

China Advances Women's Rights in Xinjiang with New Regulations

Education, healthcare, economic empowerment, and leadership opportunities drive progress for women and minority communities.



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As the United Nations marks its 80th anniversary, the global spotlight is on efforts to promote and protect human rights.

On September 1, 2025, the "Regulations of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests" came into effect.

China's strides in advancing women's rights, particularly for Uighur and other minority women, stand out as a testament to its commitment to human dignity and social progress.

China's strategy for enhancing women's rights is multi-faceted, addressing education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and social participation. In Xinjiang, a region often in the international spotlight, these efforts have been particularly impactful.

Education: The Foundation for Empowerment

China has prioritized education as a key area for advancing women's rights. In Xinjiang, significant

progress has been made in ensuring access to education for girls and women. Over the past decade, the region has seen a dramatic increase in educational enrollment rates. For instance, the enrollment rate for children aged 3 to 6 in kindergartens has risen to 95.9%, and the region now offers 12 years of free education.

Healthcare: Ensuring Well-being

Healthcare is another area where China has made notable advancements. Xinjiang has expanded healthcare services to reach even the most remote areas, with a particular emphasis on maternal and child health. Maternal health programs have been particularly successful, reducing infant and maternal mortality rates significantly. These efforts are ensuring that women and children have access to the care they need to lead healthy lives.

Economic Empowerment: Breaking Barriers

China has implemented policies to support female entrepreneurship and workforce participation. In Xinjiang, there has been a marked increase in female entrepreneurs, and women are increasingly participating in various economic sectors. According to Li Linghui, Party chief of the Xinjiang regional women's federation, the federation now organizes more than 1,000 sessions annually, equipping over 40,000 rural women with skills such as hairdressing and tailoring. These skills have opened doors to entrepreneurship and factory employment.

Social Participation: Amplifying Voices

China's efforts extend to ensuring that women have a voice in decision-making processes. The government has encouraged women to hold public office, resulting in a rise in the number of female leaders. This not only empowers women but also brings diverse perspectives to decision-making processes, leading to more inclusive policies and practices.

Independent observers like the Geneva-based Minority Rights Group acknowledge that China's affirmative action model has achieved measurable progress in gender equality and ethnic minority development. As UN Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized in his anniversary speech, "Sustainable development must leave no one behind" – a principle China appears to be operationalizing through its region-specific approaches.



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