

# ***Understanding the Differences in Educational Resources between Rural and Urban Female in China***

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**Abstract:** China has a long history of agriculture. After the economy developed, coastal cities gradually developed. However, in the vast territory, there still exist some rural areas that rely on mainly agricultural production. The development of each place is not balanced. In this context, the urban-rural gap was created. This was accompanied by disparities in geographic location, industrial patterns, and population density. Those differences bring many imbalances. Education and gender equality have been several issues that have received strong attention from society. The question of whether there is greater gender inequality in the context of unequal educational resources comes out. This essay attempts to comprehend the disparity in educational opportunities between Chinese women living in rural and urban areas. Researchers define the problem related to economic development, some related system and policies, social factors, and so on. They find out that gender inequality in rural is more obvious and serious. It is influenced by economic differences, government support, family, culture, and so on. Also, there is a cycle between the problems and impacts. These economic issues, among others, lead to unequal access to education for women, and as a result, the economic gap is exacerbated. Therefore, more help should be invested in rural education resources. Some corresponding laws also need to be enacted or improved to help.

**Keywords:** Gender Inequality, Education, Urban-rural disparity

## **1. Introduction**

The issue of equality of educational resources is a topic that has been of the world's attention. It exists in many countries and regions that are relatively backward in development. What is relatively little known is that in China, the problem of unequal educational resources in the southwest still exists. Especially there is a spatial heterogeneity of human and physical geography in those places [1].

In a similar vein, despite recent advancements in our nation's understanding of gender equality, the issue of gender inequality in education persists. The definition of gender equality in education is that males and females should have the same chance and treatment in gaining educational opportunities and corresponding employment opportunities. All people of both genders have the right to education and are equally empowered through the education process [2]. So, gender equality in education is a very important issue. In many large, highly developed cities, this gender inequality in education would appear to be less of a problem under strict regulation. However, the researcher believes it is still likely to exist in some unnoticeable way. Especially in less developed regions, boys

are given priority in upbringing due to traditional attitudes, traditional labor division patterns, lack of social security systems, and poverty. This exposes rural women to a greater lack of educational resources[3].

Researchers highlight some of the data that will be used to monitor and quantify education resources in the China Education Monitoring and Poverty Statistics Index System, which was issued by the Ministry of Education in 2020. The completion rate of primary and secondary education, the typical age of students, the percentage of instructors who are qualified to teach, the average wage of teachers, and other factors will all be examined in this study[4]. To quantify the equity of resource distribution for research purposes, these data discrepancies will be associated with gender disparities and rural-urban differences.

Based on the unequal distribution of educational resources between urban and rural areas in China, this essay will investigate the difference in access to resources for education between urban and rural females. Researchers will read the available literature in the first section to identify the issue of continuing gender disparities in schooling between rural and urban locations.

In the second part, researchers will try to determine the factors that affect gender inequality in those places. There are going to be three branches. First is the policies related to Residence registration System, Nine-year compulsory education in China will be studied. Second is the factors related to social economic, faculty ratio, and some infrastructure configuration. The third is the social and cultural influences. Also, the interrelationship between those factors will be studied too.

The paper uses the literature review to analyze those questions. References will be drawn from various existing literature, online Q&A resources, national policies and development reports, etc. Researchers mainly focus on whether rural females are correspondingly experiencing more serious gender inequality because they are in less developed areas, and what the implications of this inequality are for the development of those females in rural area, and even for the development of the rural education system as a whole. The purpose of this paper is to explore the existence of greater gender inequality in rural area. Through a nuanced analysis, these results will show the existing problems and provide some suggestions to solve them accordingly.

## 2. Literature Review

Equality cannot be defined easily. Some people think that everyone should be treated equally, but some others think that people should treat some unequal people, for example, those with a disability or vulnerable people, in a different way. In general, the concept of equality is everyone has an equal chance to gain what they want. In the restricted sense of removing obstacles that hinder people from performing to the best of their ability, this can help make "unequal" equal[5]. Women will be a little weaker in innate physical fitness than men. Therefore, appropriate measures need to be used to prevent women from being disadvantaged in society. In the case of *Muller v. State of Oregon*, justice Brewer delivered the opinion of the Court that there are differences in the physical structure, abilities, and functions of men and women. These differences justify the legislation and the hope that the amount of law will be more than sufficient to avoid or compensate for the burdens that exist for the weaker party[5]. Thus, under the topic of gender, inequality can be defined as the inability to get the same opportunities as other groups under the specific influence of that gender. The right to education is one of the most fundamental rights and opportunities. Therefore, having the same educational opportunities and access to resources as the other gender is the topic of interest in this study. It has different manifestations.

The survey found that the difference in gender expectations for children's education, a lack of gender sensitivity in school settings, differences in how family education resources are divided up, and variations in the number of years of education for male and female students are the primary ways that gender inequality in China's rural education sector manifests itself.[3]. China has a long history

of being a patriarchal society. This history has influenced the perception of women's role in society. Women have long been considered more appropriate to perform domestic tasks. This perception has influenced their access to education. A survey interviewed some poor rural parents in Gansu and Hebei. It demonstrated that parents have larger expectations for males' academic performance than for girls'. It was because such poor families have a huge financial burden related to education. Additionally, research demonstrated that as education levels rise relative to male involvement, female engagement in education declines[6]. People cannot say that this scenario has evaporated, even though it may be better now. Rural women and even the entire society are greatly affected by this inequity.

There are many studies today that demonstrate the more serious gender inequalities that exist in rural areas. But their complex causes and subsequent solutions have not been fully demonstrated and described. In this article, a few of the more obvious and serious problems are identified and analyzed, and the correlations between the problems are analyzed to provide more efficient solutions.

### 3. Analysis

#### 3.1. Defining the Problem

Income inequality, geographic location, and the unique culture itself can affect the distribution of educational resources between districts. More developed regions will have more resources and manpower to provide to education. The infrastructure of education and the perceived importance of education also determine the level of access to education in different regions.

In some rural areas, there will be many young adults who choose to go to cities to work. Some of these migrant workers will choose to leave their children back home, while others will choose to bring their children to more developed cities. In China, there are some strict policies related to settlement and the corresponding policy on compulsory education for children who move with the rural population. The Residence registration system is one of the major policies. If these children want to attend public schools, their parents need to meet certain requirements and provide documentation. The study found that the requirements for documentation vary from place to place. Identification, employment status, and residency status of the transferring population are considered. In some great cities in China, such as Shenzhen, these basic policy requirements are very strict[7]. As a result, many of those children that move with their parents are unable to access educational resources. They are forced to attend non-public schools. It is a much more expensive choice. This results in a gap.

Also, for the children who have to stay in the rural areas. Because their parents went out to work. Thus, most of the children have to be looked after by the elderly or even by other relatives. The illiteracy rate of the rural elderly is much higher than that of the younger generation, and they are also subject to more serious stereotypes. This results in children not being effectively tutored and educated[8]. The old thought influenced by patriarchal society may also further intensify the pressure on girls.

China now offers nine years of compulsory education. Within compulsory education, the perceived inequality of access is largely absent. However, when the compulsory education end, gender inequality exists, especially in poor areas and among ethnic minority groups[9].

In society part, different cities develop at a different rates. The more developed cities have stronger power to provide better resources for education. The economic level is an important indicator to determine education quality. Those great cities will have the ability to provide more elite education and have a broader definition of education itself. The infrastructure of education is well developed too. A study demonstrates that local government revenue and the income of rural residents have a favorable association with the availability of educational resources[1]. Girls receive fewer resources in certain scenarios.

The basic education practice in rural areas does not pay enough attention to spiritual needs. They lack senior faculty resources. In this way, their spiritual needs cannot be satisfied. Some of the children may be subject to behavioral deviations and moral misconduct. They have a weak sense of the law and even take the path of delinquency and crime[8]. Those children cannot learn as much information and develop their morals in school. Some of them have to start working after they end their compulsory education, and this limits their chance of them to pursue higher education and a better job to make a difference.

### **3.2. Factors Affecting Gender Inequality in Education**

The policy toward rural people who move to cities to seek a job is important. A study use the Gini coefficient and Shapley value to analyse the problem. According to this, socioeconomic stratification and urban-rural divides have a significant impact on educational inequality[10]. When those children move to urban areas, the situation doesn't become better. As those rural children already face some educational resources differently in rural areas, those children also have to face the problem of cannot getting into public school to take compulsory education. As mentioned in the previous part, many cities in China have strict settlement policies. Some cities have inflow residency requirements, and some of them have requirements for the type and length of social security payments for the transferred population[7]. People who hold a bachelor's degree from a domestic general institution and are under 35 years old, for instance, are eligible for household admission in Shenzhen. The parents of the person moving into the household must also pay social security for a predetermined period of years before they can submit a dependency application[11]. These increase the difficulty for these children who move with them to enter public education for compulsory education. Also, it is hard for migrant children to catch up with local education. According to a survey, migrant children perform worse academically than urban youngsters[12].

In this way, the only choice is to get into a private school. But most private schools are expensive. They are already facing the problem of a weak financial base, and enrolling in private schools will only add to the parents' burden. To avoid this, some parents will choose to leave their children in their hometown. This comes out of some other factors. The first is the dearth of educational resources and awareness of equal educational rights in rural communities. Their grandparents care for them in remote places. Traditional patriarchal social thinking has a big impact on the grandparents. Some of them believe that women are best suited for household chores. They think girls don't need to go to school or earn a high degree. So they will not care much about girls' education in rural areas.

The fact that education is required is significant. According to research, the urban-rural education gap decreased under the influence of compulsory schooling by 0.25 years for men and 0.36 years for women[13]. This shows that the policy help reduces the education gap among females better. But as compulsory education end, the situation changes. The chance of those students in rural areas entering universities and colleges is 8 times lower than those in urban areas[14]. So most parents will give up to bring their children to the high-schools. This effect combined with stereotype toward girls that don't have to take higher education, limit the chance of girls to seek for better education.

Driven by financial need, rural parents choose to leave their children at home. The absence of parents can leave children without discipline and thus face a lot of social problems. These traditional social consciousnesses determine behavioral choices. Because women are inherently vulnerable, they are subject to more pressure. Children's performance will be greatly influenced by their surrounding networks, like family, friends, and faculty[15]. So the existing stereotype toward girls may even come out from their peers. Parental supervision can reduce the frequency of transgressive behavior among middle school students[16]. So this can help parents to protect their children.

The economic level of local government determines how much financial support will be put on the education part. The distribution of teacher resources and senior teacher training pay is different

too. Since the government invests more resources in towns than in rural areas, this makes the allocation of compulsory education resources in rural areas relatively weaker. This resource gap also leads rural teachers to be more inclined to work in urban areas, resulting in further weakening of human resources[17]. This further greater the educational resources inequality. The teacher is an important character in teaching the idea of gender equality. When teachers are not professionally trained, the thinking they might reveal about gender stereotypes can profoundly affect girls. Gender inequalities in education emerge when teachers' attitudes toward students create distinctions based on gender. These can even affect the students' understanding of gender[18].

Family and culture will create the difference. Some poor families want girls to get married early, give up their studies, and go to work in great cities to get more income. Their definition of personal development and success is making money rather than getting an education. This is related to the gender stereotype toward females. Influenced by China's patriarchal society, some people always think men need a higher educational degree than women when they get married. This hinders women's right to pursue equal education. Sending girls to school is pointless since they will get married and leave the house, a mother claimed in an interview[19]. This represents the influence of stereotype toward women.

### 3.3. Impact to Society and Suggestion

Society suffers greatly from inequality. It will first slow down economic growth. The Middle East and North Africa, as well as South Asia, have greater gender disparities in employment and education, per the report. In comparison to East Asia, this results in economic growth differences of 0.9–1.7 and 0.1–1.6 percentage points[20]. Lack of education resources limits women's right to access higher knowledge. In today's society, the competition in employment is increasing. Every countries and city want to absorb more elites to help them develop the society. In this circumstance, those women in rural areas who lack educational resources don't have the ability and chance to gain a job. This also reduces the employment and labor force in society. Also, the absence of the role of female workers in social work is detrimental to the stability of the entire social system.

The lack of women participating in society role will further lead to greater class polarization and increased social inequity. As they lack financial resources and the idea of independence, those women in rural areas have to rely on their families to survive. This undoubtedly waives their right to choose their own life. In the absence of the most basic power, it is easier to cause neglect women in society. They will be treated more inequality.

Gender inequality in education even contributes to women's crime[21]. This is either due to dissatisfaction over a long period of lack of access to power, but also the impact on women such as economic marginalization. Also, the lack of moral education weakens their ethical awareness. This has some negative effects on society. The economic issues that contribute to gender inequality in education eventually react again to social development when they lead to unequal treatment. This creates a closed loop of mutual influence. Also, it will be harder for them to search for a job and change their situation. The issues of economic inequality, educational unfairness, and less employment opportunities are all part of a vicious cycle[22].

To reduce those problems, providing more educational resource assistance to rural areas is important. While focusing on rural economic development, more investment in teachers and infrastructures for rural schools should be provided. Also, people should intentionally include and increase sex education, and gender equality education in class. Improving gender equality education can help to reduce long-term ideological confinement. Assisting a few vulnerable groups of women in specific areas is needed. Government can use this way to raise awareness of the need for female education. Now, many policies help to protect women's rights in the workplace, but establishing appropriate employment protection measures for women and improving existing laws are always

important. The manager should try their best to end up the self-perpetuating cycle that hurt the development of society.

#### 4. Conclusions

The disparity between urban and rural areas does increase the degree of gender inequality in schooling. This inequality is influenced by the economic development of the countryside itself, such as the gap in infrastructure and the gap in resources for good teachers. At the same time, gender inequality in educational resources is influenced by pressures from within society. Certain policies restrict some children's chance to stay with their parents. The long-held ideas related to patriarchal society and lack of awareness of sex education widen the resource difference and eventually lead to a greater gap.

This is not an easy question, it requires long-term measures to change. Nowadays, the idea of equality in education and gender equality has been gradually deepened. Society is aware of the problems and is actively working to improve them. This is not a problem that can be solved quickly, so all one can do is try to help the under-resourced areas with the available resources. The idea of gender equality in education needs to be emphasized and tried to reach every family. Attention to children left behind needs to be increased, and policies on training and welfare of rural teachers need to be proposed. To the extent possible, society should also provide more assistance in building educational infrastructure and sharing educational resources. Efforts should be made to reduce the gap between rural and urban education soft resources based on the existing foundation. In conclusion, the social environment is getting better, and these gaps are gradually being reduced. These problems should be faced and improved.

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