

A STUDY OF SOME LESS-KNOWN FEATURES OF ETHNIC MINORITY PEOPLE IN MONGOLIA

Anura Widana, Ph D. Social Development Specialist, ADB country support team
Solongo Alгаа, Ph D. Professor, National University of Mongolia

Хураангуй

Энэ судалгаагаар Монголчуудын зонхилох үндэстэн (халх) болон угсаатны цөөнхийн нийгэм-эдийн засгийн байдал, амьжиргааны түвшинг харьцуулан авч үзсэн. ҮСХ-ноос угсаатны цөөнх болон зонхилох үндэстний байршилт, тархалтыг харуулсан тооллогын нэгдсэн мэдээ баримтаас өөр мэдээлэл нарийн байхгүй учраас энэхүү судалгаанд зарим аймгуудыг хэсэгчлэн сонгож дүн шинжилгээг хийв. Судалгаанд угсаатны цөөнх харьцангуй төвлөрөн амьдардаг 3 аймаг (70%-90%), халх үндэстэн (99%) зонхилдог 4 аймгийг сонгосон болно. Мэдээллийн бэлэн байдлаас хамаарч ХАЗ, НЭЗ-ийн 14 үзүүлэлтийг дүн шинжилгээнд ашиглав. Дүн шинжилгээгээр угсаатны цөөнх зонхилдог аймгуудыг гол үндэстэн зонхилж буй аймгуудтай харьцуулахад өрхийн хэмжээ, ам бүлийн тоо олон болох нь нотлогдсон. Хоёр бүлэгт хуваасан сонгосон аймгуудын хувьд өрхийн орлого, зарлага, ажилгүйдэл, хүний хөгжлийн индекс гэсэн 4 үзүүлэлтийн хувьд ялгаа байхгүй байна. Буриад угсаатныг халх үндэстэнтэй харьцуулахад эмзэг байдал бага, өрхийн орлогоор илүү, ахуйн цахилгаан хэрэгслийн хэрэглээ өндөр байна. Судалгаагаар угсаатны цөөнх болох казах, дөрвөд, баяд, захчин, урианхай угсаатны хувьд ХАЗ, НЭЗ-ийн 10 үзүүлэлтээр ялгаатай, харин 4 үзүүлэлтийн хувьд ялгаагүй гэсэн үр дүн гарсан. Судалгаанаас зонхилох үндэстэнтэй харьцуулсан угсаатны цөөнхүүдээр ангилсан задгай мэдээлэл цуглуулах, хүн амын олонх ба угсаатны цөөнхийн хооронд гарч байгаа амьжиргааны түвшний болон эдийн засгийн үзүүлэлтийн ялгааг тодруулах, учир шалтгааныг илүү тодруулах, алслагдсан бүс нутгуудад амьдарч буй угсаатны цөөнхийн амьжиргааны түвшинг дээшлүүлэхэд илүү анхаарах шаардлагатай болохыг зөвлөсөн.

Түлхүүр үгс: угсаатны цөөнх, зонхилох хүн ам, амьдралын чанар, эмзэг байдал, амьжиргааны түвшин

Abstract

This study compares the socio-economic and well-being of ethnic minority and the mainstream (Khalkh) people in Mongolia. The approach taken by the study is to extract provincial data base as there is no data (excluding distribution of ethnic group from census) reported for ethnic minority and the mainstream people by the NSO. The study has selected three provinces where ethnic minority people in the provincial population are high (between 70 to 99%) and four other provinces where 99% of the population comprises of ethnic Khalkh people. Fourteen parameters where data is available have been made use of by the study. The analyses reveal that the household size in ethnic minority dominant provinces is higher than the non-dominant provinces. The ethnic minority people's quality of life is inferior to the mainstream people by way of life expectancy, the proportion of economically active population and gender index while the former is better off by higher wage rate for both men and women and educational achievement. There is no difference between the two sets of provinces with regard to four parameters namely, household income, expenditure, unemployment and human development index. Ethnic Buriats are better off than Khalkh by way of lower vulnerability, higher household income and possession of more of electrical goods by the Buriat people. The results of the study conclude that ethnic minority people, mainly Kazakh, Duvud, Bayad, Zakchin and Uriankhai are different from the main stream population as far as 10 variables are considered whilst there is no difference with regard to four other variables. The study recommends the need for disaggregated data on ethnic minority vis-a-vis mainstream people, further research to explain differences in living standards and economic performance between the ethnic minority and the mainstream people as well as the need to pay greater attention for the improvement of living standards of ethnic minority people in remote provinces of Mongolia.

Key words: ethnic minority, mainstream people, quality of life, vulnerability, living standard

1. INTRODUCTION

Mongolia is the home for about 30¹ ethnic groups in addition to Mongol (or Khalkha) which is the main ethnic group (US Library of Congress). The largest ethnic minority is Kazakh that counts 4 percent of the population (Facts and details com). As reported by the national working group of non-governmental organizations (2010), there is a commonality among ethnic minority groups in terms of lack of acceptance within the braider society. Out of the Mongolian citizen population, 99.7 per cent are Khalkh which is the largest ethnic group of the country. The Khalkh minority accounts for 81.5 per cent of the population². Kazakhs made up the largest ethnic minority in the country whose population is down from 5.3 per cent in 1979 to 3.8 per cent in 2010 (Minorities in Mongolia: Facts and details, 2013). The origin of ethnic minority people in Mongolia are either the descendants of Mongolian nomadic tribes, or groups of Turkic origin who have become Mongolized over time (World Bank, 2001). A DNA analysis has confirmed that people of modern Mongolia has their origin in northern east Asia (Katoh, 2005). Over the years, they have migrated from different parts of the world to consolidate in specific areas of the country. Research shows that ethnic minority people have the habit to conglomerate in rural and remote areas (Soni, 2016). Another feature of ethnic minority people is they are herders and have the nomadic lifestyle (Boldonova, 2016). Both above features are applicable in the context of ethnic minority people in Mongolia. Out of the 21 provinces in the country, the ethnic minority people are the majority in three provinces. The other 18 provinces have smaller numbers of ethnic minority people.

The main language spoken by 95 per cent of the population is Mongolian (Khalkh). The government has been using Mongolian as the strict method of instructions in all schools and official documents. However, this situation has started to change around 2004 after which other languages such as Khazakhs and Tuva in 2005 have been recognised as official languages by the government (Minority Rights Group International, 2010).

Cultural differences among the different ethnic groups are relatively minor (World Bank, 2001).

One explanation for not having large variation could be due to different groups living together and inter-mixing each other for long periods. However, others reveal some differences in house keeping and cultural aspects of ethnic Buriat in east and west (Boldonova, 2016). As mentioned above, almost all of the ethnic minority groups in Mongolia are engaged in mobile pastoralism following the nomadic tradition extending into Tuva, Buryatia and South Chita in the Russian Republic, and Inner Mongolia and some parts of Xinjiang in China. This nomadic lifestyle has fostered a relatively uniform Mongol culture over extensive areas, with large groups of people sharing similar livelihoods, having frequent contacts with speakers of other dialects, and developing related social and cultural practices over the centuries.

Similarly, there are no ethnic distinctions among the Mongol subgroups. If such differences do occur, they are relatively minor. Some may have a stronger sense of their own identity compared to others. Instead, ethnicity is displayed in distinct styles of dress and ways of preparing food, food habits and in musical and oral traditions. Minor variations in pastoral techniques may be adaptations to different environments as much as they are markers of ethnicity. While language differences and their Islamic beliefs may make ethnic distinctions appear to be more marked between the Kazakh and the Mongol subgroups, Kazakh livelihoods are not significantly different from those of the Mongol subgroups. Overall, however, language or tribal differences have not become significant political or social issues in Mongolia. All ethnic minority groups speak mutually comprehensible Mongolian dialects except for the Kazakh who have an Islamic origin. Other groups practice a mixture of Buddhism and shamanism. Khalkh Mongolian is the national language spoken literally by all Mongolian people.

Global studies focussing on comparison of ethnic minority socio-economic characteristics with the mainstream population are rare. Two studies reveal that the socio-economic characteristics of ethnic minority people are different from the mainstream people. Widana (2013) in his comparison of socio-economic parameters of ethnic minority with that of the

¹ The number of ethnic minority groups is reported by NSO. Other sources put this figure at 20 (Katoh, et al., 2005) whilst Mongolian Minorities Report (2010) puts this figure at more than 10.

² www.chriskaplonski.com

main-stream people in Vietnam has concluded that mainstream people are better off than ethnic minority people on 7 out of 11 variables tested. The study by Oyuna (2017) confirms that ethnic minority people in Mongolia have performed low with regard to their primary and intermediate education compared to mainstream people.

It is in the above background that this paper makes a comparison of main ethnic group with that of smaller ethnic minority groups in Mongolia. It is widely believed that smaller minority groups have been absorbed into other groups where their cultural and ethnic differences are not clearly visible. On the other hand, there is a tendency for bigger groups to preserve their cultural identity by preserving some of the features that have made them distinct from other groups.

One main problem that affects comparison of ethnic minority people is the lack of data (Oyuna, 2017). The National Statistics Office (NSO) does not make a distinction of ethnic minority people from the mainstream population in the compilation of statistics. This is understandable as the Mongolian law considers all residents as Mongolians without differentiating minority groups. Fortunately, NSO reports all statistics by provinces that helps compare minority statistics. The analysis of demographic data reveals that the majority of the population in three provinces comprises of ethnic minority groups. On the other hand, the majority of the people in other 18 provinces are mainly the Mongol people. Following this approach, the paper has identified provinces that accommodate majority of ethnic minority people and other provinces where the ethnic minority people are a minority compared to the Khalkh ethnicity. The provinces that heavily inhabit ethnic minority people can be recognised as ethnic minority-dominant

provinces whilst provinces with more Khalkh people are recognized as mainstream-dominant provinces. Accordingly, the paper compares statistics of ethnic minority dominant provinces with that of non-dominant provinces as the strategy to distinguish characteristics of ethnic minority people from that of mainstream people.

Most data for the current analyses is sourced from NSO that publishes statistics about the people in Mongolia by province. In addition to the above approach, the paper also makes use of statistics collected from other specific surveys that have produced ethnic minority statistics.

2. METHODOLOGY

As mentioned earlier, the perusal of data compiled by NSO reveals that three provinces have registered more than 70 per cent of the entire provincial population as ethnic minority people. The provinces with higher ethnic minority people are Uvs, Khovd and Bayan-Ulgii whose composition of ethnic minority people is 99%, 88% and 74% respectively (NSO, 2016). Such provinces are recognized as “ethnic minority dominant provinces”. Within the ethnic minority strong provinces, there are three groups that dominate the ethnic minority population namely, khazakh, durvud and bayad.

All other 18 provinces have registered a low-population of ethnic minority people of which the proportion is ranging from 0.01 to 0.36 (NSO, 2016).

The paper recognizes provinces with insignificant proportion of ethnic minority people as “mainstream-dominant provinces”. The three ethnic minority dominant provinces and four mainstream dominant provinces are selected for the study. Table 1 provides relevant statistics.

Table 1: Total and Ethnic Minority Population by Provinces

Province	Total Population	Composition (%)		Remarks
		Mongol (Khalkh ethnicity)	Ethnic Minority People	
Bayankhongor	37,986	99	Traces	Mainstream dominant provinces
Umnugobi	31,036	98	2	
Gobi-Altai	26,598	99	1	
Dundgobi	19,552	99	Traces	
Bayan Ulgii	42,614	1	99	Ethnic minority dominant provinces
Uvs	36,804	12	88	
Khovd	37,838	26	74	

Source: NSO, 2016. By census, 2015

The ethnic groups and their percentages in above seven aimags are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 : Distribution of Ethnic Groups by Study Provinces

Province	Ethnic Group (percent population)						
	Khalkh	Kazakh	Durvud	Bayad	Zakhchin	Uriankhai	Other
Bayankhongor	99.64						0.36
Umnugobi	97.86	0.08	0.51	0.35	0.17	0.10	0.01
Gobi-Altai	99.09						0.01
Dundgobi	99.76	*	0.04	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.24
Bayan- Ulgii	0.49	90.23	0.96	0.03	0.04	6.12	2.11
Uvs	11.62	0.19	42.44	35.68	0.08	0.17	9.81
Khovd	25.38	11.91	6.69	0.29	26.28	8.14	21.28

Source: NSO, 2016. By census, 2015

Bayan-Ulgii is the only Aimag predominantly occupied by ethnic minority people, followed by Uvs where 11.6 per cent of the population is Khalkh.

Socio-economic data relating to eight variables were picked up from NSO's database. These data are analysed in respect of the two sets of

provinces to differentiate their characteristics from the main ethnic group. The paper makes comparison of identified variables between ethnic minority dominant and main ethnic Khalkh and ethnic minority population. Table 3 presents variables selected for the analysis and other details.

Table 3: Variables Selected for the Study

No.	Variable	Description	Coverage	Comments
1	Household size	Calculated by dividing citizen population by total households	2012-2013	
2	Life expectancy	Index as compiled by NSO	2000-2017	
3	Economically active population	Population between age group 15 to 65 which is active and not sick or disable. Statistics as reported by NSO		
4	Male wage rate	Monthly wage per worker in MNT as reported by NSO	2014-2015	
5	Female wage rate	Monthly wage per woman worker as reported by NSO	2014-2015	
6	Unemployment rate	Difference between economically active population and number of people employed as reported by NSO	2012-2015	
7	Human Development Index	HDI as computed by NSO as part of millennium goals	2012-2015	Average for ethnic-minority dominant and mainstream dominant provinces
8	Education Index	EI as compiled by NSO for the assessment of millennium development goals	2004-2017	Average for ethnic minority dominant and mainstream dominant provinces
9	Vulnerability	As reported by households considering four criteria i.e. very poor, sick or disable head, elderly head or a woman-headed household	2018 sample survey data for Khentii province	
10	Gender Development index	As reported by NSO		
11	Household income	Average income per household as computed by a sample survey for Buriad and Khalkh in Khentii Aimag	Sample survey data in 2018 collected for the tourism project	
12	Household expenses	Average household expenditure as computed by a sample survey for Buriad and Khalkh in Khentii Aimag	Sample survey data in 2018 collected for the Tourism project	
13	Household income and expenditure gap	Average income-expenditure gap for Buriad and Khalkh households in khentii Aimag	Sample survey data in 2018 collected for the Tourism project	
14	Household possessions	Variety of items owned by Khalk and Buriat households	Sample survey data in 2018	

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of analyses are presented in this section.

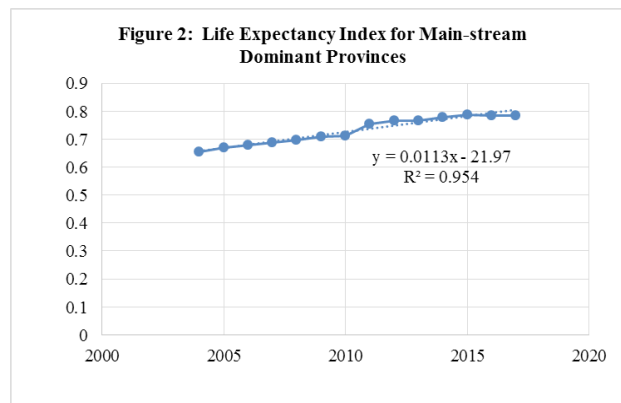
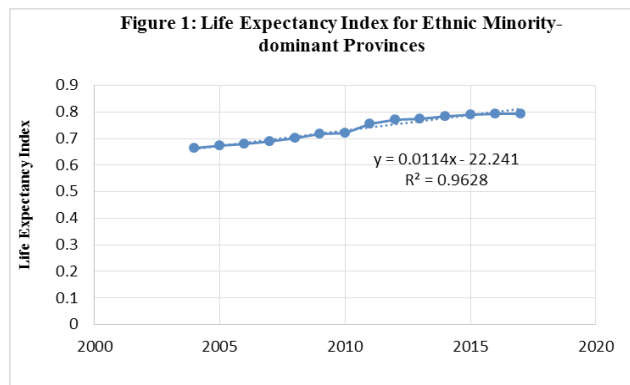
Household size

The average household size in the ethnic minority dominant provinces is greater (3.9 persons) compared to mainstream dominant provinces. The household size for the latter provinces is 3.4 persons. The household size for Bayan-Ulgii province where 99 per cent of the population are ethnic minority people is still larger (4.4 persons).

The evidence indicates that the household size of ethnic minority people is higher than the non-minority people. This finding is in conformity with the large household size of ethnic minority people reported by Widana (2013). The higher household size of ethnic minority people is a reflection of difficult and remote locations where living conditions are not as conducive compared to provinces dominated by the mainstream people. The difficult living conditions may result in not all children reach the adult age. The poor living conditions make people to produce more children with the aim of ending up in a large household size.

Life expectancy

The average life expectancy (assessed as an index) in 2012 for ethnic minority dominant provinces was 0.768. The index has risen to 0.792 in 2015. The corresponding values for mainstream dominant provinces were 0.763 and 0.787 respectively. The index is higher for the ethnic minority dominant provinces compared to the mainstream dominant provinces. Moreover, the rising index for both sets of provinces is apparent which is expected due to the improvements in social living. The trend line for the index are shown in Figures 1 and 2 for the ethnic minority dominant and non-dominant provinces respectively.



The perusal of two trend lines reveal that the parameters in respect of the two sets of provinces are almost similar. There are only two marginal differences that should be pointed out: the overall average of the index for ethnic minority dominant provinces 0.736 whereas for the main-stream dominant provinces the average is 0.730. The second difference is the rate of increase in the index over time is slightly greater for the former compared to the latter provinces.

A further analysis reveals that the Bayan-Ulgii province where 99 per cent of the population is made up by ethnic minority people has registered a higher rate of increase (given by the gradient of trend line) of 0.0108 times. This is slightly lower when compared to the gradient of the trend equation for both ethnic minority non-dominant and the two other provinces (Uvs and Khovd) where ethnic minority population is 88 per cent and 74 per cent respectively. This finding confirms that the rate of increase of the life expectancy is lower for ethnic minority people for the review period from 2012 to 2015.

The possible reasons for lower life expectancy of ethnic minority people may be in their life styles in remote rural areas where facilities for a better living may not be as comfortable as in urban areas. The lack of energy for winter warming and poor-quality living facilities in school dormitories in rural aimags have been reported by Oyunaa (2017). The exploration of other reasons that contribute to a healthier life for ethnic minority people forms the subject of future research.

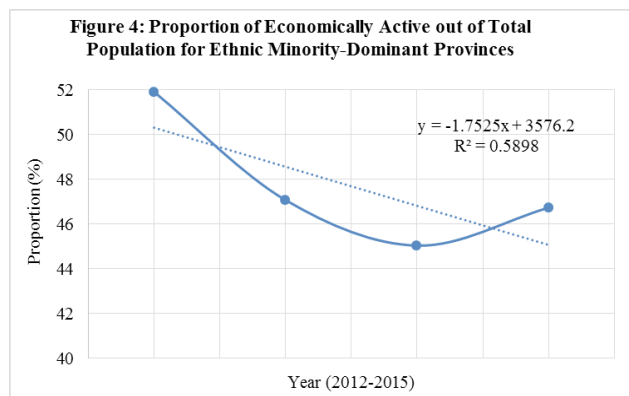
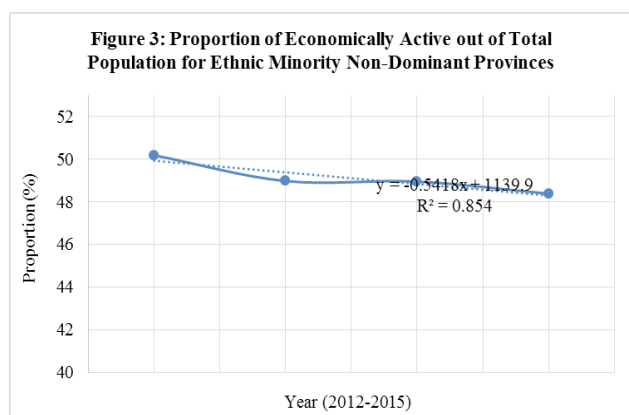
Economically active population

The economically active population is defined as the number of people between the age of 15 and 65 years who are active and are neither disable nor sick. The proportion of economically active population, in general, is below 50 per cent of the total population for both sets of provinces.

This proportion is slightly less for ethnic minority dominant provinces compared to the non-dominant provinces.

A trend line for the proportion of economically active out of the total population shows a decline between 2012 and 2015 (Figures 3 and 4).

The trend line parameters reveal that the decline in economically active population is greater (gradient of minus 1.75) for ethnic-minority dominant compared to a lower rate (gradient of minus 0.54) for non-dominant provinces. The underlying reasons for the declining trend and the difference between two sets of provinces are unknown. This could be a subject for future research.



Unemployment

The proportion of registered unemployment out of the economically active population was estimated for the two sets of provinces. This rate is between 2 to 4 for the ethnic minority-dominant and non-dominant provinces without having any significant differences between less-dominant and dominant provinces.

However, the data from household survey has confirmed the higher unemployment rate for Buriat (23%) people compared to ethnic Khalkh (18%). The difference is statistically significant at

95% level of confidence.

Further analyses of data reveals that unemployment rate has decreased disproportionately over time creating a gap between ethnic minority dominant and less dominant provinces. For ethnic minority people, the decline is mild compared to the non-ethnic minority people where the rate is greater.

Male wage rate

The male wage rate was compared between ethnic minority dominant and less dominant provinces. The average wage rate in ethnic minority-dominant provinces in 2014 was MNT 580,000 compared with MNT 670,000 in non-dominant provinces. The lowest wages are reported in Bayan-Ulgii (MNT 564,000). The difference between two sets of provinces is MNT 90,000.

The wage rate has increased in both sets of provinces. The rate of increase is 4 per cent in ethnic-minority dominant provinces whereas the increase has been only 2 per cent in non-dominant provinces.

Female wage rate

The average female wage rate in ethnic minority dominant provinces in 2014 has been MNT 579,000 that is lower than the corresponding figure (MNT 612,000) for less dominant provinces. The women wages have increased in 2015 where the rate of increase has been 2.95 per cent for ethnic dominant and just over 3 per cent for non-ethnic dominant provinces.

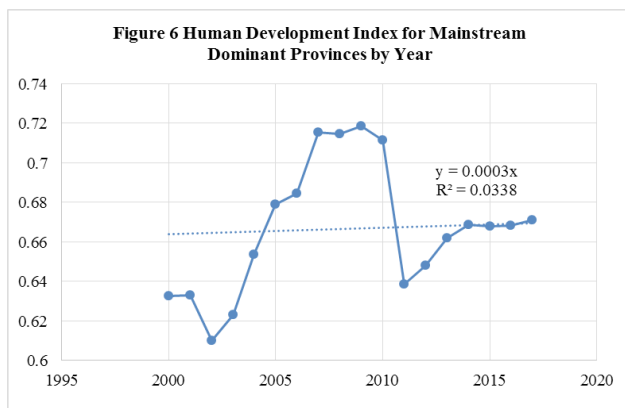
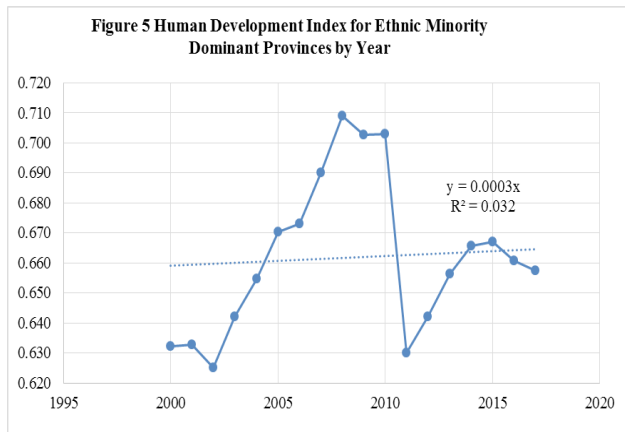
The gender gap in wage rate is higher (MNT 57,000 in 2014 and MNT 50,000 in 2015) for non-ethnic whilst it is lower (MNT 700 in 2014 and MNT 8,000 in 2015) for ethnic minority provinces. The ethnic minority people are better off with regard to gender gap although they are worse off with regard to wage rate itself.

Human Development Index

The HDI data covering the period 2000 to 2017 for two sets of provinces are graphically presented in Figure 5 and 6. The HDI curves for the tested period are vastly variable for both ethnic minority-dominant and non-dominant provinces. A trend line has been fitted for the data set which demonstrates a weak fit (low R²). The gradient of two curves is identical (0.003). A coefficient of Variability (CV) test was applied to assess the extent of variability. The CV is

3.86 percent for the ethnic minority-dominant provinces whilst it is greater (4.96%) for the non-dominant provinces. This reveals a larger variation in HDI for non-dominant provinces whereas the index is somewhat consistent for the ethnic minority dominant provinces.

For better interpretation of data, the average HDI is calculated for minority-dominant and non-dominant provinces. This data is presented in Figures 5 and 6. The data reveals some interesting results.



First, the average living standards (reflected by HDI) is higher for every year for the mainstream compared to ethnic-minority dominant provinces. What this says is that the living standards of ethnic minority people is lower compared to the mainstream population.

Second, the disparity in living standards between ethnic minority dominant and non-dominant provinces is consistent for all years from 2012 to 2015. The message is the higher living standards of khalkh people is maintained for all 4 years in comparison to the lower living standards of ethnic minority people, both are consistent.

Third, the trend line of HDI has been increasing for both sets of provinces at a different rate. The gradient of the trend line is higher for ethnic-

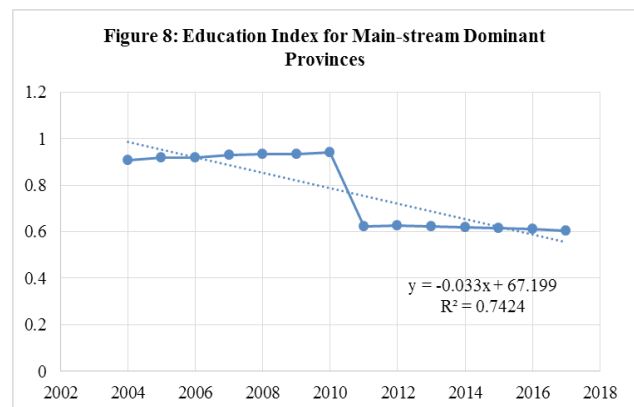
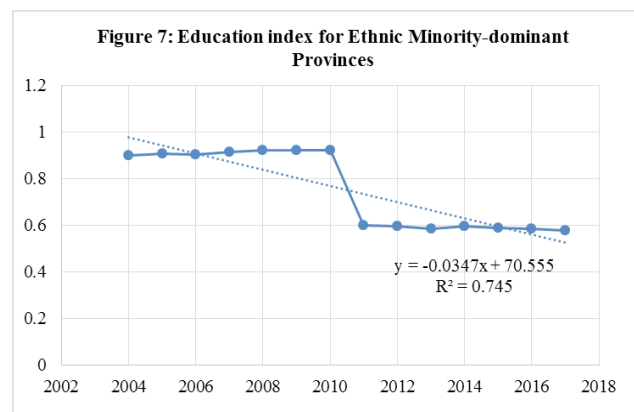
minority dominant provinces compared to non-dominant provinces. This shows that living standard improvement is higher for minority people compared to the mainstream population between 2012 to 2015.

The conclusions are that the living standards of ethnic minority people is higher than the mainstream population though the trendline shows an increase for both groups. The rate of increase is higher for ethnic minority dominant provinces compared to the mainstream population.

Education achievements

Data on educational achievement is obtained from two sources. The first source is the education index data compiled by NSO. The second source is data on educational achievement of Khalkh and Buriad people as revealed in a sample survey conducted in Khentii province. Both data sources are used to compare and contrast educational achievement by mainstream and ethnic minority people.

The education index data is available for each province of Mongolia. Such data shows the overall status of education of the people in the province. The trend line of EI for two sets of provinces are produced as Figure 7 and 8.



The trend is declining which may be due to the change in school admission age from 5 to 6 years. The shape of two trend lines are almost similar. The difference is marginal where the gradient is slightly higher for non-dominant provinces compared with ethnic minority dominant provinces.

The education facilities in general are increasing throughout the country albeit at different rates. Oyunaa(2017)states that education facilities such as dormitories and the quality of accommodation is poor in ethnic minority Aimags such as Bayan-Ulgii and Uvs. The school dormitories are outdated and the occupation rate exceeds capacity of the unit. Yet, the education index is declining over the year for which reasons are unknown.

The comparison of educational achievements between Buriad and Khalkh people in Khentii province as revealed from the results of sample survey are as follows.

The proportion of Buriad people who have achieved higher education is higher (13.9%) compared to Khalkh (9.2%). Proportion of Buriad people who have achieved technical education is higher (83%) compared to Khalkh (6.3%). The number of residents who have received education at secondary and primary education is higher for Khalkh compared to Buriad. The uneducated people are similar (4.5%) among the two ethnic groups.

The two ethnic groups do not show a difference with regard to literacy.

Vulnerability

The tourism sample survey asked households for an opinion on their vulnerability as perceived by them. Heads of households interviewed have replied whether their household is vulnerable or non-vulnerable based on four parameters. The parameters that contribute to vulnerable household are: head is elderly person, headed by a woman, head is sick or some members are disabled or the household is very poor.

Based on the four criteria, household heads themselves have classified whether or not their household is a vulnerable or non-vulnerable. The data shows that 55 per cent of Khalkh households identify as being vulnerable whilst 35 per cent of Buriad households identify as vulnerable. The differences are statistically

significant. The conclusion is that vulnerability is more among Khalkh households than among Buriad households.

The reasons for low level of vulnerability among Buriad can be explained by their hard working culture to generate food and income. Buriad's traditional style as hard-working people is acknowledged already (Hays, 2016). The same author states that unlike many other ethnic groups in Mongolia, Buriad people harvest hay for winter feeding of their animals. The business people are more common among the Buriad than the Khalkh households. The ownership and possession of household items such as refrigerators, washing machines, generators and cookers among Buriad households is greater than Khalkh and other ethnic minority households. The differences are statistically significant.

Ratio between Household income and expenditure

The comparison of household income and expenditure is an interesting subject that tells us about the disposal income. This comparison is confined to Khentii province where relevant data is available from another source. The dominant ethnic group in Khentii province is Khalkh which is the mainstream people that makes up 54 per cent of the population. The Buriad is an ethnic minority whose proportion in the province is 38 per cent of the total provincial population. Six other ethnic minority groups³ contribute to 8 per cent of the provincial population. The household income and expenditure ratio is different for the ethnic minority and the Khalkh people. The survey data reveals two different scenarios that are statistically significant. First, for Khalkh and other ethnic minority households, the ratio is smaller than one meaning their income is smaller compared to expenditure. Second, the ratio is equal to one whose income is equal to expenditure. This feature is more common among the Buriad households. Although a ratio larger than one was reported, the differences are statistically insignificant. Hence, based on the results of the survey, it is inferred that Buriad ethnic minority households are different to Khalkh and other ethnic minority households when it comes to income and expenditure ratio.

The Buriad minority people are unique in that they are hard-working people who strive to earn

³ The ethnic minority groups are: Khamnigan, Bayad, Durvud, Urainkhai and Darganga.

an income high enough to meet expenses. The hard-working nature of Buriad people is reflected in their household earnings where 70 per cent have income which is equal to or greater than their expenses. For Khalkh, the relevant data suggests that only 56 per cent belong to the same category whilst the relevant figure for other ethnic minority households is 33 per cent. This unique feature suggests that Buriad ethnic minority people's behaviour with regard to household economy is different from other ethnic groups.

The Buriad people have some unique features that stand them out from other ethnic groups. Among them are their food and beverage habits, clothing and the art. They celebrate their own unique cultural events every year. The Buriads have their own horse carts well-decorated. The Buriad bread and milk-alcohol are unique and only they master the preparation of such food.

Khalkh and other ethnic minority groups do not display similar characteristics. These groups have mixed and are well-integrated with the Mongolian society that their traditional features have disappeared over the years. However, it is to be highlighted that Buriad people have preserved their traditional features compared to Khalkh and other ethnic minorities in Khentii province. It is for future research to either prove or disprove a similar feature in other provinces inhabited by ethnic minority people.

Household income and expenditure

The household survey data for Khentii province reveals that average income for a household headed by a Khalkh person is MNT 827,000 per month compared to MNT 800,000 for a household headed by a Buriad person. However, this difference is statistically not significant. Therefore, with regard to income, there is no difference between ethnic minority and mainstream household.

The average expenditure for a Buriad household in Khentii is MNT 774,000 compared with MNT 848,000 for a Khalkh household. The difference in mean household expenditure between Buriad and Khalkh is statistically insignificant. Hence, available data suggests that there is no difference in household expenditure level for Buriad and Khalkh people.

Gender Development Index

It is to be noted that the gender inequality index

has been declining for both ethnic minority dominant and non-dominant provinces. This is in spite of several initiatives aimed at gender mainstreaming adopted by government.

It is also to be highlighted that the index is higher for ethnic minority dominant provinces compared to non-dominant provinces. The reasons for the decline in gender index and slight increase of ethnic minority dominant provinces are unknown.

Household possessions

The data for household possessions are sources from the tourism survey in Khentii province. The items possessed by Buriad and Khalkh households were compared to examine differences. Such a difference was observed in respect of 4 items namely, refrigerator, washing machine, generator and cooker. The percentage of households that are in possession of three items is found to be higher for Buriad compared to Khalkh. The proportion of Khalkh households that are in possession of generators is found to be higher. The statistics are significant at 95% level of confidence. Hence, it is to be concluded that the possession of refrigerators, cookers and washing machines is higher for Buriad households.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study compares 14 socio-economic variables between ethnic minority dominant and non-dominant provinces. The results indicate that ethnic minority-dominant provinces have larger household size, high unemployment rate, high household income, xxx. On the other hand, all above parameters are xxx for mainstream provinces. The variables included in the analyses are all related to socio-economic characteristics of people in the provinces. The provinces do not appear to have other features that influence socio-economic characteristics analysed. It is therefore concluded that xxx ethnic minority people are different from the main stream population as far as 13 variables are considered. The xx ethnic minority people incorporated in the analysis have a lower standard of living compared to the mainstream population.

The inference of the study has implications on the design and implementation of programs to improve living standards of people in ethnic minority dominant provinces. More specifically, a greater attention should be focussed on ethnic minority people compared to mainstream

people as the standards and achievements are different between them. Except for Khalkh and Buriad people, the analysis does not have household income and expenditure data for other ethnic minority people in Mongolia. This conclusion prompts the need for government and development agencies to pay a different approach in tackling living standards improvement programmes among ethnic minority people.

The conclusions of the study also throw light on the need for ethnic minority disaggregated data. Without such data, it is virtually not possible to identify living standard between different ethnic groups. For this reason, it pays to produce ethnic minority differentiated data compared to the current practice of reporting data for each province.

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