

The Chinese Community of Kolkata: A Case Study on Social Geography

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Abstract: The Chinese community of a Kolkata has been settled in India for more than two centuries. The relationship to the host society and to the authorities, particularly the dominant host culture, has gone through different stages with different forms. It is important to examine the lives, traditions or heritage and outlook of the Chinese community to understand its development and its changing character. This study argues that the impact established by the Chinese community of Kolkata particularly on their occupational specializations is just unique to observe. Moreover this study examines the freedom that the Chinese community enjoyed initially, in establishing its own social and religious institutions, without any interference of the host dominant culture as well as later by both democratic and decentralized government. At the same time, it is important to mention that political relations between these two countries, India and China as well as relationships between environmental concerns of Indian activists, and urban modification within the city have had noteworthy influence on the livelihood of the Chinese in Kolkata. Thus this study will perhaps contribute to the field of social geography not only by helping to understand the multicultural dynamics of Kolkata, but also, will definitely find a concrete way to shape this ethnic enclave community.

Keywords: Chinese, dominant, host, democratic, decentralized, multicultural

Date of Submission: 15-08-2017

Date of acceptance: 30-08-2017

I. INTRODUCTION

During 1840s world has experienced many unrestricted immigrations of Chinese population from 1848-81, Chinese exclusion from 1882-1943 was a common phenomenon, immigrations on restricted quotas from 1944-67 and immigrations on equal basis during 1968 onwards. During each historical period, there was continuous socio- economic adaptation and community development which affected the quality of preservation of Chinese identity. The challenges of banishment, the isolation, the basic sense of separation, the knowledge of and longing for a lost world are more explicit. This was the only reason identity of culturally displaced people has been put under great uncertainty. Among various immigrant communities the issue of ethnic and cultural identity was discussed by the scholars from several disciplinary standpoints. Stuart Hall for example offers two ways of looking at cultural identity. He defines “cultural identity in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self’, hiding inside the many other ,more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’ which people with a shared history and ancestry hold common”. (Hall, 1990). The second definition Hall notes that “there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute ‘what we really are’, or rather since history has never intervened-‘what we have become’”. (Hall, 1990).

Emphasis has been made specifically on Kolkata Chinese community as it is an immigrant enclave community which is intrinsically linked with the larger society. They fight for survival in the various challenging situations had led them to segregate from the common social mosaic. They build their own socio-economic environment which displays a complicated issue of hybrid identity among the Chinese in Kolkata. It is purposive to bring forward an overall idea about the cultural roots of the Chinese Indian community by examining their history of origin and current events so that they are brought to light among the mainstream society. The Chinese in Kolkata offering an indispensable part of the city’s cultural mosaic and without this story of Chinese community in Kolkata some of the spice would be taken out of the experience of living here. This diverse society in Kolkata has given birth to different subgroups of Chinese like Hakkas, Cantonese, Hubinese, Shandongs etc. They engaged as shoe sellers, dentists, and some of them have restaurants since 19th century. Man pulled rickshaws, unique in India and a part of Kolkata’s life, were brought to the city by the Chinese. (Thankappan, 1984). Moreover the Chinese –Indian food that was invented by the Chinese immigrants and their descendants that everyone in the city seems to savor still now were the most gratifying pleasure the Kolkatans have ever had.

II. HISTORY OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN KOLKATA

According to Aprita Bose. Kolkata was in fact a congregation of various foreign communities, like Chinese, Jews, and Parsis over the 19th and 20th centuries. But there is no full-fledged history as well as account of the Chinese community settled in Kolkata and rest of India. (Bose A. , 2016).

According to various accounts, Atchew was the first Chinese settler in South Asia and in the year 1778, according to a British document, in return for the tea he offered as a gift to the reigning British Governor General of India Warren Hastings, Atchew received a large land grant near Calcutta. (Bose B. K., 1934).

Atchew established a sugar mill factory and to serve in his factory he called many Chinese from China to settle in Kolkata and to work for him. Atchew maintained close contacts with local British officials, which would have been unlikely if he were an ordinary entrepreneur. Soon after he established the sugar mill, for example, Atchew tempted to the British officials that the Chinese living in Calcutta were trying to captivate and enrapture his workers. (Bose B. K., 1934).

From history it is quite clear that some of the Chinese enter to Kolkata on ships that were quite persistent between Kolkata and Canton. So it is clearly pointed out that that two typical settlements of the Chinese, were born, one in Kolkata and the another area where Atchew established his sugar mill. According to Ly, many Chinese from Fujian and Guangdong provinces were residing in Calcutta. Moreover some of them had built temples dedicated to Chinese deities. (Claudine, 1999).

A more detailed description of the Chinese settlement in Calcutta comes from an 1857 account by the Englishman Chaloner Alabaster, who had been assigned the task of accompanying the anti-British Chinese official Ye Mingchen to his exile in Calcutta. Alabaster reports that there was a “colony” of about 500 Cantonese and Hakka Chinese living in Calcutta. (Chaloner, 1858, pp. 369-70)

Engaged in shoemaking, selling opium, carpentry and other economic activities, these Chinese had built temples for Guandi and the Goddess Tianhou. (Xing, 2011)

The 1901 census recorded 1,640 Chinese in Calcutta. The number of Chinese immigrants continued to grow in the first four decades of the twentieth century, especially due to civil wars and the Japanese invasion of China. The Chinese population in South Asia declined rapidly after the India–China conflict of 1962. Almost 3,000 Chinese were deported from India to Deoli camp, Rajasthan and some of them were deported to mainland China. Many immigrate to North America, Europe, Australia and other countries.

Cantonese and Hakka are the most dominant subgroups living in Kolkata. Additionally, there were also migrants from Hubei, Shandong, and Fujian provinces. In the mid-1950s, 80% of the Chinese in India were from Guangdong province, 9% from Hubei, and 8% from Shandong. Among the migrants from Guangdong province, 43% were Hakka from Meixian County, 30% were Cantonese from the Siyi region, and the rest were mostly from Namshun, Dongan, Huining areas. (Xuxian, 1956). These groups were mostly endogamous, had their own native-place associations, and engaged in specific occupational specialties. (Sen Z. X., 2013).

III. OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALISATIONS OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN KOLKATA

The Chinese were migrated to South Asia were mostly skilled and unskilled laborers. Some of them were brought by the British to work in the tea plantations in north-eastern India. These niches became intrinsically connected to the four main sub-ethnic groups that are existed in Kolkata. Similar coloration between occupational specializations and sub-ethnic groups are found in Sri Lanka, the Chinese there also engaged in “three or four avenues of business: Chinese restaurant, noodles and soy sauce making, souvenir shops and dentistry”. (M.L., 1989, p. 233).

3.1. Carpentry business

Carpentry seems to be one of the main occupations of the Cantonese subgroups migrating to South Asia. Most of them learned their skills of carpentry in China and were employed in Calcutta and other South Asian cities to work at different areas like shipyards and railway companies. According to record, in 1930, for example, there were 178 Chinese carpenters working for the Greater Indian Peninsular (GIP) Railway Company in Bombay. (Yunshan, 1930).

Some Chinese carpenters were in Assam as they were engaged in making wooden tea containers. The Cantonese carpenters had a big reputation as hardworking, cordial, and highly skilled so they were pursued both by the local Indians and the British living in Kolkata. At first they were engaged in part-time work but after learning English and Indian languages, they were able to gain many subcontracts from large carpentry factories and other companies to do interior woodwork. They were also engaged in making home and office furniture. (Xing, 2011, pp. 138-139). Highly efficient Cantonese carpenters worked at the ports and received high remunerations. In the 1950s, for example, there were more than 300 Cantonese carpenters working on ships in the Hooghly dock in West Bengal and more than 20 Cantonese-owned carpentry factories in Calcutta. (Xuxian, 1956, p. 43). The India–China conflict of 1962 had a significant effect on the Chinese carpenters. As they were interned and deported from India without any reasons. They were regarded as Anti-Indian. Those who worked

on the docks were fired from their jobs for different security reasons. Some of them, however, remained in India and set up small carpentry workshops. Many of the major cinemas and hotels in the city, including the Ritz and Metro cinemas, employed the Canton Carpentry. (Xing, 2011, p. 142). Now with continuing decrease of the Chinese population, only a few Chinese carpenters were survive in the Kolkata area. Their importance and presence in Kolkata and elsewhere in South Asia is trivial compared to what they seem to have achieved during the first half of the twentieth century.

3.2 Shoe making business

Shoe making and tannery business were another one of the most important occupations that the Chinese community were connected with. The Hakka immigrants from China were not skilled in a specific profession when they reached the Indian subcontinent. But a majority of the Hakka migrants acquired their talents in shoemaking business expertise in India. (Liang, 2007, p. 405).

Both Ellen Oxfeld (1993) and Jennifer Liang (2007) have pointed out that the Hakka migrants were able to establish their niches as shoemakers and tannery owners due to the Hindu caste system that relegated any work dealing with leather to the untouchables. (Oxfeld, 1993). As they have no religious regulations or restrictions, the Hakkas migrating to Kolkata found it advantageous to enter the shoemaking business. When they came to know that it is quite impossible to return frequently to their own country, these Hakka shoemakers brought their families from China and started settling down in India. Slowly they opened their retail shops near Bentick street area. Rapidly, the number of such Hakka-owned shoe stores on Bentinck Street crossed the 100 threshold and initiated competition among the other shoemakers. This development led to the growth of the shoe business. The number of shoe stores owned by the Hakkas in Calcutta increased to 140. (Xuxian, 1956, pp. 30-31). As the business flourished the Hakkas bought the tanneries from them and started relocating to a new area with their families. By 1930, a buoyant community of Hakkas had emerged in Tangra and became known as the city's second "Chinatown," after the one in central Calcutta. In the 1940s and 1950s, the Hakka community in Tangra became affluent due to increased demand for leather worldwide. At the same time, the community became more cohesive and segregated from the non-Chinese residents of Calcutta. But the Hakka shoemakers were dissipated their business to modern, more efficient, shoe chains, such as Bata and Khadims. As well as the tannery business of the Hakka community has been affected due to the environmental concerns raised by non-governmental groups and legal orders from the state and federal courts. Several tanneries have either closed or shifted to a designated area authorized by the local government. Most of the tanneries were shifted to Bantala and since the Hakkas in Tangra lived in their unique tannery-cum-residences (Berjeaut, 1999) the closure of the tanneries has not only affected their livelihood, but also their lifestyle and residential patterns.

3.3 Dentists and paper flower makers

Another significant subgroups of Chinese community comprises of dentists and paper flower makers. Hubeinese were considered as well-known teeth setters of China. The Hubeinese teeth setters seem to have first immigrated to Southeast Asia, and from there they relocated to Kolkata and other regions of India. By the end of the Second World War there were around 300 Hubeinese owned dentistry businesses in India. Indian customers were attracted to the Hubeinese teeth setters because of their reputed skills and most importantly low fees. (Xuxian, 1956, p. 34). In Kolkata itself, there were more than 80 clinics run by people belong to Tianmen area in Hubei province. These clinics serve to the local Chinese and non-Chinese customers. But after 1947, the Indian government established new laws for dentists. These laws necessitate dental clinics to either obtain certification from a regular hospital specializing in dentistry or the approval from the health department. This was a major setback for the Chinese dentists in India because very few of them had proper training.

But from the Chinese Consulate General in Calcutta, temporary exception was given to Hubeinese dentists by the Indian government which extended the deadline. (Xing, 2011, p. 156). But the conflict of 1962 didn't spare the Hubeinese dentists from harassment. Still a few Hubeinese dentists can still be found practicing their art in Kolkata. In India these second and third generation Hubeinese dentists are not accredited. But they still continue to attract patients because they charge half the normal fees. Those opting to receive formal training have moved to other cities of Pakistan. (Amna, 2005).

Some of the Hubeinese, especially the wives of the dentists were also engaged in making paper flowers to support the family earning. They made flowers of varying designs and colors, paper balls, lanterns, and even toys. During major celebrations, such as Christmas, Hindu festivals, and Chinese New Year, they sold these paper flowers and other things in local markets. (Xuxian, 1956, p. 36). This occupation does not seem to have revived after the India-China conflict of 1962.

3.4 Silk trading business

Shandong is another subgroup commonly known as silk traders which encompasses more than 50% of the immigrants from Shandong in South Asia and others from Changyi and Weifang regions, 30% came from Pingdu and around 20% from Yantai. Some of them came from Myanmar also. These immigrants engaged in

selling and promoting silk products from Shandong by establishing various markets across India. In 1920, the Shandong Silk Common Business Corporation was established because of the increase in the number of these traders in India. This organization helps to communicate as well as to exchange information among the Shandong silk traders to flourish the trading business. In the 1940s, the number of immigrants from Shandong province in India had increased to 1,500, most of whom (about 600) lived in Bombay and Calcutta about 200. (Xing, 2011, pp. 158-159). Unlike the Cantonese, Hakka, and the other subgroups like Hubeinese immigrants, the Shandong traders seem to have not lived in India beyond one or two generations. In fact, most may have been regularly travelling between India and China, something that is also represented in the character of Wang Lu in the Bengali film. (Sen Z. X., 2013, p. 7).

The Chinese in South Asia were generally associated with three other businesses like laundries (dry-cleaning stores), restaurants and beauty parlors. Before the Second World War, there seem to have been only two Chinese-owned laundry stores in India, one in Calcutta and one in Bombay. (Xuxian, 1956, p. 41). These were at least 10 such Chinese-owned laundry stores in Calcutta alone during this period. However, when the relations between the two countries deteriorated, the Chinese with PRC passports were the first to be interned and deported as they were considered as anti-Indians. This resulted in the closure of a number of Chinese-owned laundry stores across India particularly in Kolkata. Still, several stores, such as the Chunking Laundry and the Shanghai Laundry in Calcutta, continued to function and are still popular today. (Sen Z. X., 2013).

There is little doubt about the fact that Chinese restaurants are the most successful and popular Chinese owned businesses in Calcutta. Already in the early twentieth century Chinese restaurants in the Bowbazar area of central Calcutta had become renowned among the European and American residents as well as among the upper class Indians (Shelland, 1924). During the Second World War there was an increase in the number of Chinese restaurants in South Asia. Chinese from Southeast Asia, who sought refuge in India, opened their own restaurants. As a result, the number of Chinese restaurants and teahouses in India reached 150. (Xuxian, 1956, p. 37). While the India–China conflict had a detectable impact on the restaurant business of the Chinese, the cuisine as well as the taste that mixed with Chinese dishes and Indian spices to favor the needs of the South Asian palate had already become an inextricable part of South Asian eating habits. For this reason still many Chinese-owned restaurants have continued to function most successfully in the major cities of South Asia. In Calcutta, on the other hand, new Chinese-owned famous restaurants are now located in the Tangra area, replacing not only those in Bowbazar but also the tanneries that have closed due to environmental restrictions. In fact, “Chinese-Indian” cuisine has emerged as an international brand, with restaurants such as “Tangra” and “Indian Wok” that have in recent years opened across the world, including in cities such as Singapore, New York (USA), and Toronto (Canada). (Xing, 2011)

Another business in South Asia that continues to be closely associated with the Chinese community of Kolkata is that of beauty parlors. These businesses were mostly grown up due to the immense contribution of Chinese women. They started their business in South Asia sometime in the 1930s. This proved that there is a link to the increased migration of Chinese women to South Asia. Similar to other Chinese-owned businesses, most of these beauty parlors were located in Kolkata. Chinese-owned beauty parlors were subsequently also began to flourish in other larger cities of South Asia. Many of these businesses run by the Chinese women are located near the restaurants owned by their husbands.

IV. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS OF CHINESE COMMUNITY IN KOLKATA

Within decades of settling in South East Asia, the Chinese migrants established many temples, native-place associations like Huigans and cemeteries. Also these were followed by the formation of various clubs, schools, and other social and cultural organizations which played an important role of the Chinese community in Kolkata. It is very interesting to know the fact that most of these associations and clubs were established in Kolkata due to the fact that the city had the largest number of Chinese immigrants and easy access to China. The most important site for these ‘Chinese-Indians’ is the tomb of Atchew in Achipur, which has emerged as an annual pilgrimage site. Most important organizations include Huiguans. Huiguans were Chinese merchant guilds that played important social, cultural, and economic roles in the lives of the people. In Kolkata five such Huiguans were established by the Cantonese immigrants, mostly near Blackburn Lane in the Bowbazarneighbourhood. They named each of the Huiguans after specific regions in Guangdong province, these were the Yixing (Ye Hing), Namshun (Nam Soon), Dong’an (ToongOon), Siyi (Sea Ip) and Huining (Wei Ning) Huiguans. These Huiguans were initially acclaimed to connect and bring together the immigrants from the above regions. They served as guesthouses, religious institutions, sponsors of schools, sites for community gatherings, etc. as well as they were also in charge of graveyards. Wedding, funerary, and other kinds of large receptions are very common to celebrate under the guidance of the Huiguans. But many other institutions of the Chinese living in South Asia are now rundown. The decline in the population of the Chinese living in the region seems to have had a most significant effect on the financial situation of the Chinese living here. For the Chinese

still residing in some other parts of South Asian cities, the Huiguans are places that relate to the history of the community, especially at its incipient stage. Most of these Huiguans continue to function till the present day and are places for people to gather to play mahjong, (Oxford, 1993) read newspapers, venerate Chinese deities, or attend special events.

4.1. Cultural organizations

The early Chinese temple in South Asia belonged to the Chinese goddess Tianhou or Mazu. In 1858, (Chaloner, 1858, p. 383) reports of the existence of Tianhou temple in Calcutta, built, according to him, by the local Cantonese carpenters. Alabaster notes that the temple was “well-kept” and visited once a year by both the Hakka shoemakers and the Cantonese carpenters in “grand processions.” The temple was renovated several times, the last of which took place in 1999.

(Chaloner, 1858, pp. 370-72) also mentions the existence of a Chinese temple which was dedicated to Guandi in Kolkata. This temple was built by the Hakka shoemakers. Alabaster seems to be referring to the large Guandi temple that now stands in the premises of the Meiguang School in the Bowbazar area of Calcutta. In fact, Guandi is a popular Chinese deity among the Chinese of Kolkata.

Another popular among the Chinese in South Asia is the reverence of Guanyin. The most important Guanyin shrine is located in the Siyihuiguan in Kolkata. Guanyin is worshiped at other parts of Chinese inhabited areas in South Asia, the Guanyin shrine in Siyihuiguan is considered to be the most efficacious. The shrine draws Chinese worshippers settled in different parts of India. (Xing, 2011)

Similar to the adoration of Caishen, images of Guanyin can also be found in the homes and businesses of the Chinese in South Asia. Other Chinese Buddhist deities as well as temples were also established in different parts of India, particularly in Kolkata including one dedicated to uniquely Chinese Buddhist divinities known as Ruan Ziyu and Liang Cineng. The glorification of these two Chinese Buddhas originated in the Sihui region of Guangdong, from where many Cantonese carpenters had migrated to Calcutta. (Sen Z. X., 2013).

The Chinese community was also contributory in establishing Buddhist temples at sacred Buddhist sites in India. In Kolkata, the Chinese community built a Zhonghua Fosi and the Xuanzang Si. As a result, the Taiwanese Guoji Foguang Hui (Buddha's Light International Association) has started playing an important role within the Chinese communities; especially those who are settled in Kolkata. In addition to promoting Buddhist teachings, nuns from the association used to perform funerary rituals, organize cultural and charity events, and arrange Chinese language classes which helps to yoke together the Chinese community of Kolkata. (Sen Z. X., 2013).

Christianity and Islam are also practiced by the Chinese community of Kolkata. In 1912, the Chinese Christian Church was first established in the Dalhousie Square section of Kolkata. In the year 1915, a Chinese Catholic Church was first built in the Bowbazar area of the city. Again in the year 1934, Father De Moor of Belgium, who had lived in China for several years, successfully introduced Catholic teachings among the Chinese community of Kolkata through the establishment of the Sacred Heart School. Later two Chinese Christian missionaries from Shanghai called David and Mary Lamb set up the Ling Liang schools (with a branch in the Bowbazar area and the other in the Tangra area of Calcutta). Its main aim was to promote Protestantism. So if we take the account of present day, it is quite obvious that there are large numbers of Christians among the Chinese community in Kolkata. The Protestants usually congregate at the Church of St. Francis Xavier and the Ling Liang Church. The Catholic Chinese frequent the Immanuel Mary Church. The Bandel Basilica, located in Bandel near Calcutta, organizes special Mass services for the Chinese. (Sen Z. X., 2013) Chinese Muslims lived in Kolkata as well as in parts of Pakistan. In Kolkata, the Chinese Muslims seem to have visited the mosques belonging to the local Muslim communities. But no such detail accounts of Chinese Muslims of Kolkata has been found.

(Hassan, 1982, p. 85) argues that the Chinese Muslims in Kolkata, who according to him numbered 50 in 1970s, were more non-segregated to the local society than those practicing other religions. Perhaps because of this integration or most likely due to emigration to other parts of the world, there are only a handful of Chinese Muslims in India at the present time.

Moreover to the above-mentioned religious beliefs and temples, the Chinese immigrants to South Asia created their own unique practices which help to maintain their own cultural identity. This can be rightly mentioned in the reverence or glorification of the Hindu goddess Kali at a small temple called Chinese Kali Temple in the Tangra area of Kolkata. The temple is popular among the local Chinese for fertility rituals.

V. POLITICAL COLLUSION OF CHINESE COMMUNITY IN KOLKATA

Despite the small number of Chinese settlers and their descendants in South Asia, some members of the community played a prominent role in political discourse. This discourse took the form of various negotiations with the British in the matter of Tibet, overseeing the activities of the GMD in South Asia. This results in coordination with the Republican government in China on an anti-Japanese coalition. It is to be pointed out those political rivalries within the Chinese community stemming from the Guomindang–Communist conflict in

China. Most importantly the Chinese community of Kolkata found itself severely affected by the India–China conflict of 1962, which saw many of its members interned and deported by the Indian government. Not a single member of the Chinese community, however, has yet been able to make his/her mark in the local governmental politics in any of the South Asian states (Sen Z. X., 2013).

The first GMD office in South Asia was established in Kolkata in the year 1911, perhaps soon after the decline of the Qing government. Kolkata not only accommodate the headquarters of the GMD, it also had two sub-branches. A third branch was located in Bombay. After this in the year 1946, new branches opened in various areas like Darjeeling, Shillong, Jalpaiguri, and Karachi. The intelligence reports mention that the main motive of the GMD party was to “unite the Chinese in this country, to look after the welfare of this community i.e., India under the Kuomintang, to minister to the welfare of Chinese subjects residing in India and to provide an understanding of the Kuomintang policy amongst Indians and other sympathetic foreigners.” Indeed, with regard to the last point, the GMD government in 1927 permitted Indians to join the Indian branch after paying appropriate entry fee and contribution to the Northern Punitive Expedition Fund (Bose A. , 2016).

The objectives of the KMT in India were to unite not only the Chinese community of Kolkata as well as to unite the whole of the community belonging in India to come under the one umbrella of the party, to care for the welfare of Chinese subjects residing in India and to provide an understanding and belief of the Chinese nationalist policy amongst Indians and other foreigners residing here. (IB File 236/36 12). Large numbers of propaganda, as well literature were sent from the KMT headquarters in Canton to Chinese clubs and organization in India to attain the goals. It is worthy to mention that since the existence of the KMT in Kolkata, several party agents frequently visited the city, either for inspection or for furthering its aim and also for collecting funds, between 1914 and 1927. It is to be noted that during this period many Chinese delegations as well as other prominent Chinese leaders again started to visit India after 1942. The local KMT branches used to regularly dispatch money to the party’s account in China through the agencies of banks or Chinese seamen. The IB files show, for instances, that `50,000 was sent to Dr. Sun Yat-Sen in 1922–23, when gambling was allowed in the Chinese clubs. The first successful major financial drive was conducted by the local KMT headquarters for the salvation of ‘China and Relief of Tsinan Victims’ funds in 1928, to which every Chinese in Calcutta subscribed. Children were also made to subscribe for one rupee each. Every local Chinese club was represented on the committee, which went around collecting the money. (Bose A. , 2016)

But the political activity of the Chinese in South Asia became contentious as well as debatable and violent in the late 1940s, when deep divisions emerged between the supporters of GMD and the Communists in China. With the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, this rivalry as well as disputes within the party became more vehement for the Chinese in South Asia. Almost every aspect of their public life was affected by the intense hostilities between the two sides. (Sen Z. X., 2013).

The reality was that the Indian government took side with PRC which was evident in November 1954, soon after Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru returned from his trip to China, when two Chinese residents of Calcutta, including C.S. Liu, the editor of a local Chinese newspaper sympathetic to Taiwan, were deported. In another incident the third Chinese was arrested under the Preventive Detention Act. Moreover in August 1958, the Indian government cancelled a football match between India and Hong Kong, because some of the players in the Hong Kong team were allegedly “loyal” to the Nationalist government in Taiwan. The controversy reached at its peak when Dalai Lama’s recantation to India in 1959 and the subsequent border dispute between India and China gave the upper hand to the anti-Beijing Chinese organizations in India. At this point of time leaders of some of these groups wrote letters to the Indian government pledging their loyalty to India and expressed the desires of thousands of Chinese residents to become Indian citizens. But in October 1959, 8127 Chinese in Kolkata were enrolled as foreign residents. Some of them held because of the out dated passports issued by the pre-1949 GMD government in China. Others were identified themselves as citizens of communist China. There were also thousands of unregistered Chinese, who were born in India but did not possess birth certificates. They were thus considered stateless as well as homeless. (Sen Z. X., 2013).

After the Indo-China war in 1962, the Indian government changed its foreign policy. Since then Chinese Communist activists were detained at concentration camps in Deoli, Rajasthan and sent back to Mainland China (Kwai-YunLi, 2011). The Chinese community felt like they were living under a cloud of official suspicion as well as in distrust and that the Government was treating them as Communist spies, an Anti-Indians even twenty years after the war. Their movement was restricted and their stay in India was controlled by renewable permits. Many Chinese were declared as stateless people. The ambiguous status of the Chinese residents in India proved to be disastrous. (Bose A. , 2016).

The Sino-Indian war widened the gulf between the Chinese-Indian community and the local residents. While the Indian government placed constraints on the economic activities of the Chinese-Indians, common people, even the Tamils of Indian origin in Sri Lanka continued to look at the community with suspicion. (M.L., 1989, p. 235).

VI. CONCLUSION

The population of Chinese in South Asia has decreased to a few thousand, but still majority living in Kolkata. Many of them have sold their tanneries, restaurants, and dry cleaning shops and migrated to Toronto or other overseas destinations. It is only in Kolkata, and specifically those Chinese living in the Tangra area have continued to maintain their unconnected cultural practices. Social interactions between the Chinese in Tangra and other ethnic groups in Kolkata are limited and endogamy is quite prevalent among the Hakka community. In South Asia particularly the Chinese population is either migrating to the West or returning to their ancestral homeland. Marriages with non-ethnic Chinese were always more common phenomena among those settled outside Kolkata in northeast India (Zhang 2011) and places such as Sri Lanka. (M.L., 1989). At these places the processes of acculturation and assimilation were not more pronounced, which do not lead to the loss of ethnic and cultural identities of the Chinese residing in Kolkata. The Chinese community in Kolkata laid the foundation of South Asia's first Chinatown, which lead to the foundation of their own unique institutions, businesses and settlements. Through all these they attempt to preserve their own ethnic and cultural distinctness.

But due to the political conflict of 1962, the Chinese identified as foreigners by Indian Government. And emerged from this process were distinct groups of the so called "Chinese-Indians". They referred themselves "Indian" which is considered to be as hybrid identity. They referred themselves Indian as they were born in India. Linguistic parameters set them apart. There are no stories of ethnic assimilation or acculturation. The Chinese in Kolkata always distance themselves from Indians and tried to preserve their own distinctiveness. Tangra is a perfect example of an exclusive settlement of the Chinese that preserves their culture and heritage. They always tried to integrate themselves with the host culture. Chinese New Year celebrations, Mid-Autumn Festivals, Dragon Boat Festivals, endogamous marriages, associations and organizations such as Huiguans are still preserving their ethnicity. Surprisingly it is observed that the Chinese living in Bowbazar Chinatown have been affected by the migrations of non-Chinese immigrants, urban development projects, ethnic intermingling, intermarriages are some examples where integration with the host community takes place and few cases of assimilation may found. So it is to be believed that with the course of time the community became an integral part of our culture of the city.

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