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An Introduction to Ethnic Minority Education in China


Policies and Practices

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Foreword

Our thanks to Prof. Sude, Mei Yuan, and Fred Dervin for a book that offers a portrait of both the challenges and the empowering successes of multicultural education in China.

The book represents an account of multiethnic education in China through the eyes and discernments of scholars with the history and knowledge that ensures the accounts are trustworthy, informed, multiperspectival, and contextualized. Sude, Dean of Education at Minzu University, is highly respected and is perhaps the leading multicultural educator in China. Sude and his associate editors, Mei Yuan and Fred Dervin, have developed the book with the support of their colleagues and the communities with whom they worked.

The book offers a careful and instructive study of educational sites throughout China vying to meet the needs of diverse learners. The observations are focused at communities and schools that represent a subset of the recognized 56 multiethnic groups that live throughout China. They represent schools and communities that dream about a better future for their young and attempt to do so in a fashion that tries to align with and build from their culture, heritage, language, and life experiences.

The book reveals the roadmaps provided by policymakers and depicts how their guidelines are fitted to local conditions for better or worse. In essence, the book provides details of the Chinese and local governments' efforts to meet the needs of Chinese minorities with varying success. Across its various chapters, the book provides snapshots of communities, educators, administrators, and families, but mostly it celebrates the students attending schools who often must live away from home to attend schools.

The portrayals have much to offer as they represent a range of settings including observations by teams of researchers who have spent time in these sites interviewing school administrators, community members, government officials, the teachers, and the students themselves. The portrayals are also connected to detailed analyses of the national, provincial, and local policies that govern these developments and the frustrations that arise when the policies are ignored or not adapted/adopted in the spirit intended.

For the foreign reader, the book offers spaces to observe the experiences of the students, teachers, communities, and the family members from whom the students are drawn. At times throughout the book, snapshots help locate the instantiations in policies hoping to advance the education of ethnic minorities. But the snapshots are not akin to political posters, they afford images of struggles that arise as teachers and students seek a form of the transformative cultural accord that stirs dreams of a better future in harmony. They raise our consciousness to issues that will resonate with educators globally. They illuminate the struggles—the circumstances and systems that can be abortive rather than supportive. They introduce the well-intended and committed, but also the misguided advocates with values that could contribute to estrangement.

The various sections of the book are powerful in different ways. The second section is a brief introduction providing an overview of multiethnic developments in China by Sude. This section is an important introduction that affords the reader an orientation to China's ethnic populations, a brief history of ethnic education in China and the study itself. The third section is an introduction to the pertinent policies that have been developed over the past 50 years. What is striking is how Sude and his collaborators delve into the discourse of the policies themselves so as to afford the reader a more critical understanding of the policies including the license afforded provincial, and local governments in hopes of adaptations and adjustments befitting the communities that they are intended to serve. How these policies play out in the real world of implementation is a concern, however, and such concerns are highlighted in the third and closing sections detailing the overall findings and recommendations from the study. The next section, which accounts for most of the book, includes the 11 case studies of schools and communities that the team of researchers studied. These case studies do not provide a uniform image of multicultural education in China, rather they portray the different needs and struggles of each community. While there may be some common considerations, the book details the difference in schooling across these sites—especially in response to the diverse backgrounds—cultural, social, economic, and geographical—of the students. They explore the struggles of the administrators and teachers in conjunction with detailing the everyday lives of teachers (with varying cultural backgrounds and expertise) and the students in and out of school as well as within the setting of dormitories for boarding that entails long periods away from home and often beginning at a young age. The cases offer a rather raw portrayal of the ongoing struggle to improve multicultural education in China.

The final section is a powerful bookend as it affords the reader an opportunity to engage with Sude and his colleagues in a conversation about the cases, as presented, what they see as key issues that need to be addressed, including a discussion of cultural positioning along with their recommendations for policy development at the national, provincial and local level. Sude and his colleagues also point to changes needed to the curriculum, the preparation of teachers and school–community–family relationships including how best to respond to the nature and function of after-school needs including adjustments to the approach needed to support students who board.

The discernments for China offered by Sude, Mei Yuan, and Fred Dervin concur with those developments globally that are rooted in the notion that effective education occurs when you connect with the learners and their communities in a manner that builds from rather than over their prior learning and cultural moorings. It requires us to reckon with the need to respect and therefore validate cultures and understanding that is transformative for all rather than attending to the interest of some over others. Globally, indigenous and various multiethnic educators in various countries have seriously challenged the supreme orthodoxy of both the structure and purpose of a Eurocentric, the colonizer's or a dominant groups sole interpretation of education. Diverse peoples are declaring and asserting their rights and freedoms for more culturally affirming and responsive curriculum content, assessment procedures, and teaching methods. Growing numbers of indigenous schools or multiethnic schools have been created to fulfill the educational aspirations that indigenous and multiethnic parents have for their children, and higher education institutions have emerged affording indigenous and multiethnic students and scholars the opportunity to pursue knowledge in a culturally safe and intellectually enriching learning environment.

The book offers those of us, who are interested in China or global education matters, an opportunity to explore China's recent efforts to meet the needs and educational aspirations of their multiethnic populations and to do so with the raw footage provided by Sude and his colleagues. The footage is not unfamiliar to those of us perplexed by these matters with our own peoples. Yet, in other ways, it is unfamiliar and requires a reading consistent with reading across cultures—avoiding presumptuousness and prejudgments. It may be reassuring to learn with Chinese colleagues that they are committed to multiculturalism and are intently wrestling with these issues. What remains to torment some of us is that educators worldwide seem to be struggling against similar gravitational forces tied to the interest of some to assimilate rather than accommodate, to standardize rather than diversify, to impose rather than support situated learning and self-determination. We would do well to interrogate and reform our own country's policies and practices through such lens.

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Chapter 1

Studying Chinese Minority Education



1.1 Contextualising Minority Education (Sude)

China is a unified socialist country, with a multiethnic¹ and multicultural society. There are 56 ethnic groups coexisting in this “family,” forming a unified but diversified society. Education for ethnic minorities (EFEM) is a significant part of the whole education system in our country, which is also important considering the ethnic work. Its development is a critical signal of a harmonious society. The Chinese government attaches great importance to the development of EFEM, issuing a large number of policies for EFEM according to the different characteristics of ethnic minorities and minority areas, in order to guarantee their rights of equal access to education. Especially since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), a major decision of Reform and Opening-up was made, which has led China to rapid development. Making a general survey of the policy development for EFEM through more than 30 years since the reform and opening up, the policies for EFEM are divided into the following three stages.

The first stage is from 1978 to 1991, which is the period of the recovery and development of the EFEM policies. In 1980, “the suggestion on strengthening the work for EFEM” was issued by the Ministry of Education and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, which articulated the policies and guidelines and major principles for the recovery and development of EFEM. In 1984, the Second Session of the Sixth National People’s Congress passed the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy of the People’s Republic of China, which not only systematically formulated the principles of socialist ethnic relations in our country, but also summarized our experience of the development of EFEM, stipulating the fundamental principles of improving EFEM. In 1985, “Decision on the Reform of Education System,” which was issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, proposed explicitly that the

¹In this book, we use the words *ethnic minority* and the Chinese term *Minzu* as synonyms. *Minzu* can refer to ethnic group, ethnicity, or nation. Other terms have been used in English to refer to the diversity of the Chinese population: *minority groups*, *non-Han peoples*, *Local peoples*, *nationalities*, *nationality groups*.

state would help the minority areas speed up the development of education. In 1986, the Compulsory Education Law was issued and implemented, which determined the supportive policies for compulsory education in minority areas by law.

The second stage is from 1992 to 2001, which is the period of rapid development of the EFEM policies. In late 1980s and early 1990s, the instability, unrest, and even secession began in some countries and regions due to ethnic issues, to which great attention was paid by Chinese government. In 1992, “Suggestion on Strengthening the Work of EFEM” was issued, which clearly stated the principles and tasks as well as guidelines of EFEM, and became the key document to guide the work of EFEM in that period.

The third stage is from 2002 up till now, which is the new period of all-round development of the policies for EFEM. In 2002, the State Council issued “Decision on Deepening Reform to Speed up the Development of EFEM,” which comprehensively summed up the working experience of EFEM since the reform and opening up, and expounded the important role of EFEM in improving the living standard and cultural development for ethnic minorities, and promoting the economic and social comprehensive progress in minority areas and strengthening ethnic solidarity as well as safeguarding national unity and social stability. Besides, it analyzed the obstacles and problems existing in the work of EFEM under the new situation, and stipulated explicitly the fundamental policies, aims, tasks as well as policies and measures for EFEM, and put forward the idea of great development of EFEM in the new century.

In 2010, the State Council passed the National Outline for Medium- and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development (2010–2020), which specially made a comprehensive planning for EFEM. It was a good opportunity for the development of EFEM, which speeded up the process of the reform of EFEM as well as the quick development of EFEM.

All in all, the policies for EFEM in China do get enormous achievement, promoting and ensuring the reform and development of EFEM. For example, the investment of EFEM has enlarged a lot, and the recruit minority student number at school has multiplied, and the quality of EFEM has been improved, which make the whole career of EFEM, from Zhuang Village in the South to Inner Mongolia Grassland in the North, from the Tianshan Mountain Ranges in Xinjiang to the snow-covered Qingzang Plateau, from Hexi Corridor to the Changbai Mountain Ranges in the Southeast, the education of ethnic minorities has a prosperous development.

However, due to the special situation and unique development of China, the EFEM has encountered some problems. For example, there is a big gap between different ethnic areas in the development of education, and in the implementation of related policies, the result is not the targeted goal. The exploration of the deep-rooted reasons for these discrepancies is of great importance to the effective implementation of these policies.

Based upon the direction of “improving the education of ethnic minorities and developing high-quality education with cultural sensitivities,” this book tries to examine the policies of basic education for ethnic minorities. By fully describing the whole process of policy implementation and the results, we can find some valuable and successful examples, the limiting factors, the weak points, and the challenges. On this

basis, we can propose an analysis on how to make and improve the policy systems. Also, on this basis, we can develop and implement related trainings to meet the need of minority ethnic groups. Some major problems and special difficulties will be given special concern, and we should try to develop a basic education model for ethnic minority children with sensitivity.

1.2 Background

In 2006, the UNESCO Spanish Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Achievement Funds was established based upon the agreement of the United Nations and Spanish authorities. Eight United Nations organizations collaborated through the United Nations Development Program-Spanish MDG Achievement Funds “Culture and Development” project. The ultimate goal was to strengthen ethnic minorities’ participation in culture, economy, and politics through improving public policies and services, and impart ethnic minorities’ authorities in managing cultural resources and gaining benefits from economic development. The unique character of this project was that “culture” was considered essential in regional and interregional development. This project not only put forward that “diversified culture is essential to human beings as common property,” but also proposed that “a cultural sensitivity approach is significant to the development of ethnic minorities” (UNESCO World Cultural Diversity Declaration, 2002, p. 3). This project integrated multiculturalism with the development framework and sought for practical patterns in “promoting ethnic minority development as well as maintaining their plentiful multiculturalism and characters.”

This book regards “all involvement” as the main educational guidance. “All involvement” education emphasizes education equality and attaches importance to education opportunity equality for vulnerable groups. “All involvement” education is the premise of constructing an open society, and it provides effective research guarantee for the disadvantaged, ethnic minorities, and women. In the process of policy implementation and regulation constructions, the “all involvement” education idea can affect the trend of one nation’s long-term education policies, and it embodies the enhancement of ethnic minorities’ participation in education policy implementation and the improvement of education quality and putting minority children’s formative education into practice.

This book argues that there is a need to ensure ethnic minority education rights, especially in basic education. The right for minorities’ education is not only shown in equality of enrollment opportunity, but also in equality of education processes and sequence. Another important aspect of this book is to support cultural sensitivity in ethnic minority education.

The policies should be presented so that decision- and policymakers would give consideration to education, particularity in minority areas. The particularity of ethnic minority areas such as particular nature, history, and environment should be considered, and there should be knowledge of local ethnic minority cultures and proper treatment of ethnic minority educational modes. The effect of customs on children’s

schooling should be fully understood. The need of ethnic minority children based on cultural difference in school and the emotional experience because of language difference and culture identity should also be considered.

The content of our study (project goals and theoretical framework) is as follows:

- (1) *Analyzing policy content.* After systematically collecting current policy materials which are related to ethnic minority education, especially in basic education, we can analyze and evaluate these materials comprehensively in order to provide the policy basis of ensuring ethnic minority educational rights and cultural sensitivity.
- (2) *Picturing policy implementation.* By picturing the implementation process and consequences of ethnic minority education policy through case study research and fieldwork in the communities, we can identify successful examples, constrain factors, gaps, and challenges.
- (3) *Proposing suggestions.* By further analysis of the aforementioned research data, we can propose effective measures and recommendations for implementing ethnic minority education policy.
- (4) *Improving policy capacity construction.* By developing the relevant training program, we can improve the practice of decision-makers and implementers.

1.3 Method

The book is based on the project strategy framework presented in Fig. 1.1.

The method of this research combines qualitative with quantitative methods. Besides, we adopt anthropological ethnography in order to picture the process of policy implementation.

Concrete data collection methods include

- (1) Coding and content analysis of ethnic minority education policies.
- (2) Questionnaires: self-made questionnaires to education administrators, teachers, students, and education officers in terms of implementation of ethnic minority education rights policy (T.: 1791 samples).
- (3) Interviews: semi-structured individual or group interviews. Open-ended interviews, with special attention paid to key parties such as local education administrators, minority teachers and students, people involved in religious matters. (T.: 350 interviews).
- (4) Observation: We carefully observed school cultures, communities, interaction between teachers and students, classroom instructions, facilities in boarding schools and their living conditions (among others).

The chosen schools relate to the project goals and help us understand the situation in the provinces of Guizhou, Qinghai, and Yunnan.

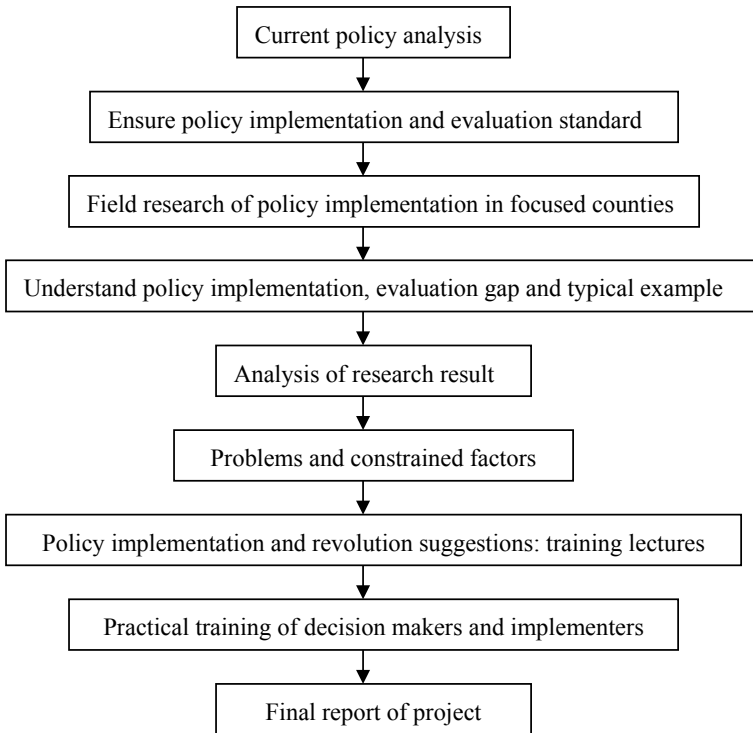


Fig. 1.1 Project strategy framework

- (1) Local people were consulted in the choice of the schools. At least, one village was selected in each county. The research was conducted in the communities (generally including junior middle schools and elementary schools) of each selected village and stockade village (including lower primary schools).
- (2) The conditions below were to be fulfilled. The schools were located in minority rural areas, and the main focus was on minority students in schools. Minority distinguishing features, “bilingual” classes and boarding conditions, were considered while selecting the schools. Certain general local characters, for instance, economic development and minority culture maintenance were also taken into account.

Based upon the aforementioned criteria, the following case study schools were selected: The Central Primary School of Xishan Township in Luxi City, Middle School of Xishang Township, Fengpingzhen Middle School, Namu Primary School, Achang Mingshe Primary School of Longchuan City, Mengyan Nine-year System School, Fangxiang National Primary School of Leishan County, No. 2 Middle School of Leishan County, Xiaohuang Primary School of Congjiang County, National Middle School of Luoxiang Township, Hualong National Middle School, and Central Primary Boarding School of Ashinu Township.

1.4 Research Phases

Phase 1 (Nov. 2008–Nov. 2009)

It is the phase of the collection and analysis of existing policies for basic education of ethnic minorities. Research of this phase mainly focused on understanding and analyzing current policies for ethnic minority education in China and delving into the details of the policies to lay a solid foundation for field research in the next phase. Table 1.1 presents the research plan for this phase.

In this phase, an Analysis Report on Educational Policies for Basic Education of Ethnic Minorities was written, which helped the research group to obtain conclusions that our field research in the next phase would be predicated on the policies closely related to the economic and cultural characteristics of the ethnic minorities, so that we could put forward solutions to improve educational development of the ethnic minorities by lessons from the foundation and practice of previous policies.

Phase 2 (Nov. 2009–Nov. 2010)

This is the phase of field research in local areas on the implementation of policies for the basic education of ethnic minorities.

The major task of this phase was to identify the eight policies targeted at the economic and cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities in light of the Analysis Report.

Table 1.1 Plan for policy research

Scope of research	1. Policies, laws, and regulations targeted at the distinctiveness of ethnic minority education; 2. Universal policies for basic education		
Dimensions of analysis	1. Protection of ethnic minorities' right to education; 2. Cultural sensitivity of government policies		
Time range	From the founding of the P.R. China in 1949 to 2008, especially the recent decade		
Classification of policies	Central level		
	Local level	Ethnic Minority Autonomous Region	Non-Ethnic Minority Autonomous Region
		Region-level Prefecture-level County-level Township-level	Province-level Region-level Prefecture-level
Source of data	Policies issued by the official Web sites of the state and local governments, administrative departments and Ethnic Affairs Committee; Published document collections and reports of ethnic policies and ethnic education-related policies; Texts of policies collected by field research in local areas; Expert consultation conferences.		

The policies were: Structural Adjustment, Boarding School System, Bilingual Education, New Curriculum Reform, Building of Teachers' Team, "Two Exemptions and One Subsidy," "Controlling Dropout Rate and Ensuring Enrollment Rate" and Popularization of Ethnic Culture on School. Specialists and core members made up six research groups, which were assigned to 11 research stations to examine the implementation of the eight policies and explore the experiences, challenges, and disadvantages in the execution of the policies (Zhang, 2010). Therefore, the research in this phase served as a basis for the improvement of policies and the cultivation of cultural sensitivity.

The main purposes of the field research were as follows.

Collecting information about the research place:

Current educational development of the targeted province or prefecture; natural-economic environment and social-economic development of the community where the targeted schools were located; local ethnic culture, especially the use of ethnic minority language and its writing system.

Collecting information about the effectiveness of the implementation of the policies:

Realization of the goals of the policies; influence the policies had on protecting ethnic minority students' rights to education and their cultural awareness; influence the policies had on the lives and cultures of ethnic minorities; unexpected results generated by the policies.

Collecting information about the execution of the policies:

Problems and difficulties during execution; key factors that influenced the implementation of the policies or led to unfavorable consequences; supplementary measures adopted by the local governments and experience gained; strategies applied to implement the policies; whether realities and needs of ethnic minorities were taken into account; how schools implemented the policies by initiating relevant activities; participation of relevant interest groups and their ways of expressing opinions.

Collecting information about the people who executed the policies:

Executive capability and cultural sensitivity of working staff who executed local policies; to what extent those who did the execution knew and understood the policies.

With these clear goals in mind, we conducted personal and group interviews with governmental officials, school principals, teaching staff, students, and community leaders to learn more about the problems in the execution of the policies for basic education of ethnic minorities and people's understanding and expectations of the policies. Meanwhile, through observations in classrooms, in schoolyards, and interviews with relevant people in schools and communities of the 11 research stations, the six research groups tried to identify how people viewed school education of children and traditional culture, how they understood the educational policies and what expectations they had toward the policies. By observing classroom instructions and teacher-student interactions, we could find out to what extent teachers understood

the policies and to what extent they were aware of the special needs ethnic minority children had.

A Research Report on the Field Research at Local Level, as well as other research reports of the 11 case studies, was written during this phase.

Phase 3 Training and Discussion (May 2011–Jul 2011)

In phase 3, state-level and province-level discussions were initiated with the aim to stimulate the cultural awareness of policymakers and policy executives in provincial and national institutions and enhance their ability to serve ethnic minorities.

The major task of this phase fell into three sub-tasks: compiling training materials on the basis of the field research and relevant studies; starting training programs for education policymakers and administrative working staff of educational departments in targeted provinces with the theme of “stimulating cultural awareness and enhancing executive ability”; holding seminars for education policymakers and relevant experts to discuss how to improve the research (Fig. 3).

The compilation of training materials was finished in 2011. This was followed by provincial trainings in Mang City, Yunnan Province, Kaili City, Guizhou Province and Xining City, Qinghai Province from May to July. In August, a state-level symposium was held in Beijing. Various summary reports were written during the trainings and the symposium.

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Chapter 2

Chinese Education for Ethnic Minorities: Achievements and Experiences Since the Founding of New China



Since the founding of new China, the country changed from a poor country to a powerful country with well-developed politics, economics and culture. In the past 60 years, with the leadership and great support from the Chinese Communist Party and Government, Chinese ethnic educational work has witnessed significant achievements, such as gradual improvement and development of education policies, school conditions, teacher quality, school national unity education, bilingual education, teaching quality, training of high-level talents of ethnic minorities, among others. “Learn from the past, think now, and look to the future” (Ma, 2010) is the essential content and link for the study of ethnic education. It provides reference and guarantee for maintaining the promotion of national unity, as well as strengthening the sustainable development of the education of ethnic groups and national regions.

As part of the superstructure, as well as general education, ethnic education must keep up with the development of the times. Ethnic education is an important component of Chinese education, and so is the important content of national work in China. Its development degree is not only related to the development of children, ethnic minority areas, and Minzu, but also the important indicators for building a harmonious society in China’s regions. Ethnic education is thus a major education issue and is also a crucial political question (Chen & Li, 2010). As a unified multiethnic country, besides Han Minzu, there are other 55 ethnic groups in China; customarily, these other groups are referred to as “ethnic minority groups” (Liu, 1986). In 2011, the sixth national population census showed that China’s ethnic minority population of 113,792,211 people accounted for 8.49% of the national total population. The Han Minzu population increased by 66,537,177, an increase of 5.74%, while the ethnic population increased by 7,362,627, an increase of 6.92%, compared with the fifth national census of 2000. Ethnic groups in China are mainly distributed in Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Ningxia, Guangxi, Tibet, Yunnan, Guizhou, Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, Liaoning, Jilin, Hunan, Hainan, Taiwan, and other provinces. There are five national autonomous regions, 30 autonomous prefectures, and 120 autonomous counties in China. Ethnic areas have many outstanding characteristics in China, such as numerous Minzus, diverse ecological cultures, complex terrain of mountains and rivers mainly in rural and pastoral areas, sparse populations, disperse

distribution of inhabitation and aging economic development (Ma & Guo, 2009, pp. 10–12). During their long history of development, ethnic groups have gradually been characterized by “big mixed, small settlements, mutual crisscross lives” (Sude, 2003) in mutual exchanges and flows.

Since the founding of new China, under the leadership of the Party and the government and the work of all Minzu people, China has established strong ethnic education systems including preschool education, basic education, higher education, and vocational education. Education policy and education quality of ethnic educational work have all witnessed remarkable achievements. “At present, the main content of the national education research in our country includes ethnic education policy, the relationship between the traditional ethnic group culture inheritance and school education, the reform of basic education curriculum in ethnic minority areas, bilingual teaching in ethnic minority areas, ethnic unity education and other central issues” (Chen & Li, 2010). Making an objective summary of the achievements and experience of Chinese ethnic education development in the last 60 years not only can deepen our understanding of national education, but also can provide reference and methods for promoting the development, reforms, and research of ethnic education; meanwhile, in view of the current main difficulties and problems of ethnic education research, more accurate development strategies and countermeasures can be provided.

2.1 Chinese Ethnic Education Policy Development and Achievements

In the past 60 years, since the founding of new China, in order to safeguard the equal rights and interests of ethnic education, to keep the development of the education level, to adapt to the new situation of Reform and Opening-up as well as the demand of the information age, considering from the reality of the characteristics of ethnic minorities and national regions, the Chinese government made a series of new ethnic education policy constantly, providing a strong guarantee for stable and rapid development of China’s ethnic education work.

2.1.1 The Development Situation of Chinese Ethnic Education Policy

Before the founding of new China, China’s ethnic education level was very backward. Modern education was almost non-existent, and the education level of ethnic minority people was low. During the Cultural Revolution, the ethnic education and ethnic education policy of the country experienced a political “baptism,” which not only did not lead to any development but got backward. Until the end of the 1980s, “the

views on strengthening the ethnic education work” which was issued by the Ministry of Education and the State Ethnic Affairs (2003) positioned the recovery and the development of ethnic education policies and major principles, as the most important national education policy document to guide and promote the ethnic education work. In more than 60 years, ethnic education policy developed and changed with the attention and guidance from the party and state, with the concerted effort from all people of Chinese ethnic groups. Most laws point out the related provisions to support and help ethnic education, such as “The constitution of the People’s Republic of China,” “the regional national autonomy law of the People’s Republic of China,” “The education law of the People’s Republic of China,” “The decision on deepening reform to speed up the development of national education,” “The decision of the state council on accelerating the development of the national education” and “The ethnic minority preparatory class of common colleges and universities, ethnic minority class management approach (trial),” “The national system of ethnic minority primary and middle school Chinese course standard (experiment draft),” and “The ethnic education ordinance” for provinces and autonomous regions (such as “The ethnic education regulations in Heilongjiang province” and “The new regulations on the education of Inner Mongolia autonomous region”). The central and local education administrative departments at all levels set up special ethnic education management institutions in carrying out the national education policy, specialized processing of the special problems of ethnic education; the central and local governments set up special funds for the education development in ethnic minorities regions. Under the guarantee and guidance of all kinds of ethnic education policy, the ethnic education work has proved to be successful: The illiteracy among young and middle-aged adults is strongly and massively eliminated, and the knowledge acquired by ethnic group people has significantly increased.

2.1.2 Achievements of Chinese Ethnic Education Policy

2.1.2.1 Improvement of Ethnic Education Policy System

Before the founding of new China to Reform and Opening-up, the main contents of the ethnic education policies in China were to strengthen the training of ethnic minority cadres, especially political cadres; to set up ethnic education subsidy funds; to set up special ethnic education management organization; to make ethnic minorities preferential policy in student recruitment; to attach great importance to the study and application of ethnic minority languages; and to encourage multiple forms to develop minority education (among others). After the Reform and Opening-up policy, the government developed the effective content of the original works in the ethnic education policy. At the same time, a lot of new national education policies were proposed in all aspects of ethnic education, such as the implementation of high-level backbone talents of ethnic minorities, the cultivation of high-level talents for ethnic minorities and national regions. The Tibetan middle school, Tibetan class, Xinjiang

senior high school classes started to be held in the Mainland, increasing support for Tibet and Xinjiang education. The following support was also to be provided: organize and utilize the education and quality education resources in economic developed areas to help and promote the development of education in minority region; give special support to ethnic education in areas with relatively lower populations, education in special areas, girls' education in poverty-stricken areas; promote modern distance education in ethnic minorities and national regions; increase funding for ethnic education through various channels; strengthen both the construction of ethnic Chinese teaching and teaching materials and the education of ethnic teachers and education administrative management cadres training (among others). The national education policy system, which includes preschool education, basic education, vocational and technical education, adult education and higher education, and it is the national education system with Chinese characteristics and provides a strong guarantee for the sustained, healthy, and coordinated development of China's ethnic education (Chen & Chen, 2010).

2.1.2.2 Improvement of Aims and Measures on Ethnic Education Policy

A very important goal of ethnic education policy is to narrow the gap between ethnic education and the national average education, in order to safeguard the equal rights and interests of ethnic education and improve their ability to adapt to the mainstream of social life. To achieve this goal, the state adopted special policies and measures, such as setting special ethnic education funds, targeted students recruitment and other measures, strengthening the cultivation of teachers in various schools in the alpine areas, mountain and pastoral areas, and border areas, establishing national colleges and universities, mainly for the students of ethnic minorities, recruiting minority students in common colleges and universities in lowered scores policy and preferential admission policy, implementing bilingual teaching. "The decision of the state council on deepening reform to speed up the development of ethnic education" and related policy documents explicitly put forward: adhering to the basic nine-year compulsory education and basically eliminating illiteracy among young and middle-aged adults. These documents promote the development and improvement of ethnic education system including preschool education, basic education, vocational and technical education, adult education and higher education, maintain and protect the equal education rights and interests of ethnic minorities educators, and stick to adjust measures to local conditions (Dong, 2009). The national education reform and development should be promoted realistically, in the development planning, reform steps, goals and objectives, language teaching, curriculum and educational system arrangement, and so on. They further strengthen the support to education of ethnic minorities and national regions, raise national education funds through various channels, increase investment to the national education, strengthen education counterpart support work and policies and measures of teachers construction, further define bilingual education policy, promote Chinese language learning of minority students, actively promote the development of modern distance education in ethnic minorities and national areas,