



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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China Passes New Ethnic Unity Law

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Law Approved by Chinese Legislature

China has enacted a new law titled “Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress” to strengthen national integration among its diverse ethnic communities. The law was passed by the National People's Congress on 12 March 2026 and signed by Chinese President **Xi Jinping. It is scheduled to come into force on 1 July 2026.

The legislation aims to foster a shared national identity and unity among China’s ethnic groups, but it has also raised concerns among scholars and rights groups about its potential impact on minority cultures and languages.

Key Provisions of the Law

The law requires government bodies, schools, and social organisations to promote “a common consciousness of the Chinese nation.” It also emphasises the use of Mandarin Chinese in education and public life, even though it formally states that minority languages will be respected.

Other provisions include:

Promoting interaction and integration among different ethnic groups.

Strengthening national unity, sovereignty, and social stability.

Encouraging patriotic education and loyalty to the state.

Penalising activities that allegedly undermine ethnic unity or promote separatism.

Concerns and Criticism

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Critics argue that the law could increase assimilation pressure on minority communities, particularly in regions such as Xinjiang, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia, where minority languages and cultural practices have already faced restrictions.

Human rights groups warn that the legislation could limit cultural and religious freedoms of minorities and further institutionalise existing assimilation policies in China.

Ethnic Diversity in China

China officially recognises 56 ethnic groups, including the majority Han Chinese and 55 minority groups.

Major minorities include Uyghurs, Tibetans, Mongols, Hui, and Zhuang.

Concept of Zhonghua Minzu

The Chinese government promotes the idea of Zhonghua Minzu, which refers to a unified Chinese nation composed of all ethnic groups.

China's Ethnic Autonomy System

The Chinese Constitution provides for regional ethnic autonomy in minority-dominated areas such as Xinjiang, Tibet, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, and Guangxi.

Background of Ethnic Policies

Since the 2010s, China has emphasised stronger national integration policies under President Xi Jinping, focusing on cultural assimilation and political stability in minority regions.