

India's Stance on Tibetan Refugees

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- Indian government has planned to shun Tibetan community in India, to ease tensions with China.

\n

- Indian foreign policy establishment should reassess seeing the Tibetan population in India as a strategic tool.

\n

\n\n

What are the recent irritants in India-China ties?

\n\n

\n

- India-China ties have deteriorated over the past few years.

\n

- These have notably been for a number of reasons unconnected to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan population in India.

\n

- It includes border incursions, including the standoff at the part of Doklam claimed by Bhutan.

\n

- India's strategic shift in line with the U.S.'s Indo-Pacific pivot that targets China is another irritant.

\n

- China constructs 'deep-pocket' inroads into South Asia.

\n

- Besides, the differences on the international stage, including over the India's Nuclear Suppliers Group membership and terror designations to Masood Azhar are some of the other concerns.

\n

\n\n

What is India's plan in this regard?

\n\n

- \n
- India has planned to stay away from events that commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Dalai Lama's 1959 flight to India.
- \n
- This has led to the cancellation of several public events related to Tibet.
- \n
- This is seen as a bigger error as the government has planned to use Tibetan refugees in India as a card in its relations with China.
- \n

\n\n

What are the concerns of Tibetan population?

\n\n

- \n
- China is investing huge sums of money for infrastructure investments in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) albeit at the cost of its **environment**.
- \n
- Tibet's downtown Lhasa has all the trappings of a modern city.
- \n
- But this is by destroying the unique Tibetan **culture** and mainstreaming Chinese culture into the region.
- \n
- These are notably leading to significant **demographic shift**.
- \n
- The outflow of refugees from Tibet has been curtailed by the Chinese authorities by convincing Nepal to close a popular route.
- \n
- Many third generation Tibetans settled in India have no idea about their **motherland** and India's attitude towards giving them citizenship has been stern.
- \n
- In recent times there is also a rise in the younger and more radical "Rangtsen" (**freedom**) **groups** demanding an independent Tibet.
- \n
- The primary concern that looms over the community is that of its **future leadership**.
- \n
- This is because the present Dalai Lama is getting older and there is no firm announcement about their next leader.
- \n

\n\n

What should India do?

\n\n

\n

- India must refresh its overseas China policy and its domestic engagement with the Tibetan community

\n

- India needs to take a proactive policy that takes into account these new realities.

\n

- There is an urgent need for community outreach, surveys and a referendum.

\n

- If necessary, mapping what the Tibetan community in India wants in its future could be considered.

\n

- In this context, India must reconsider its citizenship laws, specially for those who want to make India a permanent home.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Indian Express, The Hindu

\n

