

# ***Exploring the Current Educational Situation in Yunnan Province: The Reflection and Countermeasures of Chinese Education Inequity Problem***

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**Abstract:** In the past two decades, with the development of China's economy, there is often a gap in educational resources between developed cities and rural areas, and this phenomenon will lead to the occurrence of educational inequities. This paper focuses on the problem of educational inequality between rural and developed cities, and through the analysis of the current situation of education in Yunnan Province, a typical region of China, reflects on China's current education policies and proposes the future development direction of rural areas from three aspects: government policies, economic and socio-cultural influences. In the process of analyzing the causes of educational inequality between rural areas and developed cities, the authors found that although local backward economic development is the most important cause of the unfairness of educational resources in rural areas, the government's policy guidance and socio-cultural influence are also one of the indispensable factors. In order to truly provide a model for solving educational inequities in rural areas, we must organically combine the three, optimize the maximum composition mechanism, and give play to the power of social forces to promote education. In addition, this article only takes a rural area in China as an example, in view of the complexity of China's national conditions, the recommendations in this article cannot be applied to all rural areas, and it is necessary to adhere to the principle of specific analysis of specific problems.

**Keywords:** Education inequity, High school education

## **1. Introduction**

Educational equity is an issue that has been discussed for a long time. Whether boys and girls can receive equal education after nine years of compulsory education in rural China is one matter of that issue. Although girls also have access to education under the government's initiative, due to the lack of teaching resources caused by the backwardness of the local economy and the influence of feudal ideas, female still face various unfair threats in high school education.

The lack of educational resources in rural areas and the social constraints on women are one of the reasons for the currently. In view of the complexity of China's national conditions, local governments will adapt to local conditions, taking Yunnan Province as an example, the government

has adhered to the principle of giving priority to education since 2019, focusing on solving practical problems such as low penetration level and insufficient scale and capacity in the high school stage. In this scenario, however, some families will choose to let women drop out of school to take care of families for the additional costs of attending school and the reduction of the labour force. This phenomenon has given rise to a lively discussion in society about how to alleviate conflicts between governments, resources and families. In order to do best for giving full play to the advantages of women's education, how to provide more educational resources and financial support are two crucial factors

Considering that many developed countries have set an example of educational equity, such as the relatively complete public education spending system formed in the United Kingdom, Chinese scholars are also advocating learning like them. However, due to the huge differences between the economy and the population, the Chinese government cannot copy the rules of the West. Therefore, we need to adapt to local conditions and combine local conditions to find a way to truly promote educational equity.

Yunnan, a region impoverished by its geography, is a classic example of educational equality that China can use to study. Therefore, the analysis of the current situation of local education is conducive to the development of education in rural areas throughout China. This paper aims to analyzing the image and causes of current educational inequality, and make suggestions to obtain enlightenment that can solve the problem

The paper begins by listing the differences in education between urban and remote rural areas in China. Then, from the three aspects of government policy, economic development and social culture, it is explained why after nine years of compulsory education, the enrolment rate of girls is lower than that of boys. At the end of the article, a few suggestions are made to promote the further development of education in rural areas.

## 2. Literature Review

In China, the road to educational equity began 70 years ago, and the Chinese government insists that educational fairness is an important part of social fairness and an important driving force for promoting social fairness. Education as one of the largest people's livelihood, urban and rural education balance is the essence of urban-rural integration, the current urban and rural high school education development lag behind, high school education resources allocation imbalance has become a structural contradiction affecting the benign development of China's education system[1]. Equity of opportunity is a prerequisite for guaranteeing everyone's right to education, but due to various reasons of congenital and acquired nature, some groups of people are at a disadvantage in development and cannot enjoy equal opportunities normally. To that end, special policies must be adopted to provide the necessary support and assistance to this population. The first is the introduction of a series of tilting policies. Educational resources are tilted to the countryside and the gap between urban and rural education is narrowed. In 2018, the central government's fiscal transfer payments increased to 306.7 billion yuan, of which 80% were used in rural and poor areas in the central and western regions, and about 1/4 were used in contiguous areas of extreme poverty and ethnic minority areas [2]. The second is the introduction of a series of funding policies. NGOs play an irreplaceable role in promoting education equality in our country. They pay attention to disadvantaged groups, attach importance to teacher training, and emphasize capacity building, which have a positive effect on promoting education fairness and quality and sustainable development. It is a very big support for the development of the western region of our country.

Although the Ministry of Education has issued a series of policy measures to accelerate the reform and development of rural education, it has greatly promoted the development of rural areas.

However, due to the long-term lack of investment in my country's rural areas, the gap between regional and urban-rural education development still exists. NGOs have chosen impoverished, underdeveloped and geographically isolated areas in my country as project areas to carry out aid projects, which have played a positive role in helping vulnerable groups in remote areas of our country.

### **3. Reflection on the Fairness of Rural Education**

#### **3.1. The Challenge of Educational Inequality**

In order to better solve the existence of high school education inequality between rural areas and cities, this paper insists on analyzing the reasons for this phenomenon from three aspects: policy, economic, and cultural, trying to find a way to narrow the gap between educational inequality by analyzing the causes.

As early as the beginning of the 20th century, China established the important position of education science and technology in the process of China's social development, and all provinces have given full support in policies and funds under the leadership of the central government. However, in view of the scale of financial expenditure on education, there are differences in the powers and responsibilities of the government at different stages of education. Although China's governments at all levels have continuously increased their investment in education in recent years, the proportion of state financial education expenditure to GDP has been low, which is mainly caused by the low level of China's economic and social development, fewer channels for education financing, and excessive expansion of education and education demand. Although in recent years, the state has gradually increased its financial investment in general high school education in the central and western regions, so that its funding level has increased significantly, there is still a significant gap with the economically developed areas[3]. The improvement of educational conditions and the expansion of educational resources, especially high-quality educational resources, are seriously constrained by insufficient investment in education. For example, in Yunnan Province, from 2003 to 2013, although the proportion of Yunnan Province's financial expenditure on education has been increasing, the increase is declining, so it can be seen that the Yunnan Provincial Government is not enthusiastic enough to invest in education[4]. More than half of the Yunnan provincial government's education expenditure has flowed into nine-year compulsory education, so the construction of high school education has been further neglected. Inadequate financial input means that teaching resources in upper secondary education are not guaranteed. First, there are the few high schools that exist. As of 2021, there are only 204 senior high schools in the whole of Yunnan Province. Most of them are also concentrated in urban areas rather than rural areas. Second, it exacerbates the inequity of teacher resources in rural areas, and governments are unable to spend more money to recruit better teachers. The shortage of schools and classrooms is a major reason why students complete nine years of compulsory education.

#### **3.2. Factor of Educational Inequality**

With the support of state finance and policy, poverty does not seem to be the main reason for students to drop out of school, but because the policy is only for the care of individual students, the whole family cannot afford the living expenses of students, which also leads to some students choosing to drop out of school after nine years of compulsory education[5]. With the support of state finance and policy, poverty does not seem to be the main reason for students to drop out of school, but because the policy is only for the care of individual students, the whole family cannot afford the living expenses of students, which also leads to some students choosing to drop out of school after nine years of compulsory education. In Yunnan, for example, China's rural areas focus

on economic development in order to narrow the gap with developed cities, and the rapid development of the economy has caused labor shortages on the one hand and increased opportunity costs for students on the other. Compared with education, which takes a long time to receive a return on wealth, economically underdeveloped children prefer to use part-time work to subsidize their families. This is an analysis of why children who have been in compulsory education for nine years choose to drop out of school from the perspective of local economic development.

Local customs and culture are also a major factor in the choice of local children to continue their education after nine years of compulsory education [6]. Local customs and culture are also a major factor in the choice of local children to continue their education after nine years of compulsory education. The first is that with the development of the regional economy, the opportunity cost of children's schooling has increased. For children in rural areas, the opportunity cost is when what students learn is rarely used or even useless in their daily lives. Students are wasting their time in their studies, and they cannot convert it into money to subsidize their families, so ideas such as "the uselessness of reading" are popular in rural areas. For example, in factors, where harvesting rubber can earn 300 yuan a day, students often discuss that "what is the use of going to school, it is better to earn more than work"[7].

### 3.3. Suggestions of Changing Behavior in High School Education of Chinese Rural Areas

From a policy point of view, there are still problems of insufficient scale of expenditure on financial education in Yunnan Province, and imbalances in hierarchical structure and regional structure, which have seriously restricted the fairness of education in rural areas represented by Yunnan. Therefore, as a government, it should increase the scale of expenditure on education.<sup>[4]</sup> In the process of promoting educational equity, we must give full play to the main position of the government in the development of education, continuously adjust its functions according to the situation, and rationally plan the government's investment structure. Second, the government can also advocate the diversification of education investment and encourage capable enterprises, individuals or social groups to invest in running schools. From the perspective of the central government, we should speed up the improvement of relevant laws and regulations and use systems to ensure the fairness of high school education. Because of the special social environment in rural areas, the state must identify the long-term nature and complexity of the problem. If it is to be fundamentally solved, the education sector must establish a long-term mechanism. Resolutely use the law as a solid backing to protect rural areas.

From an economic point of view, although economic backwardness is one of the reasons for the unfairness of education in Yunnan Province, it is not right that economic development will inevitably bring about the improvement of education [8]. For example, the school will rise up but there is no source of students and the teacher is doomed to be unable to start normal teaching activities. Therefore, in economically underdeveloped areas, solving the problem of educational equity requires not only advanced materials, but also the gradual development of education in line with the local level of productivity.

Social culture is also one of the reasons for the inequities affecting local education. The family's investment decision on high school education is ultimately made by their parents, which is the embodiment of the parent's educational values. The higher the parents' own cultural level, the more they understand the relevant national policies, the more they can make education investment decisions based on the inner needs and interests of the family and their children[9]. On the one hand, families were influenced by feudal ideas and did not support students to continue to go to school, which led to dropping out of school, on the other hand, the wave of the uselessness of social reading was rebuilding the minds of young people[10]. For this situation, the first thing to do is to change the backward and conservative educational concept in the rural areas. We should be clear that this is

also a long-term task that requires the joint efforts of governments, schools and society to change. Second, only by improving the pursuit of academic qualifications in rural areas and expanding the demand for education can we play a positive role in the process of changing thinking.

#### 4. Conclusions

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the causes of educational inequality in rural China through the current situation of education in Yunnan Province and to propose solutions. First, the paper analyzes the political, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of the possible causes of regional educational inequities. However, these three are mutually influential, and we should bear in mind that educational inequities are never done by one party. Secondly, in view of the analysis of the above three aspects, this paper combines the development status of Chinese society and makes suggestions for the fair development of education in Yunnan from the aspects of improving the education support system, calling for the diversification of education investment, conforming to the law of economic development and changing social thinking in many ways. Through the above analysis, it can be found that slow economic development is the most important reason for the educational inequality between rural and developed cities, and economic underdevelopment has led to the tilt of policies to production industries and feudal backward social and cultural trends. However, to solve the existence of educational inequities, it is not simply necessary to vigorously develop the economy can be solved. Without the positive guidance of the government and the change of thinking of the local population, vigorously developing the economy will only increase the dropout rate after nine years of compulsory education, and the educational inequality between the countryside and the city will be aggravated. To effectively narrow the gap between rural and urban areas, the following recommendations can be taken. First, the central government should establish a sound supervisory mechanism to ensure that the subordinate government can invest its finances in education as planned. Second, the central government can set up twelve-year compulsory education experimental zones in rural areas of a typical nature and extend compulsory education to high school education to increase the high school enrollment rate in rural areas. Third, the provincial government needs to work with the central government to build a social support platform and give full play to the positive role of social forces in promoting the fair process of education. Fourth, we must actively give play to the important role of the community and the village committee in the process of transforming the minds of residents, and publicize the importance of students' education through various forms such as door-to-door interviews and lectures. Fourth, accept the role of the public think tank, actively listen to the opinions of the masses on the education of school-age students, and make real and convenient ways in a timely manner to create a guarantee model that integrates the government, schools and society.

Not only aims to analyze the Yunnan region, but also hopes to summarize the laws that can promote the fairness of education development in rural areas through case analysis, but each region has its own problems, and it is also necessary to analyze and propose solutions based on local conditions. On the basis of fairness, we should let the vast number of rural children have more educational inputs, more educational resources, more balanced school conditions, and more equal access to schools, so that educational fairness can be better realized in rural and rural areas.

This paper analyzes the educational inequity in Yunnan on the basis of policy, economic, social and cultural aspects, and puts forward several reference opinions for solving the educational inequality according to the specific conditions of the province, however, the suggestions are based on the conclusions reached from the analysis of local shortcomings, only staying at the stage of logical practicability, the degree of implementation needs to be tested in practice, and how to establish a good education circulation system also needs to be explored in future research.



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