

Chapter 16

Experiences and Challenges of the Chinese Rural Education Development in the Context of the Rapid Urbanization

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ABSTRACT

With the speeding-up of the Chinese economy, China is experiencing the rapid urbanization. Meanwhile, the Chinese rural education is also developing, which has made great progress in recent years. However, inequity between urban and rural education prevalently exists in China, and the unbalanced development of urban and rural areas still influences the Chinese education. However, the Chinese have taken a lot of measures to enhance the quality of rural education, such as ad hoc post policy, the school meal program, and so on. In addition, the rural schools have also launched some activities to develop the students and to serve the society.

INTRODUCTION

With considerable economic development and population growth at the global scale, various cities have been undergoing rapid urbanization (Wu et al., 2016). In the past 30 years, the proportion of Chinese urban residents to total population of the world has increased to 54.77% from 1984 to 2014 (NBSC, 2015). According to forecasts, by 2050 the proportion of China's urban population to the world's population will rise from 54% to 66% in 2014 (United Nations, 2014). However, China's urban population has become a major event (Yang, 2013) affecting the Chinese people's life.

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In March 2014, the CPC (Central Committee of the Communist Party of China) and the State Council jointly released the “National New-type urbanization Plan (2014–2020)” (Zhu, 2014). The urbanization as a national policy was pointed to explore a new path toward sustainable urbanization (Chen et al., 2016). However, there are still some questions that need to solve. First, it is widely believed that the land urbanization is much faster than population urbanization under the China’s urbanization process (Liu et al., 2014); Second, vast numbers of migrant workers were just counted as urban population, but could not generally enjoy basic public services and social security; Third, many cities in China have encountered the problems such as environmental degradation, traffic congestion, soaring housing prices, and urban fragility, which have aroused great concern.

Urbanization has promoted the industrial upgrading of urban areas, which enhanced and integrated the economic and social development of urban and rural areas, but it has also caused extensive development. (Chen, 2015) Some studies have shown that migrant workers cannot truly integrate into urban society through “simultaneous citizenization”, but they are just semi-melt or semi-urbanization (Wang, 2006). Therefore, although migrant workers have obtained citizenship, if they cannot integrate into the city better, the new contradictions will still occur, which will affect the benign operation and harmonious development of society. (Chen, 2015)

Some scholars believed that urbanization is not a simple change in the proportion of urban population, but a process and result of human modernization in essence. However, Chu Hongqi, vice president of Beijing education scientific research institute, claimed that education must promote people all around development and its core mission is to promote human urbanization and citizenization of rural migrant population. (Chu, 2015) Human urbanization pay great attention to human rights, human welfare and human subjectivity, and take the comprehensive development of human beings as the starting and ultimate destination. (Wu, 2015) under the new urbanization background, rural education needs to undergo great changes, adjustment and optimization between urban and rural areas, it is not only the necessary, but also an inevitable requirement for the development of education itself.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Urban generally includes the cities and towns, but most of the world’s small population country generally consider urbanization to be a process of population transfer and centralization to cities (Zhang, 2013). Chu believes (Chu, 2015) that urbanization means the process of gathering non-agricultural industries and concentrating rural population in cities. In the social science dictionary, Rosie argues that urbanization has four meanings. First, the urban center disseizes the process to the rural hinterland; second, the whole society accepts generally the urban culture process; third, the process of population concentration, including the increase of concentration points and the expansion of each concentration point; fourth, the process of the urban population proportion increasing in the whole society. (Xu, 1988) Besides, there are different perspectives from different disciplines.

From the demographic point of view, urbanization is the process transferring and concentrating population from rural area to cities. In China, there are a large size of population in rural areas, meanwhile, rural areas are often regarded as poverty-stricken or underprivileged. The urbanization of China is first the migration of rural population from countryside to cities and towns. They are only working in the towns, but they still live in the rural areas; Second, the rural people become directly the town or city

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