

Poverty and Exclusion of Minorities in China and India

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A.S. Bhalla · Dan Luo

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*In memory of Shufang Qiu (1956–2013), a friend and associate, who
shared an interest in issues of poverty and inequalities in China and India
until his untimely departure*

Praise of the First Edition

1. ‘... A path-breaking book...highly scholarly in the presentation and analysis of the data....based on unusual and valuable source material.... judicious and fair in its analysis..... I strongly recommend it for its scholarly value and its accessibility’.

Dr Colin Mackerras, Professor Emeritus, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia (*Asian Ethnicity, June 2013*)

2. ‘This is a rare book and probably the first of its kind. Unique also is the analytical rigour on the lines of empirical evidence-based research, essential especially when the topics considered are sensitive. A case study of the socio-political scene in Kashmir is useful reading’.

Dr Abusaleh Shariff, Executive Director, US-India Policy Institute, Washington DC, formerly Member-Secretary, Prime Minister’s High-Level Committee on Muslims, Government of India (*The Hindu, 13 June 2013*)

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Dr Quazi Shahabuddin, former Director-General, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (*Bangladesh Development Studies, September 2014*).

4. 'The authors have done a commendable job...the book is exceptional for several reasons'.

Dr D. Choudhuri, Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi (*China Report, November 2013*)

Preface to the First Edition

A study of poverty, inequality and social exclusion of minorities in China and India is timely. This book examines these problems facing minorities in a global perspective. The process of globalization and the war on terror have internationalized the socioeconomic and political conditions of Muslim and Tibetan minorities in Kashmir in India and Xinjiang and Tibet in China. The choice of minorities is guided by the fact that there is little economic literature on the subject at present, much less a comparative study of the Chinese and Indian minorities.

Both countries have diverse and significant minorities. In India, besides religious minorities, a much larger population consists of caste-based social groups which have suffered from social exclusion and discrimination for centuries. The governments of both countries have introduced similar preferential policies (affirmative action, for example) for their economic and social well-being. But it remains unclear how far these policies have achieved their goal. We examine how the poverty situation of minorities has evolved and whether special measures in their favour have led to any appreciable positive impact on their standard of living.

We attempt to answer three main questions: (1) Have the minorities shared the fruits of economic growth in China and India? (2) Does

ethnicity or extreme poverty explain their disadvantaged position? And (3) How significant is their political representation and popular participation and what impact does it have on their economic and social welfare?

This book compares income poverty of religious minorities (mainly Muslims) in China and India. It also discusses non-income poverty in terms of a lack of access to education, health and other services. It presents case studies of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in India and the Xinjiang and Tibet autonomous regions of China. In both cases, economic factors (for example, poverty, exclusion and social alienation) explain social discontent, violence and militancy as much if not more than such political factors as lack of religious freedom and suppression of cultural identity and violation of basic human rights.

The above hypothesis is empirically tested. Data from Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) (India) show that Kashmiri Muslims are poorer than Hindus in the state. Poverty and unemployment are more acute in districts with preponderance of Muslim inhabitants which suggests poor targeting and a lack of effectiveness of massive central government transfers. In Xinjiang also, the Uyghur Muslims are much poorer than the Han. Their access to jobs, education and health services is limited. We conclude that economic factors are very important and that a new strategy combining anti-poverty action with prevention of extremists' infiltration from across the borders is the only way forward in the two countries.

The global war on terror and globalization in general have blurred the domestic agenda of self-determination of Muslim minorities in China and India (in Xinjiang and Kashmir, for example). They have confused the issue of legitimate grievances of these minorities with those of Islamic militancy and secessionist movements. It is quite possible that failures of the Chinese and Indian governments in addressing their grievances have in fact reinforced separatist tendencies.

The Chinese and Indian authorities have always maintained that social conflict and unrest in minority-dominated regions in the two countries is inspired by external forces. We show in the book that such *domestic* factors as poverty, unemployment and social exclusion are just as important. The *external* factors may have reinforced social conflict

arising out of domestic problems. So clearly it is up to China and India to meet the just demands of minorities in the interests of economic and social stability and national and regional security.

We owe a debt of gratitude to a number of friends and scholars, notably, Professor Dilip Nachane, former Director, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai; Dr Rokkam Radhakrishna, Chairman, National Statistical Commission, Government of India, and Honorary Professor, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad; Dr C.H. Hanumantha Rao, Honorary Professor, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad; and Dr Sukhadeo Thorat, Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Chairman, Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi and former Chairman, University Grants Commission, Government of India. They provided valuable material and enlightened us about the current debates on economic and social development in India. Others who were generous in their support include Dr. Abusaleh Shariff, National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi; Dr. Nidhi Sabharwal, Institute of Dalit Studies, New Delhi; Mr. Peeyush Bajpai, Indicus Analytics Private Ltd., New Delhi; Ambassador Bhaskar Balakrishnan, Greater Noida, UP; Professor Irudaya Rajan and Ms Mythri Prasad-Aleyamma, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram; Dr Madhura Swaminathan, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata; Dr Rohit Mutatkar, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai; Dr. B.S. Grewal, Centre for Strategic Economic Studies, Victoria University, Melbourne; Professor Anil Deolalikar, Department of Economics, University of California Riverside; Professor Shujie Yao and Dr. Hongyi Lai, School of Contemporary Chinese Studies, University of Nottingham.

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Preface to the Second Edition

The preparation of the second edition on the heels of the first has come at a timely moment. Empirical works such as the first edition of the book become dated rather quickly. New data have become available; so have new articles and books on both China and India. Poverty has been reduced in both countries; thanks to a very rapid growth especially between 2010 and 2015 when the rest of the world including the US and the EU slowed down following the economic recession of 2008. But the issues of income and non-income inequalities, marginalization and social exclusion, remain as acute as ever in both countries.

The second revised edition has introduced a number of changes and new additions. First, wherever possible empirical tables have been updated using results of the *Census of India 2011*, *Indian National Sample Survey Organization* reports on consumer expenditure (2011–2012), health and education (2014) and the *Census of China 2010*. Second, apart from the use of new primary data, more recent relevant studies have also been critically examined. Third, some chapters, especially Chaps. 4–6 and 8 have been substantially rewritten and expanded. For example, a new section on Kashmiri Pandits as a case of non-Muslim identity is added to Chap. 6. It demonstrates that the existence

of multiple identities is often overlooked as a complicating factor in conflict resolution in Kashmir in addition to growing Muslim fundamentalism and cross-border terrorism. The global perspective to the minority issues has changed with the continuation of global terror, civil wars in Libya and Syria, the persistence of conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and the emergence of the Islamic State. As the book is mainly about Muslim minorities, these events have a global bearing on their treatment and perceptions about them. Trump's unpalatable pronouncements against Muslims and a growing Islamophobia in France following the terrorist attacks in Paris in 2016, bear testimony to how perceptions and attitudes towards an entire community are changing in the West. There is also a gradual retreat away from multiculturalism. In Chap. 8, the discussion of minority issues has been reviewed especially in such trouble spots as Kashmir in India and Tibet and Xinjiang in China in the light of these global events and perceptions. Finally, the Bibliography has been considerably expanded through the addition of a large number of recent references.

Several colleagues, friends and scholars from different parts of the world have generously supplied data and material which has enabled a timely completion of the new edition. To name only a few, Irudaya Rajan, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum; Rokkam Radhakrishna, Chairman, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad; Sukhadeo Thorat, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Chairman, National Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi; Vishal More, Intelink Advisors, New Delhi; Rohit Mutatkar, Tata Institute of Social Science Research, Mumbai; Xiaowei Zang, City University of Hong Kong; Jianxiong Ma, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology; Ding Sai, Institute of Nationality and Anthropology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Beijing; James Leibold, La Trobe University, Melbourne; Colin Mackerras, Griffith University, Brisbane; Benno Weiner, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburg; James Mayall, Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge; Hongyi Lai, School of Politics and International Relations, University of Nottingham; Björn Gustafsson, Institute of Social Work, Gothenburg University; and Michael Dillon, a China Specialist, formerly at the Centre for Contemporary Chinese Studies, University of Durham.

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Commugny, Switzerland
December 2016

A.S. Bhalla

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About the Book

Muslim minorities in China and India form only a small fraction of their respective populations. Yet as these minorities are often grouped in troubled border states, they are of key strategic importance in the context of global war on terror. This book compares the regions of Jammu and Kashmir in India and Xinjiang and Tibet in China, examining poverty and income and non-income inequalities such as lack of access to education, health and other public services. In both countries, while poverty has been reduced, inequalities have worsened, which renders economic factors no less important in explaining social discontent than the suppression of religious freedom, cultural identity and the violation of basic human rights.

The second edition has several new features namely, addition of a new section on Kashmiri Pandits, which demonstrates that multiple identities in the region complicate conflict resolution besides Muslim fundamentalism and cross-border terrorism. Another section has been added on political dialogue. The global perspective for a discussion of the minority issues has changed with the persistence of conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, the emergence of the Islamic State (ISIS) and a gradual retreat from multiculturalism. ISIS brutality and mass immigration of Muslims into Europe from the Middle East has

changed people's perceptions about them. Their legitimate grievances are often confused with those of militants and terrorists. Many chapters have been substantially rewritten and expanded in the light of this changed perspective. Others have been revised and updated in the light of the newly available data and literature.

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