

RISE OF CHINA AND ETHNIC MINORITY IN XINJIANG: A CASE OF DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY

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With the rise of China and its increasing exposure to the international media, voices were raised regarding the development and social changes that have been happening in the various provinces of China. The developments in Xinjiang also came under scrutiny and it has been used by the international media to criticise China with regard to the human rights issues and religious freedom in Xinjiang. The Uighurs Muslims being the ethnic minority in China, this article looks into the concept of minority in China, the constitutional provisions, as well as outlines the development that have happened in the province. Taking an objective view of the developments in Xinjiang in terms of education, health, employment and other parameters, the article provides an empirical glimpse into the province.

Keywords : Xinjiang, Chinese Constitution, Ethnic Minority, Uighurs, Central Asia, Education, Employment, Demographic.

Ethnicity is one of the significant features of collective and individual identity. Generally defined in terms of cultural community; group of people sharing features as common language, religion, birth-ancestry, history etc. It has potential to take the form of political entity through ethnic nationalism. Ethnicity as concept is dynamic in nature hence complicated to conceptualize. The two major trends in conceptualizing ethnicity are primordial and instrumental approach. Primordial approach works on basis that ties within ethnic groups are based on custom, blood relations are exterior, withholding and given. Edward Shils² (reference) being one of pioneer of the approach, over a period of time this approach has been criticized for being static. While the instrumentalist approach views ethnicity as social, political and cultural

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resource that can be utilized. Michael Banton in *Ethnic Competition* (1993) has initiated the instrumentalist approach, while Fredrik Barth is one of the major contributors of such approach (International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences 2008).

Its potential for causing the social conflict makes it an important research area is one of the most significant factors about ethnicity (Peter Ratchliffe 2010). Ethnic hostility, discrimination and exclusion can be identified as broad areas reflecting such potential for social conflict. In such scenario ethnic minorities are very often at the receiving end and hence demands due attention. Minority does not necessarily reflect the numerical feature about social group but it talks about the status or position of group within society. A minority group is defined on the basis of a relatively permanent and unchanging status in relation with dominant group. Initially the definition of minority was limited to racial or ethnic group but during recent times it has expanded to include social groups based on different sex orientation and gender (Farley 2005).

The historical development over last few centuries' suggests minority communities often overlap with the concept of indigenous peoples. The definition of indigenous people as defined by United Nations is based on features of such peoples as their descent from original inhabitants of a region but presently living in marginalized situation due to the presence of other dominant group of population. The politics, economy and culture are major sphere of marginality. Another major international organization working for rights of minority community is Minority Rights Groups defines minority based on their disadvantageous position, less numerical strength. These are people belonging to racial, ethnic, linguistic and cultural communities and having their distinct collective identity (MRG International). Their desire to protect their distinct identity in relation to the other dominant group constitute common feature among minority and indigenous people. Often these categories are overlapping. The common feature shared in this is their marginalization from the mainstream society and development. Uighur ethnic community in China has the above mentioned feature of minority and indigenous people. The Uighur ethnic group is one of the minority ethnic groups that are recognized as facing threats to their distinct identity.³ The paper will focus on Uighur ethnic minority residing in Xinjiang autonomous province of China also known as former East Turkmenistan. People's Republic of China (PRC) identifies ethnic groups as majority and minority ethnic groups; this categorization coincides with

³ People Under Threat is the list prepared by the MRG listing the minority groups within the countries struggling for survival recognizes Uighur in PRC as one of the ethnic minority facing such threat.

the religious differences among the society. Muslims and Buddhism are the religions followed by minorities in China. Their geographical location also plays crucial role, these ethnic groups are concentrated in particular (peripheral) geographical territory. China has given separate status to such groups and has developed Minority Autonomous Region. Rising of China as an economic and international actor, also raising of ethnic problems in Xinjiang autonomous province.

DEFINING MINORITY IN CHINA

China is multi-ethnic country it has around 400 sub ethnic groups. At present it has identified 56 ethnic groups, among them Han Chinese is the largest ethnic group and 55 other ethnic groups have the status of being ethnic minority. The four features of common culture, language, area and economy were at the heart of identifying minority communities in China. They were identified through the detail survey; collection and analysis of their information for above features. Based on this China has identified 55 ethnic groups as national minorities. The policy of identifying minority group is guided by two major criteria whether the group belongs to Han Chinese or non-Han Chinese and further whether the group has potential to form independent ethnic group or is part of some larger ethnic group.

This method of identification is criticized for being based on linear scale of social evolution (China Rights Forum). PRC labels the ethnic groups according to their stage of cultural development minorities with lack written language are primitive, backward. Such approach underlines the cultural superiority and advance nature of Han Chinese group and taking self-declared responsibility of civilizing others. It does not reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of PRC as a result of this diverse cultural and ethnic groups undergo homogenization constituting Han Chinese ethnic group. On the other hand, several other minorities' lack of scope of self-identification and many ethnic groups as demand of the Sherpas, Kucong and Chinese Jews, groups seeking recognition during 1990s census were not addressed. There are five ethnic minority groups residing in five autonomous regions. These are Mongols, Tibetan, Hui, Yao and Uighur. PRC has five autonomous regions namely Mongolia Autonomous Region, (MAR) Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), Ningxia Autonomous Region (NAR), Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), Guagaxi Autonomous Region (GAR). As national minorities are concerned, altogether they constitute 8.5 percent and Han Chinese are 51 percent. Out of all autonomous regions in China, Uighur constitutes 45.2 percent and Han Chinese are 40.58 percent and others are 6.74 percent in Xinjiang (Census 2000).

UIGHUR

Uighur is a Turkic speaking ethnic group belongs to Altaic language family. Uighur are mainly Sunni Islamic faith. Many international, regional organizations have raised their concern over the issue from time to time. Recently Amnesty international's report quotes, 'the ethnic identity of Uighur's in western China is being systematically eroded' (Amnesty International 2009).

Xinjiang is the autonomous regions where the large population is facing the marginalization in development after Tibet. The table 1, socio-economic status of minorities, describes that major indicators of development as life expectancy index are less than the national average of 0.792.

Table-1 : Socio-economic Status of Minority Autonomous Regions

| Province | Ranking | Ethnic minority | Life expectancy index | Education index | GDP index | HDI |
|----------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Xinjiang | 22 | Uighur | 0.707 | 0.836 | 0.712 | 0.752 |
| Inner Mongolia | 14 | Mongol | 0.748 | 0.829 | 0.761 | 0.779 |
| Tibet | 31 | Tibet | 0.656 | 0.554 | 0.652 | 0.621 |
| Ningxia | 26 | Hui | 0.753 | 0.785 | 0.673 | 0.737 |
| Guangxi | 21 | Yao | 0.772 | 0.842 | 0.650 | 0.755 |
| National | | | 0.792 | 0.826 | 0.724 | 0.781 |

Source: National human Development Report, UNDP 2008

As in case of GDP index, Xinjiang has less GDP index than national average. Life expectancy is considered major indicator of health of population. The socio economic indicators show that Xinjiang having 67.41 years of life expectancy which is lesser than the national average which is 72.5 years

Table-2: Socio Economic Indicators

| Province | Ethnic minority | Life expectancy in years | Combined School enrolment ratio (%) | Adult Literacy ratio (%) | Per Capita GDP (Yuan) | Per capita GDP |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Xinjiang | Uighur | 67.41 | 64.20 | 93.34 | 15000 | 7143.75 |
| Inner Mongolia | Mongol | 69.87 | 67.33 | 90.64 | 20053 | 9550.23 |
| Tibet | Tibet | 64.37 | 57.41 | 54.35 | 10430 | 4967.28 |
| Ningxia | Hui | 70.17 | 66.45 | 84.56 | 11847 | 5642.13 |
| Guangxi | Yao | 71.29 | 64.62 | 93.99 | 10296 | 4903.47 |
| National | | 72.5 | 66.56 | 90.69 | 16084 | 7660 |

Source: National Human Development Report China 2008

(Table-2). Xinjiang and Tibet are the regions since last few years posing major security concern for the Peoples Republic of China. But this paper focuses on the Uighur ethnic community to understand the implementation of development policies with specific focus on implications on security in the eve of rising China.

XINJIANG UIGHUR AUTONOMOUS REGION (XUAR)

The Uighur ethnic group historically residing in the present Xinjiang region forms bordering province of People's Republic of China. Uighur are Turkic Muslims ethnic minority in China. They regard themselves as culturally and ethnically distinct, having identity close to Central Asian nations. At present China has around 10 million Uighur population. Majority of them, around 9.4 million reside in the Xinjiang autonomous province. Xinjiang has territorial area around 1,660,001 Km², it constitutes of 18 percent of China's land area. Only 4.3 percent of the land is suitable for inhabitation. Xinjiang is mountainous terrain, having three mountains and two basins between them Altai to north, Tianshan and Kunlun Mountain to the south. The region to south of Tianshan is Tamir or south Xinjiang have large concentration of Uighur and other ethnic minorities. North of Tianshan lays Jungar basin or northern Xinxiang (Ministry of Commerce).

Xinjiang region has population around 21,813,334 (2010) with population density 249 (Xinjiang Profile). It shares borders with eight states. These includes Russia on north, Mongolia on east, India and Pakistan on South west, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan on west and Kazakhstan on north-west. The population living in the present Xinjiang or East Turkestan claims the land as homeland territory of Uighur ethnic group. Culturally the Uighur people are more close to Central Asian region, they claim their identity is distinct from Han Chinese. Hence their present struggle to preserve their cultural and political identity. While the Chinese government claims that Uighur along with other small ethnic groups and Han Chinese group are living in the region since ancient times.

Uighur has history of non-violent as well as violent protest and resistance for such dominance of Han Chinese claim. Though China governs the region as ethnic autonomous region, section of Uighur population perceives it as internal colonization and exploitation of their natural and human resources. It is rich in natural resources like natural gas and oil. The disparity in the development of both communities makes it difficult to argue otherwise. In short the Xinjiang conflict can be considered as the struggle between the socio-cultural assimilation policies of PRC and desire to preserve its identity of Uighur ethnic group. Over a period of time the struggle has taken different

shades. At present the development and terrorism and hence security are the two key phenomena dominating the discussion.

XINJIANG: ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

Xinjiang has 47 ethnic groups residing, as Uygur, Han, Kazak, Hui, Mongolian, Kirgiz, Xibe, Tajik, Uzbek, Manchu, Daur, Tatar, Russian and other ethnic groups (Xinjiang province). Among them Uighur constitute 43.3 percent, Han Chinese are 41 percent followed by Kazakh being the 8.3 percent, Hui are among the other major significant ethnic group constitute around 5 percent. Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region has 4 autonomous prefectures⁴, 7 prefectures, 2 cities at the prefecture level (Ministry of Commerce, PRC). The following table shows the ethnic composition of some of the administrative unites, where it is seen that Uighur community is concentrated only in few cities while in capital city itself the Uighur population is only 12.3 percent.

MIGRATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC SETUP

The rise of China also increased the Han population in Xinjiang Province. The trend of large scale migration and demographic shift is causing threat of becoming minority in homeland for Uighur. The development policies adopted in the autonomous region simultaneously has resulted into migration of Han Chinese population in the region impacting the demographic balance of the region. Since 1990s the region has seen major violent uprising by Uighur ethnic group. The major reasons are marginalization and discrimination leading to fear of existential threat due to changing demographics and power equations. The important areas of conflict are education, decision making positions, as important administrative positions are held by Han Chinese population. The greater freedom of movement enjoyed by Han Chinese citizen than the indigenous people is another major reason of conflict besides demographic shift. This was followed by large scale migration of Han Chinese in the region through the policy of 'Go West' (ICE 2006) affecting the demographic setup in the region.

The following table shows the demographic shift of the population in Xinjiang region where the Uighur population 80 percent in (1941) has reduced to 43.3 percent in 2010. The same period have seen increase in Han Chinese population from 5.0 percent to 41 percent showing the increasing concentration of Han Chinese population in the region. The other minority groups have largely remained constant with slight increase in the Hui population (Table-3).

⁴ Prefectures and counties are second and third administrative level units respectively.

Table-3: Demographic change in Xinjiang 1941-2010 (in percentage)

| Year/Ethnic group | 1941 | 1953 | 1964 | 1982 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Uighur | 80 | 74.7 | 54 | 45.8 | 47.5 | 45.2 | 43.3 |
| Kazak | 8.7 | 10.1 | 6.7 | 6.9 | 7.3 | 6.7 | 8.3 |
| Han | 5.0 | 6.1 | 32.9 | 40.4 | 37.6 | 40.6 | 41 |
| Hui | 3.1 | 3.1 | 3.6 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 4.6 | 5 |
| Other | 3.2 | 6 | 2.8 | 2.6 | 3.1 | 2.9 | 2.4 |

Source: UHRP Chinese statistical Year Book 2005

Ethnic composition in Xinjiang is uneven, Han Chinese population concentrated in northern Xinjiang and Uighur and other ethnic minorities in the Southern region. The whole region is not inhabitable due to geographic terrain. In southern Xinjiang Uighurs' are concentrated around the oasis. The region being insular receives less rainfall caused due to ocean currents, while Arctic current brings some rainfall the people have to rely on inland rivers. Concentration of people is around water sources (Qingyue and Jie, CCHDS 2012). The Uighur population is mainly concentrated in the areas of Hotan, Kashgar, Aksu, and Kizilsu of southern Xinjiang; and also in the Turpan area of eastern Xinjiang. Smaller populations of Uighurs gather around Shihezi and northern Xinjiang (Rong 2009).

Table-4: Ethnic distribution by administrative regions 2008

| Administrative region | Uighur | Han Chinese | Other |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Urumqi City (capital) | 12.3 | 73 | 14.7 |
| Karamay City | 15.2 | 75.5 | 9.3 |
| Turpan | 70.5 | 23 | 6.5 |
| Kumul(Hami) | 20.2 | 66.7 | 13.1 |
| Changji Hui autonomous prefecture | 4.6 | 74.4 | 21.1 |
| Ili Kazakh Autonomous | 16.2 | 43.8 | 40 |
| Bortala Mongol Autonomous Prefecture | 12.7 | 67.3 | 20 |
| Bayangolil Mongol Autonomous Prefecture | 32.7 | 57.5 | 9.8 |
| Aksu | 78 | 20.7 | 1.3 |
| Kizilsu Kirghiz Autonomous Prefecture | 63.5 | 7.4 | 29.1 |
| Kashgar | 91.1 | 7.3 | 1.6 |
| Hotan (Hetian) | 96.5 | 3.5 | 0.2 |
| Total | 46.1 | 39.3 | 14.6 |

Source: Han, Enze (2010) (China Statistical Year Book 2008)

Further the two ethnic groups have social segregation in housing pattern as noted by Enze Han (2010) in his survey that shows segregation of residence. During the centralized economy before 1980s when government provided houses for employees the housing pattern is mixed. Since adoption of market economy the housing pattern shows increasing isolation of localities. Uighur generally lives in old cities while Han Chinese population lives on outskirts of the cities called 'new town' have better facilities. Even in the mixed residential localities children are discouraged from mixing with the other group. The difference is also observed in their conception of time in private and public life. Due to geographical size Xinjiang falls two hours behind Beijing (national time zone) so when official hour starts at 8 am in Beijing, in Xinjiang it starts at 10 am. Enze Han observed that surprisingly Han Chinese and Hui population stubbornly follow Beijing time zone despite inconvenience to show loyalty towards Beijing while Uighur population in their personal life follows the local time.

ECONOMY OF XINJIANG

Agriculture is major sector of production in Xinjiang. The GDP of Xinjiang is 657.5 billion Chinese Yuan Renminbi (CNY) (US \$ 101.7 billion) while per capita GDP is 29924 CNY (US \$ 4633). Fruits, wheat and silk are the major products. Xinjiang has 4.19264 million hectares of farm land including 2.4 million hectares of pastures land (Ministry of Commerce PRC). Oil and natural gas extraction industry are major industries. The oil and petrochemical products contribute 60 percent of Xinjiang's local economy (XUAR overview of Climate Connect 2010).

GEO-STRATEGIC AND GEO-ECONOMICS OF XINJIANG

The territory is at strategic location, opening access to the Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The large oil and natural gas resources in the Xinjiang and neighbouring Central Asia region had been major incentive for industrial and economic development in the region. Xinjiang boasts complete categories of minerals with large reserves. The region is rich with mineral resources like gold, copper, chrome, nickel, rare metals, salts and non-metal building materials and oil and natural gas. Around 138 large and medium-sized mineral deposits had been found by 2005. It accounts for 81.6 percent of the total number of minerals found in China. It has developed the total length of pipelines around 3,003 km in Xinjiang which carries around 22 million tons of oil and gases in year (Ministry of Commerce PRC). Xinjiang has become the fourth-biggest oil producing and processing area in China, as

well as important cotton and woollen textile base and a fur processing base (White Paper IV of PRC). Another study of the region by UHRP (2009) notes presence of nearly 140 billion barrels of oil reserves and 11 trillion cubic meters of gas in region. Such large concentration of resource makes the region one of the main sources of energy for the PRC. China's trade relations with the neighbouring region are increasing, the region also helps to bring oil from neighbouring region of Russia and Central Asia. Such resource rich region has huge potential for development and better living standard for population residing in the region. But as mentioned above the region ranks below national average in many development indicators and also has become conflict prone region in recent period. The close view of development policies can help to emergence of present contradictory situation.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES OF PRC AND MARGINALIZATION:

The State assists areas inhabited by minority nationalities in accelerating their economic and cultural development according to the characteristics and needs of the various minority nationalities. (Article 4: Constitution of People Republic of China)

The development theories as discussed by Stanley Toops (2004) in *Demographics and development in Xinjiang after 1949* shows shift from mere economic growth as indicator of the development to more comprehensive development. Based on statistics of 2000 census he examines the regional demographics and development of Xinjiang focusing on the relation between the internal conflicts in the region. The development during 1950s was mainly measured in terms of economic growth but since last few decades the shift is towards more humane development. Stanley Toops drawing from arguments of Dudley Seers, Denis Goulet and Amartya Sen's work on the concept of development traces that evolution and shift in understanding of development. He applies it to the region of Xinjiang and argues for development policies which can ensure freedom, self esteem and dignity of the local population as more humane development. He also emphasizes the role of cultural freedom in addition with the economic, social and political freedom in the region (Toops 2004: 3-6). The disproportionate distribution of economic benefits among rural and urban areas and different group is publicly acknowledged by the PRC government (HRIC MRG 2007 and China Human Development Report UNDP 2008). Though there are measures taken through development programs, ethnic minorities in Inner

Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR), TAR (Tibetan Autonomous Region), and XUAR have not benefited to significant extent.

Since 1949 Chinese government has adopted 'preferential policies' towards its national (ethnic) minorities. These policies are part of affirmative actions towards minorities. These are mainly in the areas of education, family planning and political representation at the regional level, employment and business development (Sautman 1998). There are several limitations in the implementation of these policies. As Barry Sautman (1999) analyzing the ethnic laws underlines the limitations of the present preferential policies and its failure to reduce the gap between Uighur and Han Chinese ethnic community. He also mentions the need for more measures for ethnic minorities in the China. Deprivation in daily life and exploitation of political and geographical resources are two main aspects of marginalization. The present socio-economic and cultural situation needs historical context of the Han Chinese dominant empire. The ethnic differences between the Han Chinese and Uighur are historical. Religious differences between the two groups also mean that intermarriage between Han Chinese and Uighur is almost nonexistent (Han 2010).

XINJIANG PRODUCTION AND COOPERATION CORPORATION (XPCC)

Mechanism of repression works through the tools/models of development two major development projects were Xinjiang Production and Cooperation Corporation (XPCC) and 'Western Development Strategy'. The XPCC, also known as 'Bingtuan' is the unique (largest) economic and semi military governmental organization established in 1954. It is one of the major actors in development in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. It is spread over the area of 74,300 Km² with population 2,607,184 (2010 census) residing in six county level cities. Its ethnic composition itself reflects the unbalance. Around 88 percent of the people are Han Chinese while only 6.6 percent are Uighur, Hui 2.6 percent and Kazaks 1.7 percent (Government Document on XPCC). Many scholars suggest that it is largely military organization. The development policy was based on exploring oil industry and collective cotton farming. Though such collective cotton farming unprofitable to Uighur farmers.

WESTERN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

It is state driven macroeconomic development plan for the less developed western region. It was launched in 1999 for better economic development of

western China. It included six western provinces, five autonomous regions and one municipality. Till 2009 the Chinese government had invested 3.5 trillion Yuan (\$512.4 billion) and in 2009, China's planned investment in the region stood at 468.9 billion Yuan (National Development and Reform Commission). In the context of ethnic minority autonomous regions in general and in Xinjiang region particular, suggests that the official objectives stated are modernization, changing the 'relative backwardness' of the Western region's outlook, narrowing the development gap between the region, building prosperous economy, social progress, a stable life, national unity, prosperity to the people of the region (HRIC-MRG 2007). In practice the studies carried out from time to time found that the development policies in Xinjiang region aimed at resource extraction, economic integration of the region through influx of population and cultural assimilation. In fact, many development projects have served the development and progress of Eastern region better than the West. The Western development strategy has facilitated marginalization of minorities.

This development strategy has been criticized on various grounds. It uses the of minority development policies but ignores their needs, to serve the national integrity. In turn the deprivation has raised the discontent among the Uighur population. L. H. Liew and Wang (2004) in *Nationalism, Democracy and National Integration in China* explains how with globalization and marketization the ethnic minorities in Xinjiang region has got the opportunity to resist the integration policies of PRC. The increased interaction between Central Asian and Xinjiang ethnic groups due to their shared identity, economic benefit raises concern for PRC.

The region development is state funded rather than self or locally generated, as L. H. Liew and Wang (2004) explained examining the data for the decade of 1990, that more than half of GDP is result of state consumption and state investment which is 33 percent at national level. The following decade have shown increase in the trend. As a result, the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Province is economically well developed and competent with mainland China but the standard of living especially in south Xinjiang is far behind. The condition of Uighur community along with other ethnic minorities is improving with much slower rate which raises the possibilities of increasing gap between ethnic minorities and Han Chinese ethnic group. Moreover, the development policies have long term negative implications for both people and environment. Cotton is not suitable agriculture product for region but central government of China is planning to expand the land under cotton (Meador et al. 2013). The focus of development is integration of the region rather than development of people as the major expenditure is on highways, telecommunication and railways. All such development policies

further exploit natural resources of region and led to alienation of the local ethnic group as a result of increased suffering and lack of concern on the side of state. Lastly through such development strategy PRC has marked the minorities for the purpose of tourism, glorifying traditional culture of ethnic minorities, exhibiting them but ignoring their human value by denying them adequate share in development.

FORCED LABOUR

China uses the practice of forced labour in the minority areas. The Xinjiang region also shows presence of practice of “hashar”, a form of forced labour (Amnesty International 2009). There are several reports suggesting the practice of forced labour among men, women and children as well. These are carried out in the different names as for men it is done under the name of development programs as building roadways. Women are transfer in the factory in the Eastern China (UHRP 2008) and children under the ‘work study’ program (CECC 2008).

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

The constitutional provisions regarding the ethnic and religious minorities are broadly divided in two sections first regarding the rights of minorities and second related to governing the ethnic minority autonomous regions.

RIGHTS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES

The constitution of Peoples Republic of China recognizes the ethnic minority groups and guarantees equal rights. Ethnic minority groups have same basic civic and political rights as all other groups and also have additional protection based on their minority status. Such status shall help this group to preserve and develop their distinct culture. Article 4 of the constitution guarantees fundamental principle of equality to all nationalities and non discrimination. It also prohibits the secessionist aspirations.

All nationalities in the People’s Republic of China are equal. The State protects the lawful rights and interests of the minority nationalities and upholds and develops a relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance among all of China’s nationalities. Discrimination against and oppression of any nationality are prohibited; any act which undermines the unity of the nationalities or instigates division is prohibited. (Constitution of PRC)

REGIONAL STRUCTURE OF AUTONOMY

Further, the constitution of PRC, Article 112 to 122 of the constitution deals with the governance of autonomous regions. While Articles 116–117 provide autonomous government's authority over a variety of areas including related to administration as social services and socio-cultural development, including culture, education. Though there are special provisions as Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law (REAL), 1984 giving ethnic minorities the right to protect, preserve and promote their culture. Article 19 of the constitution lists various aspects of self governance. These organs of self government have legislative powers, authority to engage in foreign trade. These bodies have authority to use and management of natural resources, as well as authority to make the adequate provision for education, health and other such necessary services.

...large numbers of minorities be trained to become cadres at all levels and specialized personnel and skilled workers of all professions and trades (Constitution of PRC).

Though there are many provisions made in the rule of law, there implementation is highly doubtful. As the autonomous region's legislative bodies cannot legislate local laws and regulate them as easily as the other provincial legislative bodies. Autonomous regions need to seek permission of NPC while other provincial government reports such changes to NPC in order to bring it into effect. The 2001 amendment to LREA has shifted the focus of political autonomy to economic autonomy. The 2005 amendment was made to promote sustainable development and poverty relief in ethnic minority areas (LREA 2001, 2005 and HRIC MRG 2007). The work report of the standing committee (March 2013) notes the concern and necessity to implement the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy and work on various issues as basic public services, take steps to advance poverty alleviation. The report by HRIC suggests that the lack of public ownership is one of the major reasons for ineffective implementation of the LREA and other regulations protecting ethnic minorities (HRIC MRG 2007: 13).

POVERTY

Most of the poverty stricken areas are the ethnic autonomous regions. Xinjiang has 27 counties, facing poverty. The development in the autonomous regions has led to marginalization of local population largely ethnic minorities. The inequitable development has emerged as the byproduct of the present governing policies of the states towards the autonomous regions and ethnic minorities (HRIC, Commissioned by MRG 2007). The BTI 2012 report

notes that the majority of China's poor lives in minority regions. Among total minority population 20 percent are poor (BTI 2012).

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Violation of civil and political rights is one of the major issues of contestation among the ethnic minority groups. Most activists among the ethnic minority groups are closely monitored by the state security agencies. The lack of freedom of expression in exercising civic activities as well as political participation creates the atmosphere of repression. It leads to creating the distrust among majority and minority groups. The study conducted by HRIC, MRG notes such experience of distrust and feeling of otherness or being foreigner is experienced by the Uighur.

SCENARIO IN EDUCATION

The state has adopted many policies and measures to support the development of education among minority peoples. The white paper published on promotion of development for all ethnic groups notes various measures that state has taken from time to time. It notes that the state respects the autonomous area's right to develop education system ensuring minority rights. It has made provision for bilingual teaching, including teaching in minority languages. It also provides assistance in terms of funds to run ethnic education institutes along with strengthening rank of teachers from minority communities (White paper IV PRC).

Though the white paper notes that the state has paid great attention to promoting universal compulsory education especially in poverty-stricken ethnic minority areas the socio economic indicators as combined enrolment for education in all five ethnic autonomous regions is ranging between 50 to 60 percent. Further the research carried out by Edward Kormondy over a period of nineteen years shows that 'the Chinese government seems to be intent on Sincizing minority population.' The detailed study various education institutes ranging from primary education in rural areas to various universities in capital. The study found out that instead of bilingual policies for ethnic minority region, in reality the instruction only for first three years are given in Uighur language. After that instructions are given in Mandarin Chinese. It acts as major hurdle for section of population to continue the education. Further till mid 1990s education was free without any fees, now students/ parents have to bear for tuition fees which cost around 20- 30 percent of operating cost (Kormandy 2012).

**Table-5: Education level of Muslim Minorities in China-1990
(in Percentage)**

| Educational level | Uighur | Kazakh | Kyrgyz | Tartar | All China |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|
| University Graduates | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 3.6 | 0.5 |
| Undergraduate | 0.4 | 0.7 | 0.5 | 2.5 | 2.4 |
| Technical School | 1.6 | 2.6 | 2.4 | 5. | 17.6 |
| Senior Middle School | 3.5 | 5.5 | 3.4 | 11.0 | 6.4 |
| Junior Middle School | 11.9 | 16.4 | 10.2 | 22.0 | 23.3 |
| Primary School | 43.9 | 43.9 | 43.4 | 32.7 | 37.2 |
| Semi Literate or illiterate | 26.6 | 12.3 | 24.9 | 4.9 | 22.2 |

Source: Dru Gladney 2003

The study carried out by Dru Gladney (2003) shows the situation of Higher education among the Muslim minorities in China. The Uighur population is below national average in all education level except in illiterate (26.6), primary (43.9) and university graduates is equal to national average (0.5). As mentioned above the education till the Primary and secondary level is given in Uighur language while higher education is given in Mandarin making proficiency in Mandarin as one of the instrument of upward mobility. The major drawback as Gladney records is that the official definition of education does not include the traditional expertise in Persian, Arabic, Changanatay and Islamic sciences as these are not being part of Chinese culture. On a contrary the higher education is education given in Chinese language and the sciences. Though a section of Uighur elites have emerged who are trained in Higher education in the various Chinese universities and have started dominating Xinjiang's governance. Galdney notes the dissatisfaction among large Uighur population for loss of their traditional culture in such way. It is also reflected in the establishment of Uighur Traditional Medical Hospital in 1987 and *Madrassah* as beginning of counterbalancing such Chinese influence.

The study carried out by Enze Han (2010) shows the differences in the language practice in the daily life as well as job market. Where there are two groups in Uighurs based on the medium of instruction in schooling. The Uighur proficient in Chinese are called *minkaohan* the other *minkaomin*, who had schooling in Uighur language. While the *minkaohan* are relatively better at job market than *minkaomin* but they (*minkaomin*) does consider

minkaohan inferior due to their adaptation of Han Chinese culture and language. On the other hand, Han Chinese population does not differentiate between *minkaohan* and *minkaomin* and treat both the groups with distrust and suspicion.

Due to poor quality primary and secondary education, to accommodate minority students in technical as well as general education, the standard of admission are lowered in case of higher education. Though it appears as affirmative measure it is observed that it has some negative implications in the absence of adequate complimentary mechanism to improve the quality of education. It has developed attitude of laziness, lack of competence among the minority student. The research carried out by M. A. Rong (2009) also shows that there is betterment in the primary and mid school level education while the secondary and higher education scenario for Uighur community could not maintain the adequate rate of progress creating constrains for the Uighur youth resulting into social tension. Further the development of education is not evenly distributed over the whole region.

The study also found that the trend developing of sending children to other region even bearing financial inconvenience due to lack of adequate development of education institutions in the region. The poor quality of education in rural areas is also result of failure of government to ensure better teachers in rural areas while the urban area can get better teachers from eastern region (Rong 2009).

The cultural assimilation is largely working through the policies of education, employment and accessibility to basic social services like health. In Xinjiang it works at two levels that can be categorized as qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative aspect analyzed through examining education policies by Human Right in China suggests that the present education system in its implementation denies ethnic minority children the access to their own history and culture. The persistent poverty among the ethnic minorities is major indicator of their marginalization. The official statistics on education registered increasing in the enrolments in ethnic autonomous regions but the level of access is still matter of concern. In addition the level of illiteracy is significantly higher in these regions.

In 2006, the authorities initiated policy measures that are making Chinese language as the primary medium of instruction at the pre-school level. While state promoted the policy of bilingualism in theory it is not followed in practice. The report of Amnesty international (2009) notes the contradictory

practices, where Uighur children and teachers in South Xinjinag region would be fined for using Uighur language in school premises.

HEALTH

One of the latest studies conducted in 2012 due to high incidence rate of communicable disease in Xinjiang, especially south Xinjiang. Though the study notes major causes as historical reasons and geographical environment and present changes health policies. The socio economic reasons identified are concentration of ethnic minorities, mobile population and low economic development. According to another study referred by Uighur human rights project, Uighur has lowest life expectancy of 63 years while the national average is 72 years. The HRIC MRG (2007) reports that higher infant mortality and maternal mortality rates in ethnic areas. National under five mortality rate recorded in 2000 is 39.7 deaths per 1000 while it is 65.4 deaths per 1000 in XUAR. The national maternal mortality rate is 53 per 100,000 and in XUAR 161.4 per in 2000 (HRIC MRG 2007: 20).

EMPLOYMENT

Xinjiang has many modern, technologically advanced large and medium-sized industrial projects, petrochemical factories, large communication facilities. The Urumqi General Petrochemicals Factory and the ethylene project of the Dushanzi General Petrochemicals Factory, the Southern Xinjiang Railway, the Tacheng Airport and the high-grade Turpan-Urumqi-Dahuangshan Highway are major example of such development.

According to statistics, Xinjiang invested around 190 billion Yuan in fixed assets during the 20 years from 1978 to 1997. During this period it has completed 64 large and medium size projects and more than 50,000 projects. These investments have greatly improved Xinjiang's water conservancy, communications, posts and telecommunications and other infrastructure facilities.

EMPLOYMENT — UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION IN CHINA

Employment is source of not just income but ensuring social stability. With the process of privatization rural population started migrating to urban areas. China had 1.35 billion population in 2012, among them 937 million (age 15 -59 years) was working age population. Out of the 937 million 767 million were employed (371 urban and 396 rural areas).

Table-6: Employment Statistics-2012

| Employment | 2012 (in millions) | Change 2011 (in percent) |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Working age population | 937 | -36.81 |
| Employed | 767 | 37.02 |
| Urban | 371 | 32.07 |
| Rural | 396 | NA |

Source: China Labour Bulletin 2013

Unemployment rate in China the officially quoted figure is 4.1 percent while the study conducted by Professor Gan Plow of Southwest University of Finance and Economics, suggested the unemployment level around 8 percent (China Human Resource and Development Network 2012). This is because the official unemployment statistics only include urban workers who have registered as unemployed (CLB 2013).

DISCRIMINATION

Thought all citizens are equal, essentially implying fair opportunities for ethnic minorities, women and religious minorities in labour market. Yet such employment discrimination occurs in China on the basis of ethnicity, gender, age, household registration, disabilities, health and other such reasons. Ethnicity based discrimination was practiced in social life since 1949 but it has increased in the sphere of employment since 1980s. Ethnic minority community of Uighur and Tibet are the major groups suffering through such discrimination. Such ethnic discrimination is tolerated/ practiced in government as well as private organization. The China Labour Bulletin quotes a survey conducted in 2011 for around 10796 advertised jobs found around half of the applications were discrimination.

The geopolitical situation makes it potential reason for regional instability. The exclusion of minorities is based on cultural differences, very often economic and political disparities have chances of leading it to violence and conflict. It gives government the opportunity to treat these acts as illegitimate being supported by separatist or terrorist activities. The government's willingness to use violence as means to address the grievances of ethnic

minorities in the present context is the major concern among major scholars (HRIC MEG 2007).

The clear priority of PRC is social stability, national unity and development. Various documents and acts of executive make the priority clear. In such a situation minority does not get state's attention after ensuring earlier objectives to the satisfaction level of the state. As the discourse of protest by the citizens and violence due to ethnic tension treated in post 2001 period war against terrorism is sufficient evidence to get the idea that how state policies work for minorities. There are several instances policy practices or directions suggesting the discriminatory treatment of Chinese government to the ethnic minorities. These two ethnic minorities are major target of government suspicion in the name of security (Uighur Human Rights project).

It is essential to consider the global dimension of the present policies of the PRC government towards the Uighur ethnic community in particular and minorities in general. China has developed good relations with the Muslim countries in the Middle East, West Asia and Central Asia during the last few decades. Its need for oil, low grade weaponry and cheap labour are the three commodities dominating the trade between these states. As Dru Gladney (2003) argues mishandling its Muslim problem will alienate trading partners in the Middle East who are primarily Muslims. The interethnic relations within Xinjiang continue to have tremendous consequences for the development in the region.

The creation of Modern China has led to creation of the present region of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. The population distribution and cultural similarities shows that the proximity of the Uighur population with the Central Asia region (following Table Uighur population in Central Asia). The creation of new independent Central Asian State after collapse of Soviet Union and change in policies of China around similar time making the border porous has increased the interaction among the central Asian and Uighur population. Through China's more open border policy was aimed at exploring the economic benefit from the Xinjiang as well as Central Asian region, the simultaneous increase of discontent in the ethnic minority population has emerged as the parallel unwanted development. The events in the region shows that the discontent of Uighur (as well as Central Asian population) population in Xinjiang region and their presence in Central Asia has affected the relation between Central Asian states and China as well as with the population (citizens of Central Asia) and the Central Asian states.

UIGHUR IN CENTRAL ASIA

Table-7: Uighur Population in Central Asia

| Country | Population | Percent |
|--------------|--------------------------|---------|
| Kazakhstan | 224,713 | 1.4 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 48,543 | 0.9 |
| Tajikistan | - | - |
| Turkmenistan | - | - |
| Uzbekistan | 35,762 1989 ⁵ | 0.2 |
| Total | 309,018 | - |

Source: Census Reports of the states

Uighur population in Central Asia is around 309018 (2009 census). Historically the Central Asian states shares significant population with Xinjiang region. There are several waves of Uighur migration into the neighbouring region especially Central Asian states and Turkey. Starting from 1930s, the major group of population has migration in 1962 due to hardships faced during the ‘great leap forward⁶’ policy of China. After 1980s the freedom of movement has increased, increasing out migration from China to Central Asia (Shichor 2009) as a result there is higher Uighur population in Central Asia States than officially claimed (Marat E. 2009). Similarly, there large number of Central Asian population resides as well as travel for economic reasons to the Xinjiang province of China. These people also face the discrimination and human rights violation an estimated around 1 million ethnic Kazakhs in Xinjiang, faces the similar discrimination in social and cultural sphere.

The change in environment in the region with emergence of Central Asian state has affected the Uighur assertion. The Uighur population suffering from cultural, political and economic repression has seen relatively better assertion of its dissent. One of the factors can be increasing communication with Central Asia through cross border trade. The friction between these two ethnic groups also has dimension of competition for control over natural resources in the region. The increasing cooperation between China and Central Asian states especially Kazakhstan in the field of oil and natural gas

⁵ The 2009 census does not list Uighur as ethnic group separately.

⁶ Great Leap Forward is the radical shift in policy of China towards its minorities. The period for great Leap forward was ranging from 1958 to 1968. It have seen policy shift from gradualism to pluralism and then radical assimilation of minority communities in China (P Geetha Lakshmi 2003).

extraction increases the contact between two regions raising the possibilities of developing sympathy among the Uighur population in the Central Asian region. The study carried out by ICE research team (2006) suggests that under such a scenario the internal conflict of China has potential become regional conflict. The increasing cooperation between China and Central Asia can lead to increasing tension between Uighur and Central Asian ethnic groups and Han Chinese group.

The region of Central Asia has seen such political organization by Uighur groups in early 1990s which were oppressed by their respective state governments following the increase Chinese influence and formation of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) around 1996 (Bovington 2004). Historically Soviet Russia had adopted the liberal policies towards Uighur, giving their cultural freedom. As a result of which with the collapse of Soviet Union and independence of the Central Asia state, demand for separate state for Uighur ethnic group became stronger. In June 1992 such group advocating for independent Uighurstan convened their first congress in Almaty, creating East Turkestan Committee and Uighuristan Organization of Freedom. Among Central Asian states, Kazakhstan has large concentration of Uighur ethnic group, those are residing for centuries in Kazakhstan, now have adopted Russian Culture under the Soviet influence. While there was Uighur population migrating due to repression in Xinjiang region of China. Recently in 1962 such large scale migration occurred when between 60,000 and 120,000 Uighurs and Kazakhs fled into Kazakhstan. It was only around 1994 and onwards with the increasing relations with China, Kazakhstan started curtailing the freedom of such Uighur groups (MRG Kazakhstan 2011).

Uighur is the fourth largest ethnic minority group in Kyrgyzstan, after Russian, Uzbek, and Dunguns (Hui). Though official record claims Uighur population is around 50,000 but it is estimated that non official statistics of Uighur in Kyrgyzstan is 200,000 (Mukhamedov 2004). There are several organizations working in Central Asia for Uighur cause of justice. The Uighur Freedom Organization and the Kyrgyzstan Uighur Unity (Ittipak) Association is one among them. But with the increasing influence of China in the region they have been warned by government authorities not to indulge in activities relating to the Uighur Diasporas in Xinjiang (MRG 2011 Kyrgyzstan). In recent years, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have extradited several Uighur activists to China (Mukhamedov 2004). After the 2009 violence in the Xinjiang, protest was organized in Kyrgyzstan which was attended by around 500 people. The organization Ittipak is under the close scrutiny of the interior ministry of Kyrgyzstan. Its leadership has been systematically eliminated twice and several other activists are facing government repression.

SECURITY

Violence is one of the indicators of discontent and instability in society. Its occurrence leads to disturbing the peace and stability. While sustained development has stability as one of the necessary condition and objective. This makes keeping violence at minimum desirable for development. In such scenario, the increased incidence of violence in the last decade in the Xinjiang autonomous region raises concern. This makes it necessary to identify the causes of violence to deal with it. Among the first such incidence of political assertion through peaceful pro independence demonstration was carried out in Yining in 1997 (a small city about 30 miles from china-Kazakhstan border). It was suppressed with the use of force by China. The terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 has changed the situation, where separatist movements are seen as terrorist activities when it involves Muslim population. The major incidences of violence have occurred in 2009, 156 people died and several hundreds injured in it. It was caused due to local fight between Han Chinese and Uighur group in Guangdong region (South China) resulted into death of two Uighur peoples causing riots. The last such violence has happened in April-August 2013 in Kashgar region, which Chinese government has treated as terrorist attacks.

In the post-Cold War period the focus of security has changed from state centric (Military and economic security) to individual security understood in terms of human security. Human security widens the traditional concept of security. A stream of scholars considers that international relations security is closely link the concept of security to development. Such link between security and development is criticized by many scholars, being used as tool by development states to subjugate the developing world and advocating the development models.

At both national and global level there are three way connections between security and development. First progress requires reduced insecurity. More inclusive growth ensures better development. There are several problems in achieving such inclusive growth and development. It is relatively easy to mobilize people on political and cultural grounds against another group within society than engaging such groups in better development policies (Stewart 2004).

The Chinese government uses the argument of emergence of terrorism to suppress the political and cultural dissent. Such repression has resulted in violation of basic human rights. Though scholars as. M. Clarke (2007) and Y. Shichor (2005) analyzing the government policy towards Uighur community in Xinjiang notes the presence policies violates the civil and

political rights of the Uighur ethnic community. The most explicit analysis of China's implicit security objectives behind the development policies are analyzed by Daniel Moller Olgard and Tina Sundree Lauge Gill (2012), it shows the role of security in the Western Development plan and its implications on Uighur ethnic community.

Examining the China's approach towards Xinjiang region and Uighur community M. Clarke (2010) suggests that it is result of inherent contradictory policies leading to deteriorating the situation at all domestic, regional and international level. He argues that the 2009 riots indicate the failure of China's policies of governance due to increasing discontent among Uighur population. While at regional level the contradiction lies between China's growing influence with the governments of Central Asia and the ambivalent attitude of Central Asian publics towards China.

Internationally China uses the rise of religious extremism and terrorism to suppress the Uighur political and Cultural assertion. M Clarke (2007) shows the limitations of such claims, to arrive such inference he examines the government policies and reports regarding terrorism in China.

His analysis is based on the Julie Harrelson-Stephens (2006) argument about theory for genesis and growth of terrorism that concludes that denial of security rights is necessary condition along with state's failure to ensure subsistence rights along with civil and political rights creates an environment conducive for emergence of terrorism.

The Chinese government ignores/ represses the political, social-cultural and economic aspiration of the Uighur ethnic minority community with the aim to preserve its national unity and political stability. The increased violence in the last few years specifically since 2009 indicates that it has failed to achieve the desired objectives. The two communities have historical-cultural differences and China's policies towards minorities largely guided by the policy of cultural assimilation have only increased the distance between two groups increasing the potential of the region for violence and instability.

China has dealt with Xinjiang ethnic assertion as traditional secessionist problem threat to national unity. In addition the China's development policies lead to discrimination of the ethnic minority groups. There are horizontal inequalities within the Han and Uighur ethnic communities that often lead to conflict of interest between the two communities. The unequal distribution of political and economic resources is major cause of such inequalities.

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