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Poverty Alleviation Initiative
in Tibet: Demystifying
the Narrative
(Xiaokang : Moderately
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Abstract

Poverty Alleviation Initiatives were undertaken pan China from 1978; however, bulk of developments were witnessed mostly to the urban centers in the Eastern region & West region continued to struggle out of absolute poverty. Xiaokang (building of moderately well-off) villages/ habitats in border areas of West mostly in Tibet & Xinjiang were peculiar due to its inherent approach (civil military dual use infrastructure & human resource development).

The civil military integrated approached leveraged from the Management Principles & Best Practices in precise Project execution (Project Management, Change Management & HR Management) in strict time frame and brought about a distinctive Socio-Economic enhancement which was orchestrated to addresses security vulnerability (due to political instability, unrest, dissidence movement, forced occupation of Tibet by China) in a holistic manner.

The paper demystifies the Chinese Narrative of Poverty Alleviation Initiative in Tibet with Xiaokang (moderately well-off settlements built in close proximity of LAC) along with its dual use infrastructure. Sufficient evidence highlights the grand design of China to address its security and political instability in Tibet together with border management issues along India's Northern Borders armed with its New Land Border Law of China (Oct 2021) that provides legal framework to the infrastructure development, management, surveillance & monitoring of locals in border areas for Comprehensive Border Management.

The paper attempts unearth the reality from the narrative with inclusion the historical perspective, Xi narrative of New Era & Model Township, capability and capacity building, security implications in Tibet and the counter response strategy from the Indian perspective.

Introduction

Tibet due to its Geo - Political significance is considered as one of the toughest places in the world in terms of living or livelihood. The region is mostly characterized due to its rugged terrain, harsh high-altitude weather, sparse population, remoteness thereby resulting into very limited socio-economic development. The physical occupation of Tibet (Li, 2016) in late 1950 by PLA together with suppression and crackdown by the administrative regime under the control of Communist Party of China (CPC) created a colonial atmosphere for the local population.

Authorities in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) in the last one decade as part of its 12th & 13th five-year plan had undertaken sustainable development through a multi-disciplinary management approach inclusive of Change Management, HR Revitalization and Project Management. The period witnessed a massive civil-military dual infrastructure development in border areas with focus on construction of roads, tunnels, rail network, Airport/ Airfields, Heliports/ Helipads, power & tele communication network with inclusion of 5G technology. In addition to this, Xiaokang (Ranade, 2023) (construction of 628 moderately well-off settlements by employing latest technology & best use of local men & material resources) had been an important landmark achieved in a record time through integrated approach and coordinated work of all stake holders.

Civil-military approach had been the brain child of CPC under the leadership & directions of its Chairman Xi Jinping. The stated aim is to achieve integrated Socio-Economic development through host of Poverty Alleviation Projects involving multiple stake holders thereby addressing existing security vulnerabilities in the frontier remote inaccessible border region and thereby strengthening overall National Security.

Historical Perspective

Documented records related to the history of Tibet can be traced from the introduction of Buddhism which traversed from India in 6th century AD which further paved way for Unified Tibetan Empire in the 7th century AD. Post dissolution of unified empire, witnessed pd of breakup which lasted for around two centuries till Buddhist revival during the period of

10th-12th centuries which ushered in the development of three of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

Post a brief control by Mongol Empire and Yuan dynasty, Tibet became effectively independent in the 14th century and was ruled by a succession of noble houses for the next 300 years. In the 17th century, the senior lama of the Gelug school, the Dalai Lama, became the head of state. In the 18th century, a Qing dynasty expeditionary force conquered Tibet and it remained a Qing territory until the fall of the dynasty. Post Chinese independence Mao Zedong in 1949 clearly highlighted to the party (CPC) that control of Tibetan plateau was non-negotiable to unity of China and within a decade in 1959, PLA forcefully occupied and took physical control of Tibet.

In 1959, post escape of Dalai Lama to India & granting of political asylum to him and members of Tibetan Govt in exile created a major turmoil in the relation between India & China on the issue of status of Tibet Independence. Tibet which was historically considered as a buffer state between India & China no longer remained relevant resulting into a major conflict in 1962 and thereafter numerous skirmishes/ standoff at the disputed areas had been witnessed till date along the Line of Actual Control/ IB commonly known as Mac Mohan line.

China had two major challenges in Tibet post its forced occupation, firstly the internal security threat arising from the dissent of local population and secondly border management along the Indian Northern Frontiers in an extremely hostile weather and terrain. Successive leadership of CPC with turn of millennium (2000) came up with policies and host of initiatives in Tibet to holistically address the internal dissent and ensure comprehensive border management. In 2012, as Xi Jinping took the leadership of CPC, a series of reforms were launched to incl military re-organisation (Wuthnow and Saunders, 2017).

The leadership of Xi Jinping with clear cut objectives & goals, accelerated the pace of civil-military dual use infrastructure projects in Tibet. At the core of its poverty alleviation initiative had been the construction of Xiaokang settlements in the remote inaccessible 21 border counties of Tibet with India to empower the locals with slogan "**Border Guardians and Builders of Happy Homeland**" and integrating it with multiple security stake holders.

Policy Framework

In China the entire governance is controlled by CPC based on three pillars envisaging strict control of People, Propaganda & People's Liberation Army (PLA). CPC command and controls Govt functions based on core structures & organizations to derive its guidance, directions and scope under a meticulously drafted policy framework. It implies that every decision & initiative of the Govt are in sync with overall National Policy and the vision of President of China who is also the Chairman of the CPC.

National People's Congress, Political Consultative Conference, National People's Congress Standing Committee and National Party's Congress which is held after every five years are the forum which approves the draft policies and guidelines post comprehensive discussion on the subject. A team of scholars/ researchers are assigned the task of drafting and evaluating the policies and further define the roles, responsibilities of each stakeholder. Information Office of the state council is given the responsibility to shape up the narrative with support of propaganda, publicity resources and strict censorship with zero scope of any form of dissent.

All projects from planning to executions and thereafter through its life cycle remains under the backdrop of policy framework which entails no room for deviation or stop gap approach at any level. The poverty alleviation initiative to build moderately well-off settlements commonly termed as Xiaokang from its initiation to culmination remains under a detailed policy framework. The Information office of China released a white paper on "China's

Comprehensive Well Off" in Sep 2021(Xinhua, 2021). The construction of 628 Xiaokang settlements and associated civil military dual use infrastructure in Tibet flows out of need for "**building a well-off society in an all-round way**".

Policy framework aids the multiple stakeholders including the local population to undertake its roles & responsibilities, source project funding, challenges faced are ironed out and projects are completed within the strict timelines. Land Border Law of People's Republic of China (PRC) which was adopted at the 31st meeting of Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress on 23 Oct 2021 came into force from 01 Jan 2022 (Punnen, 2022). The law now provides a legal framework to protect its people's interests along the land frontiers of China including the infrastructure created in vicinity of the border.

On 14th Oct 2021, Bhutan and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to agree on a three-step road map to resolve the 477 km long boundary issue between both countries (Ranjan, 2023). The MOU is an important achievement for China which tried a diplomatic breakthrough with Bhutan for the last 26 years. The current agreement would further legitimize the forcefully occupied large stretches of its claimed border areas to include recently constructed Xiaokang settlements like Pangda I & II in Western Bhutan, which is in close proximity to Doklam (standoff -2017) in Chumbi Valley and therefore has its implication on the sensitive Siliguri Corridor connecting North East India.

Narrative (New Era)

"**Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era**", or commonly identified as the **Xi Jinping's Socialism** (Zhong, 2019) had now been adopted in CPC constitution post its pronouncement in Xi Jinping's address at the 19th Congress of the party in Oct 2017. The gamut of political ideology and political system towards the rejuvenation of China in future revolves around the key narrative of "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era".

In all spheres ranging from defence, foreign policy, law, education, development, civil society, research, social reforms and host of other fields, the perspective plan & policy documents were re-drafted to take into account the concept of New Era to remain in sync with the overall vision of Xi Jinping. All other policy, guidelines, research and initiatives to achieve the clearly quantifiable objectives setout by party in all fields of Governance to take its roots

from **Xi's idea of Socialism**. 19th Party Congress further strengthened the hold of Xi Jinping to take his planned reforms and policies to the next level.

Xi's Model Township.

Yumai (Lhuntse county, Shannan Prefecture in Tibet). Shortly post 19th Party Congress, Xi wrote back to two young Herdsmen sisters in Yumai in reply to their letter highlighting the issues of border settlement and how their father motivated them to stay on protecting the frontiers from external occupation. Xi acknowledged the contribution of the family in protecting the frontiers and appreciated their loyalty and patriotism for the motherland against all odds and also promised to address the concerns on priority.

The two sisters Zhuoga and Yangzong post the reply of Xi, overnight became the poster girl for Xiaokang project in border areas. The narrative of development in border areas with **locals at its core** echoed in reply of Xi "*I hope you will continue to inherit the spirit of patriotism and border protection and drive more herdsmen to take root in the snowy border like Gesanghua and be the* **guardians of the sacred land and the builders of happy homeland**."

Another guiding factor was given out as early by Xi at the 6th Tibet Works Forum in Aug 2015 was "Govern the nation by governing the borders, governing borders by first stabilizing Tibet, ensure social harmony and stability of Tibet with strengthening the development of border region". Xi Quotes "**Governing border areas is key for governing a country and stabilizing Tibet**". The entire narrative of the party was structured keeping in view the vision of Xi to package strategy in the form of a massive poverty alleviation initiative. It included fast paced construction of Xiaokang settlements and associated infrastructure development mostly related to surface/ air & telecommunication (5G) in border area using state of the art technology and best use of local skills and resources.

The mass relocation of local inhabitants from the traditional home to Xiaokang model villages was projected as voluntary process with all suitable forms of alibi. One of them being to facilitate families to move away from isolated areas with rarified oxygen into comfortable dwelling units with all modern facilities for comfortable living and sustainable economic development. Under the overall guidance of the party all organs of the Govt to include the Public Information Office, Propaganda & Publicity Office, Civil Society, Media, Youth &
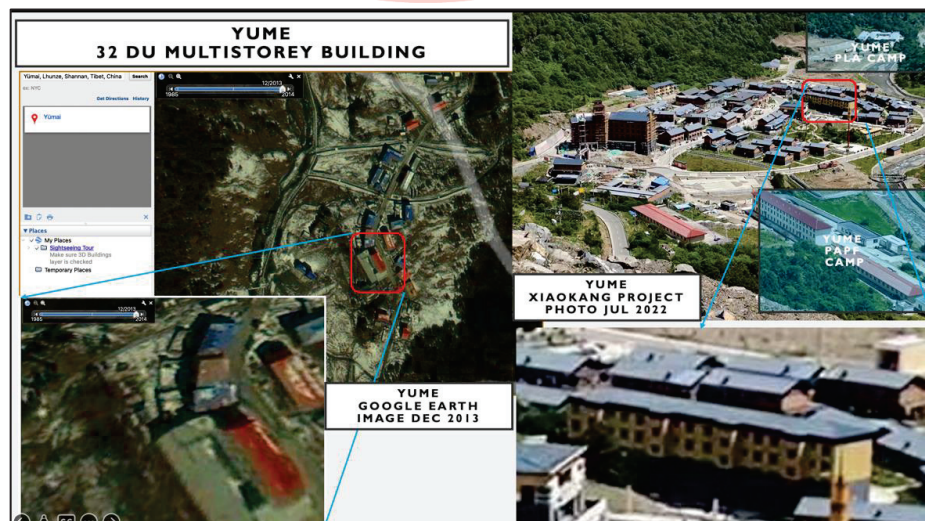
Student forums, Research Scholars & Academicians were directed to steer a positive narrative of Xiaokang and associated Infrastructure development in Tibet. The border area development and stability in Tibet were given key importance with local inhabitants as its core.

Reality

Post the forced occupation Tibet by China in 1959 and its subsequent policy of extreme oppression followed by the CPC, had to bear the brunt of criticism especially from the Western World. The current developmental oriented poverty alleviation narrative with local people, focus on the border area development and national unity at its core is an effort to counter the decades old negative fallout.

The narrative is only veil to cover the actual intent of the CPC strategy, which is to deal with political dissent, instability and strengthen the border security infrastructure to further its effective control and efficient border management. The on-ground reality is in complete contrast to the high-octane narrative, propaganda and publicity being hosted by Chinese controlled and orchestrated public, civil society, academia and party organs. The initial commencement of poverty alleviation projects in Tibet were witnessed during the 12th Plan (2011-2015) period. The acceleration in the project with focus on border area infrastructure development especially related to construction of roads, laying of power and OFC cables to connect the remote areas were observed extensively during the 13th Plan (2016-2020) (Vicente, 2017).

Demystifying Yume Model (Xiaokang) Township/ Settlement.

Post the 19th Party Congress in Oct 2017, **Yume model** of Xiaokang border area development had hyped as the Xi's vision of **"Guardians of the sacred land and the builders of happy homeland"** by virtue of the letter written by two sisters and reply received from Xi (Xinhua, 2017).

In case, the developments in Yume are chronologically observed from 2010 through satellite images and other topographic changes. One would able to clearly pick up evidences that on ground the model village was part of the designed strategy to develop border settlements in close proximity of the border with India, Nepal & Bhutan. Most prominent being that a multistorey building with 32 Dwelling Units (DU) was constructed way back in Dec 2013.

The same building was used for accommodating the families of Yume whose traditional houses were demolished to pave way for re-construction of DUs as part of the model settlement based on the master plan. Similarly, in early 2017, a quadrangle shape new PLA Army camp was constructed at the Southern tip of Yume to shift the Old PLA camp located in the center of Yume. It appears to have been chosen as the Model Xiaokang for being in close proximity to the Sacred Mountain & lakes of the Tibetan Buddhist pilgrim circuit (Rinkor & Kinkor) and also close to the disputed areas of Longju/ Bisa and Asaphila on the LAC opposite Upper Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh.

Construction of Xiaokang settlements and associated infrastructure development in Tibet was approved by Xi Jinping during 6th Tibet Works Forum (TWF) in Aug 2015. The seeds of the Xiaokang projects in Tibet were however sowed by Xi Jinping during the 18th Party Congress in 2012 and made its culmination by 100th anniversary of founding of CPC in 2021. Follow up of the progress apart from further directions taken up during the 7th TWF in Aug 2020. In reality, the Xiaokang settlements are in CPC rationale "**it is easier to control the masses when they sedentary and settled in well-connected settlement by means of Wi-Fi internet connectivity and network-based surveillance cameras**".

Another agenda being followed by CPC is "**Ethnic Mingling**". The DUs in Xioakang settlements are being allotted to mix of Tibetan, ethnic local residents commonly known as 'Lhobas' and Han migrants from hinterland to facilitate ethnic mingling. The marriages across races, communities, ethnicity and tribes are being encouraged to ensure that no pure Tibetan

settlements remain in future which could be of potential risk to dissident movement or create any form of political instability. Locals are being forcefully displaced or re-located from their traditional habitats giving up the traditional land rights in some case live-stock. The locals are compelled to live in the Xiaokang settlement under the strict supervision and control of security personnel from PAPF and sleuths of State Security Bureau (SSB) mostly dealing with monitoring of locals and generation of intelligence.

The party leaders and cadres at all level further adds another layer of security which in reality makes the settlement as large internment camps with provision of modern facilities. Each settlement has a Police & SSB post and the one in close proximity of border has PLA post. In Tibet the police and other internal security agencies are under the command of PLA with Tibet Military District taking full control, primarily with a view to deal with internal security threats. In last four years, local youths in border areas are being forced to join the PLA Special Tibetan Army Units (STAU) (Laskar, 2021), Yuma units for border guarding role and People's Militia unit with role to protect internal security and secure lines of communication. Special drives for recruitment of locals had been launched in the new settlement for deployment in Tibet and local PLA commander's in Tibet were given area specific targets to ensure the success of the drive.

The local Tibetan and ethnic tribals are best acclimatized to operate under the adverse weather in high altitude areas of Tibetan Plateau. The local Buddhist monks are being motivated to bless the new local recruits of Tibet however extreme scrutiny of recruit profile been carried to rule out individuals with any form of affiliation or link with Dalai Lama or Tibetan Govt in Exile.

Capability & Capacity Building

Post Doklam stand-off in 2017, the Tibetan plateau has witnessed significant achievements in terms of building capabilities of human resource across all domains and capacities in terms of infrastructure and other modern technology with local innovations. The civil-military integrated approach has been relentlessly followed across diverse fields with strict deadlines to accomplish targeted objective in sync with **Xi's idea of Socialism in the New Era under** new entity **Border Construction & Development Department**.

Tibet Plateau as the tourism destination of world has been identified as the key propeller for growth. The skill sets and the world class infrastructure requirement has been studied and mapped to meet the challenges of tourism industry. The initial funding is being provided by the state controlled financial institution with clear transition to self-sustainable economically incentive model. A total eco-system through Xiaokang and associated infrastructure is being developed wherein the homestay and other associated services with all modern facilities would evolve as a main stay till the last border settlement to support the destination tourism objective.

Regular drives are being taken in the form of organizing tourism festival and fairs with high level of outreach, publicity and propaganda. The local religious, cultural and ethnic aspects are being showcased to promote an unique identity with pride and patriotism within the national unity backdrop. Approximately 200 Xiaokang settlements have been constructed in close vicinity of the border including some in disputed areas like Migyitun, Mibapakdum Longju/ Bisa (opposite Upper Subansiri in Arunachal Pradesh) that further enhance the security footprints in remote frontiers thereby further enhancing the legitimacy and border management.

Synergized living in remote border areas between the locals and security forces (PLA/ PAPF/ SSB) with sharing of amenities/ resources (medical, power, communication, education and skill training). Xiaokang settlements also addresses the challenges of physical isolation among young PLA personnel's serving in remote border areas. The PLA has undertaken '**local sourcing policy**' for its personal based on which the requirement of fresh produce, dairy and meat are being provided by the local settlements through green houses and modern methods of animal husbandry. The increase in local population in remote villages also enabled higher levels of stocking in remote villages during the winter months.

Key surface communication infrastructure which transformed significant improvement ease of movement in Tibet and aid the development initiative include construction of border roads, bridges and tunnels connecting the high-altitude mountain passes on borders to main expressways. Alternate connectivity to Meto Valley (opposite Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh) through Doshongla Tunnel and construction of road connecting Meto town with Zayu town, both being part of new G-219 highway running closest to Tibet border with India. Lhasa-Nyingchi (STR) and Lhasa-Shigatse Railway connectivity and the network of existing, under construction air fields, heliports and helipad in remote border areas further improves the connectivity promoting tourism.

Security Significance

Improved surface and telecommunication along with other associated infrastructure development with focus on border areas of Tibet to enhance capacity building. It provides greater ability of Chinese Govt, PLA and other security stakeholders to swiftly and proactively respond to internal (political instability and dissent movement) and external (on IB/ LAC with India) security threats and challenges in Tibet. The key aspects of the dynamic security paradigm in Tibet which has significant security implication to the Indian security interest are covered in brief in subsequent paragraphs.

Tibetan dissident movement and resentment among the mass population against the forced occupation and administration of Tibet by Chinese Govt since 1959 had been a major leverage that India could exploit or count on. It discouraged China to take any major mis-adventure post 1962. However, with progressive success in dealing and managing internal security issues in Tibet with multi-dimensional approach has been able to address the internal security vulnerabilities to manageable proportion.

The multi-dimensional approach, include the use of force, coercion and censorship as first dimension, next dimension through economic development with poverty alleviation initiative of Xiaokang settlement to promote a self-sustainable development model with promotion of Tourism at its core. Other dimension is to focus on the locals as key stakeholder in peace & stability by skill development based on the needs of tourism/ service industry and thereby improving overall living standards. The entire approach is being supported with well-researched policy framework, outreach, publicity and propaganda to target and shape the internal as well as external public opinion.

China's progressive management of its internal security vulnerabilities could be assessed as a reason behind its strong action and aggressive posture witnessed in 2017 at Doklam and subsequently in Eastern Ladakh since Mar 2020 onwards. In the last eight years, PLA Ground Forces and Border Defence Units in an age-old departure from its aggressive doctrine have undertaken preparation of underground RCC based field fortification with standard layout of bunkers, weapon and ammunition bays and network of communication tunnels integrated with a multi-story observation tower. The standard field fortification defence

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layout had been detected mostly on dominating ground or height in close vicinity of existing PLA Ground Forces/ Border Defence Camps/ Posts opposite the LAC in Tibet. The improvement of surface communication mostly related to all weather roads, operational tracks to forward areas, bridges, tunnels had facilitated the movement of construction equipment and stores to facilitate faster construction of field fortification.

Majority of the PLA Early Warning (EW), Reconnaissance, Surveillance and intelligence acquisition technical resources are on wheel based or aerial based platforms. The development of surface communication especially the operational tracks constructed as close to the passes on the LAC and helipads further facilitates forward deployment of its technical resources. It results into enhanced capability and reach of PLA to monitor Indian security forces activities across the LAC. On the HUMINT front, the Xiaokang settlements with presence of locals from common ethnicity on both sides of LAC/ IB in Tibet further augments on ground human resources. The locals mostly hunters and herdsmen are trained to act as guides for PLA patrols/ columns and as informers to undertake intelligence acquisition task across the LAC. Locals in Xiaokang border settlements are being addressed as '**Border Guardian**' and routinely sent on surveillance duties on the LAC/ IB to supplement the PLA border guarding effort.

China had established a network of "**Remote Surveillance and Weather Monitoring Stations**" all along the LAC in Tibet. The monitoring stations equipped with Surveillance cameras, equipment to record meteorological data and GSM communication technology to relay the data to a central server for processing. The network of monitoring stations provides round the clock monitoring of meteorological conditions and observe any suspected movement of locals in remote border areas with very sparse population of local inhabitants.

China had imposed very strict censorship, control on movement of locals and stringent monitoring of internet sites, apps including social media. The locals from the border settlements with focus on households with family links in India are subjected to frequent checking of smart phones for compliance to orders. As part of strict monitoring of population close to border areas, any objectionable content, banned apps and their activities are kept under strict surveillance by the sleuths of Bureau of State Security (BSS). The counter intelligence grid fielded jointly by multiple security stake holders imposes further challenges to the intelligence acquisition effort in Tibet.

The sudden pace of development in Tibet with self-sustainable economic model with Tourism at its core is being exploited as a central theme by a dedicated set of Social Media specialist working under the guidance of Propaganda & Publicity Department of PLA. Well-researched papers, articles, travelogues and other related material are prepared in conformity to the central theme to hide its actual agenda of addressing internal/ external security vulnerabilities and further its own agenda of highlighting "**Developmental Differential**" in the remote border areas across the LAC/ IB between Tibet and India.

The developmental differential agenda is being fully exploited by the Chinese through the social media instant messaging and video uploading platforms like We-chat, Weibo, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The ethnic tribal social media groups from the border areas of India with Tibet are targeted through articles, video/audio clips, photographs, chats & discussion on the potent platforms furthering the agenda. Owing to the lessons learnt from recent face off with India, the Chinese authorities in Tibet in last four years have focused on recruitment of locals (native Tibetan and ethnic tribals) especially from the high-altitude remote border areas.

Post the recruitment training the locals are being deployed in Tibet which directly address the challenges of high altitude and weather acclimatization. It also projects that local Tibetans are guarding their frontiers which is aimed to counter the ideological motivation of Frontier Force Units mostly comprising of Tibetan refugees in India. The Govt authorities in Tibet had identified Buddhism and the status of its religious leaders, succession are key factors in ensuring the political stability of Tibet. Panchen Lama has been trumped up as an alternative to the 14th Dalai Lama who is in exile in India. All efforts are being made towards 'Sinicization' of Buddhism in Tibet.

Buddhist religious sites, Gompas, Monasteries and other places of religious significance like sacred lakes and mountains especially in remote border areas are being developed by state funding. By means of host of these initiatives, authorities and party leaders are taking full control of the religious discourse and monks are being forced to follow the party ideology being propagated by CPC Chairman Xi Jinping. In 3rd & 4th week of Jul 2022, Panchen Lama visited Xiaokang settlements and Buddhist religious sites at Yume, Migyitun, Longju, Lunze and Tsona in close vicinity of LAC in Shannan Prefecture opposite Western

Arunachal Pradesh. The visit of Panchen Lama appears to be reactive development post the recent visit of 14th Dalai Lama to Leh and other locations in Ladakh from 15 Jul 2022.

Civil-Military Social Integration has been achieved in all Xiaokang settlements in close vicinity of the border. The locals are socially bonded with the PLA and other security stakeholder personnel's through a host of daily routine activities and events. The basic amenities which are sparse in remote border areas like health/ medical support, power, communication, winter stocking and transport are shared among the civil and military personnel. The locals organize multiple events for the military personnel like grand welcome/ send-off fresh recruits, felicitation of senior officers of PLA visiting forward camps and post. PLA also organize sports, cultural events and some vocational training classes like catering, chef, housekeeping etc where locals participate with full enthusiasm. All such events are given wide publicity through all the available propaganda channels.

Xiaokang settlements in border areas have extensively enhanced the logistic buildup and sustainability capacity of PLA. Majority of the resources are available locally in form of trained manpower and winter stocks to support specific number of locals during period of traffic disruption due to adverse weather. Recent construction of Xiaokang settlements especially in the disputed areas along the LAC/ IB like Miba Pakdum South of Longju in Tsari Chu Valley in Shannan opposite Upper Subansiri dist of Arunachal and Panda I & II in Western Bhutan in Chumbi Valley has a major security significance. China is using Xiaokang settlement as a tool to further legitimize its claim with locals and supporting it with newly adopted border laws.

Counter Strategy

In view of the security significance associated with developments in Tibet especially with focus in vicinity of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) has to be monitored in detail. It is imperative to work out comprehensive counter strategy to deal with the dynamic situation that India encounters on its Northern border. Key aspects of the strategy which need to be factored in are covered in succeeding paragraphs.

A need for a detailed study and research on the developments in Tibet from security point of view to understand the policy fine print, approach, strategic objectives, opportunities/ challenges, narrative and roles played by each stake holder. On the research findings and any

other collated inputs, working out a detailed counter strategy for securing our Northern Borders. The core of the strategy needs to be the local inhabitants of borders and leveraging it with rich Indian ethnic culture with Buddhism being common chord in Himalayas. Strategy needs to be encapsulated with a strong policy framework in sync with the National Security Policy and adopt a pro-active approach rather being reactive to the actions of the adversary. The policy once adopted is required to be obligatory for successive Govt to follow it without any deviation for the best interest of the Nation.

Strong narrative is required to be articulated around the premise that all resources are actively contributing in unison to support the strategy. Political consensus is a pre-requisite, together with support of all resources of the Govt, Corporate, Civil Society, Media and any other organization that plays vital role to create the internal and external public opinion. A road map with clear objectives to be laid out as part of the strategy with inclusion of short term, medium term and long term perspectives. The roles and responsibility of each stake holder is required to be clear in terms of targets to be achieved within the stipulated timelines.

To meet the infrastructure and skill requirement to support the strategy, an integrated organization with representation from concerned ministries need to be formed directly under the PMO. This will be the nerve center to adopt, implement, seamlessly integrate, tackle all challenges, coordinate and monitor progress with all stakeholders including defence & internal security. Promotion of Tourism in Himalayas (Northern Borders with Tibet) with focus on Ladakh and North-Eastern States should be key component of the strategy. It entails developing the travel/ tourism services, small/ medium manufacturing, associated skill development in the form of setting up of education and vocational training hubs to meet the requirements of trained professionals within the local population.

Building up of integrated settlements with modern amenities and communication. Settlements to support the locals with sustainable economic development avenues like home stay/ café/ handicraft/ transport/ guides for tourism, green house and livestock rearing to meet the demand of fresh rations for locally deployed security forces. It checks any further migration of locals and encourages migrated members to return and develop the native place while staying with their loved ones.

Host of incentives in terms of tax exemption, low interest loans, low premium on insurance and grants/ subsidies from the Govt need to be ensured for organization investing and individuals taking part in the development of Norther Borders. Building up of all-weather roads, bridges, tunnels and telecommunication infrastructure to ensure round the year assured connectivity to the remotest settlement along the Northern Border. It should be a priority to address the local aspirations by use of the most modern technology and in Public-Private partnership (PPP).

Conclusion

Poverty Alleviation Initiative in Tibet is a narrative built by the Chinese for the consumption of Global community. In last one decade it has provided veil to the Chinese authorities and PLA to pursue an Integrated Approach to address Security Vulnerabilities and Comprehensive Border Management across Tibet. The dual use infrastructure development as part of Xiaokang in Tibet along our Northern Borders has created infrastructure asymmetry leading a development differential across the LAC.

The critical issue has its security implications which needs to be comprehensively addressed through focus on dual use border area infrastructure development on the Northern Borders to include establishing of vibrant settlements encouraging reverse migration of populous. A whole of nation approach need to be taken for resource allocation together with the policy, organizational and structural framework at apex and executive levels for synergy among the multiple stakeholders with locals at its core thereby ensure monitoring of progress with strict deadlines for project completion. A proactive approach is the need of the hour to comprehensively address the security challenges on the Northern Borders in the backdrop of rapidly evolving Geo-strategic & Geo-political global situation and Xi's aspiration to stay in power at all cost.

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