

Integration and Satisfaction Among Resettled Bhutanese in Australia

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ABSTRACT

Bhutan's population design out of unfounded fears led to eviction of over 20% of the country's population, mostly Nepali speakers. It was not an ethnic cleansing. It was a Bhutan's best effort to avoid democracy and respect human rights. The efforts to return to Bhutan failed. Most of them are now resettled in developed countries. The data included in this article were driven from primary research conducted by the author in August 2018. It was found that the lives of the resettled Bhutanese people have germinated with new hopes and new vision for future. They have embraced their new country and connection with Bhutan is gradually eroding. The connection would have benefited both resettled Bhutanese and Bhutan. This paper provides basic background of the Bhutanese refugee issue but focuses primarily on integration of resettled Bhutanese in South Australia, their psychological attachments with Bhutan and Australia, and the way they are coping up with language challenges, cultural shocks and identity issues.

Keywords: Discrimination, equality, happiness, immigration, integration, refugees

Introduction

The Bhutanese refugees qualify for refugee status under the Refugee Convention because they are the 'people, whose fear of persecution is based on reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.' They were forced out of Bhutan with unfounded fears. A multicultural Bhutan feared democracy, liberty and globalisation but emphasised tradition or an ethnic fundamentalism (Waters, 1994). The ruling elites in Bhutan (Ngalops), in denying the reality of being a multi-ethnic society, started to

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strengthen their status first with the change of the Nationality Law 1958 in 1985. Exclusive census was carried out in the South in 1988, *Driglam Namzha* was introduced, One Nation One People Policy promulgated and terrorism charges were laid against those who demonstrated in 1990 demanding democracy and human rights.

This author is associated with Bhutanese refugee issue since 1990 when Amnesty International London, asked the Nara Group 45 (Japan) to write cards on behalf of Ratan Gazmere, a prisoner of conscience. As the chairperson of Amnesty Nara, this author mobilised people to write hundreds of cards to the Bhutanese King, foreign minister and home minister and Bhutan's consulate in Geneva. Amnesty Nara and Amnesty Schwalbach (Germany) jointly worked for the release of Gazmere who was declared prisoner of month in September 1991. Gazmere was released on December 7 of the same year after spending more than two years in prison. Author met Gazmere in March 1993 when he had established Association of Human Rights Activists (AHURA) Bhutan and started campaigning for refugee repatriation from his base in south eastern Nepal. On return to Japan, this author established the refugee support group AHURA Japan with Jeannie Donald, a former English teacher in Bhutan and a member of Amnesty Nara, Mitsu Evang on July 7, 1993². AHURA Japan contributed financial assistance for transport and treatment of more than 100 torture victims from camps to a Centre for Victims of Torture (CVICT) treatment center in Kathmandu, scholarships for refugee student for higher studies, incentives for teachers for distant education (universities in Nepal and India) and educational goods to Caritas Nepal (Kodama, 2004).

Kudunabari Incident

Author read about the incident in *Kuensel* dated December 22, 2003. Refugees got angry when the Bhutanese members of the verification team placed conditions for their repatriation. The Bhutanese newspaper claimed the angry refugees burned the building with Bhutanese verification team inside. Days later arriving in Nepal, this author met

² July 7 was chosen as an appropriate date as it coincided with the date on which People's Forum for Human Rights was established by T N Rizal

with a French cameraman and his assistant who verified that the house was not burned. Author saw the visual footage of the cameramen where a few youths seen pelting stones at the fleeing vehicles of the Bhutanese verification team members. Then Foreign Minister Khandu Wangchuck reported the incident to the 82nd National Assembly session in July 2004. (The Story of Bhutanese Refugees, 2010).

According to incident witness Khem Khanal from Khudanabari Camp, who now lives in Melbourne, gave a different story: “UNHCR organised this meeting with JVT team, Nepal government representatives, Refugee Coordination Unit (RCU) and refugee representatives. During the meeting Bhutanese officials tagged refugees as anti-national, criminals and categorised a 7-year-old girl as terrorist. When the refugees asked questions, Bhutanese officials ignored their questions and tried to escape. Then some of the youths pelted stones to their cars. Nepal Police escorted Bhutanese officials to safety. Two days later UNHCR and RCU said, it was a mistake of the Bhutanese officials. Even though many refugees were interrogated, no one was arrested. The news from *Kuensel* that there was a fire in the camp is completely wrong. After that the verification process did not proceed further” (Personal interview, 2020).

Story of Bhutan Population

History of Bhutan`s population is inconsistent. Inaccurate population data was presented when Bhutan joined Colombo Plan. When Bhutan joined the United Nations, they declared country`s population to be over a million (Rustomji,1978). The population figure continued to increase, and 1994 Bhutan told the world that its population was 1.765 million (Japan Foreign Ministry, 1996), but two years later, Bhutan announced the population to be 765,000 (Japan Foreign Ministry, 1998).

In August 1998, a student from Tokyo University asked Bhutan`s National Statistics Bureau to provide data about Bhutan`s population based on 1988 census. He was told that there is no data (Ringhofer, 2000). To put it correctly, even after the 1988 census, Bhutan continued to project the national population by estimates. The estimates lacked ethnic composition. This concludes the eviction of nearly 20% of the

population was based on perceived fear of fabricated population increase, not based on factual data. Democratic movement in Nepal had political influenced in Bhutan and rulers perceived threat to their status quo. The often-cited danger of cultural identity loss of the Ngalops is the other excuse to validate eviction.

Together with other factors, the enforcement of One Nation One People Policy in 1989 resulted into some protest in southern Bhutan. Nobody knows how many criminal acts were committed in southern Bhutan by the government forces, guerilla groups from India and Lhotshampas (Giri, 2014). This author made 15 visits to the Bhutanese refugee camps and interviewed them. Jeannie Donald accompanied in many of these visits. Following resettlement, this author visited these refugees again in Australia. All these interviews points to one thing – Bhutanese refugee issue is not an ethnic cleansing. Presence of non-Lhotshampas among the refugee community while many Lhotshampas still living in Bhutan supports this theory. It is an issue of democracy and human rights. The term ‘ethnic conflict’ is often loosely, to describe a wide range of intrastate conflicts that are not, in fact, ethnic in character (Brown, 1999). This is not the case in Bhutan.

Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH

The Royal Government of Bhutan was seeking a face saver. This became a necessity following demonstration in eastern Bhutan in 1997-98. Former Prime Minister Jigmi Y. Thinley had already started the mission to present Gross National Happiness (GNH) as a shield to protect Bhutan from further criticism. Centre for Bhutan Studies (CBS) was established in 1998 and it launched the aggressive propaganda to seek international attention on GNH. Other than a handful of individuals in Thimphu, none in Bhutan knew about GNH, despite the claims it was introduced by King Jigme Singye in 1972. The purpose has been to establish a society preserving the culture based on Buddhist belief. GNH does not talk about coexistence of multiple culture, other ethnic groups, treatment of minorities and respect for other faiths.

In a sense, GNH is a kind of assimilation policy targeted at the nonconformist section of the population (Ura, 2006) and to divert the

focus of the international community away from undemocratic nature of the governance. Though government’s survey in 2005 said 96.8% of the Bhutanese were very happy or happy and only 3.3 percent were unhappy (Royal Government of Bhutan, 2005), the index had deteriorated since then. Two more surveys were carried out in 2010 (CBS, 2012) and 2015 (CBS, 2016) which provided more realistic picture of the Bhutanese population and their happiness rating (Table 1). The 2005 survey portrayed more happier Bhutanese due to the fact that respondents feared repercussion if they failed to abide the government version of the story in absence of legal instruments guaranteeing freedom of speech.

Table 1. Categories of GNH Index, Headcounts and Sufficiency (all figures in %)

	Sufficiency	GNH 2010		GNH 2015	
		Population	Average sufficiency	Population	Average sufficiency
Deeply happy	77-100	8.3	81.5	8.4	80.90
Extensively happy	66-76	32.6	70.7	35.0	70.8
Narrowly happy	50-65	48.7	59.1	47.9	59.1
Unhappy	0-49	10.4	44.7	8.8	45.2

Source: A compass towards a just and harmonious society. 2015 GNH Survey Report, CBS, 2016 p59

In 2010, 59.1% stated they are unhappy or narrowly happy, which declined in 2015 to 56.7%. The surveys have not spelled out the reasons for decline in happiness but if governance is a reason behind, it has been reflected in the last three elections. And if legal guarantee of freedom of speech is the reason for people to speak the reality, Bhutanese people deserve such a quick democratic maturity. Now it’s time the world question Bhutan’s ‘trustworthy history and policy’ (Munro, 2016).

Not only the national surveys, but international happiness studies also show the continued decline of happiness in Bhutan. The World Happiness Reports show the successive decline of happiness index – 79 in 2015 (SDSN, 2015), to 97 in 2017 (SDSN, 2017) and then to 95 in 2019

(SDSN, 2019). *Daily Bhutan* points out that discrepancy of outcomes from national survey and World Happiness Report is due to the criteria and methodology used (Daily Bhutan, 2019).

Happiness Among the Resettled Bhutanese

Resettlement of Bhutanese refugees in Australia began in 2008 and some 6,000 (Australian Government, 2018) had resettled in Australia. About half of them live in Adelaide (Fujibayashi, 2017). This author visited Adelaide seven times, Melbourne five times, Sydney four and Canberra three times between 2013 and 2018 as part of this research.

Demography of the Respondents

Personal interviews were conducted in August 2018. Most interviewees lived in Salisbury– the most concentrated settlement of Bhutanese Australians at the time this research was conducted. I had known some of these respondents while others were introduced through my acquaintances. A total of 100 individuals participated (Table 2). Interpreters were used for those with English difficulties. Participation was voluntary and privacy was assured. Identifiable personal details were not recorded. Of these respondents, 75% were born in southern Bhutan while 25% were born in refugee camps in Nepal. Of them seven had been government employees back in Bhutan while one was running a private business. The following few tables show the composition of the survey participants. There were 69 Hindus, 21 Buddhists, 5 Kirats, 3 Christians and 2 non-religious.

Table 2. Birth place of the respondents

Birth place	Male	Female	Total
Samchi³	14	8	22
Dagana	14	6	20
Sarbhang⁴	11	3	14
Chirang⁵	14	2	15
Samdrup Jongkhar	1	1	2
NA	1	0	1

³ Samchi was renamed Samtse in late 1990s

⁴ Sarbhang was renamed Sarpang in late 1990s

⁵ Chirang was renamed Tsirang in late 1990s

Subtotal (Bhutan)	55	20	75
Beldangi 1	5	4	9
Beldangi 2	5	1	6
Beldangi 3	2	3	4
Sanischare	3	0	3
Timai	1	0	1
Khudunabari	0	1	1
Maidhar	0	1	1
Subtotal (Nepal)	17	8	25
Total	72	28	100

Table 3. Age at arrival in Australia

Age	M	F	Total
~10	2	1	3
11-15	8	4	12
16-20	13	2	15
21-25	12	2	14
26-30	7	3	10
31-35	5	1	6
36-40	7	5	12
41-45	4	4	8
46-50	4	3	7
51-55	6	1	7
56-60	3	0	3
61-65	0	1	1
66+	1	0	1
NA	0	1	1
Total	72	28	100

Outcome

Table 4. Overall degree of feeling of integration

Independence	M	F	Total
100%	31	13	44
95%	5	2	7
90%	7	4	11
85%	2	0	2
80%	10	2	12
75%	6	0	6
70%	3	2	5
65%	1	0	1
60%	2	2	4
55%	1	0	1

50%	3	1	4
40%	0	1	1
NA	1	1	2
Total	72	28	100

Table 5. Satisfaction with housing conditions

	Total	Very	More or less	Diff to say	Not satisfied	Not at all	NA
Own house	61	54	6	1	0	0	0
Rental	36	17	14	0	4	0	1
House							
Apartment	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Total	99	73	20	1	4	0	1

Females felt more integrated to Australian community compared to males (Table 6). The high rate of satisfaction among families living in their own house can be credited to the housing policy of the Government of South Australia, which enables many refugees to acquire own houses thorough concessional credit mechanism. Those living in rent have also expressed their satisfaction on housing conditions (AHURI, 2014, p.26-28).

Table 6. Integration feeling by arrival year

Year	Integration feeling	Age (o=own house/ r=rental)
2008 (9M, 1F)	100% 4M	23(o) 27(o) 28(r) 30(o)
	90% 1M	39(o)
	75% 1M	67(o)
	70% 1M	65(o)
	50% 2M 1F	59(o) 60(o), 25(o)
2009 (10M, 7F)	100% 4M, 3F	26(o) 26(r) 30(o) 64(o)
		32(o) 48(r) 52(o)
	90% 1M 1F	54(r), 52(r)
	80% 1M 1F	28(o), 54(o)
	70% 2M 1F	40(o) 28(o), 22(r)
	60% 1M 1F	40(o), 60(o)
2010 (14M, 1F)	50% 1M	57(o)
	100% 8M	21(o) 25(o) 29(o) 31(o)
		33(o) 35(o) 46(o) 48(o)

	95% 2M	28(o) 28(o)
	80% 1M	62(o)
	75% 1M	34(o)
	65% 1M	46(o)
	60% 1M 1F	31(o), 38(o)
2011 (9M, 2F)	100% 3 M 1F	18(o) 24(r) 41(r), 47(r)
	95% 1M	31(o)
	80% 3M 1F	30(o) 31(o) 33(o), 54(o)
	75% 2M	59(o) 20(r)
2012 (8M, 5F)	100% 2M 2F	30(o) 51(o), 28(o) 35(r)
	95% 1M	32(r)
	90% 2M 2F	58(r) 84(o), 17(r) 71(o)
	80% 1M	50(r)
	75% 1M	31(r)
	70% 1F	36(o)
	55% 1 M	35(r)
2013 (11M, 9F)	100% 4M5F	21(r) 22(o) (25(o) 46(o),18(o) 20(o) 37(r) 40(o) 54(r)
	95% 1M2F	26@, 18(r) 25(o)
	90% 2M1F	42(o) (44(r),19(r)
	85% 2M	13(r) 49(r)
	80% 1M	58(o)
	75% 1M	29(r)
	40% 1F	21(o)
2014 (3M)	100% 1M	23(r)
	90% 1M	48(r)
	80% 1M	35(o)
2015 (4M, 2F)	100% 2M 2F	18(r) 21(r), 37(r) 52 (o)
	95% 1M	29(r)
	80% 1M	54(o)
2016 (3M, 1F)	100% 3M	21(r) 40(r) 58(r)
	40% 1F	NA
2017 (1M)	80% 1M	36(r)

Young respondents, mostly under 30 years, who were born in Nepal said they feel more being Australian than Bhutanese. However, these youngsters still feel the need to link their identity with their parents' nationality – Bhutanese. Few youngsters also expressed they missed their life in refugee camps and find integrating with the Australian society a challenge.

Senior members of the community feel more Bhutanese than Australian. And this is high among those who were gainfully employed back in Bhutan. People with special needs feel they are integrated well. Integration feeling among those who come early is higher but not in some elderly people compared to those who came later (See Table 6 and 7). They cite reasons such as difficulties in finding jobs, concern of acculturation and loss of language. Of the 28 female respondents, 21 were not in gainful employment. Despite this, they felt more integrated to the Australian way of life.

Table 7. Arrival year and integration feeling (in %)

Year of arrival	80%-100%	Under 80%
2008-09	59	41
2010-11	79	21
2012-13	86	14
2014-17	100	

There were 13 respondents who arrived Adelaide under resettlement between 2014 and 2017. Six of them were over 40 years and were living in rental accommodation. The possible reason for their higher integration feeling could be family reunion or losing hope of repatriation. Elderly population who arrived early for settlement and have owned house were not so happy being in Australia.

Table 8. Connection between integration feeling and employment

Job type	Number of respondents
Carers	6
Casuals	14
Part time	4
Unemployed	12
Full time	62
No Data	2

Younger population entered workforce quicker compared to those in 50s or early 60s. Respondents in 50s and 60s faced challenges of language, culture and acceptance of their prior learning to enter the workforce.

Employed respondents felt being more Australian compared to those

who were not. Full time employed felt more integrated compared to those who were casually employed. This feeling is even lower among those employed part time. Over 52% of those permanently employed responded they feel 100% integrated. Others felt their experiences of bullying and racism in workplace as the reason for not being fully integrated. And almost 90% of those employed were aged 20s or 30s. A small number feel the difficult tests required for getting citizenship and language barrier are some of the factors affecting their integration into Australian society.

Sixty percent of the respondents said their gainful employment helped them to some degree for integration. Professionals such as nurses and social workers were more satisfied with their jobs compared to those who work in food processing, interpreting or care for family members. Males are more satisfied with their job compared to female and respondents with better English do feel more integrated compared to those having lower English language command.

Table 9. English proficiency of the respondents

Proficiency	Number of respondents
Very good	15
Quite good	46
No problem for communications	19
Not so good	8
Bad	5
Not rated	7

Table 9.1. Breakdown of the respondents with very good English proficiency

Gender	Age	Arrival	Integration feel (%)	Job type	Rate integration policy
M	40	2009	60	Part Time	Very good
M	34	2010	75	Full time	Very good
M	13	2013	85	Student	NA
M	18	2013	100	Student	Good
M	18	2013	95	Student	Good
F	22	2013	70	Student	Good
M	28	2013	100	Full time	Very good
M	30	2013	100	Full time	Good

F	32	2013	100	Full time	Very good
M	33	2013	100	Full time	Very good
F	52	2013	100	Full time	Very good
M	57	2013	50	Full time	Very good
F	60	2013	60	Part Time	Good
M	46	2015	100	Full time	Very good
M	59	2015	75	Full time	Very good

Though all proficient English speakers feel positive about integration policy but not all feel they are well integrated (Table 9.1). This could be the result of positive stories they were inculcated during orientation before resettlement which gradually erode as they actually experience the Australian society. The story and reality might be different.

Table 9.2. Breakdown of the respondents with quite good English proficiency

Gender	Age	Arrival	Job type	Integration feel (%)	Rate integration policy
M	23	2008	Casual	100	Very good
M	27	2008	Full Time	100	Difficult to say
M	39	2008	Full Time	90	Good
F	25	2008	Full Time	50	NA
M	59	2008	NA	50	Good
M	26	2009	NA	100	Good
M	28	2009	NA	80	Not so good
M	54	2009	Full Time	90	Good
M	64	2009	Casual	100	Good
M	30	2009	Full Time	100	Very good
M	28	2009	Full Time	70	Good
M	31	2010	Full Time	60	Good
M	35	2010	Full time	100	Very good
M	28	2010	Full time	95	Very good
M	31	2010	Full time	100	Good
F	38	2010	Full time	60	Difficult to say
M	62	2010	Full time	80	Good
M	48	2010	Part time	100	Good
M	28	2010	Full time	95	Very good
M	21	2010	Unemployed	100	Very good
M	29	2010	Full time	100	Very good
M	25	2010	Casual	100	Difficult to say
M	46	2010	Full time	65	Good

M	18	2011	Trainee	100	Difficult to say
M	24	2011	Trainee	100	Good
M	31	2011	Full time	NA	Good
M	33	2011	Part time	NA	Good
M	42	2012	NA	90	NA
M	36	2012	Carer	95	Good
M	32	2012	Carer	95	Good
M	50	2012	Full Time	80	Good
M	17	2012	Trainee	90	Very good
M	30	2012	Full Time	100	Very good
M	28	2012	Full Time	100	Good
F	35	2012	Casual	55	Good
M	25	2013	Casual	95	Good
M	21	2013	Full time	100	Good
F	21	2013	Unemployed	40	Good
M	25	2013	Casual	100	Difficult to say
F	19	2013	Unemployed	90	Good
M	26	2013	Casual	95	Difficult to say
M	44	2013	Carer	90	Good
F	17	2013	Trainee	100	Difficult to say
F	20	2013	NA	100	Difficult to say
M	23	2014	Trainee	100	Difficult to say
M	48	2014	Unemployed	90	Good
M	35	2014	Unemployed	80	Difficult to say
M	54	2015	Full time	NA	Very good
M	30	2016	Casual	80	Difficult to say
M	40	2016	Unemployed	100	Good

Out of 13 with poor English proficiency, 9 of them were females (Table 9.1). While in camps, females were traditionally meant for domestic works while boys attend schools. The gender gap created by education system in camps is now affecting the females in integration. Life in camps were dominated by traditional role of women and getting married at an early age, which resulted in dramatic fall of girls' percentage after eighth grade (Ringhofer, 2002).

Table 9.3. Breakdown of the respondents with not so good English proficiency

Gender	Age	Arrival	Job type	Integration feel (%)	Rate Integration policy
M	60	2008	Unemployed	50	Difficult to say

F	48	2009	Unemployed	100	Very good
F	54	2009	Carer	80	Very good
F	47	2011	Unemployed	100	Good
F	54	2011	Unemployed	80	Good
F	51	2012	Unemployed	100	Good
F	37	2013	Unemployed	100	NA
M	58	2013	Unemployed	80	NA

Table 9.4. Breakdown of the respondents with bad English proficiency

Gender	Age	Arrival	Job type	Integration feel (%)	Rate Integration policy
F	71	2012	Unemployed	90	NA
M	84	2012	Unemployed	90	Very good
F	54	2013	Unemployed	100	Good
F	40	2016	Unemployed	NA	Difficult to say
M	58	2016	Unemployed	100	NA

Support System

Table 10. Australian immigration and integration policy in relation to Health and Pension care

Degree of feeling	Integration Policy	Health System	Pension system
Very good	24	51	17
Good	54	43	41
Difficult to say	14	2	32
Not so good	1	3	7
Not good at all	0	1	2
NA	7	1	2
Others	0	0	1

A total of 78% respondents rated the Australian integration policy very good or good. The health system got an even better acknowledgment with 94 % whereas only 58% rated pension system to be very good or good.

Over 65% rated social service and support system for new arrivals to be good or very good. Only 8 respondents felt it was not good. These respondents highlighted the importance of social support provided by Australian Refugee Association (ARA), BAASA or Bhutanese Ethnic

School. Those who rated social support as difficult to say or not good, cited reasons such as difficulty in accessing government forms and filling them, lack of information in their language, not adequate support at Centrelink offices and not enough hours to learn English (Koirala, 2016).

Education and Languages

Family structure is one important aspect to learn language and pursue education. Let's look at the family composition of the respondents. These 100 respondents were from 79 households, 35 of them were under 30s, not married but still living with parents. Some in 40s were still unmarried. With only one exception all of the respondents were living in extended family. All of them use Nepali as their primary language for family communication.

Out of 79, 21 households had no school-aged children. While children from 55 families attend formal schools, only children from 12 families attend Nepali classes run by Bhutanese Ethnic School. Kids from one family attend language classes run by SA Government. The language classes within the formal education system had not become popular in the community during the research period.

Absence of regular Nepali education means younger population lack Nepali proficiency. This created communication barriers within the family. Only 2 grandfathers admitted communication problems, it seems that grandparents in their late 50s and 60s are already facing difficulties in communicating with their grandchildren. The language barrier is posing challenges for grandparents to pass their stories of struggle and life in Bhutan/Nepal to grandchildren. Telling stories is an important facet towards preservation of culture and history.

Community Cohesion

Living in closed community is a Bhutanese culture. Regular contact and communication are important. 69% of the respondents say they interact with community members 'very often' while other 5% said they contact often. 85% of Buddhist responded their community interaction as either

very often or often while 71% of Hindus responded as very often or often. 100% Kirats responded very often and Christians did not respond. Volunteering within the community groups forms the basis of regular community interaction. 55% of the respondents said they volunteer for community activities of Bhutanese Australian Association of South Australia (BAASA), Bhutanese Ethnic School, Punya Foundation, Association of Himalayan Buddhist of South Australia (AHIMBSA), Adelaide Dragon Soccer Club, Radio Pahichan, Bhutan Martyrs Memorial and Torture Survival Society (BHUMMATSS), Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) and Didi Group. Others volunteer in City Council or other local non-profit groups. 80% responded attending inter-cultural events because they feel volunteering in such events is important to preserve culture, continuing rituals, teach language to children and educate younger generations about history.

It was found that 15% felt being discriminated – 4% in event participation, 3% from Hindu Brahmins and the rest did not specify. In contrast, only 8% responded, they were discriminated while back in refugee camps. However, many hesitated to respond to questions related to caste-based discrimination. Among those who responded, most feel education or legal instruments are required to address the problem. A researcher told this author personally she did not find any forms of discrimination within the Bhutanese community in Adelaide. She has not addressed this issue in her research (Tine, 2017). The fact is caste-based discrimination has become stronger among the senior members of the community following resettlement. Bhanu Adhikari, who was denied Hindu rituals for speaking against discriminatory practices, has lodged Australia's first legal complaint of discrimination on the basis of caste, in the Equal Opportunity Commission of South Australia (Knox, undated). Younger respondents feel the issue would get resolved as time lapse and people learn more about equality and Australian values. Asked by the author, two Hindu priests (in Melbourne) said they were ready to conduct rituals for lower caste families if they receive assurance from community elders that they would not be discriminated following the event.

Connection with Bhutan

Bhutan has not formally allowed the resettled Bhutanese to visit the country. A few have travelled informally through southern border, with their relatives inside Bhutan. 91% of the respondents were interested in travelling to Bhutan as tourists while 5% said they were not interested. 2% mentioned they would love to return if political environment and human rights situation improved.

Conclusion

The integration of former Bhutanese refugees in Australia is gradually taking a shape. The longer they live here, the more they feel at home. The younger generation is adopting Australia as their home, quicker than their parents. Language barriers, employment challenges and culture differences are some of the areas that required attention to help them integrate better. The connection with Bhutan is gradually eroding and if Bhutan failed to open borders, it will fail to reap the economic and technical benefits these resettled Bhutan can bring to their previous country. The resettled Bhutanese are now not threat to Bhutan's political ambitions but assets to economic and technological advancement. They have already contributed huge to Australia.

Within the resettled Bhutanese community, intra-community and inter community bond is becoming stronger through public events. Discriminatory social hierarchy within the Hindu culture is one small factor hindering the intra-community bond which need immediate attention.

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