

# ***An Investigation of the Differences in Education Between China's Urban and Rural Areas from the Standpoint of Educational Equity***

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**Abstract:** At present, there is a significant difference between urban and rural education in China, which is not only reflected in the quality of education but also family education, education concept, family capital, allocation and utilization of educational resources, etc. Under the influence of various factors, the current situation of rural education is not optimistic, and the difference between rural education and urban education is even increasing. In addition to effectively promoting the development of rural education, achieving a balanced development of education and narrowing the gap in regional education is also conducive to achieving educational equity and harmonious development of education in the whole society. Starting from the current situation of the urban-rural education gap in China, this paper examines the impact of the urban-rural economic, cultural and policy gap, and proposes specific measures to reduce the gap. These include balancing the input of urban and rural education, enhancing rural education resources with the aid of information technology, and enacting government policies that support rural education.

**Keywords:** Educational equity, urban and rural education, economy

## **1. Introduction**

In today's society, educational equity has always been a hot topic. Educational equity is an important part of social equity, which is related to the development of opportunity and quality of life for each individual. However, in reality, the distribution of educational resources is not balanced, especially between urban and rural areas, and this difference is more obvious. The gap between urban and rural education in China has been a matter of great concern and has attracted widespread attention. The difference in education is not only related to the imbalance in school infrastructure, teachers, teaching resources, etc., but also reflected in students' learning opportunities, education quality and development opportunities. Due to the imbalance of regional development and the difference in resource allocation, the gap between urban and rural education development still exists. This disparity hurts the development and stability of the future society, and also poses a serious challenge to the realization of educational equity.

From the perspective of educational equity, this paper aims to deeply analyze the disparity between urban and rural education in China, explore its causes and influences, and put forward corresponding countermeasures and suggestions. First of all, the current situation of urban and rural education

differences will be sorted out and analyzed, and the basic conditions of schools in different regions and the allocation of educational resources will be investigated. Secondly, from the policy, system, investment and other aspects, this paper analyzes the causes of the differences in urban and rural education, to deeply explore the root of the problem. Then, it will focus on the impact of urban and rural education differences on the growth of students and social development, to face the problem and reveal the impact of social inequity. Finally, the government, schools, society from all aspects, put forward the corresponding countermeasures and suggestions, seek to solve the differences between urban and rural education-specific ways.

Through a thorough examination of the differences between urban and rural education, this paper seeks to raise public awareness of the need for educational equity, encourage the wise use of educational resources, and work toward the balanced development of both types of education. At the same time, it also hopes to provide some reference for the construction of educational equity in China, promote the understanding and thinking of all sectors of society on the issue of educational equity, and make unremitting efforts to achieve the goal of educational equity.

## **2. Current Situation of Urban and Rural Differences in Education**

Educational equity is an important guarantee for promoting the equitable development of society. However, the difference between urban and rural education in China is obvious, which seriously hinders the realization of educational equity in the whole society. There are several factors contributing to China's growing educational divide.

### **2.1. Education Quality**

Teachers are one of the main subjects of education and are related to the results of education, so one of the key reasons for the difference between urban and rural education is the difference between teachers. The differences in teachers are reflected in the number of teachers, the quality of teachers, and the strength of teaching.

In terms of the number of teachers, with the continuous reduction of the number of rural schools and the continuous improvement of the treatment of teachers in urban schools, the loss of rural teachers is increasing. As a result, it is common for one teacher to teach multiple courses and one teacher to teach multiple grade courses in rural areas, which is why the quality of rural education cannot be guaranteed [1].

In terms of teacher quality, first of all, school teachers in rural areas have lower academic qualifications than those in urban areas. Most of them graduated from professional normal colleges or other universities of normal majors, received professional teaching training, and mastered a wealth of teaching methods. On the contrary, most of the teachers in rural areas have low academic qualifications and have not received professional training to be able to work quickly, which is not conducive to the improvement of teaching quality [2]. Secondly, substantial backbone teachers are lost. A large number of backbone teachers in rural areas continue to be lost to urban schools in the face of the current situation that cities recruit a large number of capable teachers and provide them with generous benefits. The continuous flow of backbone teachers leads to a large mobility of teachers in rural schools, and it is impossible to establish a stable teacher team. This series of circumstances aggravated the problem, In turn, the gap in education in China's regions has widened.

### **2.2. Families Differences**

Family is the key to the growth of children, under the influence of different educational concepts, children's education process is different, access to education opportunities is different. The difference in family education has a non-negligible impact on the overall difference between urban and rural

education. Many factors such as family input, educational concepts and parents' expectations lead to the inequality of rural children's access to education.

### **2.2.1. Family Involvement**

According to some sociological studies, family investment is an important reason for the inheritance of class status, and families with higher socioeconomic status tend to invest more in their children's education [3]. Family input includes not only economic input, but also time input.

In terms of economic investment, the number of families with higher social and economic status in the city is generally higher than that in the countryside, so the economic investment of family education received by children in the city is much higher than that of children in the countryside. In this way, urban children in the already superior teacher environment, also can get more abundant educational resources.

In terms of time investment, relevant research shows that communication between parents and children also plays an important role in the improvement of children's grades. However, in rural education, as a large number of parents go out to work, the education problems of left-behind children are increasingly serious [4]. Most left-behind children are supervised by grandparents and relatives. Due to the lack of parents' accompaniment and supervision, parents' participation in rural education is generally low, and family education is more likely to appear blank. A review of parental participation in family education in an urban environment. As parents themselves have a higher level of educational resources, they can provide their children with more abundant educational resources in the process of participating in their children's education, which will eventually transform into the advantages of their children's education [4].

Thus, the disparities in family input are caused by the economic disparities between urban and rural areas as well as the socioeconomic status of parents. At the same time, these disparities also exacerbate the educational area differences in China.

### **2.2.2. Educational Philosophy and Parental Expectations**

In the study of rural social education concepts, Xie Ailei uses qualitative research methods to explore and find that "no hope of studying" can more accurately summarize rural residents' understanding of school values [4]. In rural China, under the influence of traditional education concepts in rural China, rural parents and children have low educational expectations. As a large number of rural parents go out for work, they have little spare time to care about their children's studies and usually adopt a laissez-faire attitude towards their children's studies, which further affects the rural children's learning attitude and educational attainment level.

### **2.3. Differences in the Allocation and Utilization**

The development of education often needs to rely on advanced educational resources. In the age of information education, the traditional teaching mode of chalkboard textbooks can no longer meet the learning demands of contemporary students. Urban schools usually have better educational resources, such as advanced teaching equipment and spacious campus environments, while rural schools often have backward infrastructure, including insufficient physical resources such as on-site school buildings and teaching equipment. This difference in resource allocation leads to inequality in educational opportunities and quality for urban and rural students [5].

At the same time, rural and urban teachers differ greatly in their understanding and application of the role of educational facilities. Even with the help of the government, they cannot make full use of the teaching facilities, which hurts the education of rural children.

### **3. Reasons Analysis**

#### **3.1. The Impact of Economic Disparity**

The difference in economic development is the root cause of the difference between urban and rural education in China.

The disparity in various forms of schooling and supporting services between them is a result of the differences in economic development between these two locations. Research has indicated that public properties have better spatial equality in both urban and rural areas than do larger or more commercial properties, like universities, educational and training institutions, general hospitals, etc. The fact that there is still a noticeable disparity in the quality of services between urban and rural areas is evident to everyone, especially given that urban areas have roughly equal facilities while rural areas have unequal facilities [6].

#### **3.2. The Influence of Urban and Rural Cultural and Policy Differences**

Relevant studies show that urban dwellers are more likely to enjoy the right to education than rural dwellers [7]. Urban areas have developed economic levels and high cultural levels. Most urban residents have received good education, pay more attention to children's education, and can provide good educational resources for their children, laying a good foundation for their children's development. On the contrary, rural areas have a lower economic development level and relatively backward cultural development, and rural residents are generally busy making a living. To ensure the most basic survival, they have no time to pay attention to their children's studies, so rural families and children themselves have low expectations for education, and the disparity between education in urban and rural areas is further exacerbated by this cultural divide [8].

The amount of resources available for urban and rural education as well as how these sectors are developing are impacted by the government's differing investment policies in these funds. Income disparities will directly affect the amount of money families invest in children's education, and urban families have relatively more income and more funds to invest in children's education [1].

### **4. Measures to Narrow the Gap**

Eliminating the gap between urban and rural schooling has become a major priority in today's society since, as was previously noted, economic progress may cause it to widen even further.

#### **4.1. Balancing Education Investment**

The difference between urban and rural educational resource input is an important factor affecting the equity of urban and rural education. The lack of rural education funds leads to backward hardware facilities, so teachers can not use advanced teaching technology to teach, and students can not receive advanced scientific education. Secondly, the lack of education funds can not guarantee the most basic salary for rural teachers, which is more likely to cause the loss of rural teachers, and it is difficult to attract high-quality talents to enter rural areas for comprehensive education improvement.

Therefore, the government should balance urban and rural investment in education. Increase investment in rural education, improve rural teaching equipment and teaching environment. At the same time, actively improve the salary and welfare benefits of rural teachers, to attract high-quality talents to enter the countryside, improve the education environment in the countryside, and enhance the enthusiasm of rural families and students, to narrow the gap between urban and rural education.

## 4.2. Improving Rural Education Resources with the Help of Information Technology

In recent years, information technology has been gradually introduced into the field of education, and the use of information technology to promote the equity of educational resources has become one of the important measures.

First of all, the development of information technology is based on various information infrastructures. It includes the network, facilities and learning environment needed to support information-based teaching. Secondly, the popularization of digital learning resources is a guarantee to promote the continuous development of information technology in education. Digital learning resources include not only students' learning resources, but also teachers' learning resources. Students can use digital resources, such as MOOCs, online classrooms, and other digital education resources, to promote the sharing of teaching resources, so that urban and rural students can obtain high-quality teaching. Teachers can use the digital resources of teaching and research to enhance their teaching technology improve teaching quality, and constantly narrow the difference [9].

## 4.3. Policy Assistance

Government policy support is also a crucial component in achieving educational fairness and reducing educational disparity.

First of all, the government ought to spend more money on rural education, improve the infrastructure and teaching resources of rural schools, and ensure that rural students can receive good education. Secondly, the government can formulate relevant welfare policies to attract excellent teachers to teach in rural areas, strengthen the communication and training between urban and rural teachers, and improve the education level and teaching ability of teachers [10]. Therefore, the government should strengthen the management and supervision of education, ensure the rational allocation and use of educational resources, and establish an effective evaluation system to monitor and evaluate the teaching quality of schools and teachers. The comprehensive implementation of these measures can effectively narrow the gap in education equity.

The government needs to pay attention to the coordination of education and other relevant policies to promote comprehensive social development.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper examines the differences in education between China's urban and rural areas from the standpoint of educational equity. The differences in the quality, investment, philosophy, and teachers of urban and rural education are the key issues of education equity in China. The achievement of educational fairness in China has been somewhat impacted by the uneven development of urban and rural schooling. The disparity between urban and rural education can be effectively closed by encouraging the balanced growth of both. To avoid impeding the advancement of urban education, the government must continuously improve three areas: policy, economy, and culture. Additionally, it must provide greater support and assistance to rural areas.

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