

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PC CHINA MINORITIES' EDUCATION WITHIN THE GEOPOLITICAL STRATEGY "ONE BELT - ONE ROAD" ACTIVATION

^aLYUBOV KALASHNYK, ^bNATALIIA TERENTIEVA,
^cTETIANA DOVZHENKO, ^dYANA LEVCHENKO,
^eZHIQI DAO

^{a, c, e}*H.S.Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, 29, Alchevskih Str., 61002, Kharkiv, Ukraine*

^b*National Pedagogical Dragomanov University, 9, Pirogova Str., Kyiv, 01601, Ukraine*

email: ^dprof.lk.edu@gmail.com, ^bnataterentyeva@gmail.com, ^ctetiana.dovzhenko@hnpu.edu.ua, ^dyanamysha72@gmail.com, ^e26033313@qq.com

Abstract: The article demonstrates that the issues of maintaining cultural and ethnic autonomy, as well as the development of school and higher education for national minorities remain unresolved in China. Schools and universities shape the worldview of children through the values that they convey, performing the function of strengthening the national identity. The gradual transformation of national minorities into Chinese citizens is the main educational task. At the same time, public education is entrusted with the duty of preserving the culture of ethnic minorities within the framework of the dominance of dominated – Han culture, its civilizational project. A situation is being created to reproduce the concepts of cultural inequality with the explicit promotion of national unity. Meanwhile, for the state, the development of higher education of national minorities is especially important, since it is aimed at creating a trustworthy, loyal middle class of national minorities, capable of serving as a kind of "intermediaries" between the PRC government and the population of autonomous regions. The geopolitical strategy "One Belt One Road" announced in 2013 put the PRC in front of the need to raise the level of education and civil motivation of national minorities (especially those living on the western, southwestern and southeastern borders of the country), since these territories are key to the development of the transport system according to the Strategy. The article analyzes the corresponding document adopted in PRC – "Decision on accelerating the development of ethnic education" as the possibility of a partial solution to the problem of national minorities in China, in particular, in the field of education regarding the stimulation of obtaining an education in this population

Keywords: PRC; education; national minorities; autonomy; culture.

1 Introduction

The organization of education for certain groups of the population is always a challenge for the pedagogical systems of any country with a non-monoethnic composition, since, on the one hand, it must contribute to the gradual and planned development and unification of the population of the country as a whole, as a single organism, and on the other, it should take into account and preserve the cultural identity of small ethnic groups, their religious, social, gastronomic, artistic preferences, etc. China is a country whose population today includes (according to Chinese government documents) representatives of 56 nationalities, but 92% of the population is recognized as "Han" the titular nation of China, while the remaining 55 are united under the common name of "small nationalities of the PRC" and their number varies from 17 million people (1.3% of the Chinese population, Zhuang nationality) to 3,682 people of Lhoba nationality (0.0003% of the total population of the country). In certain periods, the number of officially recognized groups differed. Thus, during the 1953 census, 41 national minorities were listed. In the 1964 census, 183 national minorities were registered, of which the government recognized only 54. Among the remaining 129 peoples, 74 were included in the recognized 54, while 23 were classified as "other" and 32 as "doubtful". It is also worth noting that although most of the inhabitants of the southern provinces of China speak Chinese dialects, which differ significantly from the official standard based on northern dialects, they are not considered officially as separate nationalities, but as part of the Han nationality [9; 18].

The fact that a person belongs to one of the 55 small nationalities in the PRC not only highlights his non-belonging to the titular nation, but also imposes certain features on a person's social life. The balanced policy of Chinese leadership for centuries was carried out through the support of the culture of national minorities, respect for their traditions and rituals, stimulation of living according to the traditional way of life, which is characteristic of a specific minority. However, on the other hand, the benefits provided by the Government of the country are concentrated on the places of traditional residence of ethnic minorities, on the

development of their cultural identity, but they occasionally stimulate representatives of small ethnic groups to pursue a career at a more than regional level, a party career, focusing them on teaching, engineering, or medical careers for the needs of their community, artistic careers, etc. This is also due to the organization of the state education system for national minorities, who have the right to study in their native language (that is, the language of the national minority) and the territory of their residence, while this right is lost when moving to other regions of the PRC (therefore, it makes such a move practically impossible, since people from ethnic regions do not have a very good command of the Chinese regulatory language and are uncompetitive in the labor market and unfit for the education system) [5; 7; 12].

The intensively developing system of higher education in the PRC has already outstripped all countries of the world in terms of quantitative indicators, but, like other multinational states, China is facing a number of problems in the field of education. First, equal access to education must be ensured for all 56 officially recognized ethnic minorities throughout the country. Secondly, it is necessary to ensure the economic development of 117 autonomous counties through the development of education. Thirdly, the educational process in areas inhabited by national minorities must comply with the principles of national autonomy. Fourthly, the entire educational system should be based on the principle of interethnic unity.

2 Method

As part of the study of education for national minorities, a comprehensive methodology based on the principles of consistency and structure was applied, which made it possible to present the modern situation in Chinese culture and education system. The research methodology includes comparative, anthropological, phenomenological, ethnographic approaches. As general scientific methods, the following were used: observation, analysis and synthesis (when studying empirical and theoretical materials), comparison, the method of ascent from the abstract to the concrete (from the formulation of the problem to the subject under study and to a summary).

3 Results and Discussion

In September 2013, the leader of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, announced a global initiative called "One Belt One Road" which aims to create a common economic space to spread China's achievements in the field of economy, industry, etc. and gain access to the achievements of other countries. To date, 70 countries have joined this initiative. Initially, the Project aimed to create a railway system to speed up the delivery of goods from China to Germany. However, over time, the unspoken division of the project components into "One Belt One Road" as a purely economic project and "New Great Silk Road" as a socio-cultural initiative appeared. Considering this initiative as common to all the countries of the Project undoubtedly entails changes in the cultural and, therefore, educational background of the countries whose territory the Project passes through [13].

Xi Jinping said that since 2013, countries participating in the Initiative have been promoting the "spirit of the Silk Road", expanding cooperation in science, education, culture, and health care, supporting people-to-people exchanges, creating for the Project a solid foundation in public opinion and strengthening its social base. The Chinese government annually allocates 10,000 scholarships to relevant countries, and local governments have also launched specialized scholarships for Silk Road countries (also funded by the PRC). The authorities of the People's Republic of China encourage the holding of international cultural and educational exchanges, so-called years of culture and tourism, art and film festivals, conferences and dialogues of think tanks. All this made humanitarian cooperation within the framework of the Project diverse.

Today, the People's Republic of China not only is creating space for economic cooperation, but also is forming the so-called "New Silk Road Civilization", which is at the current stage dominant in the development of the Project as a whole, as it should form the appropriate favorable social and cultural climate. The Chinese use the "One Belt One Road" project program to promote their culture very actively. In modern Chinese art, a whole branch of "Silk Road Art" has appeared: it is designed to adapt Chinese national musical, dance, choreographic, graphic traditions to forms that foreigners can perceive. Gradually, China accustoms the world to its sounds, plastics, and colors. Chinese cinema actively works with foreign local directors and actors, adding not only a financial component to the films, but also its own values and social features. Contracts were concluded with leading cinematographic and animation associations for the filming of products with a Chinese component (animated films "Mulan", "Everest", historical films can be considered examples of such cooperation). China constantly organizes concerts and exhibitions in the countries participating in the Project. The low cost of tickets (China pays 50-70% of the cost), as well as the high quality of the events, make them "sold out". Obligatory organization of several public events concerts, exhibitions, etc. is included in the duties of students who obtain a Master of Arts degree at foreign universities (without confirmation of such activity, the Master's degree will not be recognized by the Ministry of Education of the PRC). The Chinese are regular participants and winners of art competitions at both local and higher levels in the Project countries. To familiarize the world with China, the artistic component is used to appeal to the emotions and souls of foreigners, which means that these emotions remain in the emotional picture of a person as something pleasant, which cannot but contribute to the improvement of the image of Chinese culture and other initiatives of the PRC as a whole in the external arena [8; 13; 14; 17].

However, the "One Belt One Road" geopolitical strategy announced by Xi Jinping in 2013 has put the PRC in a position to reconsider its relations with national minorities (especially those living on the country's western, southwestern, and southeastern borders), since precisely these territories are key ones for the development of the transport system according to the Strategy. China faced the fact that the local population is not only unmotivated and uninterested in abandoning traditional ways of life, modernization and globalization, but also emotionally and educationally cannot always accept the changes that are taking place (because usually their education, in most cases, is limited to mandatory compulsory 4th grade and vocational training in special vocational educational institutions or traditional mentoring [3; 16]). Therefore, today, the leadership of the People's Republic of China has developed a special plan for the development of education for representatives of small nationalities, which should contribute to the general increase in the level of education and its modernization for the population of this category, to allow a more active presence of Chinese state values in these territories and the educational assimilation of representatives of Chinese minorities in order to enable the active promotion of works on Project "One Belt - One Way" [15]. Let us note that our article deals exclusively with the sector of formal (state) education, created by the state of the People's Republic of China for representatives of national minorities (all nationalities of the People's Republic of China, except the titular Han) in the cities of their compact residence.

On September 28, 2014, General Secretary Xi Jinping said in his speech at the Central Conference on Ethnic Policy: "The core educational work is inseparable from focusing on the unity and development of ethnic areas". On August 18, 2015, the 6th National Conference on Ethnic Education was held, at which the State Council adopted the "Decision on Accelerating the Development of Ethnic Education", which clarified the guiding ideology, basic principles and development of ethnic education in the new era, taking into account the needs and requirements of the geopolitical strategy of the People's Republic of China "One Belt - One Road" [4]. In a concise form, the main provisions of this document can be formulated as follows:

- The transition of education for ethnic minorities from a "guarantee of rights" to "education for achieving a high goal", which should result in an increase in the number of people with higher education and a scientific degree from among ethnic minorities. In particular, it is especially emphasized that these should be specialists not only in pedagogical, cultural, and aesthetic direction, traditional medicine (where there is already a high percentage of students and "honored specialists"), but also lawyers of international profile (now the number of lawyers from among representatives of national minorities is approximately 5%), state-level politicians (now this figure is only approaching 3%), representatives of the IT sphere, high-tech business [8], etc.;
- Guaranteeing and ensuring fairness, quality, continuity, security, and balance in the organization of education through increasing the presence of students in offline classes in educational institutions and increasing the body of teachers to work in schools from both representatives of national minorities and Han people (who are encouraged by privileges and other factors motivation). Therefore, the People's Republic of China is planning to increase the number of subject teachers to work in the education system for ethnic minorities (applicants who, before taking the exams, agree in writing to work on the state distribution in places of compact residence of national minorities have priority for admission if the scores are equal) [6];
- Popularization of the idea of mandatory ten-year education and elimination of illiteracy among young and middle-aged, as well as elderly people. This issue is also very acute with regard to the problem of women's education, since most of China's ethnic minorities belong to the masculine type of culture and do not consider formal education a necessary component of girls' development;
- In-depth promotion of the "Internet + Education" action, using the technological advantages of 5G and artificial intelligence, focusing on the current situation and needs of education development in ethnic regions. Thanks to the implementation of the project "Experimental schools - experimental zones of intellectual education" in ethnic regions, 22 experimental territories and 121 schools, 20 reference schools in developed regions were created in order to explore new ways of joint development of education in developed regions and ethnic areas [2];
- The fight against poverty in the regions through the creation of targeted public jobs (it is planned in the infrastructure of the "One Belt - One Road" project) for representatives of ethnic minorities who have obtained professional or higher education in public educational institutions. It is believed that this will not only stimulate the desire of representatives of ethnic minorities to study, but will also help to even out the gender imbalance that exists among those seeking education in these regions (it is considered that parents who will be interested in getting their daughter a government job in the future will be more easily to accept the idea of the need for school education for her);
- Introduction of a 15-year program of free education for all students from national minorities with a quota of 15% of the total number of students in vocational colleges and universities of the country. This project provides that every child from among national minorities has the right to 15 years of education at the expense of the state. This period may include preschool education (3-5 years), school (max. 10 years), professional college (3-4 years), university (4 years). Parents can choose for their child, for example, "2 years of kindergarten + school + professional college" or "school + university", or "kindergarten + school" according to their own choice. This state project is also aimed at the integration of representatives of small nationalities (who usually live in a certain isolated social grouping) into Han Chinese society, as it is intended to make full use of the partnership support and cooperation mechanism between the East and the West, to improve the coordination mechanism and the promotion of partnership support in groups of vocational education and vocational

technical colleges in eastern and central provinces and cities, as well as promote the work of partnership support of “group type” of higher education institutions to achieve new results [10];

- Inclusion of the achievements of local ethnic minority cultures (especially in the field of visual arts and music) into the state education programs for the study of music, painting, decoration, sculpture, design, etc. as Chinese cultural heritage. Thus, this information will be studied in an in-depth format not only in educational institutions of the PRC, but also in all educational institutions of the world that cooperate with Chinese universities on academic mobility and double degree programs, and will also become mandatory for all foreigners studying in China. This component is key in the implementation of the so-called “soft power” policy (influence through culture and art), which is defined as the main driving force for the implementation of the “One Belt One Road” strategy in the world [13];
- Strengthening the regional component in education: study by small nationalities (especially those who live along the state border of the PRC with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan countries through which the road and railway of the One Belt One Road project pass) of language, art, and characteristics of the neighbors in order to provide the Project with a corps of quality translators and the possibility of transferring information and perspectives of the Project to the local population of those countries. Ethnic minorities who live inside the country and do not have a border with the territory of other states are offered as a foreign language the languages of those countries that are officially participants in the “One Belt One Road” Project: Ukrainian, Hebrew, Portuguese (in the Brazilian version), Spanish, etc. [14];
- Involvement of children from border areas of other countries to study in Chinese schools within the framework of cooperation of municipalities and with the consent of parents. Due to the fact that countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have a large territory and a certain amount of rural population living in communities along the borders of the PRC, it is territorially more convenient for their children to visit Chinese educational institutions than to get to such in their own country. Usually, in such communities, there is no language barrier with the neighboring representatives of the ethnic minority of the People's Republic of China, since historically and linguistically they belong to a single ethnic group. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, such an initiative is also approved due to the problems of organizing education within these countries [1];
- Mandatory bilingual education for representatives of ethnic minorities. This item is the most controversial regarding the preservation of the right of national minorities for reproducing the educational process in their native language. However, due to the fact that bilingual education also opens the way for people from national minorities to university education and the general Chinese labor market, this provision causes less opposition locally than the idea of compulsory education as such [2; 3; 8; 12; 15].#

Therefore, as a conclusion, we can note that the Initiative “One Belt - One Road” is considered by the People's Republic of China as an opportunity to partially solve the problem of national minorities, in particular, in the field of education in terms of encouraging people to get an education. The problem of the reluctance of national minorities, on the one hand, to integrate linguistically and culturally into the Han (pan-Chinese) cultural and social space, and on the other the failure of the PRC to create conditions for the social elevator of representatives of any ethnic groups, except for the Han, created a certain social conflict in the country, when state education for ethnic minorities is not integrated into the national space, is not unified according to the national standard and is therefore insufficient for a person to obtain higher education and a profession, to build a career. The economic and geopolitical benefits that the People's Republic of

China is counting on under the conditions of even partial implementation of the goal of the “One Belt One Road” Strategy forced the state to reconsider the positions of national minorities (especially those living in the border areas) and make them active participants and personnel reserves for the implementation of the Project on the ground. Therefore, the idea of developing education for representatives of national minorities is actively promoted in the country, and China is ready to invest efforts and funds in this.

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