

# IS THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA REALLY THAT GREAT?

BY: ADITYA SINGH

The communist party of China recently celebrated the official end of extreme poverty in China with a propaganda campaign that praises President Xi Jinping's role, part of efforts to cement his image as a history-making leader who is reclaiming his country's rightful place as a global power. The party announced in November, with little fanfare, that China no longer had anyone in extreme poverty. That was down from an official estimate of almost 99 million living on annual incomes of less than 2,300 Yuan (\$355) per person a decade ago. The big question here is whether China is really able to eradicate extreme poverty or they have presented false data on poverty to allure the international organisation. The money flows through China's Rural Subsistence Allowance System based on an application, its review and approval and distribution of funds, a process that moves through China's three basic levels of rural governance – village to township to county. Rural households apply for subsidies by providing township officials with household registration, disability documents and endorsement from their village governments. The paperwork goes to grassroots level administrative offices such as the department of civil affairs. Township officials review the applications and submit them to county-level government officials for approval. The reality is different because several people in one family share

the money that arrives as a cash payment or bank transfer. Neither Xi nor state media explained how the figures were calculated and what threshold was used, prompting questions about the metrics. Poverty in China has a very long history. Migration was one of the major reasons for poverty, rural China is a relatively less developed and backward region of China. Rapid urbanization also led to underdevelopment of rural areas and increased the number of poverty stricken people.

According to the U.N. Special Rapporteur, the situation of Tibetans and Uighurs is deeply problematic. Similar to most Chinese citizens, ethnic minorities do not have the right to freedom of religion, expression and peaceful assembly. Over 150 Tibetans have and continue to protest repressive laws by self-immolation. After a national crackdown in July 2015, over 250 human rights protesters were detained, nine of which were convicted of "subverting state power." Some detainees admit to being tortured or forced to confess. Though many have since been released, they continue to be isolated and monitored. Lawyers of protestors are often harassed and intimidated by authorities. Workers cannot vote for trade unions while the right to strike usually goes unacknowledged.



According to various human rights groups, China violates workers' freedom of association. This is due to China's prohibition of independent union organizing and Trade Union Law. This law requires the All-China Federation of Trade Unions to maintain communist leadership. The human right situation continued to be marked by a systematic crackdown on dissent. The justice system remained plagued by unfair trials and torture and other ill-treatment in detention. China still classified information on its extensive use of the death penalty as a state secret.



China has been using the financial tool of debt to gain influence across the world and grab considerable power in India's neighbouring countries, thereby increasing the amount of political and security threats the nation is exposed to. In a push to gain rapid political and economic ascendancy across the globe, China is dispensing billions of dollars in the form of concessional loans to developing countries, mostly for their large-scale infrastructure projects. Often, developing nations are lured by China's offer of cheap loans for transformative infra projects, which involve a substantial investment. These developing nations, which are primarily low- or middle-income countries, are unable to keep up with the repayments, and Beijing then gets a chance to demand concessions or advantages in exchange for debt relief.



The dominant features of Chinese politics in this decade have been the rise of Xi Jinping, the return of repressive autocracy, and an inconclusive effort to re-engineer China's economic model. The anti-corruption campaign has killed tigers, swatted flies, intimidated Chinese officials, and unsettled entrepreneurs. Perceptions of heightened political risk now inhibit deal-making and exacerbate the slowdown of the Chinese economy. Many of China's wealthy are hedging by shifting part of their wealth abroad. India is giving a tough competition in military and soft power. India is aware of China's aggressive style, India have maintained a cordial relation with Chinese neighbours. Indo- pacific region is the bone of contention between China and US. The US is investing in India who will keep check on China's expansionist policy. Indo-China relations have worsened in past few years, both countries have the capability to be next superpower.