

**SPECIAL FOCUS: Inequitable and discriminatory development**

Although there have been attempts to address the growing disparities within its borders, China's rapid economic transformation has not improved the lives of ethnic minorities overall.



**WESTERN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (WDS) AND THE COST OF DEVELOPMENT**

WDS, intended to 'modernize' western provinces and autonomous regions, appears no more than a political tool for strengthening national unity, through:

- Resource extraction from the borderlands to benefit the coast;
- Assimilation of local ethnic minority groups and Han Chinese population transfers to the autonomous areas; and
- Infrastructure development for military use.

*"[E]conomic development in minority regions does not, ipso facto, entail the equal enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights."*  
 - Commentary of UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

**INEQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT FUELING TENSIONS**

- The benefits of development have not been effectively translated into political, economic, and social improvement for minorities.
- Minorities' political marginalization and exclusion from the benefits of China's rapid economic growth fuels tensions between minorities, Han Chinese, and the government.
- Minorities, especially those who live in interior and rural areas, are exploited through resource extraction, and have no real impact on these policies.

**MILITARIZATION AS DEVELOPMENT**

- The state-driven Western Development Strategy aids the campaign to increase military build-up to maintain control in minority areas, especially in the **Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR)**, **Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR)**, and the **Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR)**.
- Under the banner of anti-terrorism, China organizes joint-military exercises with neighboring countries to deter 'internal threats' in the XUAR, IMAR, and TAR.

*"Expanding Tibet's economy is not a mere economic issue, but a major political issue that has a vital bearing on Tibet's social stability and progress. This work not only helps Tibet, but is also related directly to the struggle against the Dalai Lama's splittist attempts."*  
 - Li Ruihuan,  
 Member, CPC Politburo

## INEQUALITIES IN BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES

There continue to be sharp inequalities in basic social services, such as education and health, while income and unemployment comparisons show that persons belonging to ethnic groups fall behind national averages and those for Han Chinese.

### Lagging behind in education

#### ⇒ Illiteracy

- The illiteracy rate for minorities over 15 years old was 14.6% at the last official census (2000), compared to 8.6% amongst Han Chinese.
- 68.7% of minority women over 15 years old are illiterate.

#### ⇒ Low educational attainment

- Only 4% of minorities attained post-graduate level.
- Minorities who have attained a college-level of education or above account for only 5.75% of the total.

#### ⇒ Poor access to schools

- Poor school facilities and distance have prevented parents from sending their kids to school.
- As of 2003, only 57.9% of county-level autonomous areas were achieving compulsory education.

### Disparity in income and discriminatory unemployment

- ⇒ Income disparity between minority and Han-dominated areas is a serious issue. In 2000, nominal income in ethnic regions was 7,802 *yuan*, compared to 9,371 *yuan* in non-ethnic regions.
- ⇒ Mandarin fluency and education attainment have become a major discriminatory criterion preventing minorities from equal access to work.

Ethnic discrimination in employment has recently stood out as a social and political issue, with unemployment amongst the educated and Mandarin-speaking minority youth becoming more widespread, fuelling tensions between minorities, Han-Chinese and the government.

*"[Employers] basically say, 'we don't want you, Uyghurs'... they just say, Chinese... so basically, even a Uyghur college graduate cannot find a job."*  
- Uyghur interviewee

### Poor access to medical care

- ⇒ Geographical inaccessibility of clinics and hospital, and high medical fees, prevent most low-income minorities from accessing public medical care.
- ⇒ 36% of all HIV-infected individuals in the country are from minority groups.

**Under-five mortality rate** in 2000 in the TAR, IMAR and XUAR (*per 1,000 births*)

65.4	XUAR
57.2	TAR
39.7	National average
35.6	IMAR

**Maternal mortality rate** in 2000 in the TAR, IMAR and XUAR (*per 100,000 pregnant women*)

466.3	TAR
161.4	XUAR
62.6	IMAR
53.0	National average

## ADDITIONAL READING

- ⇒ Fischer, Andrew Martin. *State Growth and Social Exclusion in Tibet: Challenges of Recent Economic Growth*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Press, 2005.
- ⇒ International Campaign for Tibet. *Crossing the Line: China's Railway to Lhasa, Tibet*. Washington, D.C. 2003.
- ⇒ Riddell, Roger. *Minorities, Minority Rights and Development*. London: Minority Rights Group International, 2002.
- ⇒ *China Rights Forum: Ethnic Groups in China*, 4 (2006).

**For the full HRIC/MRG report, contact:**

Human Rights in China, [www.hrichina.org](http://www.hrichina.org)

Minority Rights Group International, [www.minorityrights.org](http://www.minorityrights.org)