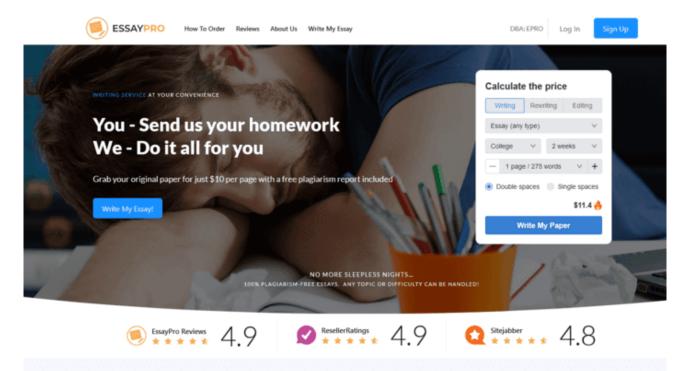
## **Modern Tibet**



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## Modern Tibet

Tibet was and is still termed by many as one of the most beautiful and culturally unique places in the world known to man. I don't have a flashy quote to start because I will be talking about a very bitter sweet aspect of China's invasion of Tibet in my paper: the economic impact on modern Tibet, and I hope that by the end of my endeavor, the reader will realize that it is sweeter than a lot of people think it is. The economic benefits of the Chinese invasion were the only good thing that came out of the bloody 'emancipation' of Tibet in 1950: it's not perfect, because nothing ever is; it's not even comparable in any way to pre-invasion Tibet, but I will show that the economic situation in Tibet now, is the need of the day and the good by far outweighs the bad.

It is imperative for the analysis of the topic to first shed some light on the economic conditions prevailing in Tibet prior to the Chinese invasion. One really interesting thing to note after reading Heinrich Harrer's Seven years in Tibet and John F. Avedon's In Exile from the Land of Snows is that both these writers give a somewhat incomplete picture of the economic situation in pre-invasion Tibet. At times, they have touched on the occupations of various people, the way of life in small villages as well as in the 'forbidden'

city', Lhasa, but they have more or less stayed away from any description of the economic structure at that time. After doing some research, a clearer picture appeared and the reality is rather striking. Since a large portion of Tibet was geographically unsuitable for any kind of use to humans, the economy was agro centric and primitive. There were basically three types of landowners in Tibet: namely the administrative class, the nobles and the monasteries. In a country where religion was the blind driving force behind everything, it wasn't astonishing to note that the landowners comprised only five percent of the total population and the rest were serfs, slaves or just vagabonds. There was even a class of serfs called Nangzam, who were solely meant to be sold and auctioned at will of the owner and even gifted to people on important occasions [9]. At least in Lhasa, one of the chief aspects of the economy was that a huge chunk of a physically capable population was earning its daily bread by begging on the streets in front of monasteries and other places of pilgrimage.

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