

The current situation of educational equity in Chongzhou City, Sichuan Province since China's reform and opening up

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Abstract. Since China started its reform and opening-up, there has been progress in making education fairer. This study looks at Chongzhou City, Sichuan Province, to see the successes and problems of education fairness policies. It uses reviews of studies, policy analysis, and data to find key issues like unfair resource sharing, teacher movement, and gaps in education quality between cities and villages. Good changes include better rural school buildings, fewer dropouts, and teacher rotation programs. However, city schools still have more resources, better teaching, and better results for students than village schools. This shows there is still a need for focused plans. Suggested fixes are improving village schools, encouraging teachers to work in villages, giving more digital learning tools, and checking how policies are working. Fixing these problems in Chongzhou can help solve similar issues in other areas and support education fairness in China.

Keywords: education fairness, Chongzhou City, China, city-village gap, village education

1. Background

Since the implementation of China's reform and opening-up policy in 1978, China has achieved remarkable results in promoting equality in education based on a series of national policies such as the Compulsory Education Law (Revised in 2021), China's Education Modernization 2035 (2019), and the Rural Teachers Support Plan (2020-2025). Although some achievements have been made, difficulties remain in narrowing the disparities in education implementation, especially in less developed areas. This study focuses on Chongzhou, an important city in Sichuan Province, and aims to analyze the shortcomings of the city's implementation of the education equality policy. Through the analysis of the uneven distribution of resources, the loss of professional talents, the fluctuation of education level and other problems, the differences in the process of policy implementation are revealed. The results of this study aim to provide practical strategies for promoting educational equity in Chongzhou and other regions with similar characteristics.

2. Research question

This study aims to explore three core topics:

- What measures have the central government and the Ministry of Education taken to promote equality in education, and how have these measures been implemented and produced practical results in Chongzhou?
- What is the status quo of educational equality development in Chongzhou?
- How do historical evolution and policy implementation affect educational justice in Chongzhou? What strategies are proposed for future optimization? This study aims to explore the achievements and difficulties Chongzhou has encountered in promoting education balance.

3. Methods

3.1. Literature and policy analysis

By collecting and reviewing 40 academic papers and policy documents, this research aims to explore the current situation of educational equity in Chongqing. The core issues of academic exploration cover the policy adjustment of educational equity in China, the uneven distribution of educational resources between regions, the application of digital technology in the field of education, the difference of educational resources between urban and rural areas, and the effect of teacher career mobility on educational equity. The research focuses investigation on teacher mobility and urban-rural inequality [1]. In addition, the research also covers the recently issued policy documents of Chongzhou City, focusing on resource allocation, teacher training, infrastructure construction, digital education promotion, and comprehensive educational practices [2]. These documents reveal the localization strategy adopted by Chongzhou in implementing the national education policy, as well as specific difficulties encountered in promoting educational equity [3]. Combining academic achievements with local policy evaluations, this exploration aims to present a comprehensive picture of Chongzhou's educational equity practices and to analyze their implications for other regions with similar backgrounds.

3.2. Data collection and analysis

In 2020, Chongzhou Municipal Bureau of Statistics conducted a survey in 15 townships, involving a total of 719,346 people, and analyzed their education levels. The data analysis and visualization process in this paper was done with the help of Microsoft Excel, a commonly used tool for processing and presenting data. Through the use of Excel tools, the data were organized and basic statistical analysis, and it was converted into the form of a bar chart to show the distribution of education level in Chongzhou. Through graphical means, the differences are clearly displayed at the level of education, so that the information is easier to digest.

4. Results

4.1. Policies of the central government and the ministry of education to promote educational equity and their implementation and effects in Chongzhou City

Since the implementation of policies such as the Compulsory Education Law (Revised in 2021), China's Education Modernization 2035 (2019), and the Rural Teacher Support Plan (2020-2025), Chongzhou's level of educational equity has improved significantly. In the time span from 2019 to 2023, investments have been made in the infrastructure of rural schools, benefiting more than 8,000 students and giving them access to better quality educational resources. These investments are mainly reflected in the updating of information technology and the improvement of the learning environment. The shortage of teachers in rural areas has been alleviated by implementing a job rotation program and providing financial incentives, and the proportion has been reduced by 12 percent. In addition, the Education Poverty Alleviation Plan in 2022 has effectively reduced the dropout rate of low-income students by 15 percent. Despite these achievements, challenges such as long-term teacher retention and disparities in outcomes remain, requiring continued localization strategies and improved policies.

4.2. Status quo of educational equity in Chongzhou

The current situation of education equity development in Chongzhou City shows that there are significant imbalances and challenges in resource allocation, teacher allocation and overall education quality.

4.2.1. Distribution of education level in Chongzhou City

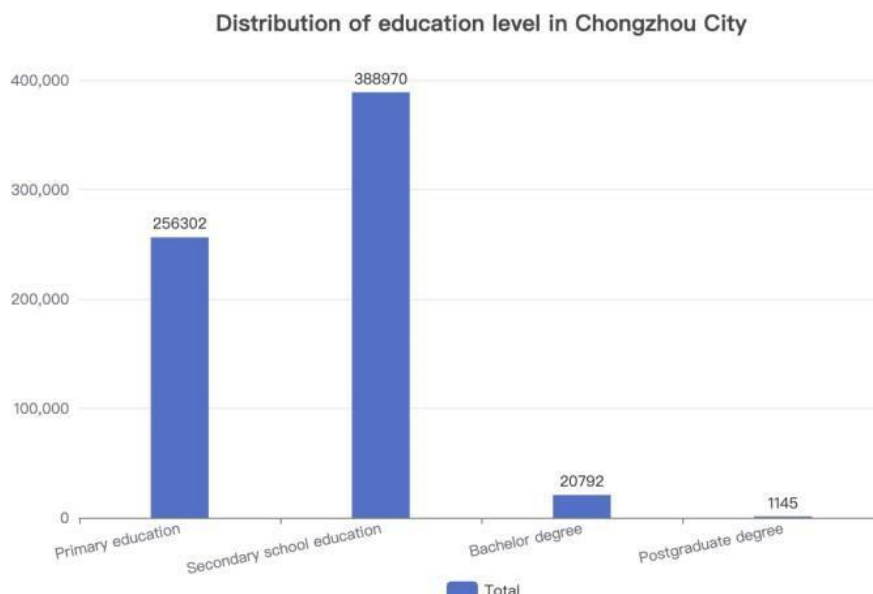


Figure 1. The education level of Chongzhou city shows certain distribution characteristics.

The respondents were divided into four categories: 25,302 had received basic education, 388,970 had completed secondary education, 20,792 had obtained undergraduate degrees and 1,145 had obtained postgraduate degrees (see Figure 1). This set of information gives a comprehensive picture of Chongzhou's layout in terms of education, revealing the overall level of education in the region.

4.2.2. Distribution and differences of educational resources

Chongzhou's educational resources are unevenly distributed between urban and rural areas, as well as between different regions within the city. Urban educational institutions benefit from well-developed infrastructure, cutting-edge teaching tools and a wealth of digital learning materials, while rural schools often suffer from outdated equipment, limited technology and lack of funds. These differences have led to a widening gap between urban and rural areas, making it difficult for students in poor areas to enjoy high-quality educational resources.

4.2.3. Teacher allocation and education quality

Teacher allocation has always been the core issue that Chongzhou's educational equality has been challenged. Urban schools are generally more attractive to experienced and highly qualified educators because they offer better working conditions, higher salaries, and more opportunities for professional development. In contrast, educational institutions in rural areas often lack experienced teaching staff, which increases the number of students per teacher, which affects the overall improvement of teaching standards. These imbalances have a direct impact on students' academic performance and long-term educational achievement.

4.2.4. School-level and student-level indicators

Within educational institutions, there are clear differences between the hardware of the infrastructure and curriculum planning. City schools have state-of-the-art facilities and a wealth of curriculum options covering extra-curricular activities that contribute to well-rounded development. Rural schools often face a lack of resources, which has led to a narrowing of the scope of educational services. At the student level, access to higher education, enrollment rates and access to schools all show heterogeneity. Rural students face more challenges in their transition to high school and university, and targeted measures are urgently needed to address these inequities.

4.3. Policy suggestions for equitable development of education in the future

In order to promote educational equity, Chongzhou government has implemented a series of innovative policies:

4.3.1. Optimize the allocation of resources

Build a data-centric resource allocation mechanism to ensure balanced access to educational materials, funds and digital infrastructure. By prioritizing schools in poorly resourced areas, such a strategy would help to reduce disparities in educational resources between urban and rural areas.

4.3.2. Promote volunteer programs

Implement targeted educator mobility programs aimed at attracting experienced teachers to teach in schools in rural areas. Providing incentives such as housing support, space for career growth and paths to advancement can encourage teachers to teach in areas with relatively poor educational resources, thereby improving the quality of education in those areas.

4.3.3. Infrastructure and curriculum upgrading

Improve the hardware conditions of rural educational institutions, promote the modernization process, and achieve the standardization of the curriculum system, thereby ensuring that students in Chongzhou can break free from regional constraints and obtain equal educational opportunities. In addition, by fully utilizing digital educational technology, the issue of resource scarcity in rural areas can be effectively alleviated. By providing high-quality courses, virtual classrooms, and online teaching resources, students in remote areas can significantly enhance their learning outcomes.

4.3.4. Student support mechanisms

Establish scholarship programs and financial aid systems to alleviate the financial burden of poor students. These mechanisms can promote students' chances of admission and further education, especially those from rural areas and low-income families.

4.3.5. Monitoring and evaluation

Construct a comprehensive observation system to monitor developments in the field of educational justice. Core performance indicators, such as the ratio of new students to new students, the relative number of teachers to students, and trends in academic achievement within the region, should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of policy implementation and make appropriate adjustments accordingly.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Significant improvement in educational equity

Since the reform and opening up, China has made great progress in promoting educational equity, especially in the areas of universal basic education, improving regional resource distribution, and comprehensively improving the quality of education. In response to the call of the national policy, Chengdu has gradually achieved a remarkable balance of basic education resources between urban and rural areas after years of efforts. The successive implementation of policies and measures has greatly expanded the opportunities to receive education, and the basic rights and interests of urban and rural residents in education have been significantly improved. These victories have not only laid a solid foundation for the progress of education in Chengdu, but also provided valuable experience and lessons for the rest of the country.

5.2. Current deficiencies

Although Chengdu has made remarkable achievements in promoting educational equity, there are still many difficulties in the actual operation. The deepening of educational inequity is mainly influenced by the following factors: uneven distribution of educational resources between urban and rural areas, improvement in the allocation of teachers to be strengthened, and significant differences in educational outcomes [4]. Compared with urban institutions, educational facilities in remote areas are still significantly deficient in terms of hardware, which affects the balanced distribution of educational resources. Rural areas have a serious problem of teacher turnover, which leads to instability in the ranks of teachers, which affects the continuous improvement of education quality, and increases the difference between urban and rural education quality. There are still significant differences between urban and rural students in terms of enrollment rate and access to quality educational resources, and the right to education of some groups has not been fully guaranteed.

5.3. Direction and suggestions for improvement

In order to further improve the fairness of education in Chengdu, more targeted improvement measures need to be implemented in the future policy implementation and practice. In the formulation and implementation of policies, special attention should be paid to the differentiated needs of different regions and groups, and precise adjustments should be made to effectively reduce the imbalance in the distribution of urban and rural education resources. At the same time, it is particularly important to build a reasonable teacher mobility system, which can be achieved by enhancing the welfare of rural teachers and strengthening professional growth support, so as to attract outstanding teachers to teach in remote areas, so as to cope with the loss of rural teachers. In addition, information technology should be made full use of to promote the extensive sharing of high-quality educational resources through online education platforms and smart campus construction, so as to provide more learning opportunities and resource support for students in remote areas. At the same time, a fair evaluation and supervision system for education should be set up. We should keep tracking the effectiveness of various policies and make precise adjustments to the policies guided by the data.

The practice of promoting educational equity in Chengdu has proved that appropriate policy support and practical measures can effectively reduce the gap of educational resources between urban and rural areas and improve the access rate of educational opportunities. In order to achieve the real equality of education, we must continue to make long-term struggle. In future exploration, we must adhere to the concept of people-oriented development [5]. In the context of globalization the field of education has encountered many challenges and opportunities.

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