

Analysis of Educational Inequality in China

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Abstract: Economic development should be based on talents. Education is the foundation of a country's centennial plan. The quality of education development is related to the destiny of a country's development. At present, the problem of educational inequality in China is obvious, and the talents cultivated under the educational management system can no longer meet the needs of China's social development. In order to promote the balanced development of education from the perspectives of the government, families, individuals, and schools, the paper proposes appropriate solutions and analyses the current situation of educational inequality in China and the factors that cause it from various angles. The paper also takes educational inequality in China as its research theme. The conclusions of this study have reference value for solving educational inequality, providing reference for government decision-making, further promoting the improvement of China's education system and promoting education equality in urban and rural areas, regions and gender.

Keywords: education, inequality, China, government

1. Introduction

Social justice has a strong foundation in educational equity. The foundation of social justice and equity is the promotion of educational equity. China is currently at the vital phase of achieving the great national rejuvenation. Promoting educational equity and reducing discrimination in the classroom is crucial if China's going to achieve societal stability and social justice. Education is an important mechanism to maintain social equality, and educational resources are instrumental existence to regulate social equality [1]. Education is a key factor in enhancing people's overall quality and supporting their overall development [2]. Education disparity is a significant social stratification study topic in contemporary culture. One of the most significant factors impacting social mobility is education [3]. The phenomenon of uneven distribution of educational resources has been a subject of continuous concern in sociology and related disciplines. Due to the growth of the economy, society, and popularity of education in recent years, China has made remarkable achievements in improving the education level of its people. In the past 20 years, the enrollment rate of primary schools in the compulsory education stage showed steady growth, reaching 99.5 percent in 2019. The enrollment rate of junior high school students jumped sharply, from 51.2 percent in 2000 to 95.5 percent in 2019. Benefited from the implementation of university enrollment expansion policy in 1999. The high school enrollment rate exceeded 90 percent in 2016 [4]. At the present stage, China has basically built the comprehensive popularization of compulsory education, the high school education trend of popularization, the higher education from popular-to-popular education system [2].

But since the reform and opening up, the wealth difference between Chinese citizens has widened, a generational cycle of poverty has emerged, and social class has a tendency to persist. The transmission of education through generations is substantial, and it serves the unique purpose of reproducing social relations of production. The education gap also frequently crosses generations. The bottom of Chinese society abandons education, the middle class is overly anxious, and the upper class is dissatisfied with education as a result of the inequality of educational opportunities, the weakening of intergenerational mobility of education, and the solidification of educational levels. Particularly, the high cost of higher education and the impediment to poor people's upward mobility have a long-term detrimental effect on educational equality and even societal stability [4].

This paper first analyzes the causes of educational inequality from six aspects: economy, examination selection, education concept, urban-rural gap, household registration system and gender, and then gives corresponding suggestions from four aspects: government, families, individuals and schools. Therefore, this paper aims to let more people know about the phenomenon of educational inequality in China, increase people's understanding of the phenomenon of educational inequality, eliminate educational discrimination as far as possible, adhere to the equality of opportunities, protect the right to education, and encourage the balanced growth of education, aid marginalized groups, and uphold the equity and fairness of education through the establishment of public education service systems. Government distributes resources for public education in a rational manner, further control and tweak the system for allocating social resources and end the inequitable distribution of resources for education. In order to achieve social equality and justice, a favorable social environment dominated by the government and cooperatively supported by the entire society can be created.

2. Current Situation of Educational Inequality

2.1. Economic Development Is Unbalanced

Addressing development imbalances is a key factor in reducing educational inequality. The educational capabilities of China's center and western provinces and those of its eastern regions differ significantly. The total degree of local economic growth has a direct impact on the government's investment in fostering educational development and the process of educational development. The degree of regional economic development, the rate of economic growth, and the structure of the economy all have an impact on the level, speed, and structure of education development. The gap in regional talent training is widening little by little due to the economic development of backward areas, the effective supply of education is insufficient [5].

2.2. Examination and Selection System

Different regions have different admission standards. The actual admission quota of college entrance examination is based on the quota of students in different places. Instead of being distributed equally depending on the number of examinees, the student quota is based on the availability of higher education resources in various locations and the idea of prioritizing metropolitan examinees. As a result, even for the identical exam paper, scores drastically differ from location to location, which worsens the educational disparity between regions [5].

2.3. Values and Educational Choices

Parents' educational expectation and children's dropout are greatly influenced by social culture and values. In China, there are significant cultural and value disparities between urban and rural areas, and these variations have a direct impact on how people see education. The level of educational expectation is different in regions with different educational concepts and values. In urban areas,

people can clearly feel that their work and life are greatly influenced by education. Therefore, urban residents have high expectations of education and attach great importance to their children's education. Increasing investment in children's education, as far as possible to help children to obtain more competitive academic diplomas [3].

Contrary to cities, farmers' negation of the value of school education is seriously influenced by such factors as the competitive labor market, devalued diplomas and underdeveloped rural education, and the idea that "reading is useless" is widely spread in rural areas. Rural residents' expectation for their children's education gradually decreases, and families' enthusiasm for investing in education is further affected. At the same time, due to their parents' negative attitude towards education, rural students have low self-expectations, and some even believe that going out to work is their "normal" future. Rural students do not pay enough attention to their studies. In addition, the signal they send to their parents to "drop out" is further reinforced by their poor academic performance. It is in this process of interaction that the "rational choice" of dropping out of school and abandoning examinations often occurs in rural families [3].

2.4. The Urban-rural Dual Structure

The disparity in educational resources between urban and rural areas, which is a result of the urban-rural dual structure, is usually thought by scholars to be the primary cause of the existing educational inequality between urban and rural areas. China has established a development strategy with urban education as the core and a key or exemplary school education system under the urban-rural dual structure system and has long pursued an "urban first" education policy. Cities have more limited quality education resources, government departments give priority to the needs of urban schools, highly educated teachers are concentrated in cities, and urban schools have more opportunities to select high-quality teachers. This "urban first orientation" education policy reflects the educational demands of urban students. In essence, it involves establishing educational policies and allocating resources for education with the city as the focal point [5].

2.5. Household Registration System

The household registration system lies at the heart of the schooling gap between urban and rural areas. An early population management mechanism in China was the household registration system. In this system, residents are registered as rural household registration and urban household registration according to the geographical attributes of the household. Before the reform and opening up, there was a high degree of overlap between the domicile of household registration and domicile, and it was difficult to realize the conversion of household registration through individual efforts. Although the household registration system has been steadily relaxed since the reform and opening up, the rights protection and social benefits attached to the household registration system have not been entirely severed. In terms of welfare benefits and development opportunities, rural residents are still not equal to their urban counterparts. Residents' resource allocation and life opportunities are profoundly affected by the household registration system. Rural inhabitants' access to education is hampered by structural barriers as a result of the household registration system [6].

2.6. Gender

In the studies on gender inequality in East Asia, gender inequality in East Asia largely stems from the institutional factor of East Asian patriarchy. East Asian patriarchy is also reflected in the distribution of educational resources within society and family. In mainland China and Japan, for example, men have more years of schooling than women. In Taiwan, daughters are forced to sacrifice their education to ensure that their brothers get more education [7].

The possibility of children obtaining higher education is positively correlated with the educational level received by their parents. But there is a clear gender difference in the influence of the latter on the former. Gender inequality is evident among parents with the lowest level of education (primary school and below). Rural inhabitants' access to education is hampered by structural barriers as a result of the household registration system.

3. Suggestion

3.1. At Government Level

3.1.1. Legal System

The construction of legal system has a strong restraint ability to regulate the behavior that harms social fairness and justice. In the two interrelated phenomena of unequal educational opportunities between rural and urban locations, as well as across various classes, as well as unbalanced allocation of educational resources, there are many behaviors that violate the law and discipline and damage social morality. Keeping up with the reality, it is urgent for the legislative, law enforcement and judicial departments to improve the legislative work, strictly enforce the law and justice. In order to legally safeguard their right to education, ordinary people should also know the law, abide by it and use it to resist the behavior of exchanging educational resources with illegal means.

In order to build a harmonious and sunny educational atmosphere and social atmosphere, it is important to set up correct educational values in the whole society. Related departments should reflect on the current educational values that are too utilitarian and elitist. Every educated person should be respected and endowed with value for their career.

3.1.2. Rationally Allocate Educational Resources

Governments should make efforts to improve the quality of rural education, accelerate the process of urban and rural integration, reduce the gap between urban and rural areas, realize the balanced development of urban and rural areas, and share high-quality educational resources with them [8].

Government also should strengthen regulation and control and rationally allocate educational resources. The public attribute of education determines that the main body of education compensation is the government. The main provider of public services is the government, and compulsory education is one of the contents of public education, which can be implemented mainly by government supply. The government is in charge of overseeing and regulating educational resources, and it also has responsibility for paying for education. The quality and level of education are directly affected by these factors. Human resources are the external manifestation of education. With the continuous acceleration of labor flow, developed areas have obtained the final benefits of education, resulting in the lack of motivation to invest in education in economically backward areas [9]. At present, the current educational supply and educational demand are unbalanced. This imbalance is not only reflected in quantity and scale, but also more obvious in quality and structure [10].

Governments also should improve the level of information construction in rural areas, make use of modern distance education, so that students all over the country can use information technology, and then obtain the famous teacher classroom resources, enjoy better educational resources. Rural teachers can enrich the teaching content and promote the transformation of backward teaching concepts by improving the level of rural informatization [9]. Government also should increase the investment of financial education funds in economically underdeveloped areas, especially in basic education. The central finance should provide financial and educational support for the central and western regions, especially for the western regions, in order to accomplish the logical allocation of educational resources and lessen the phenomena of educational disparity [11].

3.1.3. Break the Dual Structure of Urban and Rural

The hukou factor's influence on schooling is progressively waning with time. Therefore, it is possible that the important measure to realize the equality of education in China is to continuously break the urban-rural dual structure. In terms of specific measures, authority can set up special support programs, such as subsidizing rural families' children to go to college, and stick to them for a long time. In addition, the children of migrant workers and other vulnerable groups can be guaranteed equal opportunities to receive education in the destination areas by exempting borrowing fees and sponsorship fees and lowering the entry threshold for children of migrant workers [2].

3.1.4. The Improvement of Family Education

The educational opportunity inequality is gradually increased by the influence of the father's years of schooling, which to some extent indicates that the influence of intergenerational continuity is growing. In addition to congenital genetic factors, it is possible that more scientific educational beliefs are held by more educated parents. In recent years, many studies have shown that children's early cognitive ability and non-cognitive ability as well as their future education are greatly influenced by their parents' parenting mode. Therefore, the government should promote the improvement of family education, which has the potential to promote intergenerational mobility of social classes and thus ameliorate inequalities in educational opportunities [2].

3.1.5. Eliminate the Influence of Gender Bias

Governments need to prevent gender bias in teaching and research in schools and in the creation and publicity of mass media and should pay more attention to the gender difference in education, guide citizens to rationally view their children's education investment, and take practical measures to reduce the phenomenon of gender inequality in access to education [4].

Governments gradually eliminate the influence of gender bias, resist teaching behaviors and cultural activities with gender bias, such as balancing the gender ratio of teachers, especially mathematics teachers. At the same time, governments enhance the interaction between teachers and students in math-related courses and the participation of female teachers, increasing the publicity of female role models in various industries, and reducing the information about female stereotypes in the environment. An equal, harmonious and scientific gender cultural atmosphere consequently is created in society.

Additionally, in order to guide students to establish an equal concept of social gender, schools can offer scientific gender education courses. For example, by watching videos, reading materials and group discussions, students are encouraged to understand that there is no difference in male and female abilities, so as to reduce the negative impact of negative math-gender stereotypes on girls' math performance [12].

3.2. At the Family Level

Parents should overcome incorrect gender stereotypes, hold a more inclusive and open attitude towards children's behavior, temperament, interests and hobbies, and respect their children's personal choices and personality development. Parents should consciously weaken parenting ideas and behaviors with gender discrimination, strengthen children's scientific gender cognition, and create gender equality, peaceful and relaxed family atmosphere. At the same time, parents increase parent-child communication, pay close attention to children's mental health, improve girls' self-confidence.

3.3. At the Individual Level

Students of both genders need to develop positive outlooks on life, including self-worth, self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-improvement. They should look at their own abilities from an objective and rational perspective. Through their own efforts, they should increase their knowledge, enrich their experiences, improve their skills and further develop their potential, and focus on their own progress and growth. When encounter learning setbacks, students first should analyze the reason, try to seek luck, rules and other uncontrollable factors, avoid entirely attributed to their own not smart, not suitable for learning internal stability factors. In addition, role models should be used to guide outstanding women to take the lead in setting good educational and career goals [12].

3.4. At Schools Level

3.4.1. Provide Professional Guidance to Teachers

Students in schools in underdeveloped areas often have trouble getting more scientific instruction. The government should arrange for schools with higher levels of education to provide expertise to principals and teachers in schools with lower enrolment rates. Schools provide regular online and offline meetings, teacher professional development and other resources to exchange teaching experience, enrich the knowledge reserve of teachers in backward areas, improve the level of education of teachers in backward areas, and provide students with more scientific guidance [13].

3.4.2. Multiple Access to Expand Enrollment Opportunities

The seemingly fair and uniform admission standards for higher education actually have a problem of class inequality. Students from disadvantaged areas have to work harder than students from advantaged areas to achieve the same results. In addition, studies have shown that top students in public schools have more potential for development than those in private schools with higher grades. Therefore, schools should adopt diversified admission methods to provide more opportunities for disadvantaged students with potential in public schools [13].

3.4.3. Admissions Policies Based on Students' Backgrounds

Schools use background data to identify talented disadvantaged students. In addition to academic qualifications and test scores, a range of other factors, such as the high school the student attends, the place of origin and whether the student is a social student or a first-generation college student, are taken into consideration. Schools use students' background information to identify disadvantaged students, and appropriately reduce the admission requirements for disadvantaged students, so as to improve the enrollment rate of disadvantaged students [13].

3.4.4. Develop Strategies to Deal with Future Crises

The social environment of school is essential for both solitary and collaborative learning. It is crucial to create plans for upcoming crises because "you can see how important school as an institution is right now - not just on the educational level, but especially on the social level" In order to determine which settings can fulfill which functions, researchers must first examine the various roles that schools play in society. For instance, while subject-related learning appears to be possible at a distance through digital means combined with differentiated instructions, direct and continuous interactions are more likely to foster cooperative forms of learning and enduring peer relationships [14].

4. Conclusions

Two sides of the same issue are the reality of educational disparity and the unrelenting pursuit of equality. Education is evolving in an increasingly nuanced and meaningful way. Right to education and financial contribution are currently becoming more and more equal in China. However, China also has to deal with issues like the wealth gap and unequal resource distribution, which has turned into the main emphasis of Chinese education policymaking.

The inequality of China's educational progress is a direct result of its economic inequality. The current state of China's educational growth is marked by educational inequality. The ultimate solution to the current situation requires a process whereby every member of society enjoys more equal access to education. The imbalance of education resources in China is mainly caused by regional economic imbalance, examination selection system, urban-rural dual structure, household registration system, education concept and gender difference. With the advance of the 14th Five-Year Plan, the deepening reform of Chinese education has achieved initial results, but it still needs the unremitting efforts and struggles of all social parties including the government to truly realize the supply of human capital to meet the national structural demand.

In this regard, the government should improve the relevant legal system, allocate education resources reasonably and fairly, break the dual structure of urban and rural, improve the level of family education and eliminate gender discrimination as far as possible. Parents also overcome the influence of incorrect stereotypes to create a peaceful and relaxed family atmosphere. Both male and female pupils should develop the proper view on life as well as self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. They should look at their abilities objectively and rationally. Schools should provide more scientific guidance for teachers, improve the educational level of teachers in backward areas, and provide more scientific guidance for students. Schools should adopt diverse admission methods to provide more opportunities for disadvantaged students with potential in public schools. Schools should also use background data to identify gifted and disadvantaged students, thereby increasing enrollment of disadvantaged students. The social environment of school appears to be essential for both solitary and collaborative learning. Therefore, it is essential to create plans for handling upcoming disasters. China is getting close to tackling educational disparity through focused efforts.

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