

# ***Analyzing the Problems, Causes, and Policy Suggestions of Rural Education System Based on Literature Research Method***

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**Abstract:** With the continuous deepening of China's rural revitalization strategy, rural education, as a part of rural development in China, has increasingly attracted public attention. Some researchers have raised existing problems in rural education, but there is still a lack of logical analysis of the underlying reasons and targeted suggestions for the problems. Therefore, the research is based on the analysis of multiple policy texts on rural education in China and the analysis of data on the current situation of rural education in the past five years. It summarizes the problems, reasons, and relevant policy recommendations of the rural education system. The research found that on the one hand, the low level of the rural economy leads to insufficient educational resources, which directly leads to problems such as outdated teaching facilities, insufficient teacher resources, and high teacher mobility. On the other hand, the backwardness of rural education concepts has led to a consistently low proportion of the rural educated population. In response to the above issues, the research proposes three specific policy measures: increasing educational resources, encouraging social organizations to participate in rural education, and reconstructing the value orientation of rural education.

**Keywords:** rural education, literature research method, rural education policy

## **1. Introduction**

With the acceleration of the national modernization process and the deepening development of urbanization, rural issues have become a challenge that cannot be ignored in the national development process. In the process of national industrial transformation, the rural areas originally located in the important areas of agricultural development have gradually declined with the change of the proportion of the Primary sector of the economy in the national development. High-quality labor resources gradually flow to better infrastructure, more employment opportunities. Cities with better living conditions form a Binary opposition structure between urban and rural areas.

In recent years, the number of rural schools in China has been decreasing year by year, from 1591.93 million in 2013 to 1042.17 million in 2019. The number of school admissions has also decreased from 8.944 million in 2013 to 6.871 million in 2019. At the same time, the number of rural teachers has also decreased from 2.985 million in 2013 to 2.448 million in 2019, and rural teachers are only one-fourth of the total number of teachers in the country. There are problems such as

insufficient teacher resources and difficulty in enrolling students [1]. This has also had a significant impact on rural education. The uneven level of education between urban and rural areas, rural education with a large educated population but very few high-quality educational resources, has become a major issue affecting the overall balanced development of the country.

At present, research on the rural education system mainly focuses on studying the internal logic of rural education policies, evaluating rural education from the perspective of human resource development, or studying existing problems and corresponding solutions from a specific region or stage of rural education [2]. However, there is a lack of literature that fully analyzes and sorts out the current situation and policies of the rural education system and multiple educational entities such as teachers, students, and schools from the perspective of problems, multiple perspectives, and policy recommendations. This overall framework explains why the rural education system cannot produce talents, why rural areas cannot retain teachers, and why the government has introduced supportive policies but the urban-rural gap is still widening. The exploration of these issues is of great significance for the optimization and improvement of the rural education system.

Studying rural education is not only beneficial for improving the quality of rural education, but also has an undeniable role in the implementation of China's rural revitalization strategy and rural modernization construction. The research is based on existing literature and data. Firstly, it elaborates on the current development status and existing problems of the rural education system. Secondly, it analyzes the reasons for the problems from economic, cultural, and other perspectives. Finally, policy recommendations are proposed from the perspective of policy makers to address the aforementioned issues.

## **2. Current Situation and Problems of the Rural Education System**

### **2.1. Imperfect Educational Facilities**

Most rural schools have small teaching scales and backward teaching equipment. Many rural areas still use teaching equipment such as desks and blackboards made of lime. The common plastic playground in urban schools is often replaced by a barren land for students' outdoor activities in the countryside, which is not conducive to students' safety in sports. Some schools even do not have air conditioners, fans, and drinking fountains, and the teaching environment is poor [3].

The impact of teaching facilities on the quality of teaching was more prominent during COVID-19. In December 2022, the China Rural Education Development Institute of Northeast Normal University released the China Rural Education Development Report 2020-2022. The report showed that 63.44% of rural students had no online learning experience in 2020. During the epidemic period, the participation rate of rural students in online teaching was only 91.93%, and students' satisfaction with online teaching was only 55.09% [4].

### **2.2. Serious Shortage of Teachers**

T China's rural teacher policies can be divided into three stages: recovery and adjustment (1978-1984), reform initiation (1985-1998), deepening reform (1999-2014), and comprehensive deepening development (2015-present). In order to alleviate the educational backwardness caused by the low level of economic development in rural areas, the government has introduced a system for urban-rural teacher exchange, a teacher special plan for the "Three Districts" talent support program, and Special rural teacher policies such as the Free Normal Student Program provide high-quality teachers for rural areas, and through policy measures, multiple measures are formulated to tilt towards the scarce subject teacher positions in rural areas, attracting outstanding talents to join the rural education industry [5].

There is a structural shortage of rural teacher resources. For example, Henan Province, a major agricultural province in China, is also a province with a high proportion of rural areas. In 2021, the teacher-student ratio of high school in Henan was 14.46 (the national average teacher-student ratio was 12.84). The teacher-student ratio in Secondary Vocational Education was 22.87 (the national average teacher-student ratio was 18.86) [6].

At the same time, rural education also has the problems of unbalanced teacher structure, shortage of excellent teacher resources, and serious aging of rural teachers. According to the data released by the Ministry of Education in March 2022, the proportion of full-time teachers with bachelor's degree or above in China's compulsory education stage in 2022 was 81.02%. The proportion of full-time teachers with a bachelor's degree or above in the rural compulsory education stage was 76.01% in the same period [7]. The report on the development of rural education in China 2020-2022 shows that the proportion of teachers over 55 years old in rural areas is 8.8%, in towns is 4.5%, and in urban areas is 3.3%, which is 5.5% higher than that in urban areas [8].

### **3. The Causes of Problems in the Rural Education System**

#### **3.1. Backward Rural Economic Development**

China's rural economic development has always been a weak part of national development. The financial revenue of rural grass-roots governments is low, and the funds that can be invested in education are limited. In addition, education itself is an activity with a long return cycle. Because officials focus on their own performance and desire to get local short-term economic development, local governments often give priority to the development of other industries, resulting in a long-term shortage of rural education funds.

The education and teaching expenses of rural education in China mainly come from several sources, such as school running funds, financial appropriations, miscellaneous fees, and tuition fees. However, due to the reform of the education system in recent years, the financial appropriations for rural education have decreased, while miscellaneous fees and tuition fees have gradually become important sources of funds for rural education, and the overall education funds are in long-term tension [9]. Numerous educational resources are in short supply, and it is challenging to put policies in place that support the growth of high-quality education in rural areas.

In this case, the teaching facilities in rural schools have not been repaired for many years, and the supporting facilities are aging but cannot be handled. In order to save money, some local education departments even recruit a large number of substitute teachers to ensure normal teaching activities, but this also greatly reduces the quality of teaching and the stability of the teaching staff.

#### **3.2. Backward Rural Education Concept**

The concept of student training in schools is not scientific. At present, rural schools still pay too much attention to students' scores and academic performance. The development standards for pupils' overall development of morals, intelligence, physique, art, and labor are too skewed toward intellectual development, and there are serious deficiencies in students' moral quality training, sports quality improvement, aesthetic education quality improvement, and education on the hard-working spirit. At the same time, during the teaching process, teachers often focus more on classroom discipline and ignore some reasonable demands of students. They cannot teach students in accordance with their aptitude by using a single and one-sided standard to evaluate each student [10].

Home education also plays a decisive role in the growth of children, but home education in rural areas often cannot respond well to the needs of school education. On the one hand, most of the rural parents are academic losers who cannot enter the University, and the education concept derived from their life experience is "hard work", that is, if they want to achieve good grades they can achieve class

leaping, individuals must make great efforts, and personal efforts occupy an absolutely important position, but parents do not realize the role of home education and parents' encouragement and support in their children's growth [11]. Due to the outdated concepts of school education and family education, despite the government's financial and policy support, the proportion of rural education is still very low. According to the "2022 Migrant Workers Monitoring Survey Report" released by the National Bureau of Statistics on April 28th, among all migrant workers, 0.7% have not attended school, 13.4% have a primary school education level, 55.2% have a junior high school education level, 17.0% have a high school education level, and 3.7% have a college degree or above [1].

### 3.3. Imperfect Rural Teacher Training System

Rural teachers are generally divided into three types: students from normal colleges and Universities under the guidance of national policies, external teachers hired temporarily on the job, and finally, middle-aged and elderly teachers settled locally, which is also the type of teachers with the largest proportion [12].

In 1999, China issued the Regulations on Continuing Education for Primary and Secondary School Teachers, which proposed relevant measures for the ability cultivation and improvement of teaching quality of teachers who have obtained certified teachers. Later, the government departments successively introduced several policies to standardize the process and system of teacher training. In 2020, the Ministry of Education and six other departments issued opinions on strengthening the construction of rural teacher teams in the new era, which made specific provisions for the training funds, training content, and personnel management of rural teachers. There are problems in the policy implementation process. Rural teacher training policies excessively focus on achieving long-term goals while neglecting short-term goals. The main manifestation of policy use is the insufficient use of incentive tools. In China's rural primary and secondary school teacher training policies, the use of capacity-building tools accounts for 33.84%, while the use of incentive tools accounts for only 5.68%. Encouragement and the lack of short-term incentives such as commendation lead to lower enthusiasm and initiative among teachers [13].

According to Herzberg's dual-factor theory, people's motivation is mainly affected by incentive factors and hygiene factors. Hygiene factors themselves can only eliminate job dissatisfaction, and only incentive factors can have a positive impact on job satisfaction. Because the national training system for rural teachers is not perfect, although there are subsidies for teachers who go to rural areas to teach, the prospect of rural schools is limited. Many teachers who serve rural areas believe that the experience of rural teaching is not helpful for their own professional development in the teaching process, and the backward teaching equipment, poor quality of students and, poor teaching environment also make many teachers resign after taking office to find other ways [14].

## 4. Policy Suggestions

### 4.1. Increase the Supply of Rural Education Resources

The education policies of American states are planned according to their own education and teaching level under the unified federal regulations. For new rural teachers, the state government formulates 'the new teacher project' to improve the professionalism and retention rate of rural teachers by providing necessary education practice guidance for new teachers [15]. To provide professional pre-service and in-service training for teachers in rural China, the Chinese government can, on the one hand, create legislation and regulations. On the other hand, the government should prioritize and boost financial investment in rural education, particularly in supplying infrastructure with resources. In addition, the government should also improve the school running conditions of rural schools, the

living conditions of rural teachers, and the infrastructure of rural schools, which may alleviate the problems of large mobility of rural teachers and unbalanced teacher structure.

#### **4.2. Foster the Engagement of Multiple Facets in Rural Education**

Social organizations in the United States play an important role in the field of rural education. They provide guidance for rural teachers' career development planning, build external communication networks for rural teachers, and strengthen cooperation and communication among rural teachers in different regions [16]. In this regard, the Chinese government should set up corresponding support policies for social organizations serving rural teachers, cultivate social organizations that can provide support and help for rural teachers, and provide them with corresponding resources. The government may also give social groups specialized assistance with the aim of enhancing teachers' professional growth and offering psychological support. For example, encouraging social organizations to integrate talent resources such as colleges and universities and career planners, through a variety of growth path models. It is really a helpful way to clarify professional growth goals and formulate personalized career planning for rural teachers. Secondly, the government ought to help rural teachers in different regions to contact each other by carrying out seminars and sharing meetings. They can promote the sharing of teaching skills and experience among rural teachers, alleviate the psychological pressure caused by rural teachers' Job Burnout and teaching conditions through communication between teachers in the same situation, and strengthen rural teachers' professional identity.

#### **4.3. Reconstruct the Value Tendency of Rural Education**

Rural education is not only the product of rural culture, but also conducive to the inheritance and development of rural culture. The positive role of rural culture in education is not only beneficial to students' formation of good thinking modes, value choices, and behavior initiatives, but also beneficial in improving the modernization of rural education as well as stimulating the enthusiasm of rural people for building modern villages [17].

In the first place, the government should encourage the local government to develop school-based courses suitable for the local cultural situation with policies, advocate sociological, anthropological, and other professional scholars to go to the countryside to combine professional theories to fully explore the connotation of local culture, and compile teaching materials. While implementing the national unified curriculum standards, it should integrate the folk culture with local characteristics. Secondly, strengthen the cooperation and exchange between urban schools and rural schools by means of establishing a working mechanism of regular exchange of visits and cooperation. For instance, let urban and rural schools help one-on-one, and introduce scientific, reasonable, and cutting-edge education concepts, teaching models, curriculum evaluation, and other contents in rural schools, so as to update the education concept of rural schools [17]. Finally, schools should be encouraged to build a communication platform between parents and schools. Through home visiting and other ways, teachers should make parents realize the importance of home education and the important role of parents in the growth of students, so as to promote the development and progress of rural home education.

### **5. Conclusion**

In short, there are currently two major problems in the rural education system. Firstly, educational facilities are not perfect. Many rural schools have outdated teaching equipment and are unable to provide students with safe sports venues. Secondly, there is a serious shortage of teaching staff. Rural education faces problems such as imbalanced teacher structure, shortage of excellent teacher



resources, and severe aging of rural teachers. The rural economy's backwardness is the main cause of these problems, which result in a shortage of educational resources, making it difficult to implement educational policies, outdated teaching facilities, and poor teaching environment, which also affect the quality of teaching. In addition, school management and educational concepts for students are unreasonable, and parents are not aware of the importance of family education, resulting in a low proportion of the rural population receiving education despite government financial support and policy protection.

Based on these situations, the government must increase financial support for rural areas to ensure that the infrastructure conditions of rural education meet the needs of teaching. The government should also stimulate Non-Governmental Organization and universities to collaborate and participate in the development of rural education. In addition to this material resource, it is also necessary to address the current situation of the lack of local culture and unreasonable educational concepts and to rebuild the value orientation of rural education by encouraging local governments to develop school-based textbooks that conform to local cultural characteristics and strengthening communication between urban and rural schools. Only then may rural education truly adapt to China's modern development and contribute to narrowing the urban-rural gap based on rural education development.

The research analyzes the current situation, problems, and reasons of the rural education system through policy texts and authoritative data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, and proposes some targeted development strategies, including improving infrastructure construction and strengthening teacher training. This helps to promote the overall development of rural education and improve education quality, providing policy direction for the government and decision-makers to improve rural education. Due to the complexity of the rural education system and the difficulty of data collection, this paper may face issues such as incomplete data acquisition and insufficient analysis of policy texts, which may lead to certain limitations in the analysis or promotion of policy recommendations on certain issues. Future research needs to further overcome these limitations, improve the reliability and effectiveness of research methods, and promote sustainable development and comprehensive improvement of rural education systems.

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