

**The Curious Case of Nationalism and Female Subjectivities:
A Study of Exiled Tibetan Women in India**

Abstract

Gender and Nationalism inextricably have been linked together for long. The Tibetan community in exile has been perceived as a model refugee community on various parameters and gender happens to be one of them. The trajectory of women's involvement as well as empowerment in exile builds itself upon the epithet that Tibetan women in the traditional Tibet have had the highest status of women in Asia. From the active role in rehabilitation to their representation in the exiled Tibetan Parliament. Tibetan women have carved a niche for themselves. To such an extent, that Tibetan men can be found saying that "there isn't really anything for Tibetan women to complain about in terms of gender equality because Tibetan women have it so much better than women from other communities" (Kaysang 2015). But the rise of movements like #BreakTheSilence, Tibetan women in exile are coming forward and raising issues that truly matter to them. Thereby suggesting the need to bust the myth of Shangri-La enveloping the social dynamics of a community. The question here is not about whether Tibetans treat women better than Chinese or not but it's about for how long is the feminist development in sync with the nationalist project and is able to gather popular support. Essentially in the context of Exiled Tibetans asking what happens when Tibetan women loyal to their community desire not to toe the line? Is the fate of their subjective desire met with hostility? Or are they able to find a space to voice their concerns amidst the ongoing movement? In the light of these assertions this paper studies the intricate relationship between nationalism and how feminist identities develop, transform and change during the course of nationalist struggle.

Keywords: Post-conflict societies; Gender; Nationalism; Exile; Tibetan Women in Exile, Tibetan Refugees; Gender Based Violence; COVID-19