

中國(澳門)西藏文化經濟發展促進會

China(Macao)Tibet's Cultural and Economic Development Promotion Association

NGO Report of the China(Macao)Tibet's Cultural and Economic Development Promotion Association Submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council for Universal Periodic Review

Bilingual Education: A Distinctive Feature of Modern Education in Xizang

Modern education in Xizang has consistently upheld bilingual education as a distinguishing characteristic of ethnic education. Over the past 70 years, Xizang's education system has significantly transformed from traditional to modern, from high illiteracy rates to balanced development, from education limited to monks and nobles to education accessible to the entire population, and from a focus primarily on religious knowledge to the establishment of a comprehensive disciplinary system. This significant transformation is a vital manifestation of Xizang's peaceful liberation and democratic reform, with bilingual education playing a crucial role in establishing, consolidating, and developing modern education in the Region.

The Tibetan language has been widely promoted. Before the peaceful liberation, the illiteracy and semi-literacy rates in old Xizang were as high as 95%, with only 5% of the population receiving education. Most Tibetans were unable to spell, read, or write in Tibetan. Following the peaceful liberation, the central government attached great importance to the development of Tibetan education. On May 23, 1951, it signed with the Local Government of Xizang the Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Xizang on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (the 17-Article Agreement). Article Three of the 17-Article Agreement specifically stipulated the gradual development of the language, script, and education based on the actual situation in Xizang. This provision established the guiding principles for the prioritized development of education and culture in Xizang. In the early stages of liberation, education in Xizang began with literacy classes in various regions, gradually raising the cultural level of farmers and herders living in remote and scattered areas. The Constitution of the People's Republic of China and Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy provide legal protection for studying and developing ethnic languages. With over 90% of the population being Tibetans in Xizang, the Xizang Autonomous Region places great emphasis on safeguarding the rights of Tibetans to study, use, and develop their own language and script under the Constitution and the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy. In 1987, the

Region enacted the Several Provisions of the Tibet Autonomous Region on the Study, Use, and Development of the Tibetan Language (For Trial Implementation), finally making this work law-based. Today, illiteracy among young and middle-aged Tibetans has been largely eradicated.

Since Xizang's peaceful liberation, bilingual education has been consistently implemented in schools at all levels. Kindergartens focus on strengthening bilingual listening and speaking skills in Tibetan and Mandarin Chinese. Primary schools emphasize the Tibetan language, Mandarin Chinese, mathematics, and character education. Secondary schools prioritize bilingual teaching and practical courses. All universities in Xizang offer mandatory courses in both Tibetan and Mandarin Chinese. The national common language and the Tibetan language have been widely promoted in education, with both languages being compulsory subjects in various entrance examinations and the scores being included in the overall assessment. Xizang has established a modern bilingual teaching system, where the national common language is the main language, and different levels of education are interconnected. Currently, all schools in Xizang implement bilingual education, benefiting over 96% of students. Furthermore, Xizang continues to enhance the bilingual teaching system by focusing on developing bilingual teaching materials, supporting the compilation of bilingual teaching aids for primary and secondary schools, and creating bilingual local teaching materials, school-based teaching materials, and audio-visual teaching materials. Xizang has established a specialized textbook compilation center dedicated to compiling a wide range of textbooks and teaching materials for primary and secondary schools. The center has developed over 400 specialized textbooks, including "Tibetan Calligraphy" and various Tibetan-Chinese bilingual multimedia teaching resources. Additionally, Xizang has established ten bilingual teacher training centers, effectively achieving five 100% goals, including popularizing bilingual education in primary and secondary schools.

Modern education in Xizang has inherited and developed the excellent traditional culture carried by the Tibetan language. Universities in Xizang offer courses in Tibetan language and literature, history, and religion, almost all taught in the Tibetan language. In 2017, Xizang University produced its first batch of doctoral graduates majoring in Tibetan language and literature, Tibetan history, and high-altitude medicine programs. The University of Tibetan Medicine is the only higher education institution in the world dedicated to Tibetan medicine, and it has become an important educational institution for developing excellent ethnic culture. Tibetan language and literature programs are also offered at other domestic universities, such as the Minzu University of China.

The Chinese national common language has become an important carrier of the world's modern knowledge system, playing an irreplaceable

role in knowledge exchange and innovation within China. Xizang has been continuously improving the teaching of the national common language, enabling Tibetan students to access diverse educational resources and share the latest teaching achievements with their peers across the country. This creates a favorable educational environment for expanding their horizons and improving their comprehensive qualities. Naqu City and Ali Prefecture have established high schools in Lhasa, which have attracted high-caliber teachers, improved the quality of education, and broadened students' bilingual proficiency and knowledge base.

Bilingualism in Tibetan and Chinese languages has been widely used in various aspects of social life in Xizang, creating a favorable social environment for bilingual education. Since the democratic reform in 1959, Tibetan and Mandarin Chinese have been used for official resolutions and regulations passed by the People's Congress of the Xizang Autonomous Region, formal documents issued by various levels of the People's Government and their departments in Xizang, and public announcements. In judicial proceedings, Tibetan has been used for cases involving Tibetan litigants, and legal documents have been written in Tibetan. The Lugu community, located on Bakuo Street in Lhasa, is home to various ethnic groups, including the Han, the Tibetan, the Hui, the Tu, and the Uyghur people. To facilitate daily communication and promote harmony among them, the Lugu community has recently established a bilingual mini-classroom for residents. This classroom opens for a one-hour class every Thursday, and since the beginning of this year, 25 such classes have been held, benefiting 200 participants.

As a result of its commitment to bilingual education, Xizang has witnessed substantial improvement in its modern education system, which encompasses preschool, basic, higher, vocational, special, and continuing education. According to national statistics in 2021, Xizang has achieved or exceeded the national average in terms of education rates per 100,000 people in preschool, primary, middle, and high schools, excluding schools of higher education. Over the past 70 years, bilingual education has nurtured many bilingual talents in Xizang, promoted exchanges and integration among various ethnic groups, and facilitated economic, social, and cultural connections with domestic and foreign regions. These achievements have greatly contributed to Xizang's economic development, social stability, and ethnic harmony.