CHAPTER II

CHINA'S LIBERALIZATION AND NEW ECONOMIC POLICY IN TIBET

The overall changes in China, called for a new strategy for the United Work Department of the Party, which involved overtures to overseas Chinese-Hong Kong and Taiwan, in an attempt to resolve outstanding national issues. In order to gain the support of the minority groups, for the ‘four modernization’ the new party leaders also decided that the CCP must take time to improve ethnic relations and dispel misunderstanding before they end up with serious losses. 1 The Party then abandoned the policy of forced assimilation and aimed to create an environment conducive to the eventual assimilation of the minority. 2

China realised that the past two decades had resulted in economic stagnation of China, in which the minority regions had fared the worst in many ways. The disparity in economic and social development between the areas inhabited by the minorities in the West and the Chinese in the East had not been bridged; in fact it has widened. In the case of Tibet, the glaring disparity was proved by the third census carried out in 1979. All social indices showed that Tibet lagged far behind even other minority regions. The twin policies of class struggle and forced wheat production had left Tibet in abject poverty.

1 Yang Jingren, ‘Resolutely carry out the Party Central Committee’s Instructions and do the work in Xizang Well’, Chinese Law and Government, Vol.14, No.4, 1981-82, p.93. (Note: Further this will be abbreviated as Yang Jingren.)
With the introduction of reforms, the new leaders wanted to see rapid development and for that, they needed to gain the support of the minority groups for the ‘four modernization’. Tibet and other minority regions in the West are seen as primary source of raw materials for the economic development of China. Yang Jingren, the then Minister of State and Nationalities Affairs Commission, also emphasised that the territories inhabited by the minority groups were rich in natural resources; Tibet alone contained 40% of China’s mineral resources\(^3\) which makes it perfect to utilize the areas in pursuit of economic modernization goal.

As far as Tibet was concerned, the new leaders decided that, what had marred the relationship between China and Tibet were the mistakes made by the ‘gang of four’ in executing the party’s policy on nationality,\(^4\) and concluded that the Tibetan question would be solved just by finding an appropriate ‘work style’. The key to managing the Tibetan affairs, in their view, was the Dalai Lama. Once China could achieve reconciliation with him, the party would be able to recover its positions in Tibet.

Therefore, in 1979, the Chinese authorities encouraged the Dalai Lama to send the first series of fact-finding delegations to investigate the current conditions in Tibet. The government wanted to show off the progress of the previous 20 years of schools, hospitals, roads, constructions, and to demonstrate the Tibetan peoples’ solidarity with the motherland. Beijing had no idea that the regional party had failed

\(^3\) Xinhua, 21.October.1983.
\(^4\) Yang Jingren 1981-82, p.100.
to implement in Tibet, many of the changes that had already been carried out in China. Unsuspectingly, the Central government accepted reports from the then party leader in Tibet, Ren Rong, about the improvements in Tibetan living standards, and the general satisfaction of the Tibetan people with the Chinese rule.

In late 1979, the Dalai Lama sent the first delegation to Tibet – who returned to Beijing with a very negative report. This was something Beijing obviously had not expected. The delegation informed the Chinese about their shock and dismay at the universal religious and cultural destruction they had witnessed, and the overall poverty and backwardness of the Tibetans. They saw no evidence of material progress in Tibet except massive destruction, not to mention the absence of good roads or buildings. The delegations visit also made the authorities realise that even after 20 years of communism, the Tibetans showed spontaneous affection and demonstration of support for the Dalai Lama. Beijing was very much embarrassed to say the least, which prompted the fact-finding visit in May 1980 by the Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang and Chinese Vice-Premier Wan Li to see the conditions for themselves. Hu was reportedly appalled by the Chinese mismanagement in Tibet. He immediately removed Ren Rong from his position and personally escorted him back to Beijing. Hu acknowledged that the Communist party had failed miserably in Tibet. Far from eradicating poverty, in many areas, the peoples’ living standards had declined. Ren Rong’s claims of progress in Tibet were belied by the necessity of increasing subsidies for the Tibetan economy during the 1970’s that continued into the 80’s. In fact, far from providing the poor with enough to eat, the overwhelming evidence suggests that the Chinese totally disrupted an essentially self sufficient society and caused through their brutality and colonialism, massive food shortage and widespread
hunger as the masses were put to work to feed their new masters.  

Tibet had suffered disastrously from China's errors and outright oppression of Chinese policies. Yak herders were driven into collectives, barley farmers were forced to plant wheat unsuited to the high Tibetan plateau. This precipitated famines—something which was never heard of in the history of Tibet. In fact, Tibet was very much self-sufficient in food before the Chinese takeover. Recent research indicates that during the great famine of 1958 through 1961, over 343,000 Tibetans died of starvation. Not only that, it was reported that more than a million people died under Chinese repression and torture and more than 6000 monasteries and temples were stripped of all religious treasures and turned into storage places and garrisons. Eighty percent of the destruction occurred before the start of the so-called Cultural Revolution that is between 1956-1966. When the so-called Cultural Revolution ended in 1976, only 13 religious monuments had survived the destruction. Millions of Tibetans had reportedly perished or had languished in prison. Education and health care were virtually non-existent and the economy of the country collapsed.

On inspection, Hu Yaobang is reported to have told party cadres, "This reminds me of colonialism". Hu then made a series of recommendations, and changes, which laid the foundation for Tibet during the 1980's. Even though Chinese liberalization

6 Tibetan Review, October-November, 1974, p.4.  
7 See 19' News Tibet, 1 at 4 (Jan-Aug 1984)  
was introduced in Tibet, in advance of what was being done in the rest of China, the leaders also attempted to specifically redress the situation in Tibet. Hu’s six-point reform policy for Tibet included the following directives:-

1. The TAR government should fully exercise its autonomy;
2. The farmers and herders should be exempted from taxation and compulsory quota sales to state as well as the assignment of work without pay. They should be free to negotiate for the sale of their products.
3. A flexible economic policy should be implemented in Tibet recognising Tibet’s special situation and tailored to Tibet’s special needs.
4. Subsidies from the Central government should be increased to develop the local economy.
5. Within the socialist framework, efforts should be made to revive and develop Tibetan culture, education and science.
6. The participation of the cadres in the local administration should be increased and large numbers of Han cadres should be withdrawn from Tibet.¹⁰

Hu’s directives recognised the uniqueness of Tibet, its special characteristics and special needs. Since then, there have been notable changes and improvement in the social and economic spheres of life, compared to the harsh conditions during the period of collectivization and the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution. Peoples’ living standards and the food situation has since then improved to a certain extent.

China had no doubt improved the living standards of Tibetans, but it tends to

make much of its development efforts in Tibet. They repeatedly compare the old society with its primitive technology and stagnant social system – to the new, pointing to the region’s schools, roads, hospitals, electricity projects, constructions, financial aid to Tibet, and the general growing prosperity of the Tibetan people. China insists that Tibetans are much better off now that they are ‘liberated’ from feudalism and oppression and never miss an opportunity to project a happy and prosperous Tibet under their rule. On the other hand, while acknowledging the gains, the Tibetan government-in-exile and their supporters contradict China’s claims. They say that, things are still far from satisfactory even now, and more has been lost than gained. China had taken more out of Tibet than it had given and the losses are still accumulating.

This chapter will discuss the developments and the reform measures that China undertook in the field of agriculture and animal husbandry, society, education, medical services, environment, science and technology, power and industry etc. as applied to Tibet.

Agriculture and Animal Husbandry

Tibet’s economic reform began with agriculture and animal husbandry. As farmers and herders comprise about 90% of the population, improving the living standard of this lot was immediately addressed by exempting farmers and herdsmen in Tibet from both taxes and the quota sales system.

The quota system required the farmers and herdsmen to sell a fixed amount of their produce to the government at prices slightly below the free-market prices. The
nation-wide system of quota sales provides the government with its main source of farm and animal products. With the new system, the communes which had controlled every aspect of social and economic life were disbanded and animals were divided equally among the commune members. They are now allowed to keep their produce or dispose of it for their own benefit. This system had the greatest impact on Tibetan society, genuinely freeing the Tibetan peasants from the shackles of the communes and the state bureaucracy to a certain extent.

China now admits that Tibetans were forced to grow wheat for the Han settlers, instead of barley, which is Tibetan staple diet. They admitted that their officials in Tibet have displayed the unhealthy tendency of great Han chauvinism — although they blame most of the disastrous effects on the Cultural Revolution. If one goes by the Chinese report, it would indicate that the government had been making great efforts towards the development of agriculture and pastoralism.

Tibet is one of China's five pastoral areas, with 82.66 million hectares of grassland, 57.3 million hectares of which can be used. The government, reported that 60% of farmland can be irrigated and more that 75,000 farm machines, chemical fertilizers, pesticides and improved crop varieties are being used extensively to improve production. It has also harnessed rivers to build water-conservancy projects to develop Tibetan agriculture and animal husbandry. The government also accepted the UN Food Program and assistance for projects (coded 3357) for the comprehensive harnessing of the Lhasa river.

As a result, Government statistics show that Tibet has established more than
16,500 water conservancy projects, providing an annual water supply of 1.567 billion cubic metres, and that the effectively irrigated areas reached 54.3% of Tibet’s total cultivated land areas.\textsuperscript{11} By 1990, the total output value of Tibet’s agriculture and livestock breeding amounted to 789 million kg, which is supposed to be the all time high. Tibet’s livestock provided a total of 93 million kg of meat, turned out 178 million kg of milk, 8.5 million kg of wool and 496,000 of goat hair.\textsuperscript{12}

The \textit{Beijing Review} also reported that the output value of animal husbandry in 1989 reached 430 million Yuan, an increase of 48.3 percent over 1978. And by 1991, Tibet had 23 million head of animals, a 2.41 times rise over 1959, and an average 10.8 head for each person, ranking it the highest in the country.\textsuperscript{13} The per-capita income of the Tibetan peasantry had reportedly risen sharply. In 1979, the average income was 127 Yuan, but within two years it had risen to 220 Yuan.\textsuperscript{14}

Farmers and herdsmen appear to have been the main beneficiaries of the new reforms. According to Goldstein, in the nomad areas of Pala, with the exception of taxes and quota sales, the overall increase in prices for animal products have allowed Pala households to generate profits from what is still a basically traditional system of production. Although, this is still a poor area even by Tibetan standards, by 1990, many of the households had reportedly purchased new manufactured commodities

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Beijing Review}, May 20, 1991, p.20.
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Beijing Review}, May 20, 1991, p.19.
\textsuperscript{14} Tseten Wangchuk Sharho, ‘China’s Reform in Tibet: Issues and Dilemmas’, \textit{Journal of Contemporary China}, Vol. 1, No.1, 1992, p.44.
such as tape recorders, sewing machines and bicycles. While all these were important improvements in living standards, in reality, the standard of living returned to the level the people had enjoyed before the Chinese takeover.

However, Tibetans are still subjected to a wide range of state control over their freedom. Herders complain that their movements are restricted through registration and permits, which makes it difficult to find jobs in the cities, where they are not registered. Change of registration from rural to urban is almost impossible. In some remote areas, the communes were not disbanded immediately and they continued to function for several years. Goldstein also reported that, in Pala, the nomads were forced to make quota sales, even though this was illegal under the reforms. Pala officials did so, to fill the coffers of their local agencies and to make a good impression on their superiors. They also claimed that the sales were voluntary. They paid the nomads just enough to ward off protests to officials in Lhasa.15

The Tibetan government in exile and its supporters charge that China’s policies favour city dwellers over farmers and herders, concentrating its development projects and other subsidies on the cities. They insist that China should provide more support for rural areas, where the bulk of the Tibetan population live and where there is a lack of basic amenities like electricity. They claim that China is actually benefiting the Chinese cadres, merchants and other settlers, who live almost entirely in the neighbouring towns and cities. They report that ‘this becomes clear when one

study the deep urban-rural divide in subsidies\(^{16}\).

It is true that most of China’s development projects are city centered. However, China has not entirely ignored the well being of Tibetan farmers and herders. They were exempted from taxes from 1980’s to the mid 90’s, although they were reportedly forced into illegal quota sales and compulsory labour\(^{17}\). This was probably due to the inefficiency in carrying out the changes by the concerned officials of those areas.

China also built and maintained roads throughout Tibet to keep links with the remote nomads and farming areas. It is true that during the initial period of takeover, new roads were build primarily for supply lines for the troops, where they serve strategic purposes. It is also possible that China hoped to attract more Han into Tibet by maintaining roads that will enable them to keep political control over Tibet. Now that the Chinese army is firmly in place, Tibetans are benefiting too.

Chinese statistics show that the level of annual subsidies to the TAR in the late 80’s were around 1 billion Yuan or $270 million. The central government is also reported to have bolstered the TAR’s economy with 35 billion Yuan -in-aid since 1952\(^{18}\). Between 1980 and 1982, 98% of the region’s budget was met by subsidies from the central government. In 1983, Tibet generated 500.8 million Yuan in revenue


but the total disposable revenue was 100.5 million Yuan. The difference was met by subsidies from Beijing.\textsuperscript{19} This chronic dependence on Chinese subsidy made the fiscal power granted in law of little practical value. Moreover, habitual interference from Beijing and other central government offices made the provision requiring special preferences a paper promise only.\textsuperscript{20}

The fiscal power given to Tibet and the right to keep all the revenues raised, including all foreign exchange earned by Tibet made very little difference since the revenue generated locally made up only a small percentage of the total expenditure in Tibet.

The declared value of the gross value of agricultural output per capita for some rural areas in Tibet is between 500-600, well ahead of Chinese average of 276 Yuan.\textsuperscript{21} This would indicate a dramatic improvement since the reform. But in reality, this negative prosperity has been caused by inflation. Tibet is still a very poor country with a very low per capita income. There are indications that some Tibetans are still suffering from food shortages. Tourists also have reported on the large number of beggars roaming in Tibet, particularly in Lhasa, which indicates that Tibet still faces economic problems. Jonathan Mirsky, a journalist also commented on the poverty and hunger which is still so evident in Tibet.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{19} Wang Xiaoqing and Bai Nanfeng, \textit{Poverty of Plenty}, (London: MacMillan, 1991), p.68. (note: further, this will be referred to as \textit{Wang and Bai}.)
\textsuperscript{20} An Zhinguo, \textit{Beijing Review}, 1987, No.47, p.5.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{The Observer}, 26.4.1987, Jonathan Mirsky, Hongkong, Drenlong (April 1988). I discovered the truth after a visit to Tibet.
Jasper Becker, the *Guardian* correspondent, reported that the Chinese government was unable to control the deteriorating food situation and that about 100,000,000 Chinese are suffering from malnutrition and some 30-40 million people may be in danger of starvation in Western China, including Tibet. Grain is being rationed with coupons in cities and Becker estimates that per capita protein consumption is lower than that than in most third world countries. China is at present purchasing grain from the USA and other countries. For many Tibetans, their common diet like meat, butter and cheese are still a rarity, yet, China sends much of the food, wool, diary products etc. to the rest of China.

The price increase and the inflation since 1990 have eroded the buying power of ordinary Tibetans. The cost of living in Tibet is generally much higher that the rest of China, and the goods sold in Tibet are frequently much more expensive than on the mainland. The high cost of living has highly affected urban dwellers with fixed monthly wages. And the cancellation of subsidies ration since 1992 has not helped the situation either.

In a session of the TAR branch of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference held in May 1994 in Lhasa, several deputies reportedly asked for relief. “Workers monthly salaries are very low compared with the rising cost of living. Price rise should be gradual and carefully planned – there is now a strong tendency for the gap between rich and poor to widen and planning must make provision for the income

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available to the ordinary masses.  

Tibet is still the poorest of China’s Western regions. Many foreign tourists and even some Chinese have commented on the utter destitution of many Tibetans. Wang and Bai, two Chinese economists called the Western region as China’s own Third World. The late Panchen Lama too was reported to have stated that China is a third world country and Tibet is a Third World region in a Third World country. These reports indicate great economic problems and poverty, even after 40 years of liberation.

Undeterred, China is going ahead with its policy of reforming Tibet, to conform to the framework of ongoing reforms in the entire nation armed at the establishment of a socialist market economy. This means, Tibet will no longer get price controls.

China believes that Tibet no longer needs special preferences, as they believe that food production and living standards have improved year by year. Government statistics show the region’s grain output increased from 155,500 tons in 1952 to 220,000 tons in 1993, which would mean a four fold increase. And in 1994, Tibet harvested 640,000 tons of grain, a 3 percent increase from the previous year. As for the regions livestock, by the end of 1993, it reached from 9.74 million in 1952 to 23.95 million head, a 2.5 fold increase.

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25 Wang and Bai, pp.80-84.
The government further reported in 1995, that the region’s GNP reached 5.25 billion Yuan, said to be a 10.6 percent increase over the previous year. The region’s gross value of agricultural output reached 2.313 billion-Yuan, up by 4.5 percent over the previous year and a total head of livestock rose by 4.42 million, up by 19 percent total meat output reached 110,000 tons, up by 5.9 percent.²⁹

Each year, China has been reporting crop increase in Tibet. However, China has never reported down to earth facts that matter to the people they rule. Besides, Chinese figures and statistics are usually suspect, with one report contradicting the other. In spite of China’s tall claims, there is no development of commodity production within Tibet. It is true that China has granted billions of subsidies to Tibet, but “the lion’s share of the money provided by the central government has been used to pay for goods purchased from the rest of the country.”³⁰

With the high cost of living, the administration and management costs have also risen dramatically in Tibet. Tibetans claim that the bulk of financial subsidy go towards the maintenance of Chinese personnel in Tibet. Even Wang and Bai have reported that, Tibet is very much an over-administered society, with a top heavy articulated government super structure made up of “all the institutions, one would expect to find in developed regions, consuming more wealth from the government subsidies than it can generate through increased economic activity.”³¹

³⁰ Wang & Bai, , P.73.
Tibet and its supporters claim that even the items subsidized were those that are consumed by the Chinese rather than Tibetans. The staple diet of Tibetans, barley was reportedly left to the market forces by 1985, and was 76 Yuan for a kg, whereas the price of rice and wheat (Chinese staple diet) are subsidized. They say that Chinese are the greatest beneficiaries from the economic growth in Tibet. While acknowledging the developments, they claim that China has taken more out of Tibet than it has put in. “In monetary terms”, the value of Tibetan timber taken to China far exceeds the amount of financial assistance the government claims to have given”, 32 and it does not even begin to include the many priceless art treasures, mineral resources, that were shipped to China.

It is true that life has become easier and comfortable for most Tibetans since the early 1980’s. Nevertheless, Tibetans in Tibet regard the present growth in the market economy as the result of their own individual efforts and give the government no credit. Goldstein and Beall noted that, Tibetans take the benefit of reforms for granted while resenting continuing government interferences in their lives and remain fearful of a reversion to the policies of the past. 33 Due to past experience, Tibetans do not trust the government to stay committed to the current framework policies.

32 Dharamshala Responds, Tibet’s Environment and Development News.
Transport, Telecommunications, Power and Industry

The central government has adopted special policies, to support the construction of Tibet with manpower, finance and technology paying special attention to an infrastructure development with the main focus on energy resources, transport, telecommunications, and light industry.

The government is reported to have paid special attention to industry as old Tibet had almost no modern industry to speak of. Some of the key industries are mining, wool spinning, hides processing, building materials, constructions, chemicals, paper making, minting, textile and food processing etc.

During the seventh five-year plan period (1986-90) of 123 million Yuan invested in technical transformation, 53.87 million Yuan was earmarked by the state to update 74 projects of eight industries. Some 376 million Yuan was put into technical renovation of leather, woolen, textile and nationality handicraft industries. By 1991, there were reportedly more than 260 industrial enterprises with 500 million Yuan in fixed assets. 1989 statistics show that industrial output value was 221 million Yuan. China also claimed that the total output value of national handicraft industry reached 52.85 million Yuan in 1990.

By May 1991, the *Beijing Review* reported that Tibet had 108 nationality handicrafts enterprises producing 1,600 varieties of products of which 18 varieties have won national awards for their high quality. Their output value was 41.07 million

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Yuan, an increase of 12 times over 1978.\textsuperscript{35} In addition, by 1990 there were 6,999 rural enterprises and projects engaged in diversified productions, bringing in a total income of 320 million Yuan.\textsuperscript{36}

By 1994, the region reportedly established more than 300 moderate-size modern industrial and mining enterprises. Total industrial output value climbed from 43 million Yuan in the early period of 1959 to 470 million Yuan in 1993.\textsuperscript{37}

Tibet is rich in natural resources. Reserves of mineral resources have been verified in some 70 places. There are a minimum of 120 minerals in Tibet including reserves of chromium, borax and copper which are said to rank first nation-wide. All in all, Tibet has vast and virtually untapped mineral resources and an almost infinite hydro-electric potential.

By 1990, there were reportedly 60 mining enterprises. And the output of chromium and iron reached 87,000 tons, up by 42% over 1986, and cement output was 120,000 tons, a seven fold increase over 1986.\textsuperscript{38} The first phase construction of the Luobusa chromium iron mine is reported to have been completed and produced 50,000 tons of ore in 1993.\textsuperscript{39}

However, Tibetans charge that up to the early part of 1990, revenue to China from exploitation of Tibet’s mineral resource is estimated at 1.5 billion Chinese

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Tibet: From 1951-91, p.64.
\textsuperscript{37} News From China, Tibet’s Special, June 22, 1994, p.4.
\textsuperscript{39} News From China, Aug.10, 1994.
They protested that extensive mining operation has caused further erosion and is destabilising the fragile slope of the land.

Galen Rowell, a photographer notes, “The 1950 invasion of Tibet, justified on the false grounds that Mao’s China was simply restoring historical borders was in many ways, the consummation of China’s long standing desire to gain control on Tibet’s natural resources. The Chinese know Tibet as Xizang – “western treasure house.” 41

Tibetans say that China was quick to incorporate one of the richest regions of this “Western” treasure house, namely Amdo into its own province, and the extraction and exploitation of the natural and mineral resources of Tibet has been going on since then.

It is also reported that recently, Amdo has been experiencing ‘a gold rush’ with many licensed and unlicensed gold diggers flooding the region. In Qumarleb county the 17,000 Tibetan residents, herders by occupation are reportedly outnumbered by between 50,000 and 60,000 miners. Much of the mining activity is done in a haphazard, unregulated way, causing destruction and waste. More than 86,000 acres of grazing land has been damaged by mining in Qumarleb county. 42

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Regarding power energy, China reports that power supply in Tibet has grown from zero. By 1990, Tibet was reportedly turning out 310 million kw of electricity, and widely utilized geothermal energy, solar energy and wind energy. To date, government has built 500 hydro power stations in Tibet, and the installed electricity generating capacity has reached 170,000 kW.\textsuperscript{43} Moreover, the government’s efforts at third and fourth phase expansion work on the Yagbajan geothermal power station provides additional capacity of 50,000 kw.\textsuperscript{44} With the improved development in power energy, it is reported that 80 percent of the counties in Tibet have established hydro power stations and 32 percent to township use electricity.

However, Tibetans charge that the Chinese are exploiting Tibet’s abundant geothermal springs and are using them to produce electricity. Some of the power facilities available to the Chinese in Lhasa are produced from these sources. But the Tibetan villages are routinely bypassed in the provisions of basic sanitation, water and electricity. In the urban areas, only Chinese government officials, Chinese settlements and military installations are provided with these services. Even villages that stand near power stations lack electricity and most villages still use oil lamps.

China also claims that since 1950, the state has invested more than 4 billion Yuan to develop Tibet’s highway construction and transport facilities. By 1991, framing of a network of trunk lines, such as Sichuan-Tibet, Qinghai-Tibet, Xinjiang-Tibet, Yunnan-Tibet and Nepal-China highway and branch lines radiating out from

\textsuperscript{43} News From China, Aug.24, 1994. \\
\textsuperscript{44} News From China, Tibet’s Special. June 22, 1994.
Lhasa, had began.

This highway network has reportedly replaced the old “yak roads”, covering every county in the region except Medong, and 77% of the township in Tibet are accessible. There is also a regular bus service available from Lhasa to every county and city in the TAR.

Government reports that during the seventh five-year plan period (1986-1990) investment in transport and communications was 60 million Yuan. This was used to purchase over 15,000 vehicles. Overall there are now reportedly a total of 32,000 motor driven vehicles in Tibet, which is nine times the figure of 1965.

An international air-route has also been opened from Lhasa Gankar Airport to Kathmandu. Most of the main cities in China are accessible by flight from Lhasa. With the improvement of transportation, Tibet’s postal and telecommunications system too has improved.

Government claims that about 74 counties in the region were accessible by postal communication and 70% of rural areas had access to postal communication. For the convenience of Tibetans, the regional post and communication department has opened Tibetan language telegraph business.

In addition, satellite communication has been introduced in Tibet. It includes

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the installation of program-controlled telephones in six-prefectures level and 51 county-level, post and telecommunication offices, use of mobile telephones in Lhasa optical fibre line from Lhasa to Xigaze etc.47

Lhasa is now said to be linked with all prefectures and some counties by a criss-cross network for automatic telephone service. It is also set to gradually increase its capacity to present more radio and TV programmes from elsewhere that have now been translated into Tibetan language. During the ninth five-year plan (1996-2000) Tibet is scheduled to raise the radio and TV coverage rate to 80 an 70 percent respectively.

Foreign Trade, Aid and Tourism
One major aspect of economic reforms has been the ‘open door’ policy. China realised the potential of tourism as a major source of income for the region’s economic development. It recognised the necessity of having foreign capital, to supplement China’s resources as well as technological know-how to further develop its economy.

China established foreign trade and commerce, removed all restrictions on Chinese entering Tibet for trade and business. Starting from 1980, Tibet was declared an open area accessible to tourist from China and all over the world. The tourism industry flourished, attracting many tourists to Tibet. However, it was reported that

47 News From China, June 22, 1994.
between 1980 and 1984, less than 4000 tourists were allowed in.\textsuperscript{48}

To realise the full potential of tourism, the government had to improve and develop tourist infrastructure, with modern hotels, restaurants, communications, ports and improved transport facilities. One of the key economic projects was aimed precisely at improving these conditions. A joint-venture a with leading Western hotel chain – Holiday Inn, constructed in Lhasa is one of them.

In 1984, the central government also mobilized and directed nine provinces and municipalities to help Tibet in building forty three major projects in Tibet. These projects include the construction of Tibet in the field of culture, education, public health, sports stadiums in Lhasa, upgrading the Qinghai – Tibet highway, expansion of the Yngbachen geothermal power stations, building of Lhasa hotels and other infrastructure for tourism. Urban construction too was speeded up in major cities and towns, such as Lhasa, Xingaze, Nagu, Chamdo, Zetong and Shiquanhe. In order to feed the exotic fantasies of Western tourists, the Chinese government made efforts to promote the restaurants of some monasteries and temples.

Most of these were taken up to attract tourists and the much needed foreign currency. Since then, the tourist industry has been thriving. In 1987, China is reported to have earned 130 million Yuan (US $35 million) from 43,000 tourists who had visited Tibet. According to the \textit{China News Agency} (Xinhua), more than 20,000 tourists visit Tibet and spend some 24 million Yuan every year, and it hopes to

\textsuperscript{48} SWB, 1984, No.FE/7806/B11/5.
receive nearly five times as many tourists by the end of the century.

With improved trade and commerce, Tibet's total volume of imports and exports in 1993 topped US $100 million, 55.4% above that of 1992 or 5.4 times more than that of 1985. Regional and border business brought in US$ 200 million in 1993, a six fold increase over 1985. Further, it is reported that the scale of economic performance of Tibet's foreign trade has increased by a great margin. In 1994, the volume of an imports and exports increased by 8.1 times over 1987. The government claims that in 1994, at the second Kunming commodity fair in Yunnan, a Tibetan delegation closed import and export deals totalling 7.78 million US$. The goods displayed included traditional Tibetan medicine, necklaces made of bone, beads and leather products, which were appreciated by customers at home and abroad. China also opened its first legal foreign exchange market in Tibet. It is claimed that in the whole of China and its regions, Tibet is the only one allowed to keep all foreign exchange earnings.

Much foreign aid through public and private sources has been pouring in since Tibet opened up. These foreign investments are mostly for development projects. Presently, there are approximately 50 foreign assisted ventures in the whole of Tibet. Some projects are a joint government ventures, including the Lhasa leather factory, sponsored by Germany, Yangbachan Geothermal project a joint venture with Italy and the Yamtrok Yamtso project sponsored projects by Germany, Norway and Italy, the United Nations sponsored projects like the WEP etc.

50 SWB FE/2391 S2/1, 29 May 1995.
Inspite of persistent protest by Tibetans for further opening up of Tibet, China on May 12, 1992 announced the creation in Tibet of a ‘Special economic and technological zone’ with incentives and preferential tax policies to attract domestic and foreign investment.\(^{51}\)

Tibetans and its supporters protested that all economic development projects actively recruit labourers and personnel from China to work in Tibet. All employment opportunities created through economic development programmes are filled by Chinese at every level, while the local people received no material benefit. They say that their own careers are blocked not because they lack necessary skills, but because they happen to be Tibetans.

The UN’s WFP Project alone has reportedly resulted in the influx of 130,000 Chinese peasants. Tibetans farmers often heavily in debt for various taxes, are being forced to sign over their property,\(^ {52}\) to accommodate Chinese settlers.

The development of the Yamdrok Yumtso Hydro electric power plant is reportedly allocated with, six hundred and sixty million Yuan According to Chinese news agents the road construction around the site has been undertaken by Tibetan labourers.\(^{53}\) However, Tibetans claim that construction labour is provided by the electricity division of the Chinese peoples’ armed police, and benefits only the Chinese military establishment and its civilian population.

\(^{52}\) *South China Morning Post*, January, 30, 1994.
Education

In the field of education, Tibet lags far behind. According to 1982 census, the literacy rate for Tibet was 22 percent compared with 76.5 percent for the whole of China. Since then, the government has reportedly made considerable expansion in school accommodation. It has also improved conditions of schools, quality and efficiency of school management.

According to 1991 statistics, there were 12,610 people with university education, 131,179 people with secondary school education and 408,384 people with primary school education.\(^{54}\) By 1995, school attendance rate reportedly reached 76 percent and the enrolment of children in schools of various types at various levels totalled 270,200.\(^{55}\)

Further, high school construction is on the list of Tibet’s new building project and some of the money for these schools is coming from “donations from twenty-two work units in Shanghai.”\(^{56}\) The article also said that 70% of Tibet school age children was enrolled in schools.

China’s 1992 *White Paper* states that “urban (Tibetan) residents, farmers and herdsmen now enjoy the right to receive education.”\(^{57}\) This means that education is equally available to all. The same paper claims that “today education is free”. The

\(^{54}\) Tibet: From 1951-91, p. 86.
\(^{55}\) SWB FE/2363 S2/3 July 24, 1995.
cost of education of the Tibetan students from primary school to university is borne by the government and also the children of Tibetan farmers and herdsmen enjoy free boarding and education’. The government since 1985, has supported needy students with “free food”, clothing and accommodation.\(^5^8\) TIN reported in 1990 that, TAR illiteracy rate was 44.63 percent as compared to the rate in China of 15.88 percent.\(^5^9\) By 1995, Tibet Daily reported that, the illiteracy rate had dropped to 40 percent. In any case, Tibet’s literacy rate is found to be generally low.

China admits that Tibet still has far to go, and assigns much of the blame to the old society and to its scattered population, especially in nomad areas. The vast size and sparse population of Tibet is a tremendous challenge, but in blaming the former society, China overstates its case. “Before its peaceful liberation”, an official reports states, “Tibet only had monastery education for the study of scriptures and a few private schools for the children of nobles and school officials.\(^6^0\) More than 90 percent of Tibetans were either illiterate or semi-literate.

This of course, is not true, contrary to Chinese assertions even serfs could acquire learning in old Tibet. Even though education in old Tibet was limited, it was not exclusively reserved for nobles and monks. Tibetans acknowledges that China brought much needed science and a broader knowledge of world affairs to isolated Tibet. The society was conservative and backward, but commoners were able to learn and improve their lot.

\(^5^8\) Ibid
\(^6^0\) Tibet: From 1951-91, p.81.
Hugh Richardson wrote, "a considerable proportion of town people acquired a medium of literacy, and country schools taught their pupils sufficient knowledge to enable them to keep rough accounts, write a letter, and read, although not always enough to understand, the sacred books."61 Almost all monks also learned to read, although many never learned to write.

The regional government also plans to speed up science and technology system by the year 2000 to meet the needs of the economy. China also claim that Tibet now has more than 13,000 scientists and technicians in state-owned units, with over 60 percent of them being ethnic Tibetans. It has also completed more than 2000 major research projects, over 500 of which have won national and regional awards.62 Tibet now has its own lawyers, doctors, engineers, as well as indigenous artists and scholars.

In 1990, China claimed to have earmarked 130 million Yuan for the development of education in Tibet. In its white paper, the government stated that it has invested 1.1 billion Yuan to develop education in Tibet. However, Tibetan and Chinese critics claim that the Chinese students residing in Tibet are the chief beneficiaries of this grant. TIN also reported that "the government has gone to unprecedented length to provide education and social service to the Chinese settlers while excluding Tibetans."63

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62 *SWB*, FE/2546 G/7, 27 February 1996.
China frequently give inflated figures supposedly to illustrate their education promotion achievements, i.e. 6,000 schools started by the people with 200,000 students.\(^{64}\)

Chinese statistics are usually deceptive and the majority of schools China claims to have opened cannot be regarded as schools in any sense of the word. Tibetans claim that, most of the teachers are not capable of teaching even rudimentary Tibetan language, that children are not interested in going to schools.

Tibetans and their supporters also claim that schools are segregated in Tibet, with the best reserved for Chinese. Tibetans have access to primary and middle school education, but it is difficult to progress further. Access to better schools and higher education is limited for Tibetans because even if they successfully compete for a seat, Chinese students get preference for admissions. Entrance exams for university are conducted in Chinese, which put the Tibetan students at a linguistic disadvantage. TIN and Asia Watch also noted that Tibetans are at a disadvantage because Chinese is the language of higher education. As a result, Tibetan enrollment falls off as student proceed through higher school and on to college level.

According to *Tibet Daily*, 1995, the university had seven departments emphasising the Tibetan language. These include broadcasting in Tibetan, Cultural studies such as dresses and music and the literature department emphasising classical Tibetan literature. The teaching staff was 74% Tibetan and 24% Chinese. Of the 1,334

students, 82% were Tibetans and 17% Chinese, but only a year back, a June report by TIN stated that only 45% of the new entrants to the university were Tibetans. However, by law, the university should have a Tibetan enrollment of at least 60%.

The Chinese government also fails to mention the disparities between rural and urban education. For example, during the visit of a US delegation led by Senator Leahy in August 1988, regional officials stated that many Tibetans children go without any formal education.65 Contrary to the Chinese claim that education is free for all, like the health system, it is "free" only in the books. Schools have started asking parents for fees and charging for services in giving exams. Many parents find it difficult to pay making it impossible for rural children to attend schools. Villages also often have to contribute to classroom construction, with their own labour and donation of money or livestock.

John Billington, Director of Studies at Ripton school in England, travelled all over Tibet in 1988 and reported that, "in rural areas especially, a large number of children can be seen working in the fields, cutting grass, herding sheep, collecting yak dung and working at stalls. Enquiries reveal that they do not go to school in most cases because, no schools exist. It was sad to hear older people say that there had been schools attached to monasteries, but that when the monasteries were destroyed, the rural schools were not been replaced. Well off the beaten track, I met elderly nomads who could read and write, it was too often a brutal reminder of the Chinese neglect that their grandchildren could not."

The first Australian Human Rights Delegation to Tibet and China in 1991, reports that:

"Though the delegation noted official determination to raise education standard for Tibetans, many Tibetan children appear to still go without formal education. Tibetan children in Lhasa area seemingly have access to a very limited syllabus at both primary and secondary levels. Some testified to never having been to school, or having to leave for economic reasons as early as ten years old." 67

Julie Britain, who taught English for a year at Lhasa university estimates that less than half the students at Lhasa university are Tibetans and those are very often the children of cadres or are half Chinese. Many of them were not sufficiently well educated to begin university courses and the Chinese policy seems to be "this university is virtually Chinese. We need Tibetans to balance it out." 68

Tibetan students are also at disadvantage because except for Tibetan language course or the Tibetan medicine course, all other major faculties require fluency in Chinese. This is also one of the reasons why Tibetans and their supporters claim that Chinese students are getting the best out of TAR and the students are losing out. Chinese students predominate in all other majors – especially, maths, science, business, and economics.

As far as the overall educational situation in Tibet is concerned, there have

67 Ibid, p.72.
been few widespread and general improvements in the past few years. But the consensus of opinion is that educational standards are still low throughout most of Tibet. The percentage of Tibetans drops as students proceed through the grades.

The failure of the educational system was evident by the fact that between 1982 and 1990 there was an increase in the illiteracy rate. For the 15-19 age group it was as high as 61.8 percent. This is because, for many people, all education particularly higher education, the only means of social mobility was closed to them. Many joined monasteries or started working on family land as it seemed the only option.

It is true that China has brought modern schools to a region once ignorant of science and world affairs. However, China also views education as a propaganda tool to turn out young communists and assimilate Tibetans into the dominant Chinese culture. China is well aware that it is easy to sway the minds of some young Tibetan by propaganda.

Language

According to the 1975 constitution of the People’s Republic of China, “All nationalities have the freedom to use their own spoken and written language.” This guarantee was retained in 1978 and 1982 constitutions, and this seems to be the actual trend.

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During the Cultural Revolution, use of minority languages was heavily restricted, a sign of tendency towards assimilation. The Chinese language was promoted as the language of Revolution and almost everything Tibetan was condemned. In some areas, it was outrightly forbidden to study Tibetan. Chinese replaced Tibetan in schools, government offices, and work units. It destroyed many artifacts of this thirteen hundred Tibetan civilization legacy. When the Cultural Revolution ended, all public sign posts were in Chinese. Official titles and agencies changed to Chinese forms. Chinese became the language of instructions in schools with Marxism as a major subject. Only in the more remote pastoral and agricultural areas, where the officials were Tibetans, did the language managed to flourish, and there, it was often the only sign of true Tibetan identity left.

When the fact-finding delegations of the Dalai Lama expressed their outrage at the erosion of the Tibetan language, the government gave the Tibetan language its support once again. Language is an essential course taught in all the local schools. It says that throughout the region, government documents and major local journals are printed in Tibetan. In nomadic areas, education is available through a primary school located at the district head-quarters. These schools teach in Tibetan language with written Tibetan and arithmetic as their main subjects. At least in these aspects, the life of the people, including the political system is closer to traditional Tibet than at any time since 1959.

The Tibetan language is faring better at least in the TAR. Teaching of Tibetan

language in adult as well as primary school has resumed. The TAR adopted regulations concerning the study and use of development of the Tibetan language, with an accent on the former. It has also passed laws and resolutions supporting educating in vernacular for Chinese cadres as well as Tibetans in Tibet to study the local language.

It is true that the Chinese government supports the efforts to preserve the Tibetan language. However, many say that it is not enough as Chinese is now the language of opportunity and Tibetan is on the way out. Learning standard Chinese is a must for those who want to get good jobs, succeed in business or go for higher studies. So even if students learn the vernacular in schools, they find Chinese more useful once they graduate. As the Chinese take over, few will study Tibetan language seriously at all. Chinese also has a hold in all towns and cities. Asia Watch, recently, reported the education for Tibetans has improved, but Chinese is still the compulsory language in all schools, while Tibetan is not a required language.\(^{72}\) It is not surprising that there is growing demand for further Tibetanisation of the administration and education. During his visit to the Chamdo area in September 1986, the Panchen Rinpoche publicly criticised the local education department for not attaching importance to the teaching and use of Tibetan language.\(^{73}\) The following year, during the fifth session of the fourth Tibet Regional Peoples’ Congress, language was one of the main issues discussed. Ngabo Ngawang said that during the Cultural Revolution,


\(^{73}\) *SWB*, 1986, No. FE/8372/ B11/16.
use of the Tibetan language had been ‘seriously wrecked’, and that there had been ‘no fundamental change’ in the use of the Tibetan language. On 19th July 1986, the TAR government announced that on a trial basis, Tibetan would be adopted as the main language of administration. More important, it was agreed that all primary schools would use Tibetan as the primary medium of education.

However, the adoption of Tibetan as primary language of bureaucracy met with opposition from many of the Senior Chinese Cadres. They felt that this policy would ultimately weaken the long-term dominance of Chinese cadres in Tibet. Besides many Senior Tibetan officials too resisted the move as most of them had no adequate knowledge of written Tibetan. Finally, when the regulations were drawn up, it exempted Tibetan Cadres over forty-five years of age and other workers over the age of forty, from learning the Tibetan language. The rest who were illiterate in Tibetan had to learn the language and become proficient within the next three years.

No doubt, the government had taken the necessary actions to improve the Tibetan language system. In TAR, Tibetans speak Tibetan and teaching in Tibetan primary schools is conducted in Tibetan. The Chinese language is introduced only in the third grade. In Lhasa, there are two TV stations that broadcast daily in Tibetan language. There are also newspapers, magazines and journals printed in Tibetan language. There is also a radio programme in Tibetan which broadcast to pastoral and farming areas.

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74 SWB, 1986/No. FE/8614/ B11/7.
75 SWB, No. FE/8633 B11/15.
76 Ibid.
However, even in TAR, it is reported that Chinese is winning over Tibetan. In offices and conference rooms, officials speak Chinese or a mixture of both. Except for old-timer Chinese, the new comers do not bother to learn the language as they simply do not need it anymore.

The government of course maintains that Chinese language is subordinate to that of Tibetans. But it is obvious to most visitors that Chinese has the upper hand in Tibet. Tibetan may be a major language in paper, but in practice, Chinese language dominates, because officials oppose the regulations and fail to implement them. Since there are a number of Han officials, Chinese is often used by higher officials, particularly in dealings with the prefectures and the autonomous region governments.

Outside the TAR, where the majority of ethnic Tibetans live, the language has suffered even greater incursion from Chinese. ICT reports that "Tibetans are becoming illiterate in their own language." They also found that in the provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan, all forms, tickets, brochures, receipts and introductions were in Chinese. Away from the cities though, in nomad and farming areas, the most rural Tibetans were at a loss when they travelled to towns and tried to operate in post offices, banks and tax bureaus. In bus stations, the lone ticket salesman was usually Chinese and the signs, tickets and announcements were only in Chinese.\(^{77}\) However, China does not consider these provinces as Tibet and these provinces have

been swamped by Chinese speaking settlers.

Tibetan officials and bureaucrats use Chinese and many see Tibetan language as the language of nomads and peasants, having no prestige value. Moreover, the influx of Chinese speaking workers who find no good reason to study the local language, undermines Tibetan. Unless greater efforts are made to Tibetanise education and administration in the TAR and other ethnic Tibetan regions of Kham and Amdo, the Tibetan language may phase out. It is no wonder that many Tibetans fear for the survival of their language, now that it has become something expendable. Judging from the reports, all elements leading to extinction are in place.

Culture

The Dalai Lama and his supporters have charged China with “cultural genocide” in Tibet, and that China is trying deliberately wipe out everything Tibetan.

It is not only the government-in-exile and its supporters who fear for Tibetan society. Unlike other issues the debate on cultural issues is alive among Tibetans throughout Tibet and China. Educated Tibetans who work for the government, cadres educated in Chinese school, party members, monks and nuns, teachers, researchers, and ordinary Tibetans all fear that their culture will not survive for long under the present conditions. They blame it on modernization, presence of Western tourists and mainly the influx of Chinese settlers into the heart of Tibet.

In the eyes of the Chinese, Tibet is backward, only a few decades out of barbarous feudalism, mixed still in superstition, economically depressed, and
populated with ignorant peasants and nomads. Right from its takeover, China had deliberately ravaged Tibetan culture. Refugees have reported attacks on Tibetan tradition and religion. In 1960, even international commission jurists reported that China had "set out to destroy" Tibet's way of life. And even now, China critics accuse China of doing its utmost to exterminate the ancient beliefs and customs of Tibetans.

The erosion of Tibetan culture began fifteen years before the Cultural Revolution, when the PLA marched into Tibet and occupied it. From then on students were taught to hate everything Tibetan, and many began adopting the Chinese way of life.

With the flight of the Dalai Lama to India and the crushing of the rebels of 1959, officials carried off jewels, gold, silk, bound manuscripts from manor houses, monasteries and took over the homes of aristocrats who had joined the uprising.

After the rebellion of 1959, it took the Red Guards of the Cultural Revolution to destroy what remained. During the Cultural Revolution, no traditional Tibetan dance, songs, or religious practices were allowed, as they belonged to old Tibet. The red guards, many of them Tibetans themselves, incited the local people to destroy entire monasteries, family altars, thankas, statues, prayer flags, leaving only ruin walls. More than six thousand monasteries in Tibet's entire ethnic region disappeared. When the Cultural Revolution was over, only a few were standing. By 1979, Tibet, especially Lhasa began to resemble other Chinese cities. Men and women have adopted the Chinese way of life -- in style, dressing and even started using Chinese names. It is no wonder Tibetans fear that Tibet will lose its own character and become
just one more province of China.

The fact-finding delegation also claims that, in Tibet, they were treated to a dance show which hardly reflected anything Tibet. They said that the performance was in Chinese dance and drama forms and "only rarely does one hear Tibetan tune". The lyrics were new, sung in Chinese style glorifying Mao and the Communist party. One delegate further said that, "villagers can no longer recall traditional dance routines, few people were left who remembered all the prescribed movement." When Heinrich Harrer returned in 1982, he was reportedly dismayed at the changes. He found that all traces of old Tibet, its former functions had vanished. Harrier wrote that Tibet was "one huge grey industrialized zone with ugly buildings". A park with a stone throne for the Dalai Lama now a "sea of cheap huts and tin-roofed houses", nothing of the old glory could be seen. Heinrich further wrote, "Lhasa, whose name means 'place of the Gods', no longer bears any relation to that lovely name." Since then Tibet has been making efforts at bringing some outward resemblance to the old Tibet. Prayer flags reappeared on roofs, pilgrims can be seen at Jokhang and Potala.

However, with the reforms, the government has loosened its control and adopted a more tolerant policy towards the aspirations of the people. Daily life became more relaxed and there was no longer pressure to attend countless meetings.

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80 Ibid.
Agricultural practices in nomadic and rural farming areas reverted to traditional methods. Tibetans discarded the drab uniform of socialism and returned to traditional clothes. In the rural areas traditional social institutions and pattern of marriage re-emerged as the new norms and all traditional cultural and religious practices returned with new vitality.

In Changtang, Golstein and Beall note that by 1988, the Pala nomads had regained their farming values and customs. It was a natural revitalization, thriving under the new policies of reform. Moreover, in some remote rural areas, even before the reforms, peasants were still allowed to go about in traditional dress and celebrate their religious festivals – as long as the old customs posed no threat to the state. Even those who fear the end of Tibetan society agree that traditional ways remain in the farming and pastoral areas of Tibet.

Efforts were made to preserve Tibetan culture by collecting old records, documents, paintings, folk literature, published and catalogue traditional arts, books, organised dance, dramas, and spend huge amount of funds for the renovation of temples and monasteries. It had improved heritage development, Tibetan medicine, and pharmacology, which are a component part of Tibetan culture.

Tibetans also acknowledge the change since the reforms. Yet China, in order to show that Tibetan culture is flourishing under their care, keep harping on their

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81 Goldstein and Beall, "Nomads of Western Tibet: The Survival of a Way of Life" (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p.151. Note: this work shall be abbreviated as Nomads.
accomplishments. They then go on comparing the old society with the new by painting a very dark picture of the old Tibet. Chinese history text, museum displays, propaganda pamphlets, art and literature always project Tibet as ignorant and backward, which erodes pride and confidence of Tibetans in their own culture.

Chinese propaganda for example, also claims that in the olden days, traditional operas were performed only for nobles and monks. This is not true because Harrer and others who lived in Tibet before the Chinese takeover report that the shows were opened to everyone.

China distorts even simple facts in its eagerness to show the world that Tibetans are very much cared for and that their culture is thriving under Chinese rule. China has even gone to the extent of staging scenes of happy and smiling Tibetans at workplace, in their finest ethnic dress for propaganda photographs to display for tourists. In reality, Tibetans have started wearing Chinese and Western made clothes.

In its White Paper, China states, “In the cities and towns and agricultural and pastoral areas in Tibet, most Tibetans still retain their traditional clothing, diet and housing.” This of course is not true, in the case of cities and towns. However, it is true that many of the old customs persist in the country side. Nomads and farmers still wear their native dress and follow their traditional practices.

However, Tibetans still complain of political restrictions. The government

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82 China's White Paper on Tibet, Beijing, China, 1992 p.50.
restricts and censors everything that has political tone. Tibetan authors, artists and performers have to adopt the Chinese point of view for their work to be accepted. This is also one reason why Tibetans fear that just as the Chinese language is easing out Tibetan language, they are losing the Tibetan way of life in preference to Chinese culture.

However, Tibetans and their supporters have good reason to be troubled. In the eastern region, the Tibetan culture is flourishing under the onslaught of Chinese settlers and decades of rule from Beijing. Some Tibetans in Gansu, Qinghai, Yunnan and Sichuan, have come to believe that they themselves have “no culture”, that they are backward people who need to learn from the Chinese.83

Years of ingrained Chinese attitude of superiority and chauvinism have lowered Tibetan esteem in their own culture. And in the TAR, the outside influence is most apparent. Tibetans wear Han dress, and have adopted their food habits, speech, art, literature, music, dance and customs. They also fear the renewed influx of Western tourists since 1992, after China eased up again, since 1987. Many worry about the worst aspect of modernization and Western culture that has invaded Tibet, especially Lhasa. They also fear that assimilation will eventually spread even to rural areas. The process of assimilation is more advanced in Kham and Amdo where many farming areas are already sinicized. Only the rugged nomad region remains safely Tibetan for now.

As Chinese influx grows, the danger of Tibet becoming another province of China grows greater. It is not the new comers that adopt Tibetan culture, but Tibetans who pick up the outsiders’ way of life. Little wonder that Tibetans and their supporters fear for the culture which appears to be dying and heading for extinction.

Medical

China has invested considerable sums towards the improvement of medical services and Public health, since it took over Tibet in 1951. It claimed to have allocated 700 million Yuan for the development of medical service in Tibet, sending doctors and medical teams even to remote farming and herding areas, providing free of cost medical aid to nomads, peasants and city dwellers.

By 1965, according to Chinese data, Tibet had more than two thousand medical professionals in the field. And by 1991, China claimed to have established 900 Medical and Public Health Centers through the regions, with 900 health workers. China also claims that in 1951, the region had no hospital beds; but by 1991, it had more than five thousand and averaged 2.3 beds and just over two doctors per thousand residents.

China in its efforts to justify its presence in Tibet always cites its achievements and keeps comparing the old Tibet with the new ‘liberated’ Tibet to show the World that they really care for the ordinary Tibetans. However, their accomplishments are all common place, even in other Third World Countries.

85 Tibet: 1951- 1991. P.75
The Central Government reported that it has wiped out Small Pox, which used to kill thousands at that time. China makes it out to be such a great achievement, even though Small Pox was eradicated throughout the World by 1977. It also claimed that, by 1992, 85 percent of TAR children were immunised against Polio, tuberculosis and major children disease.

The Government went on to claim that Infant Mortality which was estimated to be at least five hundred live births per year before the Chinese ‘liberation’ was down to ninety-one per thousand live births by 1991. With so much development in health care, medical services and living conditions improved, which have resulted in a rapid growth of the Tibetan population.

Chinese statistics show that the region population grew from 1.2 million in 1952 to 2.29 million in 1994. In contrast, in the 150 years up to 1950, its population only increased by 15,000. The life span of an average Tibetan has extended from 33.5 years in the early 1950, to 66 years at present.  

China also insisted on projecting the old Tibet and its government in the blackest of terms. China says that before the peaceful ‘liberation’ of Tibet, there were only a few medical institutions and folk clinics, which mainly served the nobles and officials. Government White paper states “Absolutely no medical treatment was given

87 News from China, October 4, 1995.
to the broad masses of serfs and slaves when they fell ill," the authorities in the old society were so lacking in compassion that they drove victims of epidemics into the mountain to die.\textsuperscript{88} Disease was rampant in old Tibet, and as doctors and medicine were inaccessible to the masses of Tibetan people, thousands died. In 1952, more then 7,000 people died of small pox in Lhasa alone and, in 1934 and 1937, over 5,000 Tibetans died of Typhoid.\textsuperscript{89}

It is true that many Tibetans died during the epidemics, with no proper modern medicine. The Chinese claim that medical treatment was available only to the nobles and officials is not true. Anyone could call on traditional physicians and lamas for treatment when someone fell ill even though medicines were not free and the families had to pay the expenses of the lamas and physicians. Tibet had no modern medicine except the British clinics, serving the Trade Mission but some Tibetans received modern care at those clinics before the Chinese takeover.

However, the Tibetan government-in-exile and critics charged China with discrimination. They claim that there is overwhelming evidence from various sources, which suggest that Tibetans undergo a form of health care discrimination in contrast to Chinese settlers, which is tantamount to Medical Apartheid. "Medical care is segregated, with the best facilities reserved for the Chinese"\textsuperscript{90}

Tibetans also says that, even though China has built many hospitals in Tibet, they are all centralised whereas the Tibetans are highly decentralised people, spread

\textsuperscript{88} \textit{White paper}, p.53
\textsuperscript{89} \textit{Tibet : from 1951-91}, p.75.
\textsuperscript{90} Tibet The Facts, \textit{The New Internationalist} (London) December 1995, p.19

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across a vast area. In most areas, medical facilities are poor or non-existent. They report that: only 10% of the financial outlay for health goes to rural areas, 90% goes to urban centers where Chinese settlers are concentrated. Even when available medical facilities are prohibitively expensive for most Tibetans. For admission to hospital as an in-patient, one has to pay a deposit of 300 to 500 Yuan (US $ 80-133) an enormous sum in a country where the average per capita income is 200 Yuan. 91

Chris Mullin also wrote that “even to the casual observer, it is evident that the standard of health care is much lower than in the rest of China.” 92 The Chinese government claimed that Medical care is free in the region, in contrast to every other area of the PRC. But in reality, medicines are not available in hospitals except in private pharmacies. So, even through farmers and herdsmen were supposed to be getting free Medical Services, in reality, it is only the wealthy and high officials as well as Cadres, who get good health treatment. Basically, health service is urban biased, which serves the rich better than the poor.

Tibetans also report that, priority is always given to Chinese citizens, and often suffering Tibetans have been turned out of bed when Chinese patients arrived needing attention. 93 Moreover, most of the doctors, China sent to Tibet are said to be unqualified, having failed or performed poorly in their examinations in China and thus having little prospects of finding employment in China. Not surprisingly,

93 Tibet: The Facts. A report prepared by the Scientific Buddhist Association for the UN commission on Human rights. Tibetan Youth Buddhist Association Dharamshala 1990,p.46
Chinese officials prefer to fly home for medical treatment, particularly in the light of the fact that failed Chinese Medical students are sent to work in Tibet. These doctors reportedly use Tibetan patients as guinea pigs to practice their skills. They also usually interpret symptoms and treat patients with outdated equipment and limited supply of medicine. Tibetans also report of coercive birth control practices, forcible sterilization and abortions. These claims could be the reason, Julie Britain noted, that Tibetans favor their own doctors and medicine even when they are unsanitary over those offered by the modern Chinese hospitals.

At the same time, the Chinese government reports that medicine and health service followed the principle of giving priority to prevention; reformed and improved the regime of public health services and free medical care for rural and urban residents, provided better maternity and child care; and constantly improved peoples’ health. Efforts to publicize family planning work and provide relevant services were intensified and family-planning work in farming and pastoral areas and among migrants began to receive due attention.

As a result of poor health service, in 1981, crude death rates per thousand were 7.48 in the TAR and 9.92 in Amdo, as against an average of 6.6 in China, according to the report of the World Bank in 1984 and of the UNDP in 1991. Child Mortality rates are also reported to be high, a hundred and fifty per thousand against forty-three for China. The TB morbidity rate, according to the World Bank is 120.2 per thousand

95 SWB, FE/2363 S2/3, 24 July 95.
in the TAR and 647 per thousand in Amdo. This would suggest that Tuberculosis is still very prominent in Tibet. Statistics for life expectancy in Tibet also varies from one source to another. World Bank data suggest an average of around sixty one years for the TAR and Amdo as against the figures of seventy years for China in 1990, up from forty seven years in 1960, according to UNDP 1991.96

Of course, no one can really tell the actual medical statistics for the old Tibet, as there were hardly any written records, and taking census was next to impossible considering Tibet’s scattered population and vast size. China has produced various figures concerning the number of hospitals and medical facilities available to ordinary Tibetans. Often, their assertions contradict the impression China gives to the rest of the world, and taking into account the numerous reports of Tibetan government-in-exile and its supporters, it is possibly true that China gives priority to Chinese settlers and officials. It is also possible that Tibetans are discriminated against, and the progress and success China claims to have made towards health care in Tibet may not be that great. Considering the vast size of Tibet, medical services may not have covered the whole of Tibet, especially the rural areas. Nevertheless, China has brought better medical care to Tibet. Besides bringing modern medicine, the Chinese government also supports Tibet’s medical heritage. In recent years, Tibetan medicine and pharmacology have had gratifying achievements in both research and treatment. It is reported that “pearl 70” and other Tibetan medicines have been proved to have unique curative effects on the treatment of disease affecting the nervous system such as atrophic gastritis. Tibetan medicine is also gaining credibility in the West and many Chinese are also benefiting from treatment by Tibetan doctors.

96 Tibet: Proving Truth, p.68
Environment

The Tibetan government-in-exile and its supporters charge China of committing 'ecocide' on Tibet's traditional environment. They charge that China is ravaging and assaulting its forests, carting off its timber and rich minerals, slaughtering its wildlife and polluting the soil and rivers. The Chinese name for Tibet is Xizang which means "Western treasure House", and Tibetans claim that this is one of the main reason why China coveted Tibet for centuries. A photographer, Galen Rowell, also writes, "The 1950 invasion of Tibet, justified on the false grounds that Mao's China was simply restoring historical border, was in many ways the consummation of China's longstanding desire to gain central of Tibet's natural resources. The Chinese know Tibet as Xizang "Western treasure House"."  

On the other hand, the Chinese government claims that TAR is China's top area in terms of environmental protection. As usual, China points to the regulations and rules devised for protecting forests, wildlife and its tree planting campaigns. They claim that by setting up an environmental monitoring station to inspect the regions environmental changes, it has effectively protected the region's ecological environment and human health.

Tibet is rich in forest with abundant flora and fauna. It has more than 5,700 types of high-grade plants, 600 kinds of birds and beasts, numerous valuable medical substances and mineral resources. A total of 94 minerals have been discovered and

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verified in Tibet. It has proven reserves of limestone, gypsum, copper, borax, gold, coal and chromite, to name a few. Geologists have found that Tibet’s region holds 60% of the chromite deposits in the whole of China. The government says that this rich environment of Tibet is protected and that the charges were baseless. It again made it a point to cite as proof, the Qomolongma nature reserves and Tibet Wildlife preserves it had established to protect the region’s environment. The environmental protection committee that was set up in the TAR to co-ordinate the environmental protection, specifically to develop forest and mineral resources.

However, Tibetans and its supporters’ reports contradict China’s claim. They charge that China’s extensive mining has led to soil erosion and destabilization of the fragile slopes. The ICT reported that the Ninth Academy, China’s North-West Nuclear weapon Research and Design Academy in Tibet’s North-Eastern Area of Amdo, has deployed nuclear missiles and developed nuclear waste on the plateau. This dumping of nuclear waste is said to have polluted the rivers and soil of Tibet, poisoning human and animal lives.

A San Francisco nuclear watch dog, In Vivo Radiation Response, has also reported that China is opening a nuclear test sites on the border, between Xinjiang province and the TAR. Further, TASS, reported on July 3, 1982, “China has been conducting nuclear tests in several areas of Tibet in order to determine the radiation levels among the people living in those parts.”

China of course denies placing nuclear missiles or dumping toxic waste in Tibet, but China’s entire nuclear program is highly secretive. Its nuclear capability and record remains mysterious and unknown. One will never know the actual information about how much radioactive waste comes out and its other nuclear activities in Tibet.

The ICT also reported that toxic chemicals used to process gold in Qinghai province have killed human and farm animals. Tibet is believed to have the largest uranium reserve in the world. In 1982, Yin Fatang revealed that the largest uranium resources in the world are to be found on the mountain of Lhasa.100

In April 1993, the ICT claimed that fifty Tibetans living near the research sites and uranium mines in Sichuan province died from the effects of radioactive pollution. There are also reports of local Tibetans having perished after having contaminated water near the uranium sites and birth of deformed human and animals.

The northern and eastern plateau if not the central Tibet had definitely suffered from pollution. China says that Tibet has never ever experience acid rain, let alone radioactive pollution. They claim that the atmosphere there is fine and unpolluted, and rivers and lakes in Tibet have fine quality water. They say that only a small river, the upper and middle reaches of the Duilung River are slightly polluted by industrial and domestic sewage.101

101 News From China, 22 June 1994, p.6
China insists that mining is done on a small scale yet it is believed that China has increased the scale of its mining operation in Tibet. Kham and Amdo had seen the gold rush, which turned nomads pastoral region into wasteland. By 1992, it was reported that an estimated 80,000 licensed prospectors had already arrived and China wanted to double output by 1995.\textsuperscript{102}

It is also reported that in Qumarlab Country, that much of the mining activity is done in a haphazard, unregulated way, causing destruction and waste. More than 86,000 acres of grazing land has been damaged by mining in Qumarlab country.\textsuperscript{103}

Tibetans also report that, "up to the early 1990s, revenue to China from the exploitation of Tibet's mineral resources is estimated at 1.5 billion Chinese RMB.\textsuperscript{104} The Tibetans also charge China of damaging their forests and exporting their timber to China proper. Timber extraction is said to be a multi-billion dollar enterprise. There have been numerous accounts from tourists, travellers who recorded these activities on videotapes, slides- showing convoys of trucks loaded with huge tree trunks moving east and other regions of the interior. They have also recorded denuded slopes and piles of lumber wasted upon various banks or abandoned by the roadside. Since 1959, the southern forests of the TAR and the eastern Timberland of Sichuan have been disfigured by over cutting. Radio Lhasa (25/6/88) claimed to have deforested some 70% of the forestlands of Nagpa, Karze, and Mili and an estimated

\textsuperscript{102} Justine Lowe, \textit{Multinational Monitor}, October 1992
50-100 lumber trucks travel east to Sichuan daily.\textsuperscript{105} The \textit{Guardian} also reported that, waterways are jammed with lumber and each hour dozens of truckloads of Timber are hauled away.\textsuperscript{106} Further, Galen Rowell has reported of "trees cut by thousands" in Yadong, on the eastern slope of Mount Everest, bordering Nepal.\textsuperscript{107}

In 1949, Ngapa, Amdo, had 2.20 million hectares of land under forest cover. Its timber reserves then stood at 340 million cubic metres. By 1980 it reduced to 1.17 million hectares, with a timber reserve of only 180 million cubic meters.\textsuperscript{108} It was reported that until 1985, China extracted 6.44 million cubic meters of timber from "Kanlho Tibetans Autonomous Prefecture."\textsuperscript{109}

Tibetans claim that in 1949, Tibet's virgin forests covered 221,800 sq. km, and only 134,000 sq. km remained by 1985. By 1985, China had extracted timber totalling 2.442 million cubic metres, worth $55 billion.\textsuperscript{110}

The Chinese authorities denies these charges, and maintain that only a small

\textsuperscript{105} Information Office, Tibetans Secretariat 19/10/88. See also Information-Material No.19, Office of Information and International Relation: A statement Rinchen Samdrup, a witness from Tibet.
\textsuperscript{108} Ngapa Tibetan Autonomous prefectures, Sichuan publishing House, 1985, p.149-154
\textsuperscript{109} Kanlho in Autonomous prefecture, Gansu peoples publishing House, 1987, p.145.
\textsuperscript{110} Tibetan Review, July 1987.
portion of forest is cut each year, and that, almost all of the TAR have timber harvest goes to the construction of TAR. Only since 1990, have they exported small quantity of lumber and the charge that Tibet’s timber is being exported to the rest of China is untrue. Of course, when Officials refer to Tibet, they mean only the TAR. They do not include the forest of Kham in Sichuan or Yunnan province, which had suffered overcutting and had been exported to China proper.

The Regional forest Departments reports that the total forest area in the region in 1993 topped 6.12 million hectares and the forest coverage rate was 9.84%. The reports also claim that the region has planted over 23,000 hectares of trees and 46,000 hectares of grass since 1951. Further, it has built forest-protection belts along rivers (like Yarlung Tsangpo River in Xigaze) and valleys in Shannan and Xigaze prefectures. In Shannan prefectures, six million trees have been planted since 1988, forming a 150-km protection belt. This is said to have reduced the harmful effects of drifting sand on the highways and crops, enabling the production of 10,000 tons of grass annually for sheep and cows. \(^{111}\) Hence, China says that proliferation outstrips consumption, and the region’s 225,500 hectares of cultivated land is not affected by industrial pollution.

Further the Lhasa Environment Protection Bureau Agency alone is supposed to have planted more than 1,600 acres with trees. The government has also adopted and put into practice, a policy of “he who cuts plants must replant.” As a result, new saplings have been planted in some 9.3 hectares of lumbered area in Gongbagnayamde.

\(^{111}\) *News From China*, August 31 1994
The TAR government conducted environmental appraisal for all lay construction projects.\textsuperscript{112}

The dispute between the two sides can go on and on. However, going by reports, it is clear that China is overcutting and exporting timber to China proper, as far as the forest of Kham in Sichuan and Yunnan province is concerned, of course, it is true that officials have put restrictions on lumbering and are trying to conserve forest by promoting tree planting. To some extent, the Tibetans have also contributed in denuding their forests. They have not stripped the land of its trees, to such a great extent as the Chinese, but they have used wood to build houses, monasteries and temples for centuries. Even today, most Tibetans are said to be still using timber for building, cooking and heating. However, with reforms which brought in hydroelectric geothermal plants, concrete buildings and kerosene for cooking and heating, the use of firewood would have lessened.

Tibetans claims that several species of plants and animals, once found in their forest have disappeared or are becoming extinct. There were once bears, wolves, wild goose and duck, black-necked crane, fish, eagles, ospreys and great herds of in blue sheep, wild yaks, deer and gazelles. They charged that most of the animals have been gunned down to feed the new Chinese population.

China's \textit{White Paper} has admitted that a number of animals "are on the verge of extinction". China acknowledges that due to excessive hunting, the number of bears and deer’s has decreased, and protection measures have been strengthened in recent years to stop wanton killing for economic gain. Thirty of Tibetan animals

\textsuperscript{112} \textit{News From China}; No.5, 1994, p.13.
species were also mentioned in 1990 list of international union for conservation of natures ‘Red List’ of endangered species. Since then, China says that endangered wildlife such as black-necked crane, antelopes and tigers are well protected.\textsuperscript{113} Tibetan and Chinese prize animals for fur and medicinal properties. There are reports of local people and Chinese shooting and trapping the endangered animals of Tibet and selling animal skins openly in the markets. Range ecologist Daniel Miller also reported that, hunters with high-powered rifles are penetrating the remote Kunlun Mountain of Qinghai province to kill antelopes, gazelle, blue sheep and wild yak. They sell the meat to markets in outlying towns.\textsuperscript{114}

Except for research purpose, China outlaws hunting many species in Tibet. If anyone is caught hunting or capturing protected animals without the government’s permission, they would be fined or put in jail. Hunting however, is outlawed only in the books but in reality; the laws have no power. The skins of the endangered species are often sold openly in the markets. This is because, the country officials in charge fail to implement the laws regulations passed by the government, for their own immediate gains.

Tibetans also charge the Chinese of exploiting Tibet’s abundant geothermal springs and using them to produce electricity for Chinese settlers. They say that Tibetans villages are routinely bypassed in the provision of basic sanitation, water and electricity. Some of the large rivers are pushing their sources westwards, and the consequences of soil erosion, deforestation, winds, industrialization and earthquake

\textsuperscript{113} News From China, June 22, 1994, p.6.
techtonics are immense.

Tibetans and the ICT had also charged that the Yamdrok Yamtso hydroelectric project, would destroy the Sacred lake and its ecosystem. The project was estimated to cost only $128 million and the 1992 White paper stated that it would be finished by 1997. The project was delayed in 1985 due to opposition by the late Panchen Lama, that it might harm the environment. The government postponed the work on the plant, to study the effect on the ecosystem and after four years, announced that the environment would not suffer adversely. The government reported that “a careful feasibility study determined that the station will not effect the environment.” At the same time, TIN reported that China is looking for another hydroelectric source for Lhasa.

Whatever China says, Tibetans and their supporters have good reason to fear, especially for the wild animals, which are being wiped out, and the forests that are becoming barren in some areas. Most of China’s development projects are bound to affect the land with roads, construction, structures and more Chinese settlers, which threatens the environment. As for the Yamdrok projects, some believe that China will not build such an expensive plant which might destroy their water supply.

Cadres
Since the reforms, one of the important aspects of the regional national autonomy was to train, select and appoint cadres of national minorities. Hu proposed for withdrawal

\footnote{Xinhua, “Lhasa power to stop burning of dung, sod,” China Daily, April 26, 1990.}
of the cadres in Tibet, so that Tibetan Cadre should make up more than two-thirds of
the government functionaries within two or three years. He emphasised on
Tibetanization of cadres. The Chinese cadres under the age of fifty should be required
to learn Tibetan and be able to read papers and documents written in Tibetan. 116

According to Chinese reporters, currently there are about 37,000 Tibetan cadres in Tibet, who account for 72% of the number of Tibetan Cadres at the regional level and 61.2% at the county level. These are the new generation who are trained in Mao-Leninist ideology. The increase in the number of Tibetan cadres in the bureaucracy was mainly achieved by the withdrawal of a large number of Chinese from Tibet. Between 1980-81, thousands of Chinese Cadres were transferred to China. The vacancies were equally filled by the newly recruited Tibetans. In 1981, the percentage of Tibetan cadres exceeded 50% for the first time. The figures below show the number and percentage of Tibetan cadres in 1965-1981. 117

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Number of Tibetan Cadres</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>7,508</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>20,023</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>29,406</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By 1982, the Chinese authorities claimed that over 600 Tibetan ex-officials were holding post in the government and the party. These Ex-officials were members of former Tibetan aristocracy who were rehabilitated and were given important roles

117 Tibet: Today and yesterday, China Today 1983, No.7, p.16.
in Tibetanizing the bureaucracy. And by 1986, the government statistics show that the figures had risen to 60.3% with an even more marked increase at the lower levels of administration.\textsuperscript{118}

In November 1985, the regional party announced a major shuffle. For the first time many Tibetans were appointed to top position within the party. Wu Jinghua remained the first secretary but of the six Deputy Secretaries, five were Tibetans.\textsuperscript{119}

The 1989 government statistics then reported that professionals of Tibetan and other minority nationalists amounted to 62 percent of the total in the region. These cadres are said to be well represented in the fields of industry, agriculture, energy, science, technology, communication, arts, culture, education and public health of Tibet.

However, Hu’s policy of withdrawing Han cadres was not implemented fully, as it was met with stiff resistance from both Tibetan and Chinese cadres, who had gained their positions during the Cultural Revolution and were reluctant to surrender their position. Many of them had vested interests in obstructing the reforms. They saw the changes threatening their authority and privileges, as well as a it as a negation of their work in Tibet over the past three decades. Moreover, years of neglect had left Tibet without any educated work force. This made Tibetanisation of the bureaucracy very difficult. Many of the Tibetan cadres had no qualifications and 50percent of them had only been educated up to junior middle school. This had left them ‘barely competent for their work’.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{118} Data on CCP in Tibet 1993, p.296.
\textsuperscript{119} SWB, 1985, no.FE/8113/B11/7.
\textsuperscript{120} Tibet: Today and yesterday, China Today 1983, No.7, p.43.
In any case, the increase in the number of Tibetan cadres did not mean that a transfer of power had taken place. However, it provided new opportunities for a generation of young educated Tibetans who had suffered during the Cultural Revolution. They are now holding leading posts in the local peoples’ congress government and peoples’ courts at various levels throughout the region. Of course, it is doubtful that China would recruit anyone who is sympathetic towards Tibetan independence, especially since the outbreak of protest in 1987.

Tibetans complain that even if they held high positions, in reality, they held no real power. They cannot make any decisions without the consent of their Chinese ‘subordinates’. Tibet is one of the autonomous regions of the country, but autonomy is at best limited to the rarely exercised right to pass local laws and impose local taxes. All the important key posts are occupied by Hans. It is interesting to note that till date, the post of the highest position of power in Tibet, the Party’s First Secretary has always been held by Chinese. Right from 1959, it was Zhang Guhua, followed successively by Tseng Yunge, Ren Rong, Yin Fatang, Wu Jinhua, Hu Jintao and Chen Kuiyuan who are all Chinese.

Conclusion

Most of the foregoing accounts suggest that conditions have generally improved in recent years. The central government is much more sensitive to peoples’ needs, than in the period from mid -1960’s to mid - 1970’s. Since Hu’s inspection tour in May 1980, there have been reports of a much-raised general standard of living, although it
is still very low compared to other parts of China. Despite his continuing political protests against the Chinese rule, the Dalai Lama himself albeit grudgingly, has conceded improvements in the standard of living and increased production.

However, inspite of government’s efforts to push development, Tibet still lags behind China in development, with 15 percent of households said to be living below the poverty line. In certain rural areas, the increase in population, not matched with economic growth pushed living standards to a downward spiral. There are also reports of hordes of unemployed labourers roaming the country looking for work, having been driven out of their occupations by the endless ‘influx of Chinese’. “Tibet: A case study to answer featured in ‘Dispatches’ BBC channel 4, estimated that 70 percent of Tibetans are unemployed in Lhasa.

Chinese economists noted that there were many natural barriers preventing the development of commodity economy in Tibet, such as difficulties in transport, power supply and the poor educational level of the people. 121 However, the main weakness of the Tibetan economy was that the region somehow existed outside the new economic development in China, and that it was becoming even more dependent on state subsidies. Although, Tibetan herdsmen produced large quantities of butter 90% of it was consumed by them. 122 The surplus was expended for non-productive activities such as temple building. In the Chinese view, the Tibetan peasantry made little or no effort to convert the surplus into marketable goods or profit; they only made moves towards self-sufficiency.

121 Wang and Bai, p.30.
However, M. Goldstein and Beall, found that in nomadic areas the wool trade became so lucrative that the nomads were forced to sell a quota to the government at a lower price than they could obtain in the open market.\(^{123}\) In some areas the communes were not completely disbanded and separation of the government from commune administration did not take place. There were still major administrative reforms that needed to be carried out. Development aid is more visible in the cities than the countryside. Nevertheless, government did not completely ignore the rural areas. Because of improved transport facilities and roads, nomads are now directly involved in trade. While most preferred to continue with straight animal husbandry, some have began to explore the trade option.

The period between 1979-1983 had brought modest economic benefit and the main changes had been gradual relaxation of social and political control. A number of prisoners prosecuted during the Cultural Revolution were rehabilitated. Travel was allowed for the Tibetans to visit relatives and Pilgrimage sites in India. Restrictions on internal travel have also been lifted of late.

Tibetans say that if the Chinese are really sincere about helping and developing Tibet, the real decision making should be in the hands of the Tibetans, who know and understand the needs of their people and not Chinese officials who have China’s interest and their own personal gain in mind. Of course, it is doubtful that any government will put its opponents into positions of authority, if it can avoid

doing so. It is possible that in this case, fault occur in the systems, not because of lack of good policy decisions, but their failure in implementation; either deliberately or inadvertently. The officials in Tibet, most of the time fail to implement the government policies, which is basically the reason for the failure of the new economic policy in Tibet.