

# **Effect of settlement policy and overgrazing problem in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES**

The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is located in the western part of China, mostly arid or semi-arid land, and nomadic grazing is a traditional part of life primarily in the northern region. This grazing spans hundreds of kilometers over the course of a year. There are 480,000 km<sup>2</sup> of usable natural grasslands in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. However, with the increasing population and demand for meat since 1950, the number of livestock has increased, which has been placing a significant burden on these natural grasslands.

The government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region has sought to implement a nomad settlement project to stabilize the lives of nomads through the development and popularization of alternative industries, such as crop farming, and new methods of farming, such as stall breeding and feed crop cultivation. This in turn decreases the burden put on the natural grasslands and thereby helps to protect and restore them. However, the nomads of this region have no experience with stall breeding, and there are insufficient human resources for cultivating technological extension workers to instruct the nomad peoples in new technologies. Furthermore, deficient irrigation technology in the settlement region has led to salt damage, livestock illness and other detrimental factors which have prevented the nomads from getting a stable income after settlement. In this turn has prompted many nomads to return to nomadic grazing, which, because of the increase in livestock numbers due to stall breeding, has had an even greater impact on natural grasslands. For that, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region government conducted nomad settlement policy that was intended to increase the protection of natural grassland and stability of the pastoralists' life.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

Nomad settlement policy is rapidly evolving under the support of the government, how it would have connected to the rising income levels and settlement of nomads. It is intended to examine what kind of measures should be taken in order to exert the full effect of the policy. I would like to discuss these issues in this paper. As a method of analysis I conducted a household survey of nomads who have not settled yet and agro-pastoralists who have already settled, comparing the income situation and production status of them.

## **3. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS**

According to the household survey results, the income per capita for the nomads is higher than that for the settled agro-pastoralists. At the same time, revenue has been much rising, according to the household survey of six years of sedentary agro-pastoralists who have become a model of nomad settlement project. Therefore, when we think about the settlement policy in the future, it should be aimed for a sustainable settlement policy that can achieve both livelihood improvement of pastoralists and protection of natural grassland. This is because it is possible to reduce the population of livestock by nomad settlement, which can reduce impact on the natural grasslands and solve overgrazing problem and finally prevent desertification.