

Research on Educational Inequality among Students in Poverty-stricken Areas in China

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Abstract. Education in reality and the constant pursuit of equality of education, are both sides of the same problem. This article makes research on educational inequality in rural education and urban education. To sort out and explain the reasons for the existing inequality in the field of education, this article involves reasons for inequality in education in rural regions and available ways to alleviate it. The inequality in education is not that some students can attend schools and some cannot, problems in deep are much more worth being concerned about. In the study, the author finds that students in disadvantaged are mainly in different sorts of inequality, like curriculum, teacher quality, and educational investments. It leads to improper and unequal allocation of education resources, and then students in rural regions cannot have access to education in quality and generate their living environment for the next generation. Solutions to alleviate existing problems are listed in the following parts of the research, namely offering incentive pay for teachers, applying local resources in the curriculum, and offering educational programs on vocational training and guidance for disadvantaged juniors.

Keywords: Rural Regions; Educational Inequality; Disadvantaged Students.

1. Introduction

Inequality in education has been a main problem catching people's eye. Education, still, is the most important mechanism affecting moving up social levels. Since tremendous changes in the Chinese economy and society, started in the 1980s, the dependent relationship between Chinese people and education, highly linked to their future lives, has become deep [1]. For students in rural regions, the only way they achieve more is through schooling and education, to change their given lifestyle from their last generation. However, poor conditions of schooling, inability to require constant education, and parent's education and occupation made students in rural regions gain education, which is a lack of quality and equity. In a further way, limited educational backgrounds and skills make young students cover their own lives. They are likely to struggle to marry a man or woman, have a kid build their house, the live longer. The study shows that rural education is far behind urban education, and the gap between those two is becoming wider during the period of urbanization. In this way, uneven and inadequate development of education and the following problems caused the number of rural people, distrusting in rural schools, to increase.

This paper involves research on the inequality education of disadvantaged students in rural regions. The research method applied in this article is a method of document study. This paper uses the method of literature analysis to find out the nature and status of inequality in education in mountainous areas through the research of collected, identified, and collated documents, and on this basis, it further expands the reasons for educational inequality. The countermeasures are put forward to provide diversified ideas for the single study of educational inequality in China.

2. Status Quo

2.1. Teachers Receive Unfair and Insufficient Treatment

Rural primary schools refer to all schools located in rural areas that are usually suitable for children aged 6-12 to receive education, including those under central and local jurisdiction. Primary school is a formal school institution in China that implements primary education, and it is the beginning and foundation of basic education. In May 1985, the "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Reform of the Education System" proposed that it is completely necessary for China to regard the implementation of nine-year compulsory education as a major event related to the improvement of national quality and the prosperity of the country, mobilize the whole society and people of all ethnic groups in the country, and make the greatest efforts to implement it step by step.

Compared to Australia, the New South Wales government released the Rural Remote Human Resources Strategy in 2017, which arranged the official fund to develop education in rural regions, especially about aspects like teachers' treatment and incentives. It also offers bonuses to teachers who have worked for years in disadvantaged areas in New South Wales [2].

2.2. Exams-oriented Curriculum Becomes Major Education Mode in Rural Regions

According to a study, schools in rural regions are considered the only party which have the right to set curriculum for students, and local authorities have no way to participate in the process of course designing [2]. These places are rich in country culture and local resources. However, schools there do not combine with local cultures during designing their courses. Instead, these schools focus on curricular responses to exam-focused systems, which is the key to helping students enter better schools in the future.

In fact, helping students enter better schools is the goal for most schools in rural regions. It is highly related to a traditional opinion of Chinese people, Education is not the only way to be successful, but the best way to be successful. People consider receiving education and passing exams are the way to gain success in life. To follow the opinion and match those parents, schools in rural regions emphasize their education resources as an exams-oriented mode. They add classes and homework in basic subjects, send students to summer camps in other schools, and hold more exams to increase students' average scores.

The exams-oriented curriculum is a double-sided thing. It helps students a lot who have the ability to enter higher levels of education, and students who cannot follow this mode fail to achieve more in school. According to the study of Cao, schools in rural regions is a cultural center in a certain region, and bring people the satisfaction of belonging [2]. But, students falling behind others lose their sense of identity in rural cultural context, also within the sense of belonging. All these are not beneficial to their development in careers and education.

2.3. Low Returns of Education for Rural Students

According to a study, students in urban areas have a better academic performance in University Entrance Exams, compared to students in rural regions. Families in rural regions, with poor income, are much more likely to follow their children's choice, whether choosing higher levels of education or dropping out of school. In fact, most children are less willing to gain an education, since schools there involve low-quality education, disadvantaged positions, and low passing rates to good schools. If children choose to drop out or shut their education, parents in these families are likely to agree with them. Because parents themselves are uneducated and did not perform well in schools, they cannot see the benefits and returns of an educated person. In this way, they do not offer education resources for children, instead, will let their children start to work or do farm jobs.

In a further way, students, who performing not that well in exams, are likely to go to a private college. During the study of research on tuition costs in private colleges, private colleges in China lack

educational funding from the government. In the future, tuition fees will still be the main source of funding for China's private universities [3]. In this way, the tuition fees of these colleges are much higher than public universities. Families, especially those with students performing not that well in exams, find it hard to afford their children to go to school, and even cannot apply for any student loans [3]. Eventually, these students are considered as not worthy to be given more opportunities for quality education.

2.4. Parents Make Unfairness and Discrimination in Choosing Which Child Is Worthy of Gaining an Education

Considering the fact of rural families, it happens that parents make unfair and discriminate in choosing which child is worthy to gain an education. According to a study, parents with more than 2 children are likely to choose to invest more in just one child, to some extent. The number of children in the family does have a considerable impact on the investment in family education, and has become an important influencing factor in family education investment [4].

Comparatively speaking, when the family has difficulties, three-child families have a more serious gender and age bias in education investment and therefore make irrational choices. Its choice is more influenced by emotions, among which the gender structure of children also plays a role; Families with fewer children are more receptive to special investments than other families when making them. All this caused an inequality competition between children in one family, they make more efforts in academic things in order to gain their parents' preference [4]. But, families, especially those with poor income, are limited to supporting all children to achieve more. In this way, they still choose just one or two children to gain a better education, and another child will be in a disadvantaged position in education. Eventually, these children without a better way to gain education will achieve less, compared to their siblings in the family. It is also a kind of educational inequality.

3. Solutions

3.1. Offering Incentives for Permanent and Temporary Teachers

It is efficient to design a special promotion scheme for teachers who have been working in rural and remote areas. It is highly recommended to release incentives policies for teachers, to attract and retain permanent and temporary teachers in eligible and remote schools.

Teachers, who have worked up to 5 years or more, are available to apply for their Retention benefit. It is an annual payment and is paid in June or November each year, being up to the local government [5].

If someone, is recruited as a temporary teacher in especially remote areas, is available to gain a fast track to a permanent position at the same school. Then, teachers who transfer to permanent positions also have access to retention benefits.

In a further way, incentives for permanent and temporary teachers give schools in remote regions a way to meet local students' needs. Additional policies include incentives to attract and retain quality teachers, executives, and staff to rural schools. Rural and Remote Rental Subsidy and Rural and Remote Education Subsidy will be given to teachers' families. Not only staff working in schools but also their family and children are being considered in it [5].

3.2. Apply Local Resources in the Curriculum

Although, it is essential for students to gain basic skills and master subject knowledge. Besides putting subject knowledge and exams in the first place, local resources are a good choice which has been ignored. Although it is essential for students to gain basic skills and master subject knowledge. Besides putting subject knowledge and exams in the first place, local resources are a good choice which has been ignored [6].

Speaking of local resources, adequate animal and plant resources, natural scenic spots, customs, and culture are the basis for students' inquiry and exploration. While enriching students' experience of extracurricular life, it also guides students to construct knowledge and cultivate inquiry skills and accelerates students' integration into rural life. Also, these learning projects are in a wilder and deeper level of basic knowledge. In the process of curriculum development, it is necessary to dilute the subjectivity of chemistry, identify local resources and rural development topics as the theme of school-based curriculum, and arrange them into curriculum knowledge with local characteristics and interdisciplinarity [7]. This requires curriculum developers to pay full attention to the culture, ecology, and social customs of the countryside, in order to enhance students' understanding of the countryside and cultivate students' local identity.

In this way, students there are willing to research and develop their hometown, and they eventually gain a sense of identity and more opportunities for careers and education.

3.3. Offering Vocational Education Chances for Disadvantaged Students in 16

Helping young people to gain work experience is another way for students who are in disadvantaged positions. Progress on this front is particularly important for students on work-related learning, like providing 16-18 year-olds with work opportunities is the top priority [8]. It is mainly about two parts, understanding and experiencing the workplace, the value of money, and setting priorities.

To strengthen the system, governments are not the only party that could deal with existing problems and drawbacks. Local organizations should cooperate with education departments and officials, working together to offer quality courses with industry experience [9]. These courses are taught by properly qualified staff with industry experience, with adequate industry resources, and students are achieving proper standards. In this way, students who are qualified for work in the workplace could gain internships and payments. Also, all this offers them another choice to develop their education and career.

3.4. Offering Training and Support for Teachers in Rural

Local governments in rural regions find cooperation with other local organizations and universities to develop education in local areas [9]. These ones offer higher levels of teaching training to teachers in rural regions, and leadership courses of high quality. In this way, teachers who are teaching and living in disadvantaged areas also have access to quality training and professional support in teaching [10]. Gradually, teachers will be treated well mentally and physically.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, the study researches inequality in education between education in urban and education in rural, by focusing on several facts and reasons for inequality in education. They are namely teachers receive unfair and insufficient treatment, Exams-oriented curricula become a major education mode in rural regions, low returns of education for rural students, and parents make unfairness and discrimination in choosing which child is worthy to gain education. There are several ways to solve those problems mentioned above, namely offering incentives for permanent and temporary teachers, applying local resources in the curriculum, offering more chances for disadvantaged students, and offering training and support for teachers in rural.

The overall picture emerging from this study is that there is a significant inequality in education in the current condition of remote and eligible areas, and an apparent shortcoming in schools, teachers, curriculum, and family-mindedness.

A promising agenda for future research would be to develop novel research designs to identify and understand the complex interplay among not only the process of schooling experience in rural and different forms of inequality but also the remarkable educational opinions shifts in China.

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