Tibet: an issue between China and India

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Abstract

Since India and China’s independence in 1947 and 1949 respectively, Tibet remained a cause of disagreement between the two. In history, Tibet was controlled by China but in twentieth century, China lost it to Britain. After the departure of Britain from South Asian subcontinent both China and India claimed the ownership of the area. In this article, an effort has been made to discuss some of the important problems involved in Tibetan politics of the region, history and its dynamics. Descriptive and analytical method has been used for the interpretation of secondary data. A lot of literature has been review for the article. Library based research technique of social sciences has been used in this article, in which the work of others has been thoroughly scrutinized and analyzed.

Keywords: Tibet, China, India, China-India Relations.

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Introduction

Tibet is one of the five administrative divisions of China known as ‘autonomous regions’ allocated for national minorities. Its population mainly consists of Buddhists. It is the second largest region of China by area consisting of 1.2 million square kilometers area and a population of about 3 million. Tibet constitutes one sixth of the land mass of the whole of China. It is located in South West of China and North West of India, surrounded by Kulun Mountains in North and Himalaya Mountains in South. Tibet is one of the highest plateaus of the world with altitude of about 16000 feet, also known as ‘roof of the world’. Strategically Tibet is very important for China and India both. The control of Tibet is necessary for China; firstly to secure her western border and secondly to exploit the natural resources of Tibet.¹

Historical background

Tibet was occupied during Tang Dynasty (718-907 A.D) and it remained under the control until Qing Dynasty (1644-1911 A.D). However, the China’s suzerainty on Tibet vanished with the decline of the Qing Dynasty in the nineteenth century. Then a new era started in Tibetan history when Britain arrived in South Asian subcontinent. Britain made it a buffer zone in nineteenth century to protect her South Asian colony from the expansion of Czarist Russia. Britain imposed its suzerainty over Tibet because she considered that China was unable at that time to protect it from Russia.² Therefore, by making Tibet forcefully her northern frontier created a border problem with China³ because China never agreed with Britain measures and order of things.

After WWII West recognized Chinese claim over Tibet but they changed their position after communist revolution in China. Instead, it became an opportunity for western powers to destabilize China, to stir rebellion in an inaccessible and remote part of China (Tibet), which was difficult for the new People’s Republic to handle.⁴ With the breakdown of colonial framework in India in 1947 and establishment of communist rule in China in 1949 the situation changed and the things were to be reevaluated. The communist leaders of China gave top priority to the demarcation of its border with the neighboring states. China traditionally claimed Tibet as part of

¹ John W. Garver, Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2001 p. 35
² Sir Olaf Careo, The Geography and Ethics of India’s Northern Frontiers, Geographical Journal, Sep. 1960, vol. 126, no. 3, p. 316
³ Dr. Mohammad Yunus, Reflection on China, Lahore, Wajid Ali Press, 1988, pp. 114-15
⁴ Beijing Review May 7, 2008. Retrieved from www.bjreview.com.cn/expert/txt/2008-05/07/content_115237.htm
greater China. However, India continued to consider Tibet as a buffer zone by inheriting the British policy; because Tibet's autonomous status was in India's security interests. This contained much potential for friction and strife. It was clear that a classic pattern for a border dispute was inherent in the situation. Indian moves in border areas, which China claimed, had increased China's concern about Indian intentions.

The difference between China and India on the status of Tibet was present even before the departure of Great Britain from Indian subcontinent when China objected to the Tibet independent status in the meeting of the Indian Council of World Affairs Inter-Asia Relations Conference in March 1947. However, in July 1949 when the victory of communists in China was obvious, Tibet expelled nationalist Chinese and declared independence. China announced that the so-called 'Declaration of Independence' by Tibet was the result of intrigues of imperialists and that the communist government of China would immediately proceed to liberate Tibet. India urged China to let Tibet be an autonomous region. India also asked China to reduce her military presence in the area.

For the settlement of the problem Tibetan delegation visited India in August 1950 to discuss the problem. The Chinese ambassador in India advised the Tibetan delegation to visit China and discuss the matter there but the Tibetan delegation wanted to discuss the matter with China in a neutral territory because of their stand that these negotiations should base on equal status not between a suzerain and a protectorate.

The Tibetan delegation did not visit China and stayed in India for about two months. Which was considered by China as foreign intrigue against China and did not wait further and in a decisive move, on 7 October 1950; invaded Tibet and occupied it and assert its authority by force over what it considered its own territory. After the occupation of Tibet, China announced that Tibet will enjoy autonomous status under Chinese rule and China will not make any change in Tibet forcefully. China also solidified this claim in a 17-point agreement with Tibet but did not stand on it. The

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5 Robert Trumbull, *Times of India*, Dec 7, 1950
6 Thien Ton That, *India and Southeast Asia 1947-1960*, Geneva (Switzerland), Librairie Droz Press, 1963, p. 288
7 Louis Dupree, Eden Naby, *The Modernization of Inner Asia*, New York, M.E. Sharpe Press, 1994, p. 190
8 Op.Cit., Dr. Mohammad Yunus, pp. 114-15
9 Dinesh Lal, *Indo-Tibet-China Conflict*, New Dehli, Gyan Publishing House Press, 2008, p. 223
10 John Rowland, *A History of Sino-Indian Relations: Hostile Co-Existence*, New York, D.Van Nontrand Press, 1967, p. 71
independent status of Tibet ended with Chinese occupation and its buffer status had been lost between China and India. At the same time, China also refused to recognize the Shimla Agreement on border demarcation between Tibet and British India, which exposed the Sino-India border to a dispute.\textsuperscript{11} This was the first test of Sino-Indian friendship. China was relatively isolated at that time and India was heard with attention in world councils but India decided to withdraw its claim on Tibet. However, India sent a letter to China and called her action most surprising and regrettable. However, China's reply was not favourable to India in which China made it clear to India that no foreign influence will be tolerated in Tibet. She also considered that India's attitude had been affected by foreign elements hostile to China.\textsuperscript{12} India was surprised and upset by the China's use of force in Tibet\textsuperscript{13} but did not show its opposition to the said action. Even India did not show publicly its displeasure to the establishment of authority of Communist China in Tibet. Indian leaders adopted lenient attitude showed by Nehru's statement in a press conference in March 1950 when he said that India would not interfere in Tibet. The Indian Ambassador to China was also clear about this policy of India as he later put on record:

“I had, even before I started for Beijing, come to the conclusion that the British policy of looking upon Tibet as an area in which we had special political interest could not be maintained. The Prime Minister had also, in general, agreed with this view.”\textsuperscript{14}

Nevertheless, the animosity between India and China was present which was showed in their letters exchanged at that time between the two governments, accused each other over Tibet problem in October and November 1950.\textsuperscript{15} However, Indian position on Tibet was cleared from the statement of Nehru in the Council of States on 23 September 1953:

“As between the Chinese Government and us, there are no territorial questions. The questions relate to trade, posts and telegraphic arrangements and such matters.

\textsuperscript{11} Abanti Bhattacharya, Chinese Nationalism and the Fate of Tibet: Implications for India and Future Scenario, \textit{Strategic Analysis}, 2007, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 237-266
\textsuperscript{12} Girilal Jain, 1960, \textit{Panchsheela and After: A Re-appraisal of Sino-Indian Relations in the Context of the Tibetan Insurrection}, London, Asia Pub. House, 1960, p. 7
\textsuperscript{13} K Sarwar Hasan, \textit{China, India, Pakistan}, Karachi, PIIA Press, 1966, p. 39
\textsuperscript{14} Kavalam Madhava Panikkar, \textit{In Two Chinas: Memoirs of a Diplomat}, London, Allen and Unwin Press, 1955, p. 102
\textsuperscript{15} Bhavna Tripathy, \textit{The Tibetan Uprising and Indian Opinion of the Chinese}, \textit{Journal of Defence Studies}, 2012, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 27-54
Obviously, we have no desire to claim any position in Tibet which may 'not be in keeping with the full sovereignty of China.'

The statement of Indian ambassador also showed the Indian indifference towards the problem. When Mr. Panikkar was asked in a press conference about the large influx of Chinese troops into Tibet and its implications for India in security terms he said that he did not think 'there was anything wrong in the troops of Red China moving about in their own territory.'

**Panch sheela; Sino-Indian Agreement on Tibet 1954 and after**

China and India concluded a treaty on Tibet in April 1954, in which India recognized China's sovereignty over Tibet and the rights and privileges of India dropped in that region and withdrawn its deputation from Tibet which was stationed there to protect Indian trade. India also handed over all its installation in Tibet to China. Through this agreement, China got the actual control, what it had lost to the British in Tibet.

India, in fact, sacrificed Tibet (the area where the interests of India involved) in the hope to win China's friendship. Every government in China knows the importance of the area so they had exercised exclusive authority over there. India could not maintain the British policy of Tibet as a buffer zone and could not protect its interests there. Nehru also had agreed to this policy. China, at that time, considered British and American intrigues in Tibet against her interest and thought that Western imperialist were involved in making Tibet a base against China. It was high time for China to take steps for the liberation of Tibet, as it had done for the rest of the Chinese territory.

Dalai Lama (Tibetan leader) asked India for asylum in 1956. He complained to Nehru that the China did not keep to the promises it had made to Tibet in 1951 agreement. In response, China complained to India that United States with the help of Taiwan were making subversive activities against Tibet across the border area.

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16 Dorothy Woodman, *Himalayan frontiers: a political review of British, Chinese, Indian, and Russian rivalries*, Westport (US), Praeger Press, 1970, p. 224

17 Prithwis Chandra Chakravati, *India’s China Policy*, US, Indiana University Press,1962, p. 49

18 Sumit Ganguly, William Thompson, *Asian Rivalries: Conflict, Escalation, and Limitations on Two-level Games*, US, Stanford University Press, 2011, pp. 99-101

19 Thomas Laird, *Into Tibet: The CIA’s First Atomic Spy and His Secret Expedition to Lhasa*, New York, Grove Press, 2007, p. 10

20 John B. Roberts and Elizabeth A. Roberts, *Freeing Tibet: 50 Years of Struggle, Resilience, and Hope*, New York, AMACOM Div American Mgmt. Assn, Press, 2009, p. 19
from India.\textsuperscript{21} India addressed Tibet's complaint to China and assured China that necessary action will be taken if evidence was found of usage of Indian land for subversive activities by US.\textsuperscript{22} Nehru advised Dalai Lama to return to Tibet with assurance that "The Chinese Prime Minister had promised complete autonomy for Tibet and would not force reforms on Tibet against the wishes of the people."\textsuperscript{23}

Dalai Lama then returned to Tibet but China became suspicious of his stay in India. China protested in July 1958 to Indian embassy in a note, that Chiang Kai Shek was involved in a conspiracy against China with the help of US by using Tibet's escapee reactionaries in India and making subversive and disruptive activities against China's Tibetan region.\textsuperscript{24} China believed that they were using India as base for their conspiracy to stage an armed revolt against China to achieve their deceitful goal of separation of Tibet from communist China. The Chinese worries come true when the revolt broke out in Tibet but India denied her involvement. However, China suspicions did not remove about India's involvement in Tibet's rebellion. In March 1959 the rebellion further ignited when China crackdown to capture Dalai Lama.\textsuperscript{25} Dalai Lama fled to India to escape from China's arrest. India provided asylum to Dalai Lama as well as permanent residence in India (Dharamsala), from where he launched a movement against Chinese rule in Tibet. The movement meant for freedom and protection of human rights of Tibetans which viewed by China with apprehension.\textsuperscript{26} All this happened was in contrast to India's pledge that Dalai Lama will not indulge in any activity against China from India. Therefore, Tibet problem remained a continuous irritant in China-India mutual relations in the coming years.

In 1965, China declared Tibet as her autonomous region. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), many Tibetan monasteries were destroyed and thousands of Tibetans were killed. However, in the post-Mao era, reforms to bring about development and investment, under Deng Xiaoping in 1980s, eased Chinese pressure on Tibet. However, unfortunately this did not end the unrest. In 1987, a new series of protests by the monks in Tibet once again ignite the uprising for Tibetan independence. The protests ended with a crackdown in Tibet by Chinese government in 1989. In the same year, the 10th Panchen Lama had died and the

\textsuperscript{21} Kuldip Nayar, \textit{India: Critical Years}, India, Vikas Publications Press,1971, pp. 193-95
\textsuperscript{22} Neville Maxwell, \textit{India's China War}, India, Natraj Publishers,1997, pp. 339-45
\textsuperscript{23} Donald Newton Wilber, \textit{The Nations of Asia}, Oxford (UK), Hart Publishing Company Press, 1966,p. 566
\textsuperscript{24} Warren W. Smith, \textit{Tibetan Nation, A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations}, US, West view Press, 1996,pp. 450-59
\textsuperscript{25} Zhongguo fu li hui, \textit{China Reconstructs}, Volume 38, China Welfare Institute, 1989,p.12
\textsuperscript{26} Joshua Eisenman, Eric Heginbothem and Derek Mitchell, \textit{China and Developing World, Beijing Strategy for the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century}, New York, M.E. Sharpe Publisher,2007, pp. 135-37
search for his reincarnation led to yet another crisis between Tibetans and Chinese government.

**Change in Policies after Cold War**

From late 1980s, change in policies of all the three parties to Tibet was evident. In the Joint Communiqué of December 1988 following Rajiv Gandhi’s visit the Indian side recognized that the Tibet Autonomous Region is part of the territory of China (in contrast to the mention that ‘Tibet is an Autonomous Region of China’) and repeated its stand of disallowing anti-China political activities by Tibetans in India.

Dalai Lama also changed his position when he sent representatives to China and ceased to call for Tibetan independence. Further, the Dalai Lama gave a proposal in June 1988 at Strasbourg, which meant for self-government of Tibet under PRC. Dalai Lama maintains that the Tibetans are not seeking independence but ‘genuine or meaningful autonomy within the constitution of the People’s Republic of China’. This has been overtly stated by the Dalai Lama over and again from various forums and reiterated by his representatives on various occasions. However, China remained suspicious of his proposal because she considers it a plan to deceive her. China has rejected the Dalai Lama’s proposals for ‘genuine autonomy’ and described it as a trick to seek independence. For example, China pointed to the 1991 charter of the Tibetans in exile, which comprised that “efforts shall be made to transform a future Tibet into a Federal Democratic Self-Governing Republic and a zone of peace throughout her three regions, and the Dalai Lama as a head of such a future entity.”

In fact, it was for the first time that Tibetans in exile agreed to accept the sovereignty of China over Tibet in exchange for their full local autonomy. According to this proposal, all local affairs will remain with Tibet and only defense and foreign relations will be controlled by central government of China. The political system in Tibet will be democratic. China wanted Dalai Lama to accept the Chinese stand on Tibet that it was and will be a part of China but he rejected this desire of China. So consequently, China rejected his Strasbourg proposal. The proposal was a big concession from Dalai Lama side by scaling down the independence demand of Tibetans.

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27 His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Strasbourg Proposal, Address to Members of the European Parliament, Strasbourg, June 15, 1988, at [http://www.tpprc.org/scripts/strasbourgproposal.aspx](http://www.tpprc.org/scripts/strasbourgproposal.aspx).
28 1991 charter of the Tibetans .p.2
29 *Beijing Review*, August 31, 1988, p. 16
Tibetans to local autonomy, though many Tibetans considered it a deviation from main cause.\textsuperscript{30}

Chinese and Tibetans in exile contacts in these vague circumstances were totally disillusionsing and frustrating. Although both sides did not abandoned the idea of reconciliation but the activities took place from both sides in 1980s and 1990s increased the differences between them. The prospects of reconciliation were dim indeed and the new developments would lead to desperate and sporadic terrorism on the part of Tibetans.\textsuperscript{31} Dalai Lama wanted to pressurize China by pursuing worldwide campaign. China also changed the material status of Tibet and invested heavily there for economic development. The China’s aim of Tibet’s economic development was that once people become prosperous under Chinese government they would themselves discard the idea of independence.

China considered the Tibetans struggle for independence as Western conspiracy against her to undermine her rise as global power. China used the criticism of west related to human rights violations in Tibet to activate national sentiments against western ‘hegemonism’. On other side, the same western support of Tibetan separatists gave China the chance to apply ‘Strike Hard’ like policies to suppress the Tibetan movement for freedom. China very tactfully portrayed the western criticism of human right violation in Tibet as a conspiracy of west to dismember her. China not only deflected the international criticism but also successfully suppress the Tibetan rebellion.\textsuperscript{32}

**Tibet in Sino-India Relations in Post 9/11**

China’s main fear about India is that, in future, India with the help of United States will once again raise a Tibetan rebellion against China.\textsuperscript{33} India is the main factor in the solution of Tibet problem of China. It needs to be discussed between the two countries on highest level for solution rather than dismissing it as a simple internal problem. China remained suspicious about India’s intentions regarding Tibet because India refused in 1962 to renew the Sino–Indian 1954 agreement of Tibet when it expired after eight years. India’s rejection of China’s proposal for renewal of

\textsuperscript{30} Baogang He and Barry Sautman, *The Politics of the Dalai Lama’s New Initiative for Autonomy*, October 8, 2005, retrieved from http://www.phayul.com/news/tools/print.aspx?id=10900&t=1

\textsuperscript{31} Brantly Womack, *Resolving Asymmetric Stalemate: the Case of the Tibet Question*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, 2007, vol. 16, no. 52, pp. 443-460

\textsuperscript{32} Warren W. Smith, *Tibet’s Last Stand?: The Tibetan Uprising of 2008 and China’s Response*, Maryland (US), Rowman & Littlefield Press, 2010, Pp. 6-9

\textsuperscript{33} Amardeep Atwal, 2008, *China-India Relations Contemporary Dynamics*, New York, Routledge Press, 2008, p. 42
the agreement meant that India no more recognized Tibet as the part of China. Since then it was in 2003 Vajpayee’s visit to China that India officially accepted Tibet as an autonomous region of China by signing a declaration. Despite India’s signature to the declaration accepting China’s sovereignty on Tibet, China would continue to be doubtful of India and the Tibetans in India as long as the border dispute will not settle. Whether China acknowledges or not, the Dalai Lama’s stay in India has been a continuous embarrassment for China.  

According to Wang the Tibet problem, ‘Sometimes has attracted more attention of the people than the boundary issue itself’, he asserts that ‘If this problem is not handled properly, it would be detrimental to the development of future Sino-Indian relations.’

The Tibet issue remained contentious between the two countries because there is disparity between Indian official actions and public sentiments as India officially recognized Tibet as Chinese region but Dalai Lama still reside in Dharamsala, India, along his thousands followers and Indian people supports them. Dalai Lama is widely popular and spiritually influential in India. Majority Indian people differ to the government’s policy towards Tibet and support an independent Tibet. Indian people also oppose to China’s policy of pouring ethnic Han in Tibet. The ethnic composition of the area is rapidly changing with massive migration of Han, and will soon make Tibetans a minority in their own land. Indians are also very disappointed by the destruction of various Buddhist religious sites in Tibet by China. The problem further deteriorated by China’s claim of an important Buddhist site of Tibetans (Tawang) in Arunachal Pradesh on the basis that Tawang was the birth place of sixth Dalai Lama. Nevertheless, India rejected the Chinese claim and stated that it is non-negotiable and humiliating. Therefore, Tawang become a sticking point between China and India. China is pressurizing India to give access to Tawang because China wants to control the Monastery of Tawang for choosing the next Dalai Lama. Sino-Indian relations was at its lowest ebb due to Tibet issue during Hu Jintao’s rule because he is known as a hardliner over Tibet and he played important role in successful suppression of 1988 Tibetan revolt. In these circumstances, China has developed military infrastructure in Tibet near Indian border, as preemption against any possible destabilization of Tibet by India in post-Dalai Lama Period.

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34 B. R. Deepak., India, China and Tibet: fundamental perceptions from Dharamsala, Beijing and New Delhi, *Asian Ethnicity*, October 2011, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 301-321
35 New York Times, 8 August 2002.
36 Joshua Eisenmen and Eric H., Derek M. (eds), *China and the Developing World: Beijing Strategy for 21st Century*, New York, M. E. Sharpe Press, 2007, p. 139.
37 New York Times, August 8, 2002.
38 PINR (Power and Interest News Report), Oct 24, 2007.
39 Ibid.
Although China and India held negotiations for three decades continuously but no progress has been achieved for the resolution of the problem and on the core territorial issues, India and China are as divided as before. Despite their growing economic ties, Tibet issue remained a major sour point in Sino-Indian relations. For China and India, as emerging powers with competing ambitions, dispute over border is more than just land; it is about power, pride, prestige, and a sense of national honor and propriety. This is the reality that both countries still have deep mistrust and suspicion toward each other’s strategic intentions. Tibet issue along with Border dispute still has the potential to trigger unexpected results. Therefore, the possibility of armed confrontation over borders and territory cannot be ruled out completely. China believes that India still pursues imperial policies of Britain, evident from India’s insistence on the British-imposed McMahon line as their border.40

In June 2001, China’s fourth Symposium on Tibet mainly emphasized the economic modernization of Tibet and showed the desire of China to re-contact Dalai Lama. Therefore, the official contact between China and Dalai Lama reopened in 2002. Since then five meetings took place up-to 2006 but did not result in any outcome and there was no planning for future meetings also. No joint statements were issued after these meetings because China considered these meetings as private rather than between two governments.41

The 49th anniversary celebration of Tibetans’ uprising against China by Dalai Lama and his supporters in Dharamsala (India) in March 2008 led to violent demonstrations by Tibetans in Tibetan capital (Lhasa) in which 13 peoples died including security personnel of China. There were also demonstrations by Tibetans and their Indian supporters in many cities of India, which were considered by China as a conspiracy against her. Though India showed that she was trying to suppress the unrest but media reports expressed anti-China stance. India still suspects China’s intentions in the long run as exposed from the statement of an Indian military official The Lt. General (R) Harwant Singh that

“The mountainous Tibet would be very useful for the installations of China’s ballistic missiles which could reach all parts of India. Fair and reasonable settlement implies that “India will need to give up something to get something.”42

40 Yaacov Y. I. Vertzberger, China’s Southwestern Strategy, Westport (US), Conn.: Praeger Press,1985, pp. 145-168
41 K. Warikoo, Himalayan Frontiers of India: Historical, Geo-Political and Strategic Perspectives, London, Routledge,2009, p. 104
42 The Tribune, Chandigarh (India), Feb 18, 2007
India still maintains double-tracked policy towards Tibet. It maintains officially that Tibet is a part of China but covertly it supports the Dalai Lama and Tibetans in India to the extent that infuriates China and hinders any prospects for the development in the solution of Tibet’s problem.

**Change in population structure of Tibetans and Han in Tibet Autonomous Region (according to Chinese Census) 1949-2010**

(In millions)

| Year | Total population | Tibetans | Han | Other ethnic groups |
|------|------------------|----------|-----|---------------------|
| 1949 | 1.15             | 1.15     | 0   | 0                   |
| **percentage** | **100** | **100** | 0   | 0                   |
| 1953 | 1.27             | 1.27     | 0   | 0                   |
| **percentage** | **100** | **100** | 0   | 0                   |
| 1964 | 1.35             | 1.25     | 0.037 | 0.005              |
| **Percentage** | **100** | **96.63** | 3   | **0.37**           |
| 1982 | 1.89             | 1.78     | 0.092 | 0.008             |
| **percentage** | **100** | **94** | 5   | 1                   |
| 1990 | 2.2              | 2.1      | 0.08 | 0.02               |
| **percentage** | **100** | **95** | 4   | 1                   |
| 2000 | 2.5              | 2.4      | 0.15 | 0.049              |
| **Percentage** | **100** | **92** | 6   | 2                   |
| 2010 | 3                | 2.7      | 0.24 | 0.06               |
| **percentage** | **100** | **90** | 8   | 2                   |

Source: William S. Tay, Alvin Y. So, 2011, *Handbook of Contemporary China*, Singapore, World Scientific Press, p. 140.
National Bureau of Statistics of China: [www.stats.gov.cn/english/](http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/)

**Conclusion**

Tibet is a sensitive area where China has been flooded Han to dilute the Tibetans majority to die their resistance his own death. The future will witness further Hanization in Tibet by China if the current policy and trends continue. In the process, Tibetan culture is vanishing and the identity of Tibetans will gradually destroyed or will submerge in Han identity. China will try to solve the Tibetan problem within the framework of her nationalism. The recent gestures of Dalai Lama indicates to reconciliation of Tibet with China. He gave the proposal of Autonomy of Tibet, which seems difficult to be realize by China.

Indeed the Tibetan movement for independence weakened by giving much emphasis on the human rights aspect rather than on the right of self-determination
of Tibetans. The same thing is pointed out by a Tibetan analyst that, 'the human rights discourse has obscured the true goal of the Tibetan people, which is the restoration of independence'.

On other side, India also changed her policy towards China and engaged with her by putting the contentious issues on the back burner. Therefore, the Tibet issue receded to background and the Tibetans lost one of their main patron. India also repeatedly reiterated her stand on Tibet issue that she considers Tibet as an autonomous part of China. However, the issue will remain as an irritant between the two because of Dalai Lama and Tibetan refugee residence in India and their struggle for Tibetan liberation from Indian soil.

Moreover, China’s rising power silenced the criticism of West. In fact, China very tactfully used the ‘human rights card’ for the protection of her national interests. Although the US wanted to use human rights as a means for manipulation its relations with China, but did not put much emphasis on it because of the fear that it jeopardize its relations with China. US actually did not use it for Tibet’s right to freedom. The situation has dramatically changed today and China has become both confident and secure.

43 Op.Cit., K. Warikoo, p. 104
44 Yongjin Zhang, China in International Society Since 1949: Alienation and Beyond, St. New York, Martin’s Press, 1998, p. 191
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