gampo is hailed as an emanation of Chenresig, the Buddha of compassion, and is endowed with titles such as the 'religious king'. Two chapters are devoted to him alone in the Grade 6 Tibetan history textbook. He is believed to have a small statue of Chenresig on this head, and this is often shown in the images or sculptures. Whereas Darma is denounced as the destroyer of the Buddhist faith in Tibet and was written off in just one paragraph in the textbook. The Grade 6 textbook, reproducing the Lamaist narrative, provides a glowing account of Songtsen Gampo's reign – his contributions range from military campaigns to territorial expansion, and introduction of the Tibetan script to the establishment of matrimonial relationships with neighboring empires. The textbook also discusses the Buddhist temples built by each of his five queens. Songtsen Gampo's death is divinized and memorialized as thus (Department of Education, 2002a):

> This emperor [Songtsen Gampo] performed unparalleled political and religious deeds and finally at the age of 82, along with his Nepalese queen

> Tritsun and Chinese queen Gong-zhu, coalesced into a heap of rays and disappeared into the statue of Thukje Chenpo [other name of Chenresig, the Buddha of Compassion] at the Rasa Trulnang temple. (p. 24)

In sharp contrast, there is only one paragraph discussing the reign of the forty-first Tibetan emperor Darma, who remains the most vilified Tibetan king in the Buddhist narratives because of his alleged suppression of Buddhist faith and reinstitution of Bon (a native faith) as the state religion. In the later folk and oral accounts that had incorporated layers of myths and exaggerations, sedimented over the course of centuries of retelling, Darma is demonized as having ox horns on his head and a black tongue. Shakabpa (1967) summarized the Tibetan popular perceptions of the king in the following lines:

> A number of folk tales have since sprung up about Lang Darma. He was supposed to have had horns on his head and a black tongue. To hide his horns, he arranged his hair in two plaits, tied in a raised knot on either side. No one supposedly knew this at the time, unless it was his hairdresser. It is said that this is the origin of the practice for the Tibetan lay officials to plait their hair in this manner. It is also said that some Tibetans, when they scratch their heads and put out their tongues on meeting high-ranking persons, do so to show that they have neither horns nor black tongues. (p. 53)

The Grade 6 Tibetan History textbook appears bit cautious, but nonetheless, it referred to the forty-first king primarily as Lang Darma. It explains how the prefix *Lang*, which means an ox in the Tibetan language, came to be added to the king's name: "because of the emperor's rough character, his subjects called him Lang Darma - Darma, the ox" (Department of Education, 2002a, p. 36). This is written as if it was an undisputed historical fact. The textbook continues to vilify the emperor Darma by describing his activities in an extremely negative light, thereby perpetuating the Lamaist narrative:

> From 843 CE onwards, the emperor and his nobles conspired to destroy Buddhist laws: monasteries and shrines were destroyed; statues of deities and scriptures were buried; most of them were burnt; Tsuglagkhang [temple] turned into slaughterhouse; monks consuming alcohol were painted in the temples; good monks were killed; average ones were banished afar; and lowly ones were made to hunt. (p. 36)

Samten G. Karmay (2007) examined pre-eleventh century sources like pillar inscriptions and more importantly manuscripts belonging to the Tibetan imperial period which were discovered from the cave libraries in Dunhuang to construct a more nuanced account of the emperor Darma. He noted that the

derogatory title "Lang Darma" appeared to have emerged only after the eleventh century. On the contrary, in the ancient written records, the emperor was known by different names such as *Tsenpo Wüdum Tan, Dun Tan,* and *Lhase Darma.* Likewise, the reasons for the suppression of Buddhist faith were located more broadly in economic and military factors of the time. Karmay argued that the strain of spread of Buddhism, especially the system of ordained monks, started to feel on the Tibetan economic and military prowess during Darma's reign. A sizable portion of the state revenue was being siphoned away to support the growing monastic communities, in addition to its direct impact on Tibet's military strength required for maintaining the massive empire. Questioning the claims of the Lamaist historians concerning the totality of destruction of Buddhist practices during Darma's reign, Karmay wrote: "during the reign of Darma, the Buddhist tantric practices spread far and wide. King Darma severed the practices of many monks living in monasteries and remaining dependent on others [the state] for their livelihood, rather than eradicating the Buddhist religion itself" (p. 11).

King Darma's assassination by a Buddhist monk by the name of Lhalung Palgyi Dorje is also mentioned in the textbook. It also carries a hand-drawn picture depicting the assassination of king Darma as it has been described in the Buddhist quasi-historical accounts. In the Lamaist narratives and the Tibetan folk and oral traditions, Darma's assassination is often sensationalized and dramatized, and the assassin is sometimes hailed as a hero (Khangkar, 1993).

The stories Tibetan history textbooks chose to tell about the two kings show the partisan attitude and monocular view of the Lamaist historiography. Their view of Darma was informed overwhelmingly by his suppression of Buddhist monastic practices, resulting in vilification and demonization. Songtsen Gampo, on the other hand, is eulogized as a 'religious king' due to the royal patronage accorded to Buddhism, even though he was more fittingly known during his time as the *Tsenpo*, the fierce one. Therefore, the Lamaist narrative chose to highlight aspects of the past that are convenient for them and that serve their interests. What is more concerning is the use of public education, especially the teaching of history to perpetuate and legitimize this kind of one-sided narratives.

7.2.1.4 Divinization of the Dalai Lamas

Since the mid-seventeenth century, the Dalai Lamas have played a pivotal role in the Tibetan cultural and political life. In fact, the institution of Dalai Lama spearheaded the Tibetan government from the 1640s to 1959, with the Dalai Lama as the supreme temporal and religious leader. In the Grade 7 and 8

textbooks, all the chapters covering the period between the mid-seventeenth to the mid-twentieth centuries were constructed around the successive Dalai Lamas' biography. These biographies are written in the tradition of hagiography and are thus filled with honorifics and supplicatory discursive devices. In many senses, they resemble less of a historical account. Recourse to mysticism and divinity elevate the Dalai Lamas into an exalted position of paranormal height, transcending the logic of the mundane world. This helps preserve the power of Buddhist clergy and places them in a dominant position. For example, the passing away of the Fifth Dalai Lama is narrated in the following lines in the Grade 8 textbook (Department of Education, 2012):

> In 1682, the year of Water Dog, the *Victorious One* [honorary prefix that goes with the Dalai Lama's name] suddenly *pretended* [*Tshul bzhes-pa*] to develop a foot disease. After leaving a bulk of final testaments, asking his prime-minister to keep it secret and instructing him to consult Lhamo [the State Oracle of Tibet] whenever he has doubts about any tasks, [the Dalai Lama] *passed beyond the sufferings* [*Sku mya-ngen las 'das*, an honorific for saying he died] [all emphasis added]. (p. 8-9)

The logic behind the use of these kinds of expressions is that the Dalai Lama is considered by the Tibetan Buddhists as an enlightened Bodhisattva, an emanation of Chenresig, who has returned to the earth to serve sentient beings. Therefore, he actually transcends suffering and death. Yet in order to be like other human beings, he and other enlightened beings *pretend* to get ill and die. However, historically, this notion of the Dalai Lamas as an emanation of Chenresig became more established only after the Fifth Dalai Lama, especially due to efforts of his regent Desi Sangye Gyatso who wrote the Fifth Dalai Lama's biography in which he was promoted as Chenresig's emanation (Schaik, 2012). By promoting the Dalai Lamas as the emanation of Chenresig, Tibetan Lamaist historiography establish a chain of direct and primordial link with Tibet's imperial 'religious kings' and even further to the origin of Tibetan race from the compassionate Monkey, who according to Buddhist mythology, was an emanation of Chenresig. This atavistic tendency of reclaiming links to something sacral and ancestral helps in the establishment of divine legitimacy and consolidation of power.

To establish the Dalai Lama's divinity, the textbooks following the tradition of Lamaist historiography, peruse a multitude of discursive constructions that place the Dalai Lama on the high pedestal of divinity. The textbooks claimed that the recognition of each Dalai Lama's reincarnation was based on the 'prophecies of deities and lamas' (*Lha-bla'i lung-bstan*); the child candidate's miraculous abilities of recalling his past life, reciting complicated Buddhist

texts, or identifying objects belonging to the previous Dalai Lama; and the appearance of auspicious signs and good omens. All of these establish the child candidate as an 'unmistakable reincarnation' (*Yang-srid 'khrul-bral*). His enthronement and assumption of power were purportedly based on the wishes of 'all the deities and people of Tibet' (*Bhod-ljongs lha-mi yongs*). And the Dalai Lama's passing away is divinized as *pretending* (*Tsul bzhes-pa*) to die, *passing beyond the sufferings* (*Mya-ngan las 'das-pa*), or *consciousness dissolving into nirvana* (*Dgongs-pa chos-dbyings su thim-pa*). The Dalai Lamas themselves may not have any role in these projections, and many of them eventually grew into erudite scholars, spiritual masters, and able and benevolent rulers. He was perhaps promoted as thus by his monastic coteries, and by the political elites surrounding him, primarily out of faith as well as to ensure the protection of their own vested interests and patronage. But once it was embraced by his faithful subjects, it becomes reified as an essential part of Tibetan cultural and social fabrics.

Despite these sanitized projections, the reality, however, was more mundane and brutal at times. The processes of identifying reincarnation of the Dalai Lama or other high lamas were often embroiled in controversies and often violent struggles between rival claimants supported different factions with vested interests. In fact, the Fifth Dalai Lama acknowledged in his own autobiography that, as a child candidate, he had failed miserably in the reincarnation identification tests conducted by the official search party. But still, he was 'recognized' as the true reincarnation due to prevailing political climate (Gardner, 2009; Karmay, 2005; Schaik, 2012). The Sixth Dalai Lama broke his monastic vows and stepped down or was forced out of his position. Likewise, many Dalai Lamas died at a very younger age, especially from the ninth to the twelfth Dalai Lama, and some of them may have been murdered by powerful aristocrats (Schaik, 2012). These controversies find little or no mention in the textbooks as it would rattle the very premises of the Lamaist narrative.

In the Lamaist tradition, the narrative presents the historical event as an objective reality, suppressing the constructed nature of historical accounts and the possible existence of multiple and alternate constructions. Therefore, the thrust of the historical narrative is on fostering allegiance, and not on developing children's critical thinking capacities and disciplinary understanding of history. For example, certain portions of the Tibetan history, even those dating back nearly to a millennium are written like an eye witness account, often in a conversational fashion. For example, discussing the relationships between Mongol king Kublai Khan and Tibetan Lama Shakya Phagspa, the Grade 7 textbook (Department of Education, 2002b) narration goes like this:

> Since Khan considered Tibet as an uncivilized land, Phagspa explained in detail the dynastic history of Tibetan kings from Nyatri Tsenpo to Lang Darma; religious histories; chronology; how Tibetan kings took Chinese princesses as consorts by resorting to force on two occasions; and the history of how even the Chinese king was dethroned. Disbelieving, Khan checked Chinese historical accounts, and on finding it corroborate [the claim], the king [Khan] developed love, respect and admiration towards Tibet. (p. 6-7)

To sum up, the middle school Tibetan history textbooks adopted the Lamaist narrative and sidelined other narratives from the margins. They perpetuated the discursive constructions deployed by the Lamaist historiography such as the mythical account of the origin of Tibetan people from a Buddhist parable, sanitization and divinization of its early kings by conferring them with the title 'religious kings', etc.

7.2.2 Discursive construction of Tibet

Aside from viewing the history of Tibet from a Buddhist perspective, the construction of Tibet as an independent country or an entity separate from China is a major recurring theme in the middle school Tibetan history textbooks. In this regard, the middle school Tibetan history textbooks carry forward the narrative promulgated by the primary-level social studies textbooks. From a historical perspective, it must be noted that the present-day concept of the nation-state with a bounded territory is more of a recent invention, especially from the early twentieth century in Asia. Prior to that, kingdoms and empires rose and fell, and the borders between them constantly shifted as a result of the reconfiguration of power balance after a certain period of time. Tibet existed in the past in various shapes and sizes and the same is true for China and Mongolia, the two players with whom Tibet had intimate relations. Therefore, the use of modern-day concepts like 'country' or 'nation' to describe past relationships would be grossly inappropriate. Even though Tibet remained a separate entity for much of the history, the need to highlight the independent character of Tibet and Tibet-China separateness in the school history textbooks is primarily prompted by the current circumstances of polemics between the Chinese communists and the Tibetans.

As in the case of the primary-level social studies textbooks, mapping and geographical features are frequently used as discursive resources to construct an image of Tibet and lay claim over Tibet's territoriality. Describing Tibet's neighboring places, the Grade 6 Tibetan history textbook (Department of

Education, 2002a) elaborates: "to the south of Tibet is India, Nepal and Bhutan. To the west are Ladakh, Kashmir and Pakistan. To the north is Xinjiang and Mongolia and to the east is China" (p. 4). It is interesting to note that Kashmir and Ladakh are mentioned separately from India, as well as Xinjiang from China. This may be because the textbook is not referring to the modern-day conception of nation states (*Rgyal-khabs*), but more of a traditional reference to places (*Yul*) surrounding Tibet. The Tibetan history textbooks have also consistently referred to Tibet as comprising the whole of the Tibetan Plateau or the traditional three provinces of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo. As shown in chapter six, this position challenges the post-1950 Chinese state view that equates Tibet with only the western half of the Tibetan Plateau, to which they now call as the Tibet Autonomous Region. Therefore, the textbooks make a special effort to portray Tibet as consisting of the three provinces. For instance, when Mongols offered Tibet to Phagpa as patronage for his spiritual initiation, the Grade 7 Tibetan history textbook (Department of Education, 2002b) highlighted that the "sovereign of *three provinces* [emphasis added] of Tibet" (p. 8) was given. Likewise, when Phagdru snatched power from Sakya rulers, the textbook described it this way: "in 1358, Situ Jangchub Gyaltsen snatched political power from Sakya and ruled the *entire three provinces of Tibet* [emphasis added] (*Bod chol-kha gsum yongs-su rdzogs-pa*)" (p. 15). It is highly likely that Phagdru's political authority was confined mainly to the Central Tibet. The textbook further says that for more than a hundred years successive Phagdru rulers held political power and ruled over "the *entire Tibet* [emphasis added] (*Bod-khams yongs la*)" (p. 16). Similarly, when the Mongolian forces defeated the Tsangpa rulers of Central Tibet and enthroned the Fifth Dalai Lama to power, the textbook claims that he was made "the religious and political ruler of *the whole of Tibet* [emphasis added] (*Bod-yul hril-po*)" (p. 26). The special emphasis laid on presenting Tibet as comprising of the entire three traditional provinces or the entire areas inhabited by ethnic Tibetans has tremendous political significance for current debates between the Chinese Communist state and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. This issue has been dealt with in the previous chapter (6).

Likewise, the middle school Tibetan history textbooks make use of opportunities certain historical events present to construct Tibet-China separateness. For example, the Grade 8 Tibetan history textbook (Department of Education, 2012) discussed the visit of the Fifth Dalai Lama to the Manchu court in Beijing in 1653 on the invitation of Manchu Emperor Shunzhi. This visit caused a flurry of diplomatic maneuvers at that time between the Chinese court and the Tibetan delegation as it would cause a similar political polemics some more than three hundred years later between the two sides. These

maneuvers and polemics pertain to the nature of relationships between the Dalai Lama ruled Tibet and Manchu ruled China. The issues like where should the Emperor personally welcome the Dalai Lama; should the Dalai Lama kowtow before the Emperor; how should they be seated; and the parting gift of a seal from the Emperor to the Dalai Lama caused diplomatic maneuvers and discussions between the two sides. Several centuries later, these issues were reinterpreted for political purpose to support the Chinese claim over Tibet. Schaik (2012) noted: "though modern Chinese nationalist historians have taken this visit as marking the submission of the Dalai Lama's government to China, such an interpretation is hardly borne out by either the Tibetan or the Chinese records of the time" (p. 153). On the contrary, the Tibetan school history textbook (Department of Education, 2012) explicates the reasons for Manchu's invitation, and in the doing so construct an image of the Dalai Lama as a powerful sovereign ruler:

> One of the reasons why the Manchu court revered the Dalai Lama is that Tibet and China share extensive borders. Moreover, there were repeated aggressions from the Mongols on Mongol-China borders in the northeast. Since the Dalai Lama's religious teachings were readily accepted by the Mongols, having a good Priest-Patron relationship between Tibet and China will help in preventing the Mongols from harming Manchu's China. (p. 4)

The textbook carries a hand-drawn picture depicting the Fifth Dalai Lama's arrival at the Forbidden City with long retinue and guard of honor befitting a sovereign leader. It concludes: "at that time, a new palace called Yellow Palace was built for the Dalai Lama in Beijing. When he arrived, the Manchu emperor himself came to receive him, according him the dignity and honor [representing] tw*o equal countries* [emphasis added]" (p. 4-6).

The textbooks not only discursively construct Tibet as an independent and separate country from China; it eulogizes Tibet's natural beauty. In the nationalist discourse, glorification of the motherland is often a standard recipe for building a sense of shared national pride and allegiance in its subjects. As such, the textbooks conjure up an image of Tibet as a pristine and beautiful land. The introductory chapter in Grade 6 Tibetan history textbook (Department of Education, 2002a) extols the virtues of Tibet in the following lines: "it [Tibet] has a perfect natural and environmental setting: vast and beautiful grassland; wide and dense forest; high and majestic snow mountain ranges; pristine and cool rivers, streams and lakes" (p. 6).

7.2.3 Refuting the Chinese claims

Alongside constructing Tibet as an independent and sovereign country, the middle school Tibetan history textbooks also dwell on the issues of contention between the Chinese state and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and provide interpretations that invalidate and challenge some of the Chinese claims. Therefore, a strong undercurrent that runs throughout the middle school Tibetan history textbooks is the refutation of the Chinese claim over Tibet. This is achieved by highlighting contentious issues and building a defensible account of the Tibetan sovereignty and undermining the Chinese interpretations that claim Tibet as a part of China. One such issue is the nature of the *Priest-Patron relationship* (*Mchod-yon 'brel-ba*) that came to be established between Tibetan lama rulers and the Mongol kings or the Manchu kings (of Qing dynasty that rule over China). The Grade 7 Tibetan History begins with an exposition on the Priest-Patron relationship. It is a mutually-beneficial system of control and power relation that had developed initially between Mongolian rulers and Tibetan Sakya lamas in the mid-thirteen century. In this reciprocal relationship, Tibetan Lamas provide spiritual blessings and guidance to the Mongol kings, who in return support and patronize Buddhism. Since some of the Tibetan lamas simultaneously hold political power in Tibet, the relationship also means providing protection to Tibet. This relationship began between the Mongol king Kublai Khan and Tibetan Lama Phagspa (Schaik, 2012). Phagspa taught Buddhism to the king and helped invent a Mongolian script (called Phagspa script). As a reciprocal offering, Kublai Khan is said to have offered the governance of Tibet to Phagspa in 1254. This system of mutual interdependence also formed the basis of later relations between the Ming and Manchu dynasties of China and Tibetan lamas, including the successive Dalai Lamas.

However, after the 1950s, this Priest-Patron relationship became a bone of contention between the Chinese side, who claimed that it represented Tibet's subservience to Mongol Yuan dynasty thereby effectively making Tibet a part of China, and the Tibetan side claiming that it was a purely spiritual relationship without any political tag attached to it. These political polemics clearly influenced the textbook narrative as it attempted to refute the Chinese claim in the following line (Department of Education, 2002b):

> From 1368-1644 CE, [the Chinese side claim] that the Ming dynasty inherited the right to a establish relationship with Tibet from the Mongol Chengis Khan. When Chengis Khan and his successors were expanding their power in different parts of the world, some of the Tibetan areas came under their partial rule. But from 1253 when Kublai Khan gave the

> sovereignty of three provinces of Tibet to… Phagspa, Tibet and Mongolia, as independent and sovereign nations, developed the Priest-Patron relationship. Following that, in 1368… China gained independence from the Mongol rule. (p. 8-9)

Therefore, it clearly shows that writing of the history textbooks concerns not just with the past per se, but also constitute a response to the present. Past events and their representations are often colored by the contemporary positionalities of the actors involved. Although the logic of Mongol's rule over Tibet doesn't sufficiently legitimize the Chinese claim over Tibet, the textbook's narrative that Tibet became completely independent from Mongol's influence following Kublai Khan's offering of Tibet to Phagspa is an oversimplification. Schaik (2012) offered a nuanced historical perspective into this debate:

> It is said that Kublai offered Tibet to Pagpa [Phagspa]… and Mongols then simply allowed the Sakya to run Tibet. This too is an oversimplification, for Mongol court took a direct interest in how Tibet was run. At the Mongol capital, there was a Department for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs, and the imperial preceptor was also a resident at the court. (p. 100)

Therefore, Tibetan history textbooks gloss over inconvenient historical facts that could potentially cast their narrative astray.

The case of *Golden Urn* (*Gser-'bum*) is another contentious issue between the Chinese and the Tibetan narratives. In 1792, after the Tibetan-Manchu victory in the second Nepal-Tibet war, the Manchu Emperor Qianlong issued a "29-article imperial decree for more efficient governing of Tibet" (Schaik, 2012). This introduced, among other things, the use of golden urn for recognizing reincarnation of high Tibetan lamas, especially the Dalai Lamas and the Panchen Lamas. Contrary to the traditional methods of conducting tests and divination, this method requires the names of the child candidates to be put in the golden urn and the officiating Tibetan lama and the Manchu Ambans (representative of Manchu emperor stationed in Lhasa) draw out a name from it. For Manchus, it represents their power over the selection of the highest lamas in Tibet which was also indicative of Manchu's overlordship over Tibet itself. For Tibetans, this was a heavy-handed interference in their religious and political affairs. Later, the Communists cited golden urn as another evidence of Tibet being part of China. For example, one of its White Paper on Tibet states (Information Office of the State Council, 1992):

> The Qing [Manchu] government *holds the power* to confirm the reincarnation of all deceased high Living Buddhas [reincarnated lamas] of

> Tibet including the Dalai Lama and the Bainqen Erdeni [Panchen Lama]. When the reincarnate boy has been found, his name will be written on a lot, which shall be put into a gold urn bestowed by *the central government* [all emphasis added]. The high commissioners will bring together appropriate high-ranking Living Buddhas to determine the authenticity of the reincarnate boy by drawing lots from the gold urn.

On the contrary, the Tibetan exile's narrative in general and the one presented in the history textbook in particular, discredit the system of using golden urn and make it a point to highlight the occasions when Tibetans were able to avoid its use. On the discovery and recognition of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, the textbook says (Department of Education, 2012): "the vision in Lhamo Lake and the prophecies of deities and lamas matched completely, and with the appearance of many miraculous signs, [the child] was recognized as unmistakable reincarnation *without the need of using the golden urn* [emphasis added]" (p. 35). A similar point was raised in the case of recognizing the Ninth Dalai Lama in 1808 (the first recognition of Dalai Lama after the introduction of the golden urn). However, the textbooks remained reticent when it comes to the cases where the golden urn was put to use, during the recognition procedures of the Tenth, the Eleventh and the Twelfth Dalai Lama. Therefore, its selective tradition is highly problematic and is guided primarily by the current disputes between the Chinese and the Tibetan sides.

7.2.4 Centrist and elitist narrative

As shown in the summary of the middle school Tibetan history curriculum, the focus of the textbooks is on the ruling classes. The history of early Tibet is narrated through the dynastic history exploring the king's exploits, military campaigns, matrimonial alliances, court conspiracies, etc. The more recent period of Tibetan history is told through the biographical accounts of the successive Dalai Lamas and the Tibetan government. In these reconstructions of the history of Tibet, ordinary people seldom figure as playing a part in it. In doing so, the theatre of much of the political and cultural activities was confined to Lhasa, the capital and other locations of power and authority. Lhasa became the main center of power since the seventh century CE and notwithstanding brief interventions in-between, continued to remain so until the 1950s. Therefore, the historical narratives presented in the textbooks were centered around Lhasa and several other pivotal locations in the U-Tsang province, whereas the histories of the outlying provinces of Kham and Amdo were largely absent. Despite oft-repeated claims of Tibetan rulers having ruled the "entire

three provinces of Tibet" or "the whole of Tibet" to offset the Chinese claims, voices and narratives from the peripheries only serve a second fiddle. Likewise, perspectives of the subalterns and others inhabiting historically marginalized social locations, like women and the followers of Bon faith (Tibet's native religious faith), were conspicuous by their near total absence in the narrative (Hansen, 2003). In that respect, the textbooks remain overwhelmingly centrist and elitist in its nature and scope.

7.3 Conclusion

As it is evident from the above discussion, two dominant currents are embedded in the middle school Tibetan history textbooks of the Tibetan refugee schools in India. Firstly, it privileges the Lamaist or Buddhist narrative of Tibetan history. Secondly, the textbooks lay particular emphasis on constructing Tibet as an independent and distinct entity from China and rebutted the Chinese claims over Tibet. Therefore, it contributes to the preservation and perpetuation of the traditional power relations within the Tibetan socio-political structure on the one hand, while responding to the current circumstances imposed by the establishment of the Chinese rule over Tibet. The Lamaist narratives presented in the textbooks seek to build a Tibetan cultural and historical identity that is primarily centered on Buddhism. In doing so, it positioned the Tibetan children in the diaspora as inheritors of a nation with a long history and rich Buddhist cultural heritage. The textbooks also transmit a message concerning Tibet's distinctiveness and separateness from China, not only in the cultural fields but more importantly in a historical and political sense. In doing so, these discursive constructions portray the current Chinese rule in Tibet as occupation and unjust. Such presentations seem necessary for sustaining the Tibetan exile's political struggle for freedom in Tibet.

The teaching of Tibetan history is thus expected to perform the role of constructing a shared national identity and cementing social cohesion. This task is of particular relevance to a community in exile who experiences a great deal of pressure to conform to other identity categories in their host nations. Moreover, to the second or third generation Tibetan children born in exile, who possessed no living memory of their homeland, the teaching of the history of Tibet is expected to address this memory deficit to some extent. In that respect, history education can play a significant part in conjuring up an imagined national community and constructing a sense of allegiance to it.

However, the promotion of nation-building and national identity construction via transmission of the dominant Buddhist narratives leave little room for teachers and children to work towards the development of critical

awareness of the history of their nation and acquisition of historian's crafts. Like the primary-level social studies curriculum, the middle school Tibetan history curriculum also employs critical lenses to problematize and refute the Chinese claims over Tibet. But this critical scholarship is conspicuous by its absence when it comes to the question of pre-1950 historical narratives and the asymmetrical power relations that exist within the traditional Tibetan society. Its critical analysis is confined to the 'objective other' (here China), leaving the 'subjective self' beyond the critical purview. Therefore, in this respect, the middle school Tibetan history textbooks are rather pedagogically regressive in their characters and are antithetical to the pursuit of progressive education. It primarily serves to perpetuate the traditional power structures of dominant Buddhist groups in Tibetan society.

8 PAST IN THE SERVICE OF THE PRESENT: ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHERS' INTERVIEWS

This chapter discusses the findings of the qualitative thematic analysis performed on semi-structured interviews conducted with fifteen social studies and Tibetan history teachers. These interviews were conducted in five Tibetan refugee schools located in and around the town of Dharamsala, in North India, the capital of the Tibetan exile world. These semi-structured interviews were preceded by an observation of a classroom teaching of the fifteen teachers. Therefore, field notes from the classroom observations supplemented the interpretation of the interview data.

The research findings presented in this chapter are divided into five main sections. The first three sections, viz. the teachers' perceptions on the teaching goals, their views on the social studies and Tibetan history textbooks, and their pedagogical approaches offer an insightful lens for understanding the role of teachers and their classroom teaching in the project of nation-building and construction of Tibetan national identity in exile. In the fourth section, challenges the teachers are encountering in their pursuit of nation-building goals in diasporic circumstances are discussed. The final section summarizes and discusses the key findings from the interview materials. A number of verbatim quotations from the interviews are included in the analysis to corroborate and buttress the data interpretation, as well as to privilege the immediate and local meanings of actions as discursively articulated by the teachers themselves (Erickson, 2010).

8.1 Analytical framework and procedures

A total of fifteen primary-level social studies and middle school Tibetan history teachers were interviewed for this research. Ten of them are male and the remaining five are female. A bulk majority of them (13) were born in Tibet. Having born and lived in Tibet, and having had to flee Tibet due to the Chinese political repression, may have resulted in a stronger identification with Tibetan ethno-national identity and the freedom struggle. All of the teachers interviewed were schooled inside Tibet or in Tibetan exile schools, and most of

them have earned their teaching certificates from institutes or colleges run by Tibetans in India. This is because the instructional medium for the primary-level subjects and middle school Tibetan history is the Tibetan language. Seven of the interviewees finished their 12th grade from Tibetan refugee schools and earned Trained Teacher's Certificate (TTC) from the Teacher Training Center run by the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV). TCV's teacher training course is a three-year course provided in the Tibetan language, and is aimed at training primary-level teachers who can teach all subjects (generalist) in the Tibetan language. Remaining eight interviewees possessed university education – four earned bachelor's degree in Tibetan studies from College of Higher Tibetan Studies, Dharamsala, and three possessed master's degree in Tibetan studies from Central University of Tibetan Studies, Varanasi. Tibetan studies course offered in the aforementioned universities covers a broad range of fields such as Tibetan history, Tibetan language and literature, and philosophical and religious traditions of Tibet. After their university education, most of them have also completed Bachelor of Education course from the two universities. One of the interviewees earned his bachelor's degree and teaching certification from Indian colleges. Of the fifteen interviewees, one interviewee doesn't have teacher training. These trajectories of personal lives and educational experiences can have tremendous impacts on their motivation and beliefs as school teachers. More importantly, since most of them have received both basic and higher education from Tibetan-run schools and colleges, they are likely to possess what Cornell and Hartmann (2007) called as 'thick-asserted identity'. A thick-asserted ethno-national identity has the potential of governing and dominating an individual's life quite comprehensively. Besides, most of the respondents have considerable work experience. In 2016, the duration of their service in school ranges from 4 years to 34 years with an average of 16 years of service. This means that all of them have already crossed the crucial initial years of their career when teachers learn the crafts of teaching.

The main field visits and data collection were carried out between June to September 2016, during which all the textbooks and curricular documents were procured, as well as the fifteen teachers were observed and interviewed. All the interviews were conducted in the Tibetan language and were audio-recorded. While performing analysis of the interview data, certain gaps were noticed in some areas, especially in the teachers' responses to the goals of teaching social studies and Tibetan history. Many of them have alluded to literacy in the Tibetan language as an important goal for social studies and Tibetan history subjects. However, the data was not detailed enough to offer a nuanced interpretation. Therefore, a supplementary and follow-up interview was

conducted with eight of the initial fifteen teachers in the summer of 2018. The findings presented in this chapter are gleaned from both of the interviews.

Several important stages were diligently followed for organizing and analyzing the interview materials. These procedures were explicated in the method chapter (five) in greater detail. However, a short summary is provided here to establish direct linkages to the analysis presented in the subsequent sections. Firstly, all the interviews were transcribed and simultaneously translated into English. Secondly, the transcriptions were imported into *atlas.ti* software and a draft coding framework was developed from the theoretical frameworks and the interview questions, as well as from some of the interview transcripts. The draft coding framework was then put on a trial by two researchers independently to gauge its validity and reliability. As a result of the trial, the coding framework was further expanded and improved upon. All the codes and sub-codes were defined and were grouped into broader categories. Thirdly, all the interview transcripts were coded using the coding framework (table 16). However, the procedures also allowed for the emergence of new codes or sub-codes as the coding progresses. Thus, the coding procedures benefitted both from theory-driven and data-driven codes. Fourthly, after the entire interview transcripts were coded, quotes linked to each sub-code were imported to an excel file for in-depth and comparative analysis. Finally, the emerging themes were analyzed and discussed.

Table 16: Coding framework for the teachers' interviews

Category	***Codes***	***Sub-codes***
Perceptions on teaching goals	Nation-building goals	Fostering a sense of Tibetan identity
		Promoting nationalistic feeling
		Nurturing international spokesperson for Tibet
		Refuting the Chinese claims on Tibet
		Proving Tibetan independence
		Providing political education
		Promoting the Tibetan language
		Acquiring Tibetan historical/cultural knowledge
		Learning a lesson from the past
		Getting inspiration from the past
	Intellectual/academic goals	Promoting historical literacy & skills
		Promoting language competencies
		Acquiring basic content/conceptual knowledge

Perceptions on the textbooks	Critical of the textbooks	Critical of content/perspective
		Critical of language use
		Critical of design, layout & edition
	Faithful to textbook content	Faithful to textbook content
	Textbook-based teaching	Textbook-based teaching
	Multiple sources-based teaching	Multiple sources-based teaching
Perceptions on pedagogical approaches	Learner-centered pedagogy	Learner-centered pedagogy
	Teacher-centered pedagogy	Teacher-centered pedagogy
	Test-based assessment	Test-based assessment
	Diverse assessment strategies	Diverse assessment strategies
Narrative structure	Victor narrative	Victor narrative
	Victim narrative	Victim narrative
Nation-building challenges	Nation-building challenges	Nation-building challenges

8.2 Findings of the thematic analysis

This section presents the findings culled from a qualitative thematic analysis conducted on the semi-structured interviews with the social studies and Tibetan history teachers. The findings are grouped into several thematic categories that emerged from the coding scheme and their analysis. The interpretations of the interview materials were also supplemented by data gathered via classroom observations and other field notes, and references are also made to the theoretical frameworks and concepts.

8.2.1 Perceptions on teaching goals

Education is a conscious project of mankind to raise and educate its younger generation towards a particular vision of society. In this respect, education is a goal-driven endeavor. The purported goals of education in general and subject-specific goals in particular, can have far-reaching impacts on all educational and curricular matters, ranging from the formulation of curriculum documents to production of textbooks, from teachers' lesson planning to the micro-level adaption of teaching to changing classroom dynamics. In an ideal scenario,

teachers plan their daily lessons in pursuit of certain goals, either explicitly stated or implicitly envisioned. It can range from macro-level socio-political goals to more subject-specific goals as well as those oriented towards individual child's growth. Therefore, teacher's perceptions of the teaching goals can have a pervasive influence on his/her selection of teaching contents, consideration of pedagogical approaches, and construction of classroom ethos. For instance, an education that is geared towards producing nationalistic and loyal subjects in children leaves little room for pedagogic and epistemic openness (Kumar, 2002; Wang, 2008). On the contrary, if the goal of education is focused on engendering free and independent thinkers, it warrants a radically different curricular and pedagogical approach. Thus, the goals of teaching dictate and give shape to classroom instruction to varying degrees.

As discussed in the theoretical chapter (2), the differences between the collective memory approach and the disciplinary approach to the teaching of history stem from pursuing different goals of education (VanSledright, 2011). Whilst the collective memory approach is focused on fostering loyalty to the nation-state, the disciplinary approach advocate inquiry-oriented study of the past for developing intellectual wherewithal. Likewise, Elie Podeh (2000), in his study of history teaching in Israeli schools, identified three main approaches with different teaching goals. Firstly, the *academic* approach calls for the application of a more scientific approach to the study of history, requiring critical analysis of materials presented in the textbooks. This approach is akin to the disciplinary approach. Secondly, the *nationalist* approach to the teaching of history stresses the social and political function of instilling Zionist values and attitudes in students. This is similar to the collective memory approach. In this approach, historical narratives present a simplistic and one-sided story, largely written in an emotional language. The third approach is a *synthesis* of both academic and the national approaches, presenting a more inclusive and non-partisan view of history without abandoning the national and social goals of teaching history. In a similar vein, Christian Laville (2004) argues that the teaching of history attempts to pursue two primary goals. The first one is the formation of citizens who are well informed with a critical bend of mind, which is important for meaningful participation in a democratic society. This goal is primarily intellectual in nature as it is aimed at nurturing well-informed and responsible citizens who can think and decide independently. Secondly, the teaching of history is expected to contribute to the project of nation-building, and to foster in its citizens a sense of belongingness and solidarity. Aside from these dichotomous binaries, we can argue that the teaching of history pursues a range of educational goals such as democratic citizenship, globalism, cosmopolitanism and multicultural competencies. These theoretical frameworks

are employed in analyzing the interview materials pertaining to the Tibetan teachers' perceptions on the goals of teaching social studies and history of Tibet in the Tibetan refugee schools in India.

During the semi-structured interviews with the social studies and the Tibetan history teachers of grade 1-8, a number of questions were asked to probe into the teachers' perceptions on the teaching goals of social studies and Tibetan history subjects, and the ways in which these goals are linked to the project of nation-building and construction of Tibetan national identity in exile. Likewise, during the lesson observations, close attention was paid to discern the goals that the teachers were trying to pursue with the help of their classroom teaching, and their written lesson plans were collected to understand the goals of social studies and history teaching explicitly stated in them.

It is interesting to note that the Tibetan refugee schools do not have a strict curriculum document that is binding for the schools and the teachers. This has been established and corroborated by the teachers during the interviews. This is important because schools and teachers usually derive some of the overarching teaching goals from curriculum document. There are two curriculum documents, neither of which is referred to or used by the teachers on a daily basis. The first one is the *National Curriculum Framework-2005*, developed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (2005), under the Union Government of India, and the second one is the *National curriculum framework for pre-primary, primary and middle school education-2010 (Based on Basic Education Policy for Tibetans in exile)*, developed by the Department of Education (2011), Tibetan Government-in-Exile. As far as the Tibetan Children Village schools are concerned, where the fieldworks have been conducted, there is a common syllabus for the primary-level social studies and middle school-level Tibetan history, drawn up by the subject teachers' committee. This means that the teaching contents are largely uniform, standardized, and based on a single textbook. However, the formulation of the teaching goals is left entirely to each teacher. As is evident from the discussion below, the teaching of social studies at primary grades and the Tibetan history at middle school grades are predominantly guided by nation-building goals or the nationalist approach. At the primary level, the teachers have considerable freedom to decide on which chapters to teach from the textbook. In most of cases, teachers were not able to finish the entire textbook, and they claim that the emphasis is placed on teaching Tibet-related contents. For instance, a primary-level social studies teacher said: "when I face a shortage of time, I teach those contents related to Tibet, and leave aside those which are not. Like those lessons on the United Nations which children can study in higher grades in English" (Teacher 2). Theoretically, if a primary teacher is not satisfied with

the textbook content, he/she can bring new contents or materials to the class. However, this is seldom done, as it is evident from the section on teachers' perceptions on the textbooks. In the case of the middle school Tibetan history, teachers have to stick to the textbook and the pre-set syllabus.

This section presents an in-depth analysis of the teachers' perceptions on the goals of teaching social studies and the history of Tibet, primarily from the interview data, supplemented by field notes from the lesson observations. The teachers who were interviewed highlighted a wide array of goals for teaching social studies and the history of Tibet, and the major goals highlighted are thematically summarized and analyzed below (Figure 9).

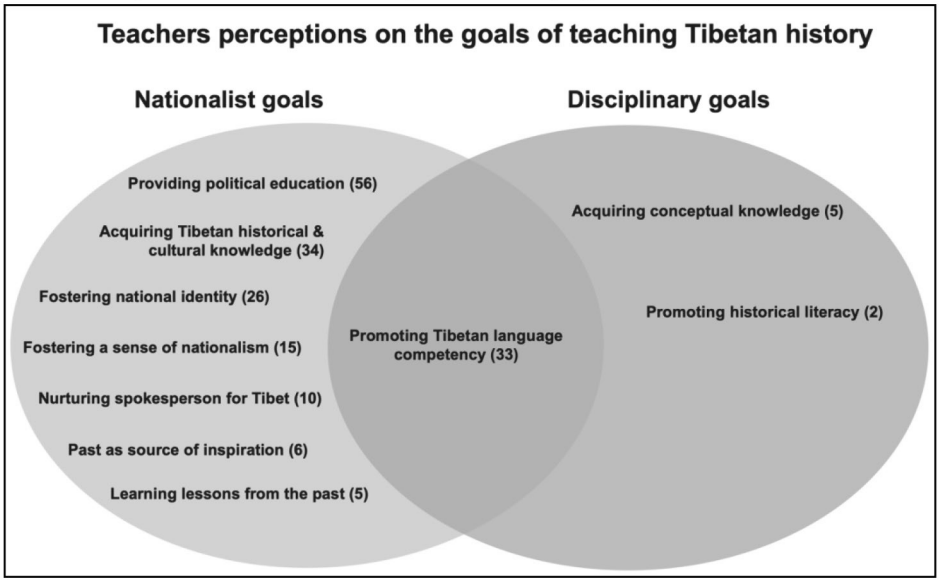

Figure 9: Teachers perceptions on the goals of teaching History of Tibet. Quotations linked to each code are given in the parenthesis.

8.2.1.1 History teaching for identity construction

The centralized system of teaching national history began around the same time as the rise of nation-states in the early nineteenth century (López & Carretero, 2012). As such it is no coincidence that the traditional role of teaching history is heavily influenced by identitarian politics of emerging nation-states. Its role was conceived primarily in terms of cementing social cohesion and fostering allegiance towards the nation-state. By the turn of the twenty-first century, the goals of teaching history are under review with current research largely critiquing the inherent limitations of the nationalist approach and suggesting

incorporation of disciplinary objectives of 'thinking historically' (López & Carretero, 2012; Seixas & Morton, 2013; VanSledright, 2011). As the move towards pursuing more eclectic educational goals gain ascendency, there is increasing recognition of the importance of treating children as active meaning-makers and knowledge constructors, rather than as passive receptacles of information. However, a refugee community, whose ethnic and national identity is threatened by the Chinese occupation and minoritization of Tibetans inside Tibet and the challenges of life in exile, seems to place less emphasis on children's intellectual development than on constructing and promoting their 'endangered' ethno-national identity. The Education Code of the Department of Education (2005a), Tibetan Government-in-Exile thus states: "for us Tibetans in exile, it was of paramount importance that we maintain our *national identity* [emphasis added]" (p. 12). Similar trends have been observed in many post-colonial nation-states and communities undergoing conflicts which suffer from identity insecurity (Kumar, 2002; Podeh, 2000; Wang, 2008).

The coding of interview data yielded 26 quotations where the teachers explicitly highlight the importance of teaching social studies and the Tibetan history for construction of the Tibetan ethno-national identity. Most of the teachers alluded to the singular role historical and cultural knowledge play in the construction, maintenance and promotion of the Tibetan identity among the younger generations. As such, knowledge of Tibetan history is perceived as *sine qua non* for knowing who you are and claiming a Tibetan identity. Teachers argue that history teaching possesses identity-giving power. One of the respondents thus remarked: "As a Tibetan, you need to know your identity and for that, you must study history. History reflects identity" (Teacher 6). Some of the teachers even argued that without the knowledge of the history of one's nation, one's claim to ethnic and national identity is severely undermined Teacher 7 said: "it is very important for Tibetans to know their history at any cost. If we do not know our own history, then it is difficult for us to claim that we are Tibetans".

Situating the discourse within a wider context, teachers argued that history is important for everyone to know their 'true identity'. For example, Teacher 6 said rhetorically: "a generation that does not know *their history* [emphasis added] is akin to monkeys in the forest". An ethnic or national identity that people derive from a sense of shared collective history is deemed crucial for the survival of the group. Another interviewee puts it this way: "in reality, it [history] is necessary for the survival of the ethnic group as well as the individual" (Teacher 12). These views expressed by the social studies and history teachers align closely with the primordialist position on ethno-national identity formation which stresses the 'assumed or cultural givens' such as

common descent and collective historical experiences as the bedrocks for ethnic attachments and identity formation. Weber, Roth and Wittich (1978) highlighted the "subjective belief in their common descent" (p. 389), and Richard A. Schermerhorn (1978) argued for the need of "having real or putative common ancestry and memories of a shared historical past" (p. 12) as the ground on which ethnic attachment and identity is formed.

The teaching of Tibetan history for ethno-national identity construction is seen particularly as a very crucial task for the generations of young Tibetans who were born in exile, and who possess no living memory of their homeland. Deprived of lived experiences of their homeland, these children "inherit memories and narratives of an oppressed history" (Shakya, 2017), transmitted via school education and other agents of socialization. As stated before, a bulk majority of student population consists of second or third generation Tibetan refugees born and raised in India, whereas a significant portion (approximately around 30%) fled Tibet in recent times (Department of Education, 2018). Several Tibetan history teachers interviewed for this research narrated difficulties that the exile-born children face in terms of constructing their Tibetan identity or relating to the lessons on Tibet. For example, Teacher 5 highlighted this issue during the interview:

> Tibetan children living in India lack knowledge of Tibetan history and the present situation under the Chinese rule. Even if they are born in India, they are still Tibetans. So as a Tibetan, it is important to know our histories. When we teach history, those children who were born in Tibet can contribute a great deal to the classroom discussion. This is because they had lived in Tibet, and have felt and experienced it. But for those who were born in exile, when I teach history to them, they listen well but they can't contribute to the lesson.

Therefore, the teachers believe that the teaching of the history of Tibet is particularly an urgent task for Tibetan children born in exile due to their lack of physical and material connections to Tibet.

The construction of Tibetan national identity is also influenced and shaped by the powerful 'significant other' (Hall, 1997). China looms large in this equation, with its policies of assimilating and subsuming ethnic identity (Ch: *minzu*) of minorities including Tibetans into a larger artificially constructed Chinese identity (Ch: *Zhonghua minzu*) (Yi, 2005; Zhao, 2010). In this spirit, the histories of ethnic minorities were largely ignored or were only recalled when they were useful to the Chinese national histories (Vickers, 2006). Therefore, some of the teachers interviewed were quick to point out the

'uniqueness' of Tibetan history or Tibetan historical experiences and its differences from the Chinese history:

> We have a *unique history* [emphasis added] which is different from other countries; like we have different dynasties and political rulers. I used to say [to my students] that other countries have their own history. For example, China has its own Tang, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. Similarly, we Tibetans also have Tsenpo, Sakya, Phagdru, Rinpung, Tsangpa and Gaden Phodrang. (Teacher 6)

Therefore, the teaching of Tibetan history plays an important role of constructing Tibetan historical experiences as distinct from China's, thus countervailing the Chinese claim over Tibet and its efforts to treat Tibetan history as subsidiary to the Chinese national history (Vickers, 2006). The dichotomous categorization of *'our history'* and '*their history'* accords Tibet a distinct historical memory and identity, thereby putting Tibet on par with China and other nations. These efforts are crucial given the current circumstances in which the Tibetan exiles exist. Similarly, India also acts as the immediate significant others for Tibetan exiles. Tibetan teachers justify teaching the history of Tibet to Tibetan children by taking recourse to examples from other nearby communities. Teacher 8 opined: "Indians teach the history of India like Ashoka, Kalinga, and Magadha to their children, and not Tibetan history. For them it is important to know about their history, and so is the case for us". Therefore, it is reasoned that each community or ethnic group must teach its own history to give a strong sense of ethno-national identity to its younger generations.

The sense of identity insecurity that the teachers expressed and the importance they attach to claiming and asserting Tibetan ethno-national identity through the teaching of Tibetan history and social studies can be explained by the situation facing the Tibetan people. Inside Tibet, China has largely pursued an assimilationist policy towards Tibetans and other minorities, and assertion of certain aspects of Tibetan identity is either discouraged or actively suppressed. For example, several Tibetan community leaders and teachers who have demanded protection for the Tibetan language were put behind the bar by labeling them as 'separatists' or 'counter-revolutionaries' (Wong, 2016). Likewise, the Chinese state has, in the past, put in place restrictive policies to undermine Tibetan people's strong identification with their Buddhist beliefs. As Bass (2008) notes, most of the references to Tibetan Buddhism in the Tibetan language curriculum have been removed since the 1990s. In exile, the Tibetan community's capacity to transmit a '*thick ethno-national identity'* (Cornell & Hartmann, 2007) to its younger generations is limited by the

constraints imposed by their diasporic existence, such as pressure of integration into mainstream culture of the host country, increasing spatio-temporal distance from their homeland, lack of resources, and challenges of operating as a stateless entity in someone else's land. Therefore, teachers seem to consider the construction of a Tibetan ethno-national identity as the primary goal of teaching social studies and Tibetan history. These findings corroborate and extend Maslak's (2008) Delphi study of teachers' perception, done in a Tibetan refugee school, where teachers highlighted "learning about Tibet from the school curriculum" and "being exposed to Tibetan teachers" as crucial factors influencing students' construction of Tibetan identity (p. 96). This project of ethno-national identity construction aligns closely with other nation-building goals of education.

8.2.1.2 Producing political subjects

All of the teachers interviewed for this study highlighted the political goals of teaching Tibetan history and social studies to the Tibetan children in exile. The political goals pertain to working for the cause of freedom in Tibet, highlighting the Tibet issue in international forums to garner support for it, and maintaining the exile political and administrative set-up to spearhead this movement. This is often expressed as the *raison d'etre* for their very existence as a community in exile. The banner on the official website of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (www.tibet.net) reads: "restoring freedom for Tibetans". Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the interview materials furnished a total of 56 statements that explicitly refer to a variety of political goals of teaching Tibetan social studies and history. When asked whether the teaching of Tibetan history and social studies have any role to play in the Tibetan freedom struggle, a teacher remarked:

> Generally, every teacher has this [Tibetan freedom struggle] in their minds regardless of whatever subjects they are teaching, not just the Tibetan history subject. The reason why we provide education is that they [children] are the future seeds of Tibet, and our future solely depends on them, not anyone else. Therefore, we have to teach them well so that they become someone who can contribute to the community and someone who will *work for the cause of Tibet* [emphasis added]. That is the hope, and I think every teacher puts their efforts in this direction. (Teacher 15)

Another teacher recounted that at the start of regular classroom teaching, he would take some time to counsel students on their moral responsibilities as Tibetan exiles. He said: "We are here in exile without even a handful of soil.

So before teaching the lesson, I advise my students about what kind of responsibilities we have as Tibetans, and what our position is" (*Lang-phyogs*) (Teacher 10). Therefore, as described in the preceding chapters (3 and 4), daily political socialization is carried out, not only through the teaching of social studies and Tibetan history, but also through a host of rituals, commemorations, events and other social encounters at multiple locations in the school and in the community.

With coming into exile in the late 1950s, the Tibetan refugees have taken upon themselves the role as **international spokesperson** for Tibet. It is based on the argument that the Tibetan people living inside Tibet cannot express freely due to Chinese control and that international media have very little access to Tibet. This claim by the Tibetan exiles is borne out by several international NGOs' reports on freedom in Tibet. For instance, Freedom House (2018) ranked Tibet as the second least free region in the world in 2018, only after war-torn Syria. Similarly, Amnesty International's 2017-2018 report confirms that the "[e]thnic Tibetans continued to face discrimination and restrictions on their rights to freedom of religion and belief, of opinion and expression, of peaceful assembly and of association" (Amnesty International, 2018, p. 128). Therefore, as the argument goes, the Tibetan exiles have to 'represent' Tibetans inside Tibet and amplify their voices. The Dalai Lama's leadership and the quasi state-like structure of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile strengthen the assumption of this role as the primary responsibility of the Tibetan exiles. The exile leadership has used this rhetoric repeatedly (Dalai Lama, 2010, 2013). The Dalai Lama (2013) wrote: "Generally, the few of us in exile, being Tibetans, have the responsibility to articulate the aspirations of the Tibetans inside Tibet and to tell the world of the real situation inside Tibet" (p. xxi). Hess's (2009) study found that this sense of being 'Tibetan ambassadors' is widespread among Tibetan youngsters in the diaspora. A young Tibetan scholar reflects on the responsibilities as a Tibetan exile in the following sentences (Gelek, 2013):

> Tibet, for most of us, is more than just a cause. It is our way of life, our purpose. It is, and should be, what drives and motivates us to study that extra hour every night, pay extra attention to our children so that they don't forget who they are, and walk an extra mile every day so that we stand true to the responsibilities that we have all inherited as Tibetans. (p. 65)

The President of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile Dr. Lobsang Sangay, while addressing Tibetan students' leadership training in December 2017, said: "you are not studying simply for a career, but for a [Tibetan] cause" (Saldon, 2017). In this spirit, most of the teachers who were interviewed for this study, view

school as an important site for preparing young Tibetans to take up this role. In particular, they highlighted the role teaching of social studies and Tibetan history play in engendering Tibetan children to become ambassadors of the Tibetan cause and custodians of its history and culture. A teacher cogently puts it this way:

> If I study about Tibet and its history well, and later on, when I go to places surrounded by Indians, I can explain it. For example, how Tsampa [barley flour], the staple food of Tibet, is grown; how a pilgrimage to monasteries is done; how to circumambulate; or whatever it may be. If you know, then you can explain it to others. If you yourself do not know, then you cannot explain it to others. They may then say, 'well you are saying that you are a Tibetan, but you don't know anything about it'. Then it is shameful and embarrassing. His Holiness the Dalai Lama always tells us that we should explain our [political] situation to others and that they will understand our plight. (Teacher 8)

In order to assume this role properly, the teachers argued that the teaching of social studies with Tibet-related contents at primary level and the Tibetan history at middle school are indispensable. The teachers see a direct causal relationship between the acquisition of Tibet-related knowledge and the development of patriotic feeling in the children. They argued that knowledge and awareness precede action: "we have to explain how things were when Tibet was an independent nation. In order to develop a patriotic feeling, first children have to know about it [Tibetan history and the current conditions]. With knowledge comes the patriotic feeling" (Teacher 13).

Thus, knowledge production and dissemination are regarded as an important way of influencing public opinion and changing the narrative to one's side. But it is not a one-sided affair. Such attempts have been used in the past by both dominant and dominated groups. Knowledge production, therefore, is a highly contested terrain. As shown earlier in the chapters (6 and 7) on textbook analysis, China had launched massive propaganda claiming Tibet as historically a part of China and legitimizing its rule. The White Papers on Tibet and the official English magazine titled *China's Tibet* are parts of the Chinese propaganda materials. To counter the Beijing-sponsored narratives, the Tibetan exiles have carried forward active campaigns to prove independent existence of Tibet prior to 1950s and to discredit the Chinese rule in Tibet by characterizing it as colonial practices (Department of Information and International Relations, 1996; 2015). In light of this scenario, some of the teachers interviewed stressed the importance of teaching evidence of **pre-1950 Tibetan independence** and how to **refute the Chinese interpretation** of Tibetan history to the Tibetan

children in exile. The teachers' view aligns closely with the textbook interpretations when asked about the historical status of Tibet and its relationship with China. For example, Teacher 8 said the following during the interview:

> The Chinese claim that Tibet became part of China with the marriage of Chinese princess Wencheng Gongzhu to the Tibetan emperor Songtsen Gampo is baseless. Songtsen Gampo also married a Nepalese princess. Sonia Gandhi married Rajiv Gandhi, but that doesn't mean Italy becomes part of India. I tell this to my students: 'what the Chinese are saying are baseless and untrue, and that what we say has the truth'. And one day sun of truth will shine, even though we may have to live in India [as refugees] for the next 50 years. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama says, the truth will see its day and lie will be found out one day. Our truth is backed by documentary evidence. Their claims don't have documentary proofs. For example, textbook clearly says that there are no documentary evidence to support the Chinese claims regarding Tibet being a part of it since the Yuan dynasty. We have documents and everything to show.

A similar view is also echoed by another teacher:

> The Chinese claim that Tibet was a part of China because of the Mongol rule [Yuan dynasty of Mongols ruled its empire from Beijing as its capital]. Or since princess Gongzhu married the Tibetan king, the Chinese claim that Tibetan and Chinese belong to the same family, and therefore, a part of China. In order to refute these claims, we need to delve deeper into the history of Tibet. (Teacher 3)

This consensus between the textbook contents and the teachers' views indicate uncritical acceptance and transmission of the textbook narrative to children. Therefore, the teachers see history education as having an important role in preparing the younger generation as 'ambassadors of Tibet' who would advance the Tibetan narrative at international platforms. For this, the knowledge of the history of Tibet is deemed important by the teachers.

Another theme closely related to producing political subjects is that the teachers consider **developing a sense of nationalism** for Tibet as a paramount task of teaching social studies and Tibetan history. Teachers use a variety of subject contents and pedagogies to raise children's ethnic and nationalistic consciousness. As discussed in the preceding chapters (6 and 7) on the textbook analysis, a focus placed on the Chinese oppression and the Tibetan resistance is meant to arouse a sense of nationalism. A victim narrative focusing on certain 'chosen trauma' is often invoked by the textbooks and the teachers to trigger an

affective response in children. The Chinese occupation, the ongoing oppression and the resistance inside Tibet, hardship of life in exile, the trauma of separation of children from their parents, and other incidences are recounted to children, potentially to raise their nationalistic feeling. For instance, a respondent broached an issue closer to the children's lived experiences of life in exile:

> I tell them if you have a country, even if you wanted to build a house, you have the freedom. Right now, we are all living in houses rented by others. Indians, no matter how poor they are, they still have a small plot of land and house. That is because this is their country. We have nothing. Even the houses are rented by others. Some Tibetans buy houses, but in someone's name, and that we don't have the right to a buy house. I tell such things to children and those in class four or five understand quite well. For class 3, I have to come down to their level. For example, I tell them that my parents are in Tibet and we are separated for a long time and that there are many like me. Therefore, it is important to get freedom. When I tell such things, it seems to have some impacts on the children. (Teacher 2)

The teachers also use different classroom pedagogies to make children reflect on what their nation means to them and let them express their thoughts and feelings through creative ventures. One interesting example is provided by Teacher 10 who uses performative pedagogies in the pursuit of nation-building goals like raising a sense of nationalism:

> Sometimes I use to teach via performance or singing of songs… Through songs, I make attempts at developing a sense of nationalism in children or making them realize the importance of preserving and protecting one's language. I do it once a week or so, or 15 minutes in a period. Sometimes we have romantic songs or songs extolling one's motherland, composed by myself or by students. Through songs, I make attempts at developing a sense of love toward one's nation or getting to know the situation of one's nation.

Likewise, the teachers often invoke victim narratives such as Tibetan sufferings under the Chinese rule or the trauma of displacement and exile so as to develop children's sense of nationalism and potentially motivate them to work towards the cause of freedom for Tibet. Teacher 4 said:

> Of course, we regard it [nationalism] as very important. It is important for them [children] to know why we came here [into exile]. Therefore, most of the teachers give advice to them regarding the fact that we don't have a country and that it is important for us to work hard [towards freedom

> struggle]. We talk about what the situation is like in Tibet, how we suffer under the Chinese, and sometimes, we show them videos.

The high degree of awareness and commitment that the teachers have expressed about the political goals of teaching social studies and the Tibetan history suggest a deep internalization and subjectification on the part of the teachers. They seem determined and convinced about the political goals of history teaching. This internalization of a political and national subject may have happened via their own schooling and socialization, especially the experiences of growing up Tibet under the Chinese rule and coming into exile later in their life. To a great extent, these teachers are themselves *products* of the Tibetan exile schools as all of them have received some level of education from Tibetan exile schools and institutions of higher learning.

8.2.1.3 Promoting the Tibetan language

Most of the teachers interviewed for this study highlighted promotion of the Tibetan language competency as an important goal of teaching social studies and the Tibetan history. It yielded 33 quotations from the coding of interview materials. This focus on promoting literacy via social studies and history teaching can be understood from two different positions. Firstly, a language can be viewed as an important mediational tool in the child's search for meaning (Vygotsky, 1978), and as a medium of learning all subjects in school. Viewed from this perspective, the pursuit of language competency can be seen as pursuing intellectual or academic goals of education. Language serves as an important tool for meaning-making and abstraction in all subjects or fields of studies. On the other hand, a language can also be seen as an important carrier of culture and marker of ethno-national identity, and hence its promotion is seen as crucial to the sustenance of cultural and ethno-national identity of a community. Nash (1989) underscores the importance of language in this way: "language as a group marker has more social and psychological weight than dress does" (p. 12). In both assigned and asserted identity, language is a crucial component of ethnic identification (Schmidt, 2008). Promoting language proficiency with this intent is definitely a part of pursuing nation-building goals of education. Even though promotion of language competencies can have deep impacts on children's academic success and intellectual growth, it is argued that the call for Tibetan language promotion in the context of the Tibetan refugee schools is prompted primarily by the anxiety of language and identity loss. Many of the teachers interviewed for this study also hinted at this role of the Tibetan language in the identity construction. Therefore, promotion of the

Tibetan language via social studies and Tibetan history teaching is an integral part of the nation-building project.

The Tibetan teachers, especially those who are teaching primary grades, consider Tibetan language improvement as an important goal of teaching social studies subject. This concern for the promotion of the Tibetan language stems from the anxiety of native language loss that usually happen in diasporic conditions. With the Tibetan language facing severe marginalization and disempowerment inside Tibet due to Beijing's assimilationist policies and aggressive promotion of Mandarin (Robin, 2014), the Tibetan exiles have taken up Tibetan language preservation and promotion as an important political and cultural task. The Tibetan Government-in-Exile website says that its Department of Education was set up to pursue twin-object, that of providing quality modern education and preserving the Tibetan language and culture. The vernacularization and Tibetanization of primary education in the Tibetan refugee schools, from English-medium to Tibetan-medium of instruction that started in 1980s, can be seen as attempts to circumvent this anxiety of language and identity loss. This effort received a further fillip in 2004 when the new "Basic Education Policy for Tibetans in Exile" was promulgated, calling for a mother-tongue based education in all stages of schooling (Department of Education, 2005). A teacher interviewed for this research explicitly stated that the policy did influence the classroom instruction: "with the arrival of the Basic Education Policy there is a change in the goal. Social studies and science are regarded as medium for improving Tibetan language" (Teacher 14). Even though the policy had not been implemented beyond the primary grades, the focus on Tibetan language preservation received constant push. In 2014, the Tibetan Children's Village schools have decided to follow a *language-across-the-curriculum* approach in primary grades where Tibetan language improvement becomes an important goal for all the subjects and all teachers becomes *ipso facto* language teachers (Tibetan Children's Villages, 2014). Subject teachers were provided explicit instructions and trainings on integrating language skills with subject-content teaching.

Interview materials reveal that many social studies teachers consider improving Tibetan language competency as one of their 'main goals' of teaching and is often considered more important than teaching the content knowledge. A respondent described a scenario of common consensus during a teachers' meeting:

> During our section meeting, it was suggested that the social studies teachers should also focus on the Tibetan language. We agreed readily. We replied that we will focus on Tibetan calligraphy, student's writing in the notebook,

> reading, and grammar. So, the main goal [of teaching social studies] is to improve Tibetan language. (Teacher 4)

It is likely that the suggestion came from the school administrators or from the Tibetan language teachers, and the way social studies teachers 'readily' accepted the suggestion speak of a shared understanding and recognition of the importance of promoting Tibetan language competency. It is interesting to note that some resistance to this singular focus on language came from the students. A middle school Tibetan history teacher narrated an incidence where his students complained to him that he is focusing too much on language. The teacher claimed that he makes his students write journals and mark spelling mistakes in students' answer sheets in exam. He claimed that he succeeded in convincing his students about the importance of language by arguing that historical meaning can only be understood if the text is written in a grammatically correct language. He argued that the subject teachers cannot treat language as a separate issue from the history subject as two are mutually interlinked and he likens this relationship to the one expressed in a traditional Tibetan adage: "sun being the friend of fire; rain being the friend of water" (Teacher 6).

Since the initial data collected in 2016 primarily shows the teachers' overwhelming consideration of literacy in the Tibetan language as an important goal of teaching social studies and the Tibetan history, a follow-up interview was conducted with eight teachers in 2018 to probe further into the underlying rationale. These were the teachers who spoke passionately about the Tibetan language competency as an important goal of teaching social studies and the Tibetan history, and they were asked to substantiate their position with reasons. In this follow-up interview, teachers highlighted both the perspectives equally – language as a marker of identity and language as an intellectual tool. Highlighting the role of language in ethno-national identity construction, Teacher 1 said:

> Since Tibetan language is the language of our nationality [*Mi-rigs*] we have the responsibility to protect and preserve it. Therefore, I think every teacher should focus on the Tibetan language competencies, especially at the primary level. Look at what China is doing to restrict the use of Tibetan language and how Tibetans inside Tibet, despite the political risks, are using all sorts of methods to preserve our language. So, we [in exile] have extra responsibility given the freedom we have.

A similar view is echoed by another teacher who also alluded to the issue of language and identity loss in the scenario of displacement and pressure from the mainstream cultures of the host nations. Teacher 9 reflected:

> [Tibetan] children these days are very intelligent. But the environment they grow up in is not that much of Tibetan culture, and there are lots of distractions from others [cultures], and they live in an environment where languages of other countries are dominant. Therefore, if we do not create a Tibetan language environment and give it a special focus, they will not be able to develop their competency in the language.

Aside from the identitarian goal, some of the teachers explicitly spoke about acquisition of the Tibetan language competency, via social studies and the Tibetan history teaching, as an important intellectual skill for meaning-making and lifelong learning. Teacher 5 explained it in this way: "I focus on the [Tibetan] language improvement a lot as subject contents can be forgotten very fast, whereas language skills once acquired are for the lifetime". Some of the teachers argued that without sufficient competency in the language of instruction, children will face difficulties in understanding subject matters of social studies or science. For example, Teacher 2 opined: "I think the main objective of having Tibetan medium of instruction at the primary level is to improve children's Tibetan language competency. If they are not good in the Tibetan language, they will face problems in the other subjects". A similar position is also held by Teacher 9 who also argues: "If their mother tongue skill is not well developed, then they will not be able to understand and internalize other subjects that we teach them". Therefore, promoting literacy in the Tibetan language is considered by the teachers interviewed for this study as a significant goal of teaching social studies and the Tibetan history. They perceive the Tibetan language as important from a national identity point of view, as well as from an intellectual stand point.

8.2.1.4 Communicating cultural knowledge

The teachers expressed the view that a certain level of Tibetan cultural and historical knowledge is important for every child to know. This pertains to the major historical episodes and Tibetan cultural practices, particularly those of the dominant Buddhist majority. The emphasis placed on the transmission of a core cultural and historical knowledge of the community is crucial for the project of nation-building. Such tendency was observed in many countries and it appeared under various labels like 'cultural literacy', 'teaching canonical knowledge', or 'core knowledge'. In the context of the United States, E. D. Hirsch's (1987) concept of 'cultural literacy' calls for the teaching of vital knowledge that is necessary for communication in the common culture. But it raises the critical question of whose knowledge is worth transmitting, especially in multicultural

societies. Thus, the concept of cultural knowledge is intimately linked to the power relations in the society.

As described in the sections analyzing textbooks contents, the historical and cultural knowledge about Tibet presented in the textbooks are highly selective and reflect the power relations of the Tibetan society. The historical narrative presents a highly elitist and Lamaist (Buddhist) historiography, and the Tibetan culture is taken as synonymous with Buddhist culture. A teacher encapsulates the key contents of cultural and historical knowledge in the following statement: "As a Tibetan, it is important to know about the history of Tibet; of how Tibetans suffered; how Tibet lost its independence; about one's Buddhist religion and the Tibetan way of life" (Teacher 5). The historical episodes and cultural components highlighted by the teacher shows the political and cultural goals of the teaching social studies and the Tibetan history.

The influences of Buddhist religious practices are clearly visible in the textbooks as well as the daily teaching. As shown in the chapters (6 and 7) containing analysis of the textbooks, Tibetan cultural practices, especially those pertaining to the Tibetan Buddhism, form a significant part of the social studies and the Tibetan history textbooks. In close alignment with the textbook contents, many teachers emphasized that it is important for Tibetan children to acquire historical knowledge like those concerning the three powerful Tibetan emperors, whose major contributions according to the lamaist narrative, were in the field of establishing Buddhism in Tibet. For example, Teacher 11 said: "the most important part of our history is the period of three religious kings [*Chos-rgyal*], and period starting from the 28th king when Buddhism first arrived in Tibet. It is really important to know about them [Tibetan children]". Likewise, a number of Tibetan cultural practices, especially those reflecting Buddhist values, were included in the textbooks and the teachers interviewed for this study consider teaching such contents important. Teacher 8 said this during the interview:

> I teach Incense Burning [*Bsang-gsol*] to grade 3, and they [children] know about five colors of Buddhist prayer flags and what are needed for the ritual of Incense burning. And I teach them when people perform the incense burning prayers and what [benefits] it brings; where we have to hoist the prayer flags; reasons why prayer flags are hoisted on high mountains... When I tell them these, they understand them.

Some of the teachers adopt a pragmatist approach and argue that a certain level of cultural knowledge is indispensable for children in order to help them negotiate complexities of social life. They stress the practical use and benefits of having such cultural knowledge. For example, Teacher 12 reasons:

> There are contents related to Tibet's environment, vegetation, animals, costumes and ornaments [in the social studies textbooks], and it is important to have some knowledge about these topics. If not, these days some people do not know how to wear a Tibetan *Chupa* [Tibetan robe], or they don't know the names of costumes or ornaments. So, these are important to know.

The teachers' focus on teaching Tibetan cultural knowledge is also prompted by the fear of such knowledge being lost. They feared that, as traditional lifestyles and its accompanying indigenous epistemologies are being replaced due to modernization, globalization, and Chinese culturalism in the case of Tibetans inside Tibet, many traditional Tibetan vocabularies are disappearing. Chinese culturalism is described as xenophobic pride in the assumed superiority of the Han Chinese civilization (Knapp, 2010), which is reflected in the ethnic minority regions in the present-day China in the form of assimilationist policies such as aggressive promotion of Han Chinese culture and language. Teacher 12 notes this in following excerpt:

> As for me when I set objectives, I treat them [cultural knowledge] as important. If we take *Chupa* [Tibetan robes] as an example, it is important to know what we call for its sleeve, belt, collars, and when wearing it we need to know about its upper and lower portions. It is important to have some basic knowledge. As for animals of Tibet, there are many animals, and we need to know the important ones like Tibetan antelope, wild yaks, lynx, snow-leopard, etc. Otherwise, these days many vocabularies are disappearing. For example, in the case of nomadic tents, many vocabularies are already lost.

Therefore, the social studies and the Tibetan history teachers of the Tibetan refugee schools treat acquisition of Tibetan cultural knowledge as important for a variety of reasons. In particular, they highlighted the role of cultural knowledge in the politics of defining and guarding Tibetan identity in face of occupation and displacement.

8.2.1.5 Past as a source of inspiration

Some of the teachers view the past as having a repository of glorious episodes that can inspire the younger generation. The coding of the interview transcripts furnished 8 statements where the teachers highlighted the use of glorious events of the Tibetan past to inspire the current generation. For Tibetans who have undergone decades of Chinese oppression and hardship in exile, glorification of Tibet's independent past becomes an important political project. In the context

of the Tibetan refugees, Tsering Shakya (2001) wrote: "regaining the past has become a necessary act of political invocation, which allows them to escape from a reality which has deprived them of their future" (p. xxii). Therefore, certain episodes of the past reflecting achievements of the Tibetan people are highlighted in the social studies and the Tibetan history textbooks and during the classroom instruction. One of the respondents explains:

> I think the first goal is that if some history is not taught, then it is like the country has no background to show. So even if the country is weak now, like Tibet, but still through history, we can teach that it was once a very powerful country. Tibetan forces in the past have reached neighboring countries like India, China, and Mongolia in all directions. It has huge political power that time. Then it changes with time, and it has declined now. (Teacher 3)

A victory narrative that celebrate 'chosen glories' of the community's past has the power of triggering certain kinds of affective responses in children and can potentially act as a redemptive force. In the case of teaching of Tibetan history, the textbooks and the classroom teaching often emphasize the era of what is described by the Tibetan Buddhist historiography as the "three ancestral religious kings", referring to the Thirty-third king Songtsen Gampo, the Thirty-seventh Trisong Detsen and the Fortieth emperor Tri Ralpachen of the Purgyal/Yarlung dynasty, who ruled the Tibetan empire between the seventh to the ninth century CE. A teacher observed the effects such victor narratives have had on his students:

> Every child hears from their parents and from the school that our country is under the Chinese occupation. This gives them a feeling that Tibet is a poor country. But when I teach them about the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo [the Thirty-third king] and how his forces reached up to the river Ganga in India or how Chinese were forced to offer their princess to him or the military power of Tibetans at that time, students would say "wow, Tibetans were not so weak [*Bod-pa a'u-tsam 'dug-ba*]"… So, it gives them a sense of pride, and makes them remember that our ethnic nationality [*Mi-rigs*] is not a weak one. By looking at history, we realize that we were powerful. Therefore, it helps in the development of nationalism and a sense of worth in one's nationality. (Teacher 3)

The teachers' responses reflect the invocation of both 'chosen trauma' and 'chosen glory' to inspire the current generation of Tibetan exiles into taking political actions. One of the participants highlighted the performative aspect of invoking victory narrative in the following statement: "actually after learning

about the achievements of our ancestor, it should inspire us to do more" (Teacher 1).

8.2.2 Perceptions on the textbooks

Textbook is perhaps the single most influential curricular artifact in the school education. As historically-situated and socially-constructed artifacts, textbooks carry the imprints of the time and milieu in which they were produced. Thus, they are ideological, political and historical in its character. They give shape to students' learning experiences, particularly in the classroom transaction. In many contexts, teachers use textbook as the 'authoritative resource' and serves as the pivot of classroom instruction (National Advisory Committee, 2004). This is particularly true in the case of underdeveloped and developing global south where education systems tend to use a single nationally produced textbook uniformly (Kumar, 2001). As mentioned before, the Tibetan refugee schools use single textbook uniformly and the textbook culture is entrenched in the system. In this sense, textbooks serve as the de-facto curriculum, and therefore, what is included in the textbook can have tremendous impact on students' learning. This brings us to the role teachers play as the mediators between the state and the child, and as interpreters of the textbook.

Therefore, understanding teachers' perceptions on the textbooks and the extent to which the textbook informs their classroom teaching is crucial, because these factors can have a decisive influence on the pursuit and impact of nation-building goals. As described in the chapters (6 and 7) dealing with the textbook analysis, the primary-level social studies and middle school Tibetan history textbooks carry considerable amount of contents related to the project of Tibetan nation-building in exile. This section explores the way in which teachers perceive the textbook contents, and how far they use the textbook as the basis of their classroom teaching. Critical use of textbook and other curricular materials or artifacts by teachers is often considered as an important component of progressive, democratic and critical education (Apple & Beane, 2007; VanSledright, 2011).

8.2.2.1 Perceptions on textbook contents

Most of the teachers hold a positive and uncritical view on the textbooks that the Tibetan refugee schools are using. They expressed a general sense of agreement and satisfaction with the content of the primary-level social studies textbooks and middle school Tibetan history textbooks. The coding of interview transcripts yielded 21 quotations in which teachers talked

satisfactorily about the textbook contents. Of the 15 teachers interviewed for this study, 11 of them expressed views indicating that they do not wish to bring major changes in the textbooks, and they find the extant textbooks adequate. Not surprisingly, some of them clearly see the political contents of the textbooks as its major strength. For example, Teacher 14 said: "generally, the lessons related to the *Tibetan cause* [emphasis added] given in this textbook are very good". Another teacher concurred:

> I have been teaching social studies from Grade 3 onwards for few years, and most of them [textbook contents] are helpful to the students such as the introduction of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, how Tibet was an independent country... The chapter 'Tibet was an independent country' [in Grade 5] is related to the Tibetan history course in middle school. So, I think most of the contents are relevant. (Teacher 8)

This agreement with political contents aligns well with the teachers' exposition on the goals of teaching social studies and the Tibetan history, analyzed in the previous sections, wherein they underscored the political goals as the primary driving force behind daily classroom teaching. The political goals include construction of Tibetan ethno-national identity; preparing young people to be ambassadors of Tibet who can raise awareness on the Tibetan issue in international forums; raising their nationalistic consciousness, etc.

Agreeing with the Lamaist/buddhist, elitist and dynastic narrative presented in the textbooks, a middle school Tibetan history teacher gives an overview of important topics included in the textbooks and agrees that the selected contents and the sequencing of the historical events are good:

> I think that the contents and the sequencing are quite good. Even if it is not that detailed, Grade 6 to 8 covers all major topics. Starting from how Tibet's physiography was formed and how its inhabitants originated; followed by the first Tibetan king Nyatri Tsenpo and the successive kings; not all kings are discussed but there is considerable information on important kings like Songtsen Gampo; and the assassination of king Lang Darma. All of these are in the Grade 6. The Grade 7 covers: disintegration of Tibetan empire; establishment of the rule of Sakya, Phagdru, Rinpung, Depa Tsangpa; and then the transfer of power to the Fifth Dalai Lama. For Grade 8, the syllabus covers successive reign of the Fifth to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. So even if it is not very detailed, but it has all [the important topics] in it. Therefore, if the children pay attention, it will help them develop a basic understanding of the history of Tibet. (Teacher 7)

As such, many teachers interviewed for this study seem to accept the basic format of the social studies and the Tibetan history textbooks, especially the contents or the historical events included in the textbooks, perspectives presented on the selected contents, and the manner in which these events were explicated and portrayed.

Some teachers argue that the contents of Tibetan history textbooks may be sketchy and brief, but they are reluctant to bring in more contents or alternative perspectives during classroom instruction given the level of the students that they are teaching. One of the teachers thus reasons:

> For Grade 6, I do not bring different interpretations into the lesson because it would create confusion for students, since there is no definitive account to serve as the anchor point... Students have difficulty understanding what is there in the textbook, and if we add, it may create more confusion for them. (Teacher 10)

Similarly, few of the teachers are mindful of the fact that historical interpretations and perspectives, especially on politically sensitive topics, are tricky and complicated. Therefore, they felt that conforming to a given framework or an official interpretation given in the textbook is a safe way out. For instance, one of the respondents argues:

> [For] the chapter 'Tibet was an independent country' or the section on 'reasons why China invaded Tibet', I cannot say whatever I want. I have to stick to the reasons given in the textbooks. The four reasons [for China's invasion of Tibet] that I taught in the last lesson were all drawn from the textbook. They are not newly created or made up by me. For history, it is important to follow a structure. (Teacher 8)

Therefore, for a variety of reasons, majority of the teachers seems to agree with the textbook contents and have expressed satisfactory views on it. It also highlights that the socio-political and pedagogical constraints within which teachers function in schools. For example, some of the teachers saw the need for bringing in additional interpretations to the ones given in the textbooks, but their freedom to maneuver is limited by self-censorship to remain politically-correct as the previous quote indicates, or their lack of understanding that even young children are capable of understanding multiple perspectives on a historical event.

Notwithstanding the general mood of satisfaction, few teachers expressed critical views on certain portions of the textbooks. Their criticisms fell into two broad categories. Firstly, few teachers expressed discomfort about blending mythical tales into historical account and presenting them as true accounts.

Secondly, some of the teachers pointed out that in some content areas, the textbooks use flamboyant and unscientific language. The traditional Tibetan historiography, produced primarily by Buddhist scholars, tends to submerge historical accounts with mythical or folk tales. This approach has heavily influenced the writing of the middle school Tibetan history textbooks, especially the one pertaining to the ancient Tibet discussed in the Grade 6 textbook. An informant highlighted this issue succinctly: "the current textbooks don't look like a textbook. They look more like a Buddhist religious scripture [*dpe-cha*]. It needs modern layout and design" (Teacher 1). Therefore, some of the teachers expressed ambivalence and skepticism on contents dealing with following episodes, listed in a chronological order:

1. Story of the origin of the Tibetan people from coupling of Monkey and Ogress.
2. Origin of the First king Nyatri Tsenpo in the 2nd century BCE.
3. Funeral of the Eighth king Drigum Tsenpo
4. Arrival of Buddhism during Twenty-eighth king Lha Thori Nyentsen
5. Passing away of the Thirty-third king Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century CE.

Most of these skepticisms relate to integration of Tibetan Buddhist mythical and fictional stories in the history textbooks, rendering historical accounts less plausible and credible. After Buddhism gained ascendency in Tibet by the end of first millennium, the history of Tibet was reinterpreted with a Buddhist frame. This can be seen in the attempt to locate the origin of the Tibetan people in a Buddhist parable, and more glaringly in describing the three greatest Tibetan emperors as 'Dharma/religious kings' (*Chos-rgyal*). It is these accounts that teachers find somewhat out of place. One of the respondents remarked:

> For example, in the chapter dealing with the origin of Tibetan people, it says that the Tibetans originated from the six infants born as a result of coupling of a compassionate monkey and female ogress. And with regard to the First king Nyatri Tsenpo, it is said that he was an Indian prince who escaped to Tibet and later found by some Tibetans in Yarlung who carried him on shoulder. I find these somewhat strange. History has to be told in a way that a modern person can believe. (Teacher 3)

Few teachers have recounted classroom moments when their students have questioned the textbook narrative, saying it is incredulous.

> [I]t is said that during Lha Thothori Nyentsen [Twenty-eighth king], Buddhism came to Tibet. But these are like fairy tales [*Lha-sbrung*] and sometimes it is hard to believe. It is written that "it rained from the sky, gods played music, rainbow appeared and then Mani and golden stupa

> descended". Children of today cannot digest such stories. They asked me: 'what is this?' (Teacher 12)

Juxtaposing the teacher's statement with the actual textbook excerpt of the event will offer us interpretative clarity. This is what the Grade 6 Tibetan history textbook says about the Twenty-eighth Tibetan king (Department of Education, 2002a):

> Wood Male Dog [year], in 374 CE, the Twenty-eighth king Lha Thothori Nyentsen was born. When he attained the age of 60, in 433 CE, the year of Water Female Bird, he was residing in the palace of Yumbhu-Lhakhang. One day, the entire sky was brilliantly filled by rainbows, and flowers started to rain down. Heavenly music echoed naturally. Accompanying sunlight, 'spang-kong phyag-rgya pa' and 'mdo-sde za-ma tog' [Buddhist text called Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra in Sanskrit] scriptures written on golden paper… a golden stupa, a cintāmaṇi [a wishfullfilling gem] descended on the roof of his palace… This is regarded as the first arrival of Buddhism in Tibet" (p. 11-12)

This event of paranormal height is hailed in the Lamaist narrative of the Tibetan history as the first advent of Buddhism in Tibet, and therefore, a landmark historical episode. This and other Tibetan Buddhist myths, which were at times, recounted as de-facto historical events, are problematized and critiqued in the preceding chapter (7).

Some teachers are critical of the use of unscientific language. The textbooks, especially the middle school Tibetan history textbooks, were written in semi-classical style with occasional use of highly ornate language. They were critical of the 'traditional style of the writing', 'use of archaic words', 'use of religious vocabularies' (*Chos-tshig*), 'lack of illustrations', and the 'use of contractions' (*Tshig-bsdus*). As shown in the preceding chapters (6 and 7), Buddhist vocabularies appear quite frequently in the text. For example, Teacher 6 said: "in the Grade 6 textbook, it is written that when the *Dharma/religious* king Songtsen Gampo died surrounded by his two wives, *he turned into a heap of rays and then disappeared into the statue of Chenresig* [Buddha of compassion] [emphasis added]". The same issue was picked up another teacher:

> We shouldn't bring much of the language of gods like being a manifestation of Chenresig [Buddha of compassion] or Jetsun Drolma [an important female deity]. Rather the textbook should use scientific language. For example, with regard to the origin of man, we can refer to modern theory of man's origin from monkey. So, there should be less fiction, and if some

> foreigners listen to the Tibetan history, they should feel that it is realistic. (Teacher 3)

One of the teachers argues that the middle school Tibetan history textbooks have failed to benefit from new research in the field of Tibetan historical studies and their findings, and advocates adoption of western scientific approach to the study of past. He states:

> Tibetan historical narrative has changed after modern research and archaeological evidences. However, the textbooks retained the old writing style and the narrative. It is not compatible with the western [modern] approach to historical study. So, we must make changes in the content. If we teach this [the current narrative] to the students, they will laugh. They tend to ask, "is this real?" (Teacher 6)

However, it is important to clarify that most of the teachers interviewed were not advocating for removal of mythical stories from the Tibetan historical accounts. On the contrary, some of the teachers have explicitly argued that myths and legends are an important part of Tibetan traditional folk culture. They vouch for integrating myths in the textbook narratives by clearly mentioning them as mythical tales, and not as historical accounts. For example, Teacher 12 explicates:

> We have mythical tales as well as other [more realistic] interpretations, and if we introduce them together it would very good. We can tell them that these are religious and mythical tales and that these are objective historical narratives. Such differentiation would be helpful to children. These mythical tales are also part of the Tibetan heritage. Indians have their legendary tales too.

In several instances, careful observations reveal that the textbook did make attempts to distance mythical accounts from the historical narrative as following textbook excerpts indicate. For example, the Grade 6 Tibetan history textbook says (Department of Education, 2002a): "*from the different interpretations* [emphasis added] about the origin of human race in Tibet, the primary one says that many infants were born when a monkey, blessed by Chenresig [the Buddha of compassion] coupled with a rock-ogress in the mountains of Yarlung Tsethang" (p. 3). Likewise, the same textbook highlights the existence of different interpretations regarding the origin of the First Tibetan king. It states:

> In 127 BCE, the first king of Tibet, Nyatri Tsenpo came into being. Even though *there are different interpretations* [emphasis added] about the origin of Nyatri Tsenpo, according to popular traditional historical accounts, a son

> was born to king of Magadha, India called king Mag-Gya, whose eyelid closed from the bottom and eyebrows made of turquoise, and his hands were webbed. Since the king was ashamed of showing his son to other people, he sent his son away towards Tibet. (p. 8)

However, there are other instances where mythical accounts are presented as true historical event, as shown before and in the preceding chapter (7).

Despite the criticisms on ways in which certain historical episodes were presented and the language used to portray them, there is no all-out rejection of the dominant narrative. Most of the teachers continue to perpetuate the dominant Buddhist narrative by occupying the dominant voice when describing historical events. For example, during the classroom observations and the follow-up interviews, many teachers uncritically use the term *Dharma/religious king* repeatedly. This reveals deep internalization and normalization of the Buddhist narrative. Likewise, most of the teachers indicate that the political education is necessary. Only one teacher expressed a disconcerting feeling about the inclusion of highly political contents in the early primary grade textbooks.

> I think that now it is important to develop social studies textbooks keeping in mind children's interest. For example, chapters like 10th March Uprising Commemoration are far too abstract for [primary] children. Therefore, I doubt they will remember it. While teaching about 10th March Uprising Commemoration, other than showing images/videos of protests, I can't do much. So, it may send a strange message to children that we have to always engage in protest on 10th March… it is better to have contents on mountains, animals, flowers, and places of Tibet. At the stage of 3rd grade learning names are important, and later on they can learn more [complex ones]. (Teacher 9)

8.2.2.2 Centrality of the textbook

Alongside the teachers' perceptions on the textbook contents and the perspectives they represent, the semi-structured interviews also explore to what extent the teachers use textbook as the basis for their classroom teaching. This is because teachers play a pivotal role in *interpreting* the textbook content and *designing* the learning experiences for students. The centrality of textbook in classroom instruction is directly relevant to the value textbook knowledge holds for the child. Therefore, during the interview a number of questions were asked to gather information on the role and centrality of the textbooks in class instruction, and similar data were gathered during the classroom observations.

As shown in the earlier chapters (3 and 4), the Tibetan refugee schools use single textbook uniformly across all grades. Therefore, it is no anomaly that most of the teachers (13 out of 15) indicated during the interview that they use the prescribed textbook as the basis for designing and enacting classroom teaching. This claim was also corroborated by the field data collected from the classroom observations. Almost all the teachers whose lessons were observed used textbook information exclusively, without much deviation or addition. They either base their teaching 'entirely' or 'primarily' on the textbook. For example, one of the informants said:

> I base my lessons primarily on the textbook. For example, for the chapter 'Tibet was an independent country' or the section on 'reasons why China invaded Tibet', I cannot say whatever I want. I have to stick to the reasons given in the textbook. The four reasons [for China's invasion of Tibet] that I taught in the last lesson were drawn from the textbook. Sometimes, when I get time, I do consult internet or ask my colleagues when I have doubts. However, for most of the time, I base my teaching on the textbook. (Teacher 8)

Even though use of other books or references is not non-existent, but their amount and the frequency are limited. Some of the teachers did mention using internet, audio-visual resources, and other print materials as well as the main reference book titled *Political History of Tibet* written by Shakabpa, from where the middle school Tibetan history textbooks were developed. The teachers cite a number of reasons for their decision to stick primarily to the textbook, such as limited instructional time for middle school Tibetan history subject (2 hours a week); the issue of curricular load for students if additional information is brought to the classroom; political sensitivity and correctness of certain topics, etc. The strain of the examination culture in confining teachers and students to the prescribed textbook is also visible. One of the informants admitted: "yes, [my teaching is based on] textbook only. If I teach beyond the textbook, students tend to ask me 'will this come in the exam?" (Teacher 11).

The uncritical acceptance of textbook contents and the overwhelming centrality and dominance of the prescribed textbook in the classroom teaching bear several important implications. Firstly, it ensures that the textbook perspective is communicated to children without much questioning, and therefore the possibility of children seeing it as 'truth' is relatively high. It helps in perpetuating the textbook narrative and power structure it represents. Secondly, it increases the value textbook knowledge holds for children, since it serves as the pivot of classroom teaching and the examination. These factors

limit the possibility of children's participation in an authentic construction of knowledge and knowing alternative perspectives.

8.2.3 Teachers' pedagogical orientation

Teachers' pedagogical and classroom practices can have significant impact on the pursuit of political and nationalist agenda of history education. Teachers hold a key position as curricular and instructional gatekeepers. Generally, a more progressive and democratic approach to classroom teaching allows greater pedagogic space for children to engage in critical construction knowledge. On the contrary, teacher and textbook-dominated classroom teaching potentially reduces children to docile recipients of 'given' knowledge. It can be argued that a pedagogically-progressive teacher can, to a certain degree, mitigate potential impacts of a highly nationalistic textbook content by countervailing it with alternative materials or missing voices. A nationalistically-oriented curriculum or textbook passes through teachers. Therefore, the role of teacher and his/her classroom teaching is an important factor buffering nationalistic and political agenda in education. During the semi-structured interviews, the social studies and the Tibetan history teachers were asked to explain their approaches to classroom teaching. Simultaneously, during the lesson observation, a special focus was placed on understanding teachers' pedagogical practices in the lived realities of classroom situations. This section summarizes findings from the interviews and the classroom observations that pertain to teachers' pedagogical orientation to classroom teaching.

During the semi-structured interviews, Tibetan social studies and history teachers highlighted a variety of teaching strategies that they use generally in their class. The most common strategy that the teachers claim to have employed frequently is 'group discussion'. For instance, one of the respondents claims:

> As far as teaching methods are concerned, most of the time I divide class into groups and give them topics to study during the class period and as home assignment, and then I allow each group to present to the class. I allow them to ask questions to each other. (Teacher 2)

Another teacher concurs:

> Firstly, I make them to read the textbook, allow them to develop some understanding by themselves, or gain knowledge by their own efforts. Then I organize group or pair discussion that allows them to explain their understandings. And after that I offer my explanation. (Teacher 7)

Other approaches or teaching strategies that the teachers highlighted include literacy approach to social studies like reading and writing, storytelling approach to history teaching, asking developmental questions to elicit children's prior knowledge and viewpoints, contextualization of subject contents to child's immediate life, individual or group project work, field visits, performing arts strategies like singing or theatrical performances, inquiry-based method. These teaching strategies can be more broadly described as learner-centric in their nature. However, a couple of teachers justify using 'lecturing' (*'chad-'khrid*) or direct instruction as the main teaching method. One of them said the following during the interview:

> Since it is history, I mostly give lectures. People say history is a talking subject. There is no way other than talking or telling. Whether students listen or not, history is like a story, to be told by mouth. What I do is that I read the entire chapter, analyze and summarize it, and let the students write it [summary developed by the teacher] down. (Teacher 3)

Another teacher holds a similar view: "generally for social studies, the subject itself is such that we have to use lecture method. This subject requires lots of explanation to do" (Teacher 14).

Despite their claims of using a host of child-centric teaching strategies, teachers remain largely faithful to the textbook narrative and most the lessons observed were dominated by teachers. As highlighted in the previous section, teachers hold uncritical views on the textbook contents and use textbook as the primary curricular artefact in their classroom. In fact, during the classroom observations, not a single teacher brought materials outside textbook that significantly challenge the textbook narrative. For example, Teacher 1 taught a lesson about the Twelfth Dalai Lama's reign to eighth graders. The lesson was solely based on the textbook and no additional perspectives were included. It dealt with the controversial question of why the Twelfth Dalai Lama died so young, and the teacher attributed the cause to illness as mentioned in the textbook. Additional or missing perspectives such as possible assassination due to power struggle and infighting were completely ignored.

Most of the lessons observed during the field visits were predominantly teacher and textbook-directed with little opportunities for children to engage in critical construction of knowledge. Even the so-called group discussions or tasks were primarily aimed at simply knowing or understanding the narrative presented in the textbook, rather than critically examining and evaluating competing claims or perspectives. In most of the cases, summaries of the lesson were written by the teachers on board and students simply copied them down on their notebook. One of the interviewees said: "I teach by first writing the key

points on the board, explain them, and then go through the textbook. This makes the whole process easier" (Teacher 12). In other words, the focus of classroom teaching was on knowledge acquisition via direct instruction. No perceptible effort was made towards integrating historical thinking concepts (Seixas & Mortons, 2013). Likewise, a very few teachers make use of technologies to aid classroom teaching. Only one lesson was taught using a PowerPoint presentation with a number of images related to the teaching content. It was learned during the field visits that the number of LCD projector in each school is very few.

This disparity between the claims made during the interviews pertaining to the use of child-centered strategies and the actual realities of classroom teaching during the lesson observations could be due to challenges of translating child-centered approaches to lived classroom situations. Teachers may be theoretically aware of the importance and benefits of progressive and constructivist pedagogies but are struggling to put it into practice in their classes. Therefore, teacher and textbook-directed pedagogies, as observed during the lesson observations, can have a significant impact on the pursuit of political and nationalist agenda of social studies and history education in the Tibetan refugee schools.

8.2.4 Victory and victim narratives

During the interviews, many teachers underscored the importance of teaching both 'chosen glories' and 'chosen traumas' (Volkan, 2005) to the younger generation of Tibetan exiles. Their views align closely with the social studies and Tibetan history textbook contents wherein, as shown in the preceding chapters, both victory and victim narratives are given significant emphasis. The coding of interview transcriptions yielded eight quotations linked to victory narrative. For instance, on the functionality of victory narrative, Teacher 1 argued: "After learning about the achievements of our ancestor, it should inspire us to do more". Teacher 3 expanded this argument further in the following statement:

> Every child hears from their parents and from the school that our country in under the Chinese occupation, and this gives them a feeling that Tibet is a weak country. But when I teach them about Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo and how his forces reached up to the river Ganga in India or how Chinese were forced to offer their princess to him or the military power of Tibetans at that time, students would say "wow, Tibetans were quite okay (*Bod-pa a'u-tsam 'dug-ba*)"… So, it gives a sense of pride to them, and makes them

> remember that our nationality (*Mi-rigs*) is not a weak one. By looking at history, we realize we were powerful. So, it helps in the development of nationalism and a sense of worth in one's nationality.

Teacher 15 also recounted a similar experience while teaching chosen glories to children:

> When I teach about how Tibetans waged wars and conquered other countries [during the imperial period between 7th-9th century], children were astonished, asking how come we Tibetans were like this in ancient time... It shows that this gives a certain feeling to them that Tibet was once powerful.

Thus, victory narratives, that highlight the past achievements and greatness of Tibetan nation, is deemed necessary for countervailing the current situation of powerlessness and boosting the morale of Tibetan refugee children. Following the lamaist historiography, the teachers who were interviewed highlighted the era of 'Dharma kings' (*Chos-rgyal*) as the golden period of Tibetan history, as well as celebrated the spread of Buddhism in Tibet as glorious events. Teacher 6 opined:

> For example, in Grade 6, there is the history about Lha Lama Yeshi Od and Jangchub Od [who were instrumental in reviving Buddhism in Tibet in 9th-10th century] and their sacrifices, and I narrate these histories with emotions. Sometimes tears well up in my eyes thinking about how our ancestors have sacrificed their lives for our rich culture that we now have.

Whilst victory narrative is needed to inspire the younger generation, some teachers felt that victim narrative is also important. The coding furnished a total of five quotations related to transmission of chosen traumas, particularly those relating to the Chinese invasion of Tibet and its repressive rule. Here again the teachers' views run parallel to textbook contents in heightening the Tibetan sense of victimization. Teacher 4 cites an example of using victim narrative to raise children sense of nationalism:

> Most of the teachers give advice to them [children] regarding the fact that we don't have a country and that it is important for us to work hard. We talk about what the situation is like in Tibet, and how we suffer under the Chinese.

Victory and victim narratives work in tandem to inspire children to inherit their ethno-national and cultural identity, and work towards freedom in Tibet. Both the textbooks and the teachers seem to consider invocation of chosen glories and

chosen traumas, via the teaching of history, important for the project of nation-building in exile and construction of Tibetan identity.

8.2.5 Challenges of building a nation-in-exile

No conscious effort was made to probe into challenges the Tibetan teachers are facing in their pursuit of the nation-building goals via teaching social studies and the Tibetan history. However, during the semi-structured interviews, many of the teachers voluntarily alluded to a number of challenges. Thus, this theme emerged directly from the data. The coding procedures resulted in a whopping 42 quotations that referred to tensions, fissures, challenges and problems the teachers are facing vis-à-vis pursuing political and nation-building goals of teaching social studies and the Tibetan history. Such tension is also reflected in other literacy sources on the Tibetan diaspora. In an anthology of prose and poetry written by Tibetan exile writers, one of them observed (Tsering, 2013):

> It's a matter of grave concern that the Tibetan youth in India are already losing the focus of their struggle and a majority of them do not know how to identify their Tibetan-ness… The idea of Tibet as a country has already been lost in these young minds. (p. 56)

Many interviewees alluded to a lack of motivation in the current generation of Tibetan children that they are teaching, particularly in relation to learning about Tibet, its history and culture. One of the informants bemoaned: "these days children do not have motivation to study at all" (Teacher 1). On the contrary, several teachers spoke highly of the students of 'earlier generations' who were dedicated to learning Tibetan language, culture and history. For instance, a teacher explicates the differences between the current and the past generations of Tibetan exile students in following terms:

> Earlier most of the children were from Tibet and were attentive to Tibetan song, language, and everything. These days we have children from different parts of India [from Tibetan settlements who are second or third generation exiles]. Hence, they are weak in the Tibetan language... They feel ashamed of wearing Tibetan dress and eating Tsampa [Barley flour, considered as the national diet of Tibetans]. (Teacher 4)

Another teacher concurs:

> But our children don't have much feeling [for Tibet]. Sometimes, I use to jokingly say this to them: 'I hope you are not seeing our martyrs as naïve' [*Dpa'-bo de-tso byab-chung 'dra-bo mthong-gi mi-'dug ba*]. Even after

> sacrificing everything for the sake of our country and its people, our children's perception toward them is an absence of feeling. This may be because our children didn't face much problem since their childhood. (Teacher 1)

As it is clear from the previous statements, the strains of prolonged exile and generational change is clearly visible. The following respondent touched on a number of issues, including impacts temporal distance have had on a person's feeling of closeness towards his or her original homeland, and highlighted ways in which such weakening of ties and inner feeling is manifested.

> We have been living in other's country for so long. Even for parents these days, the degree of hardship less. So is the case with their children. Therefore, even in family, it is very important to tell children about Tibet and its situation. Because, children these days… don't think about doing something for Tibet's cause. They think about what job they will get, or whether they will be able to abroad, or how much salary they will get. So, it is very important to raise their nationalistic feeling by telling them about Tibet. I feel their nationalistic feeling is less. Earlier, during our time, we use to cry when we see a film on Tibet. Such an affective response is not seen in children these days. Even when a theatrical drama is performed showing the situation in Tibet, children treat it as joke. So, I feel we need to nurture more patriotic feeling in them. I think there is less attempts on our part in nurturing their patriotic feeling. (Teacher 2)

Generally, it can be argued that increasing spatial-temporal distance tends to weaken diaspora population's bonds with its original homeland, consequently resulting in weakening of its ethno-national and cultural identities. A similar trend can be discerned from the anxieties and concerns expressed by the Tibetan teachers vis-à-vis the current generation of Tibetan children in exile that they are teaching in the schools. Apart from those who fled Tibet in recent times, most of the Tibetan children in the schools are second or third generation refugees born and raised in the Indian sub-continent. Therefore, they possess no living memory of their homeland and their Tibetanness is passed on through what Appadurai (1990) calls as 'nostalgia without memory' – an act of remembering what one has never known. With the changes in generation, one move farther away from the homeland one's parents or grandparents have left behind. Majority of the current generation of Tibetan exiles have no lived memory of the 1950s Chinese invasion and the resultant exodus to India. Their life in exile is relatively more comfortable and easier than compared to the first-generation refugees. Since they were born in India and spent their entire life in India, they absorbed and internalized many influences from the local Indian

communities. A second-generation Tibetan exile wrote: "unlike my parents, I *do* consider India my home, where I grew up eating rice and dal in school, glorifying Amitab Bachchan in *Sholay* [a Bollywood film] and humming Tamil songs in college" (Choephel, 2013, p. 133). From the 1990s, Tibetan exiles also started immigrating to the west in a greater number. These factors have increased spatio-temporal distance between them and the homeland many of them have never known. Tibet increasingly becomes a fixed and a reified imagined homeland that one yearns for, but without much affective and lived connection.

The impacts of this increasing spatio-temporal distance are seen by some of the teachers in terms of lack of motivation on the part of the students to learn contents related to Tibet's history, culture and politics. This issue has been broached by many teachers during the interviews. As some of the teachers have argued, this could be due to prolonged exile and the increasing temporal distance from the homeland children's parents have left. It could also be due to failure of the schools and the teachers to respond meaningfully to the changing circumstances. Children's motivation for learning depends, among other things, on the curricular artefacts like textbooks and their pedagogical appropriateness, as well as on instructional competencies of teachers. As discussed before in the chapters (6 and 7), textbooks, especially the middle school Tibetan history textbooks are poorly developed. Likewise, as discussed in the preceding section, most of the lessons observed were teacher-dominated, indicating incompetence on the part of teachers to integrate progressive child-centered teaching strategies.

Teachers also highlighted institutional and structural challenges, especially those pertaining to constraints of operating within the Indian education system. As described in previous chapters, all the Tibetan refugee schools in India are affiliated to and accredited by the Central Board of Secondary Education, under the Union Government of India. This means that the Tibetan schools in India have to somehow reach a 'curricular truce' by integrating both the Tibetan curriculum and the Indian curriculum thereby enabling the children under its care to receive a culturally-relevant Tibetan education, as well as pass the Indian national matriculation examinations which are crucial for gaining access to higher education in Indian universities and colleges. Consequently, there is a tussle for curricular space between the Tibetan curriculum and the Indian curriculum. It generally results in curricular load for children, less instructional time for each subject, and abrupt changes in the language of instruction from Tibetan to English at the Grade 6. For instance, Teacher 4 argues:

> One of the challenges is that the language of instruction and the content changes to English in the Grade 6. So, we have to focus a lot on Tibetan-English terminologies in the Grade 5. Students who are good in social studies in primary grades, sometimes, perform poorly when they reach middle school.

Similarly, operating within the Indian sub-continent context means that the influence of English language is pervasive. English language is one of primary medium of instruction in schools across India, often far outdoing many Indian national and regional languages. All the schools affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education use English language as the medium of instruction, at least from the secondary level. Therefore, some teachers expressed concerns at the English language is taking over Tibetan children's mother-tongue. The issue of native language loss is at the core of the politics of Tibetan national identity. For example, an informant shared several episodes highlighting students' preference for English:

> We provided opportunities for all the students to participate in morning assembly class presentation, where they can read the Dalai Lama's advices or poems both in the Tibetan and English languages. And for the song, I asked them which song they wanted to perform. Only two students raise their hands for Tibetan song, and the remaining 14 or 15 students are for English song. So, I told them that this is how our Tibetanness is declining… Once I observed that when kids were asked to read something, after the day's teaching is over, most of them would go for English storybooks. During the library period, I observed that most of the students read English storybooks. I used to tell them to pay attention to both the languages – in order to become someone with two wings. (Teacher 4)

Loss of native language amongst immigrant or diaspora communities is a general trend in many parts of the world. The concerns teachers expressed on the growing influence of English and children's preference for it relate closely to identity politics and nation-building in exile.

8.3 Conclusion

As it is evident from the above discussion, the role of the teaching of social studies and the Tibetan history in nation-building and construction of a national identity in the Tibetan refugee schools was not a systematic and well-organized one. The fact that the teachers have considerable freedom in setting the learning goals for children indicates that there is a lack of top-down directives.

Teachers' interviews point to a complex scenario where meanings are created and co-created at multiple sites, thereby revealing that there is a lack of uniform move towards Tibetan nation-building in exile and construction of a Tibetan national identity for the younger generations.

However, teachers' perceptions on the goals of teaching social studies and Tibetan history reveal that nation-building in exile and construction of national identity are the primary goals. Despite the lack of top-down directives and binding curricular guidelines, teachers seem to have a tacit shared understanding of what it means to educate Tibetan children in exile. Their visions are in tandem with ones expressed by the leadership or the textbook narratives. In fact, teachers talked almost entirely about the importance of nation-building goals and they seem quite determined about the political mission of teaching Tibetan social studies and history to children in exile. The interview materials indicate that there is a singular lack of focus on pursuing what could be termed as intellectual or educational goals – or more specifically disciplinary goals like historical thinking concepts. As conception of goals lead educational programs to a specific direction, Tibetan teachers' perceptions on the teaching goals of social studies and history can have far-reaching impacts on their classroom instruction. The pursuit of nationalist and political agenda is further enhanced by the teachers' fidelity to the textbook narrative. They seem to view textbook narrative as 'given', and their classroom teaching quite often simply perpetuates the official narrative. Therefore, the teaching of social studies and Tibetan history predominantly follow the 'nationalist' or the 'collective memory' approach (Podeh, 2000; VanSledright, 2011).

But the pursuit of nationalistic agenda of social studies and history education is not a straightforward story. The Tibetan refugee schools and their teachers' efforts in the direction of nation-building in exile is countervailed by limitations imposed by the circumstances in which they function.

9 NATION-BUILDING IN EXILE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this concluding chapter, the key findings of the study are highlighted and discussed in the light of theoretical and conceptual frames deployed herein. In particular, it summarizes the major findings from the critical discourse analysis of the primary-level social studies and middle school Tibetan history textbooks, and the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted with the history teachers in five Tibetan refugee schools in India. In the end, the chapter also discusses the limitations of this research and provides directions for further research.

9.1 Reimagining refugee education

This section develops a reflective view on the lessons the educational experiences of the Tibetan refugees in India could offer to refugee education and to multicultural education. The system of education developed by the Tibetan refugees within the broader framework of Indian system of education provides an interesting case for exploring the migrant/refugee-host relationship and how a migrant community's success to a great degree is determined by how they are perceived and supported by the host country. When the Tibetan refugees started flowing into India in the late 1950s, they were largely welcomed by the government and people of India. This positive reception was due to a host of historical, cultural, geopolitical and humanitarian reasons unique to the situation of Tibet at that time. Historically and culturally, Tibet shares a close relationship with India. Buddhism, which can be seen as the cornerstone of Tibetan culture, was established in Tibet with the help of Indian Buddhist masters, and the majority Buddhist canonical texts in the Tibetan language were translated from Indian languages, primarily the Sanskrit language. Therefore, Tibetans generally perceive India as their cultural big brother and is often referred to as 'Aryabhoomi' – the precious land (*'phags pa'i yul*). The Dalai Lama calls India the "spiritual home" of the Tibetan people

(Venkat, 2018). Geo-strategically, for centuries, Tibet acted as a buffer zone between India and the Central Asian or East Asian powers, namely Russia and China. As a result, the Chinese Communist occupation of Tibet and its oppressive rule thereafter was opposed by many Indian political leaders. Likewise, despite the Third World anticolonial solidarity, India and China had significant ideological differences. Tibetan refugees were thus perceived as a potential cultural and political ally.

The aforementioned factors prompted a positive reception of the Tibetan refugees in India, resulting in a number of important political decisions as well as humanitarian assistance. India played an active role in rehabilitating the Tibetan refugees in various agro-based settlements across India with the long-term lease of land for cultivation; funding and supporting the establishment of Tibetan cultural institutions; and politically, India allowed the Tibetan Government-in-exile, established by the Dalai Lama, to function discreetly. In particular, India played and continues to play a key role in providing educational opportunities to the Tibetan refugees. Instead of assimilation, on the Dalai Lama's request, India set up a large number of separate schools for Tibetan refugee children and these schools were fully-funded by the Central government of India.

These initiatives resulted in the establishment of a culturally-vibrant and politically-active Tibetan refugee community in India. The Tibetan exiles were able to preserve and promote their cultural heritage to a great extent. In the field of education, school enrolment and literacy rate rose sharply. Generally, migration and increasing spatio-temporal distance from original homeland often result in the loss of native language and culture (May, 2009; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, 2006). However, in the case of the Tibetan refugees, a reverse process of language revitalization can be observed in terms of growing literacy in the mother-tongue. Establishment of the separate schools and the flexibility of the India system of education allowed the Tibetan refugees to incorporate curricular contents relevant to their community. The fact that the Tibetan refugees were able to develop mother-tongue based primary education itself is a milestone achievement that indigenous and minoritized communities in many multicultural countries are struggling with. The positive reception and humanitarian assistance accorded by India not only resulted in the educational success of the Tibetan refugees, but it also generated a sense of gratitude resulting in reciprocatory acts of goodwill. Today, about 30% of children studying in the Tibetan refugee schools are local Indians, often selected from underprivileged sectors (Department of Education, 2018). Coinciding with the 60th anniversary of their exile, Tibetan refugees celebrated 2018 as "Thank You India" year (Central Tibetan Administration, 2018a), with programs such as

'feed the hungry', 'cover the cold', 'towards a clean India', etc. This positive refugee-host relationship may have helped the Tibetan refugee community transforming itself from a 'burden' and a 'taker' to a 'contributor' to the host country's socio-economic and cultural life.

It is to be noted that, aside from setting up separate schools for the Tibetan refugees, much of the curricular and instructional innovations and adaptions become possible due to the flexibilities of the Indian system of education, as it serves its hugely diverse population. For example, mother-tongue based education is possible under India's pluralistic and inclusive Three-Language Formula, and the rights of linguistic minorities to use their language as the medium of instruction in school, especially at primary level. The Three-Language Formula is an interesting act of balancing between the local and the national. According to Sridhar (1989), it is "to accommodate the interests of group identity (mother tongues and regional languages), national pride and unity (Hindi), and administrative efficiency and technological progress (English)" (p. 22). Therefore, it is not surprising that India uses more than 80 languages as the medium of instruction in different stages of schooling, of which 18 languages are considered as the principal ones (Khubchandani, 2008). The use of vernacular languages allows greater inclusion of curricular contents relevant to the ethnic and linguistic community it serves, such as local histories, local cultures, craft, literature, etc.

The Indian system of education in general and the case of Tibetan refugees and the developmental trajectories of its educational system in particular offer interesting lessons, especially those in relation to refugee education and multicultural education. Nawang Phuntsog (2018) wrote that the "rare and unprecedented mother tongue based schooling of Tibetan children in exile in India… can serve as a model for displaced and indigenous peoples" (p. 1). The Indian educational system can serve as a model to offset the exclusionary tendencies of modern nation-state building which tends to project a national homogeneity via one national master narrative, one national language, and one national culture. Perceiving language and culture children bring from home as 'resources' and incorporating them meaningfully in the education system are shown to have positive impacts on the level of school enrolment and children's academic achievements. Mother-tongue based schooling with culturally responsive curriculum can potentially promote social, economic, and cultural integration (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009). In this respect, MacPherson (2011) succinctly summarizes lessons we can learn from the educational experiences of the Tibetan refugees in the following lines:

> How an intercultural curriculum that artfully wedded traditional and modern education could be developed and implemented to conserve an indigenous language, culture, and its values through education while availing its community of the promise of globalization and the world of its rich heritage. (p. 11)

These lessons gain greater relevance at a time and age when racially and linguistically minoritized communities are forced to assimilate into the mainstream or dominant group's culture in many countries, and when refugees or migrants are often perceived as a problem to deal with. Despite advances in multicultural education, the 'deficit' perspective with regards to minoritized languages and cultures is still a major issue (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009). With the rise of rightwing populism, there are growing tendencies in many countries to look at refugees and migrants as 'burden' or at worst they are often demonized as bringing trouble. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, there are over 25 million refugees and 40 million internally-displaced people in the world, and education is one of the crucial challenges facing them (Miliband, 2018). The lessons from the case of Tibetan refugees clearly underscore the importance of refugee-host relationship. There seems to be a direct correlation between host country's positive image of the migrant community as resources (cultural, political, economic, etc.), and the migrant community's ability to stand up on its own feet and reciprocate. Refugees, if perceived positively and provided with support, can become 'contributors' to socio-economic and cultural life of the host nation.

9.2 History in the service of nationalist agenda

As it is clearly evident from the critical discourse analysis performed on the Tibetan social studies and history textbooks and thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews held with the history teachers, the teaching of history in the Tibetan refugee schools predominantly follows the collective memory approach with a nationalist orientation (Podeh, 2000; Seixas, 2000; VanSledright, 2011). The collective memory is constructed around the dominant Buddhist narrative of the Tibetan past, and the nationalist fervor is augmented through decolonial discourses against the Chinese occupation and rule. The selection and organization of textbook contents highlight the primacy of Tibetan nationalist concerns and preeminence of the dominant group's narratives. This is reflected in the contents of the primary-level social studies and middle-school Tibetan history textbooks, as well as the lived realities of

everyday classroom teaching. As shown in the analysis, teachers who were interviewed for this study overwhelmingly endorse a nationalist approach to the teaching of history.

A certain number of nationalist themes or strands pervade all of the social studies and the Tibetan history textbooks from grade one to eight which appear crucial to the project of Tibetan nation-building in exile and construction of Tibetan national identity. Firstly, the textbooks give considerable focus on constructing Tibet territorially, culturally and politically. This task serves two primary purposes – to create an imagined homeland for Tibetan children born in exile with no living memory of Tibet and to counter the Chinese state's perspective on the question of what constitutes Tibet. The discursive construction of an image of Tibet enables appropriation of a particular representation by children who were largely born and raised in exile. In this respect, the textbooks adopted a romantic or perennialist approach resulting in the construction of an essentialized and reified image of Tibet that is decontextualized and unchanging. For example, maps are used as important cultural artefacts for representing Tibet as a bounded territorial entity in the textbooks. But the maps deployed in the textbooks construct Tibet as an unchanging entity throughout history, overlooking historical shifts and changes in the boundaries of Tibet over the centuries. Carretero, Alphen and Parellada (2018) observed a similar tendency in their research on Spanish university students' appropriation of national imageries. They wrote: "the maps fill out by the students tend to plot the current borders of Spain, Portugal, and France as permanent since as early as the eighth century. They tend to represent present borders as if they were always there" (p. 433).

In terms of territorial definition, the textbooks stick to the "three-province model' covering the entire Tibetan Plateau or regions inhabited by ethnic Tibetans. In doing so, the textbooks reject the territorial demarcation that came into force after China took over Tibet, which greatly reduced the size of Tibet by half. Culturally, Tibet is constructed as the land of Buddhism with a certain degree of predestination. The Tibetan culture is perceived as synonymous with Buddhist culture. Even the pre-Buddhist eras were viewed from a Buddhist lens. For example, the origin of Tibetan people is recounted through a Buddhist parable. In this process, the textbooks homogenize Tibetan culture, often by ignoring non-Buddhist cultures. Politically, Tibet is constructed as an independent country throughout history, until China annexed it in the 1950s. The textbooks establish figurative contours of the Tibetan nation by deploying modern signifiers of the nation such as political maps, national flags and emblems, national monuments, etc. Therefore, Falcone and Wangchuk (2008) write that "[t]he Tibetan homeland is carefully crafted by Tibetans in exile

through practices of nostalgia, patriotism, and resistance to assimilation" (p. 178). Because of their preoccupation with projecting an independent Tibet prior to 1950s and the tendency of living in the past, they have in the process, fixated Tibet. Tibet for them becomes time frozen, a reified object. For the Tibetan refugees, the glorious march of their nation's history is arrested by the Chinese invasion and thus, for them, the history of Tibet stops in the 1950s. Therefore, the textbook narrative ended in the 1950s, and focus is shifted to their life in exile. As Falcone and Wangchuk (2008) conclude:

> Tibetans in exile have constructed a community in exile by reconfiguring and re-"enframing" Tibet. The idealized Tibet is the Edenic "memory" and nostalgia for the Dalai Lama installed upon his seat at the grand Potala Palace in Lhasa. In much of Tibetan exile discourse authentic Tibet is past and future, but definitively not present. (p. 180)

Secondly, the textbooks perform an important political task of rejecting the Chinese claim over Tibet as being a part of it since the ancient time. While discursive representations of Tibet as a separate entity with distinct geography and culture countervail the Chinese claim in a subtle manner, the textbooks also engage in the more explicit task of refuting the Chinese claim. The textbooks, especially the primary-level social studies, are laden with curricular contents that address the polemics surrounding the legal and historical status of Tibet. Chapters like "Tibet: an independent country" in the Grade 4 social studies reject the Chinese claims systematically and advance arguments and evidence in support of the independence of Tibet prior to the 1950s. As pointed out earlier, the textbook discourse used modern signifiers of nations (such as national flag, political map, national emblem, national monument, etc.) that rose into prominence with the establishment of modern nation-states, as evidence of Tibetan sovereignty and political independence.

Thirdly, the historical narratives presented in the textbooks invoke both 'chosen glory' and 'chosen trauma' (Volkan, 2005), which are often seen as a standard recipe for most of the nationalist historical narratives. The textbooks celebrate the Tibetan imperial age, especially the period from the seventh to the ninth century CE, and the cultural achievements of the Tibetan people. Returning to the past, via a victory narrative of a glorious past, is necessary to offset the current state of collective loss and dispossession that the Tibetan refugees experience. Therefore, invoking past glories is a supreme act of empowerment for regaining a sense of worth and dignity in their otherwise challenging existence. Reclaiming heroic past temporarily lifts oneself out of the impossibilities of the current circumstances. Likewise, correspondingly, the textbook narrative also highlights the Tibetan sense of victimhood by

recounting traumatic experiences of death and destruction under the Chinese occupation and rule. Such victor and victim narratives could potentially cement social cohesion and unify the Tibetan exile community, which are crucial for mobilizing themselves in their political struggle for freedom in Tibet.

The nationalist narrative presented in the textbooks receives overwhelming support and endorsement from the social studies and history teachers interviewed for this study. Both textbooks and teachers seem to work in tandem with regard to pursuing nationalist and political agenda via the teaching of history. The teachers are convinced of the importance of political and nationalist tasks. Their perceptions on the teaching goals for social studies and history lessons reflect the preponderance of nationalist goals. They highlighted, among other things, the construction of Tibetan national identity; fomenting a sense of nationalism to carry forward the Tibetan struggle for freedom; producing Tibetan political and cultural ambassadors who can champion the cause of Tibet in international settings; preserving and promoting the Tibetan language which they consider is crucial for preserving their national identity, as the major goals of teaching Tibetan social studies and history. These objectives are often seen as *raison d'etre* for the very existence of separate schooling for Tibetan refugees. To reiterate, one of the respondents remarked:

> Generally, every teacher has this [Tibetan freedom struggle] in their minds regardless of whatever subjects they are teaching, not just the Tibetan history subject. The reason why we provide education is that they [children] are the future seeds of Tibet, and our future solely depends on them, not anyone else. Therefore, we have to teach them well so that they become someone who can contribute to the community and someone who will *work for the cause of Tibet* [emphasis added]. That is the hope, and I think every teacher puts their efforts in this direction. (Teacher 15)

The predominance of nationalist narrative in the teaching of history in the Tibetan refugee schools should be seen largely as products of historical and political contingencies surrounding the community. The education of Tibetan exiles in general and the teaching of Tibetan history in particular are geared towards constructing Tibetan national identity and producing national subjects to carry forward the struggle for freedom in Tibet. Therefore, it is not surprising that disciplinary goals of history education are sidelined both in the conceptualization of textbooks and in the actual classroom teaching. While current researches in history education highlight the importance of transcending the limits of national master narrative and focusing on disciplinary and intellectual goals of history teaching (VanSledright, 2011; Seixas & Morton, 2013), a refugee community engaged in a nationalist struggle for freedom

appears less likely embrace it fully. This research confirms and extends the findings of extant research that establish a relationship between stages of statehood a nation has achieved and the corresponding nature of history teaching. For example, Kumar (2002) found that in many of post-colonial states where state-building is in a primary stage, often challenged by state and non-state actors, history education is perceived primarily in terms of nation-building and cementing a unified national identity. Findings of this research add a new dimension, especially from the perspectives of sub-nation groups like refugees, immigrants and diaspora communities, as well as racialized and linguistically minoritized communities. As the case of history teaching in the Tibetan refugee schools demonstrates, for sub-nation groups who live in a vulnerable socio-political climate and whose identity is threatened by displacement, history is seen as an important key to the construction and maintenance of their national or ethnic identity.

9.3 Selective deployment of critical history

The Tibetan history and social studies taught in the Tibetan refugee schools represent an interesting paradox and dichotomy. On the one hand, it finds itself in the domain of alternative knowledge base, privileging the viewpoints of the oppressed and the marginalized group to countervail and problematize the narrative of the dominant group, the Chinese Communist state. The key political subtext of the social studies textbooks of primary grades is that Tibet comprises of the entire Tibetan inhabited areas or what is known as the traditional three provinces of Tibet, and that it was an independent country prior to the 1950s with distinct history and culture. The discursive constructions deployed in the textbooks construct Tibet as a fully-sovereign modern nation-state, possessing the criteria required for a modern statehood, before China's annexation of it in the 1950s. This subtext runs consistently in the primary-level social studies textbooks and middle school Tibetan history textbook, and these themes are tacitly present in even seemingly apolitical chapters dealing with the Tibetan culture and ways of life. This absolutist narrative is advantageous to the kind of political and national subject the Tibetan government and community in exile hope to engender in the younger generation via education. A belief in the historical status of Tibet as an independent nation appears crucial to maintaining their political struggle for freedom inside Tibet and giving meaning and a sense of purpose to their life in exile.

After the 1950s, Tibetans have been largely dislodged from the position of power and their narratives relegated to the margin, and as such, these textbooks and the narratives they carry should be seen as their attempts to reclaim power and bring to center their narrative and voice. Despite simplistic and often reductive in its character, narratives presented in the Tibetan refugee schools' textbooks assume a counter-hegemonic and decolonial position. They countervail and destabilize the hegemonic discourses generated by the dominant power, China, regarding the historical status of Tibet and the nature of Sino-Tibetan relationships in the past. In this respect, the very existence of separate Tibetan refugee schools in general and the Tibetanized social studies curriculum in particular, generate what Apple (2004) called as the 'counter-hegemonic' discourse. It offsets the Chinese interpretations and propaganda discourses on Tibet on multiple fronts. Firstly, it rejects the Chinese claim that Tibet was always a part of China. Secondly, it counters the Chinese construction of Tibet as only the western half of the Tibetan Plateau, leaving other half of the Tibetan-inhabited areas in the neighboring provinces. Thirdly, by projecting Tibetan culture as ancient, distinct and rich, it challenges the Chinese state efforts to subsume Tibetan culture as a part of larger Chinese culture or their efforts to describe Tibetan culture as backward. Fourthly, by highlighting the sufferings of Tibetan people and destruction to their cultural heritage under the Chinese rule since the 1950s, the textbook discourses question the Chinese characterization of its rule in Tibet as bringing development and happiness to Tibetan people. Therefore, by questioning the coloniality of the Chinese rule in Tibet, the primary-level social studies textbooks of Tibetan refugee schools advance a decolonial position. Decolonial or critical curriculum is considered a key for arousing the critical consciousness of people (Freire, 2005). In many ways, the schooling of Tibetan refugees represents a 'curriculum against domination' (Lissovoy, 2010) that countervails the epistemic violence of the Chinese state propaganda.

However, on the other hand, the social studies and Tibetan history textbooks also perpetuate the dominant discourse within the Tibetan society, especially when it comes to the presentation of Tibetan past prior to the Chinese invasion. Right from the ancient past, Tibet has been presented as a land of Buddhism. This is evident when the history textbook traces the origin of the Tibetan people in a Buddhist myth. Its imperial history is viewed from a Buddhist lens with its great emperors known by the title *Chos-rgyal* (religious king). By privileging Lamaist (Buddhist) narratives, it contributes to the preservation and perpetuation of the traditional power relations within the Tibetan socio-political structure. The Lamaist narratives presented in the textbooks seek to build a Tibetan cultural and historical identity that is primarily

centered around Buddhism. In doing so, it positioned Tibetan children in the diaspora as inheritors and custodians of a nation with a long history and rich Buddhist cultural heritage.

In particular, the history of Tibet presented to the middle school children is predominated by the Buddhist narrative, and this may have helped in ensuring its dominant position in Tibetan society. It is highly plausible that the Buddhicization of ancient Tibet, thereby establishing a primordial link to divinity, and rewriting of Tibet's history from a Lamaist perspective may have helped in laying the material bases for the ascendency of lama rulers and their faithful retinues to powerful socio-political positions in the Tibetan society. The school textbook narrative remained completely loyal to the traditional Lamaist historiography. By projecting Tibet as a land of Buddhism, the textbook narrative sidelines the perspectives arising from non-Buddhist and pre-Buddhist historical experiences, such as the followers of indigenous Bon faith. It also neglects the perspectives arising from other historically marginalized social locations such as women and common people (Hansen, 2003). Wittingly or otherwise, history education in the Tibetan refugee schools attempt to build students' allegiance and loyalties to the existing social order, and therefore its narrative conveniently ignored the historical experiences of marginalized groups. As such, these textbooks have not been able to benefit from the critical scholarships of Tibetan historical studies that have countervailed the Lamaist historiography with a more nuanced description of the Tibetan past (Choephel, 2015; Doney, 2015; Schaik, & Doney, 2009; Schaik, 2012).

Therefore, the history textbooks of the Tibetan refugee schools succeeded in looking 'outside' with a decolonial and subaltern position, but failed to deploy the same critical lens to look 'within'. Veiled under complex relationships and manufactured common sense, looking within requires much more intellectual commitments to unraveling power structures to which one may be a part and parcel of. As much the history textbooks of the Tibetan refugee schools countervail and destabilize the dominant Chinese narrative on Tibet, they, on the contrary, perpetuate the dominant Buddhist narrative. As such, they are also trapped within the dominant discourse. The Tibetan refugee schools employ decolonial and critical pedagogy to the extent it is advantageous to the progression of its grand narrative of Chinese oppression and Tibetan resistance. The textbooks and classroom teaching subvert the dominant Chinese colonial narrative on Tibetan history and Sino-Tibetan relationships, and reveal the colonial nature of the Chinese rule in Tibet. Yet they fail to question the traditional power structure of the Tibetan society. In stark contrast, it perpetuates a patriarchal, elitist and Lamaist narrative of the Tibetan history. Therefore, its deployment of decolonial and critical pedagogy is selective and

guided primarily by political motivations rather than by its interest in questioning power and domination. Questioning the objective 'other' is intellectually easier and politically convenient than the questioning of the subjective 'self'.

9.4 Toward new directions

School history textbooks inevitably reflect pulls and pressures of the time in which they were written. In that sense, they are not just stories about the past, but more often they tell the stories of the current times. Despite the spread of historical thinking concepts (Seixas & Morton, 2013) and disciplinary approach to the teaching of history (Seixas, 2000; VanSledgright, 2011), nationalist narrative or the collective memory approach continues to hold its sway over history education in many countries around the world (Podeh, 2000; Kumar, 2001; Vickers, 2006; Wang, 2008; VanSledgright, 2011; Carretero, Alphen, & Parellada, 2018). As such, the predominance of the nationalist narrative poses a major challenge to history education. So long as nation-state remains the primary way in which modern political arrangement is constituted, it is likely that a certain degree of national master narrative and nationalist agenda will continue to influence history education.

However, it is possible to imagine an alternative pathway that balances both nationalist and disciplinary approach and treat children as more than national subjects. While a certain degree of nationalist narrative could be deemed necessary for cementing social cohesion and performing legitimatory functions as countries engage in the project of nation-building, history teaching can simultaneously pursue certain disciplinary and intellectual goals of education. The nationalist and the disciplinary approach are not necessarily mutually incompatible in an absolutist sense. For instance, substantive knowledge (national narratives) can be taught and learned with procedural knowledge (disciplinary skills). In this regard, teachers have a tremendous role to play. Teachers who are well-acquainted with progressive pedagogies can use national historical narrative to problematize historical knowledge production and acquaint children with procedural and second-order knowledge.

The curricular and pedagogical approach to the teaching of Tibetan history represents a classic example of the failure of the postcolonial approach. Postcoloniality tends to good at revealing and subverting the western colonialism, and yet it fails to question the coloniality of non-western powers or coloniality of post-colonial states. As such, postcolonialism also engages in

colonizing project (Anand, 2018). This is what history teaching in Tibetan refugee schools seems to be doing. On the one hand, it reveals and problematizes the Chinese colonialism in Tibet, and on the other hand, it participates in the perpetuation of the traditional power structures by upholding its narrative uncritically. Its dismal lack of interest in critiquing and deconstructing the power relations of the traditional Tibetan historiography reveals that its engagement with decolonial pedagogy is half-hearted and politically-motivated rather than a genuine interest in questioning power and domination. Therefore, in the case of history teaching in the Tibetan refugee schools, the deployment of a critical approach to history education should be extended to the study of the period prior to the Chinese occupation and problematize the dominant Lamaist narrative. Certainly, this is a challenging task. As despite its evolution over the course of history, Buddhist clergy and elites still hold a dominant position in the Tibetan society. Therefore, decentering of Tibetan historical and cultural knowledge is crucial to make it more inclusive and address the widespread inequity in representation. The decolonial pedagogy it has employed to successfully dislodge or countervail the Chinese narratives about Tibet should also be extended to present a more non-partisan and inclusive account of Tibetan history. As such, history education in the Tibetan refugee schools needs to adopt a genuine interest in questioning and challenging power and domination. Thus, there is a need for both outward-looking as well as inward-looking decolonial pedagogy.

9.5 Limitations of this study

This research, which analyzes the role of history teaching in the nation-building and construction of national identity in the context of the Tibetan refugees in India, was based on critical discourse analysis of the primary-level social studies and middle school Tibetan history textbooks and thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted with the history teachers. Therefore, it was beyond the scope of this study to include a number of other factors influencing children's socialization and identity formation. For instance, the role of parents, home and the larger Tibetan refugee community are crucial to understanding national identity construction in a much more holistic and nuanced manner. Therefore, in addition to studying schooling in general and history teaching in particular, further research is required to probe into the role of home and community in national identity construction. What kind of messages do children receive at home and in the community about its past, via a number of

mediums like storytelling, oral histories, festivals and celebrations, community events, commemorations, rituals, imageries, etc.? How do children appropriate these representations and messages? Does the school narrative confirm, differ, or reject the representations children acquired from home and community? These are important questions that need further investigation. Therefore, understanding the role of home and community in shaping students' (national) identity construction is important to gain a holistic perspective on the issue.

Likewise, this research was done on textbook contents and teachers' perceptions on the teaching of history. However, in reality, not all the textbook contents are taught *in toto* as they were written. Teachers interpret textbook narratives for students, as well as the meanings are appropriated by children themselves. Therefore, the question of how children experience the teaching of history in the lived realities of classroom instruction is a crucial one. Consequently, further research is required to analyze how the production of national identity in textbooks and classroom teaching are mastered or appropriated by students. As it is evident, the focus of this research is on analyzing the production of national identity via textbook contents and teachers perceptions, but not on consumption or its appropriation by children.

As a qualitative study, this research is also limited by the subjectivities of the researcher's interpretations and positionalities. The fact or the data doesn't speak for itself. It is the researcher who makes the data talk by posing questions on them and by providing interpretations using rule-bound linguistic and narrative structures. Therefore, subjectivities and positionalities influence the selection of data, the kinds of questions posed on them, and the meanings and interpretations provided on them.

On the whole, research on history teaching (both via formal and informal education) within refugee communities is limited. The bulk of extant research on history teaching and its role in the nation-building were carried out in the context of large nation-states. As such, the following questions need further research. How are refugees received and perceived in the host countries, and what kinds of educational opportunities are available to them in different contexts? How is their national and ethnic identity communicated and transmitted to the younger generation? What differences and commonalities can be observed between various refugee communities on the basis of different socio-political backgrounds and contexts? Therefore, further research is required to investigate the teaching of native history (if any) and its role in the national, cultural and ethnic identity construction amongst refugee communities, whose circumstances significantly differ from one context to another.

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TCV School, Chauntra: http://tcvchauntra.org

TCV School, Gopalpur: http://www.gopalpur.org

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11 APPENDICES

11.1 Lesson observation checklists

Checklists	Observation notes
1. What are the goals of the lesson?	
2. What approaches or methods are used to achieve these goals?	
3. To what extent are the attempts successful? Are the learning outcomes visible?	
4. To what extent is the lesson based on information given in the textbook?	
5. Does the teacher bring new information or perspectives that are not mentioned in the textbook?	
6. Does the teacher use materials beside the textbook (like handout or audiovisual materials, etc.)?	
7. Are there opportunities for students to give interpretations, express their opinions, & become participants in the process of constructing historical knowledge?	
8. Are there opportunities for students to work in small groups & become active in the process of learning?	
9. Does the teacher present information or knowledge given in the textbook as a finished product/truth?	
10. Is the lesson based primarily on a master narrative? Are the perspectives or interpretations given in the textbooks challenged?	
11. Is there multiplicity of perspectives in the lesson taught?	

11.2 Semi-structured interview guiding questions

Part A. Perception of teaching goals

A1. Generally, what are some of the major goals of teaching history of Tibet that is highlighted in the curriculum document or goals that you feel are important?
A2. What are some of the specific objectives that you were trying to achieve with the lesson you have taught?
A3. Do you think constructing a sense of Tibetan national identity/consciousness is an important goal of history education? Why or why not? (*Mi-rigs kyi ngo-bo dang 'dus shes*).
A4. Since this is a refugee school, do you think teaching of Tibetan history has a special significance or role? Or Why is it important that the Tibetan refugee children need to know about the history of Tibet?
A5. Do you think the teaching of Tibetan history has any role to play in the Tibetan freedom struggle?

Part B. Perception on textbook contents

B1. What is your view on the historical knowledge presented in the current textbooks?
B2. Do you wish to see some new information or perspectives added to the textbook? Why or why not? Can you give some examples? (*Shes-bya gsar-pa dang 'dod phyogs sam blta-tshul gsar-pa*).
B3. Do you usually prepare your lessons primarily on the basis of textbook contents, or do you use other resources?

Part C. Approach to pedagogy

C1. Can you explain to me some of the teaching methods that you use frequently? Or your general approaches to teaching of history?
C2. How are students' learning outcomes in history subject assessed? What kinds of assessment tools (test, project, tasks, group work, etc.) are used during the formative and summative assessments?
C3. Specific questions from the lesson observation.

11.3 Coding framework

Theme	Code name	Code definition	Subcodes	Subcode definition	Example
Teaching goals	National building goals	When the teaching of social studies and history is geared towards implanting national values and consolidating bond between citizen and homeland.	Nurturing spokesperson for Tibet	When the teaching of Tibetan social studies/history is seen as important for nurturing young Tibetans who would speak for the Tibetan cause in India or abroad, who would explain Tibet and its history/culture, and especially the Chinese invasion and the current situation to an international audience.	
			Proving Tibetan independence	When the teaching of Tibetan social studies/history is meant for letting children know how Tibet was an independent country prior to 1950s.	
			Promoting Tibetan language	When the teaching of Tibetan social studies/history is meant for promoting and preserving Tibetan language. Here language is seen as a cultural artifact.	Preservation and promotion of Tibetan language as an important component of Tibetan identity.
			Fostering a sense of nationalism	When the teaching of Tibetan social studies/history is regarded as crucial for promoting a sense of nationalism, and a sense of worth and pride in one's membership in a nationality.	
			Acquiring Tibetan cultural/historical knowledge	When the teaching of Tibetan social studies/history is regarded as a medium for communicating Tibetan cultural and historical knowledge to the children. Cultural literacy, core knowledge.	

			Learning lessons from the past	When the teaching of Tibetan social studies/history is deemed important for learning lessons from the past to guide the future.	
			Fostering a sense of national identity	When the teaching of Tibetan social studies/history is meant for fostering a sense of national identity.	
			Past as source of inspiration	When the teaching of Tibetan social studies/history is seen as important for inspiring students.	Chosen glories, victor narrative
			Providing political education	When the teaching of Tibetan social studies/history is seen as important for creating awareness about the political conditions, especially vis-a-vis Chinese rule, and nurturing freedom fighters and spokesperson for Tibet.	
	Academic goals	When the teaching of history is focused on the development of historical literacy (critical thinking, source analysis, etc.) and acquisition of more balanced body of knowledge.	Promoting historical literacy	When the teaching of Tibetan social studies/history is aimed at nurturing historical literacy - intellectual skills and wherewithal of historian's craft - critical thinking, analysis of wide range of sources, taking stock of multiple perspectives, etc.	Focus on higher order thinking skills.
			Promoting language competency	When promotion of literacy via social studies or history is seen as important for knowledge acquisition and fostering deeper understanding. Here language is seen as an intellectual tool.	Language as an intellectual tool for meaning making, for accessing a range of subject contents, as the media of all learning.
			Acquiring content/ conceptual knowledge	When the teaching of social studies and history is aimed at the acquisition of a knowledge-base in	Topics such as longitude and latitude, physiographic divisions,

				these disciplines which is generic in its nature.	democracy, United Nations, etc.
Perceptions on textbook content	Critical of textbook	When the teacher expresses critical view on the textbook.	Critical of content & perspective	When the teacher doesn't agree with some of the perspectives or the viewpoints presented or selection of certain contents in the textbook.	
			Critical of language use	When the teacher is critical of the difficulty level of the text, compositional style, and vocabularies of the textbook.	
			Critical of design, layout, & edition	When the teacher is critical of the textbook design, size, layout, visuality, and its edition.	
			Critical of content adequacy	When the teacher is critical of content load or inadequacy of the content.	
	Faithful to the textbook narrative		Faithful to the textbook narrative	When the teacher predominantly agrees with the textbook content and the perspectives presented in it.	
	Centrality of textbook		Textbook-based teaching	When the teaching is primarily based on what is given in the textbook.	
			Multiple-source based teaching	When the teaching is based on multiple sources, including the textbook.	
			Use textbook critically	When the teacher uses textbook contents critically and selectively.	
Pedagogical orientation	Pedagogical approach		Learner-centered teaching	When the classroom teaching involves active engagement of the students in the learning processes.	Use of discussion, project-based learning, authentic activities, open-ended questions that stimulate children's thinking, etc.

			Teacher-centered teaching	When the classroom is largely dominated by the teacher while the students remained passive.	Lecturing, teacher talk, lack of learning materials, monologue.
	Assessment practices		Test-based assessment	When students' learning outcomes are assessed primarily via tests/exams.	
			Diverse assessment strategies	When students' learning outcomes are assessed with the help of diverse assessment strategies including tests.	use of assignment, homework, class work, project, group work, test, etc. as the basis for assessing students' learning outcomes.
Narrative structure	Narrative structure		Victim narrative	When the historical narrative presented in the textbook or classroom teaching highlights certain chosen traumas that the group underwent in the past.	
			Victor narrative	When the historical narrative presented in the textbook or classroom teaching highlights certain chosen glories that the group achieved in the past.	
Nation-building challenges	Nation-building challenges		Nation-building challenges	When the teacher expresses difficulties, tensions, or challenges in realizing their nation-building goals due to certain factors generally beyond their control.	

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