

Measures in Rural Education in China

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Abstract. This paper focuses on the issues of rural education development in China. Education is the cornerstone of development. As a populous and developing country, China pays great attention to education issues. The Chinese government and people have made many directional efforts for the development of education, but there are still many regional, cultural, and linguistic problems in the practical stages of policy implementation due to China's vast territory. Especially in the aspect of rural education, there are still many problems, and the revival of rural education also promotes the development of rural revitalization. This paper analyzes and introduces the current education environment and the problems of uneven education resources based on various education policies in China today, and proposes solutions to rural education problems, including localized curriculum setting for rural education, directed training for rural teachers, organic integration of new media and education, and the creation of spatial awareness in rural education.

Keywords: Rural education, educational measures, revitalization of rural education in China.

1. Introduction

Education has always been the cornerstone of national development, and the education issue in rural areas of China remains one of the major challenges in the education sector. Although the government has formulated many relevant policies on this issue, how to implement them and how to implement them effectively is still a content that China needs to continuously explore. Nowadays, China is vigorously promoting the rural revitalization policy, in which rural education is one of the key points of rural revitalization. The development of education affects the advancement of rural revitalization.

The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation needs to be realized through Chinese-style modernization, and China is steadily moving towards this goal. In the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Chinese leaders stated that the central task of the Communist Party of China at this stage is to unite and lead the people of all ethnic groups in the country to comprehensively build a modern socialist country and achieve the second centenary goal: Basically realize modernization and build a prosperous, strong, democratic and civilized socialist country [1]. Education is the foundation for national development and the cornerstone for national strength. Rural education plays a crucial role in the development of education in China, and only by developing rural education well can people effectively promote the modernization of education in China. The modernization of education in China is an important component of Chinese-style modernization, and promoting the modernization of education in China can provide strong technological and talent support for Chinese-style modernization. However, in the process of modernization of education in China, rural education is a shortcoming' [2]. On the issue of education, the Chinese government has formulated many relevant policies such as the "Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Extracurricular Training for Students in Compulsory Education", which explicitly states the need to reduce the heavy burden of homework and extracurricular training for students, this policy requires students to focus more on improving their overall literacy and skills, which has led to a greater emphasis on the enhancement of students' core competencies and comprehensive abilities in primary school Chinese teaching [3]. It further emphasizes the importance of the Chinese language as a subject; Notification on the Pilot Work of Chief Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools in the Central and Western Regions, implementing the Rural Teacher Support Plan, cultivating "special teachers" for rural areas, implementing special

plans for targeted training of outstanding teachers in underdeveloped areas, and improving the treatment and career development space of rural teachers [4]. The Compulsory Education Law requires all children and adolescents of school age to receive national education, which the state, society, and families must guarantee. Its essence is a system of compulsory education for a certain period of time imposed by the state according to the law, etc. [5]. The revitalization of rural education has directly influenced and promoted the development of rural revitalization, highlighting its importance. With the support of policies, education plans and content with local characteristics are formulated based on the actual background of the countryside.

2. Problems

In recent years, with the increase in economic strength, the educational level of urban areas has grown rapidly and rural education has also made progress to a certain extent with the attention of the state and the government. However, there are still many problems in rural education, such as a shortage of educational funds, inadequate educational facilities, remote rural areas, and inconvenient transportation.

2.1. The Conflict between Merging and Cancelling Rural Primary and Secondary Schools

The majority of children in rural areas live with their elderly relatives as left-behind children. Due to the underdevelopment of rural areas, low overall education levels, and a relatively closed-off information environment, they do not place a high value on education. With the increasing number of migrant workers moving to cities, some children follow their parents to other places to study and live, resulting in a decrease in the number of students attending rural schools. The integration, consolidation, and restoration of these schools is a major issue. From 2001 to 2012, adjusting the layout of rural primary and secondary schools according to local conditions achieved some success. At the same time as the school layout was being rearranged, the number of rural primary and secondary schools also rapidly decreased. During the implementation of this policy, many problems arose due to school construction, safety, and distance between home and school, and the large-scale negative side effects of merging and cancelling rural schools became evident. However, there were no corresponding measures put in place to support this consolidation and cancellation of primary and secondary schools. In this period, the country also issued a series of documents that promoted the priority development of rural education and strengthened the construction of rural schools and town boarding schools. Nevertheless, the merging and cancelling of rural primary and secondary schools did not come to a complete stop and the reduction in the number of rural schools has not stopped either. In the past decade, the conflict between merging and cancelling rural primary and secondary schools and their restoration and preservation has made it difficult for rural education to truly return to the countryside [6].

2.2. The Quality Issues of Teaching Content and Teaching Team

The quality issues of teaching content and the teaching team are also facing the problem of how to improve the quality. Teachers in rural areas who work on the front line of teaching in rural primary and secondary schools in poor and backward areas play multiple roles in the rural education process, including teaching, nurturing, safety and health, education extension and campus management. They consciously take on social responsibilities, serve as cultural bonds between rural society and rural primary and secondary schools, and are the foundation of civilization between rural primary and secondary schools and modern society. This also shows that the development of rural education requires certain demands on rural teachers, but the unequal treatment issue has caused many highly educated teachers to be unwilling to take on "excessive" job content. This also results in the lack of good teaching staff and teaching quality in rural schools.

3. Suggestions

Regarding these issues, Chinese education researchers have proposed the construction of "localized education content with Chinese characteristics" as a major recommendation, providing a great exploration direction for the development of rural education in China. Rural education can be arranged reasonably according to the local characteristics of the region. In Heze, Shandong, rural schools use local resources to offer countryside courses, encouraging students to cultivate their spirits and shape their characters through labor practices. In Tongnan, Chongqing, rural schools establish juvenile palaces and provide platforms for students to learn paper-cutting, bamboo weaving, and tie-dye, promoting their comprehensive development in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, and labor skills. In Chengdu, Sichuan, rural schools deeply explore the culture and value of the local pottery industry, guiding students to experience and appreciate the beauty of labor and creation... In recent years, various regions have actively explored teaching curricula with rural characteristics, injecting new vitality into the high-quality development of rural education in China. Chinese people have always had an attachment to their hometown. Since ancient times, Chinese people have attached great importance to the inheritance of their family and the protection of their land. Ancestor worship and hometown memories have formed a unique cultural form. Chinese poetry, literature, music, and other art forms have expressed their deep affection for their hometowns to varying degrees. Although the reform and opening-up policy has enabled many people to enter big cities, their feelings for their hometown have not faded. On the contrary, with the acceleration of urbanization and the progress of social transformation, people's emotions towards their hometowns have become more rooted. This has also brought emotional support to the development of rural education with local characteristics.

3.1. Curriculum Design

In terms of curriculum design, schools can offer relevant courses according to local conditions, thereby enhancing students' sense of belonging and emotional connection to their hometown. China has a vast territory with unique rural scenery and local cultures, which determines that rural education needs to pay more attention to local cultural ecology. When designing courses, rural schools could adapt to local conditions and integrate social and natural cultural knowledge, such as local historical evolution, folk customs, traditional skills, climate, animals, plants, etc., into the curriculum content, guiding students to fully experience the cultural connection with the countryside. In the actual teaching process, various forms of teaching activities, such as experience, participation, and practice, can be carried out, utilizing teaching resources such as labor scenes, mountain and forest natural landscapes, etc., to create teaching scenes that are close to nature and life, cultivating students' cultural identity with the countryside subconsciously. In localized education development, schools can adopt project-based learning to enrich rural students' rural life experiences and improve their localized participation. Project-based learning emphasizes that teachers should focus on students and teach knowledge based on real contextual problems [7]. Through group collaboration, relevant information and existing experience are utilized to solve problems, construct core knowledge, and enhance personal core literacy. Moreover, with few students, teachers can better focus on students' specific needs to carry out localized teaching, and students have more opportunities to participate and cooperate. Students can express their opinions on issues actively and jointly design and investigate, and they can also obtain personalized learning feedback from teachers. This small team participation is conducive to students' access to high-quality project-based learning opportunities and enriches their rural learning experience and stimulates students' willingness to participate in localized learning. Localized project-based learning is a kind of exploratory, experiential, and situational learning, as well as interdisciplinary learning that combines multiple subject knowledge. It not only enriches students' out-of-school life experiences but also guides them to construct knowledge and develop inquiry ability, accelerating students' integration into rural life. Localized project-based learning can promote students' deeper integration into rural areas and stimulate their emotional attachment to the countryside. The emotional attachment of rural students to the countryside is based on rural dependence and rural identity. Enhancing students' emotional attachment to the countryside requires

rural identity, strengthening rural belonging, stimulating students' internal motivation to participate in localized learning in the future, and setting up their desire to participate actively. Rural dependence and rural identity are the foundation of rural students' emotional attachment and the prerequisite for their integration into the countryside.

3.2. Training Programs

To cultivate rural teachers through targeted training programs, engage university students in teaching activities, and improve the quality of teaching. Rural teachers act as effective intermediaries between rural schools and communities, and play an important role in implementing local education reform and connecting schools with communities, particularly in guiding students' localized learning. Furthermore, increasing the focus on rural student teacher programs and special teacher placement policies, while encouraging and supporting graduates of higher education institutions to teach in rural areas, will help address the shortage of teachers in rural schools. Student teaching not only benefits individual experiences, but also facilitates the sharing of advanced teaching techniques among regions. For example, in Chongqing, China's support plan for Tibet involves sending targeted professionals, including healthcare and education experts, from Chongqing to the Tibet region each year to improve local technology levels and teaching skills. Selecting and training young rural teachers through local teacher's colleges is also an important means of alleviating the challenges faced by rural young teachers. Local teacher's colleges have a major obligation to serve the education development of their region (including rural areas). By offering specific admission programs, job training programs, and student subsidies for rural populations, local teacher's colleges recruit and train local teacher candidates and specialize in producing local special temporary teachers to stabilize the teaching staff in rural schools. Relying on the rich academic research atmosphere of local teacher's colleges can also cultivate theoretical research awareness and skills among rural education majors, which will form the basis for future participation in localized teaching research and practice. The United States' "Grow-your-own" project in rural areas is a model to follow. Each state selects students from rural areas to attend local higher education and teacher training institutions, and then returns to teach in their hometown rural schools after graduating. This project not only alleviates the shortage of teachers in rural areas, but also focuses on cultivating teachers with hometown affection and a desire to stay in rural areas during their teacher training. As teaching candidates are from rural areas, they have close ties to these regions, allowing for more opportunities to understand local customs and delve into the interaction between schools and society. Moreover, this project integrates rural cultural elements into teacher education curriculum and internship programs to consistently cultivate the teacher candidate's rural cultural care, rural responsibility, and rural identity [8].

3.3. Utilize New Media Technology

Government should fully utilizing new media technology to create a new digital teaching environment in rural areas and incorporate modern information technology into rural education and teaching, and build an intelligent, information-based, and digital rural education new model, making information technology in rural education an important driving force for rural education development and allowing school education to keep up with the times and for students to learn new knowledge in a timely manner. Based on the resources of high-speed multimedia networks, cloud computing, and intelligent decision-making platform systems sharing big data, environmental construction, resource sharing, task allocation, teacher development, and course and teaching evaluation system monitoring and response are carried out for dispersed school site platforms in various rural areas, school and home user terminals, thus achieving a series of intelligent decision-making functions. Also, it is significant to create "Internet of Things+" smart campuses, campus security systems, smart libraries, and smart writing systems. Construct an intelligent environment including school-specific resources in the smart classroom application scenario. Simultaneously promote the construction of remote online education resources such as "Cloud Classroom", "Famous Teacher Network Classroom", and "Famous School Network Classroom". "Internet + Education" is also an important means for modern

society to engage in cross-school and cross-regional education and integrate educational resources. With the support of the Internet, firstly, the boundaries of "homeland" are expanded, and the localized education cooperation network of rural schools expands beyond the narrow scope of a single rural area. Secondly, the local resources of different rural areas within the county are shared, and localized education accepts human resources and local resources from different rural areas with a more open view and a more inclusive attitude. With the help of new media technology, regional barriers between schools are broken, promoting the exchange and dissemination of educational experiences and greatly assisting and enhancing the teaching and management of rural schools.

3.4. Spatial Consciousness in Rural Education

With the deepening of the national rural revitalization strategy and the promotion of high-quality and balanced education, the Chinese people's attitudes towards rural education will continue to improve. However, theoretical research has not been synchronous with this progress. Due to the inertia of the research perspective and the stereotype of most people, the achievements and superiority of urban education have always been an implicit standard, while rural education is often seen as an object that needs rescue. Even today, most people still tend to view rural areas with their own ambiguous eyes instead of exploring the rich educational resources in rural communities with reverence. As a result, the educational structure in rural areas cannot be recognized and constructed with systematic and professional methods.

Space is a very broad concept that has been formed as a regional concept through long-term practical experience. The determination of spatial boundaries requires continuous practice by humans. In the process of practice, space and time constitute a basic system. In the research of social sciences, the concept of space is a combination of time and space, which studies the relationship between individuals and the world. In educational activities, having appropriate spatial concepts can promote the development of educational activities. However, due to the lack of necessary sorting of spatial concepts in educational research for a long time, the understanding of space is also relatively weak [9].

To establish the "spaces" for rural education, it should start from the aspects of nurturing space, practical space, teaching space, and intrinsic space. It is linked with people who possess local knowledge, and it involves cultural space levels that primarily consist of various historical relics and memories, such as various cultural relics, documents, legends, skills, customs, beliefs, and local knowledge. Essentially, it is a space-time place where historical remnants and memories coexist and interact. The nurturing space is formed through the accumulation of time. In the temporal dimension, it extends deep into history and infinitely into the future. The practice space refers to a cultural space level that is based on specific production places, aims to perceive, understand and utilize nature, uses designing and producing products, cultivating crops as means, transmits production skills as links, and focuses on cognitive nature, complying with nature, utilizing environment and achieving survival as the main tasks. It is an important part of rural education practice, closely related to physical education, intellectual education and labor education in rural education. It is derived from the nurturing space and always refers to the present in the time dimension. The teaching space refers to the cultural space hierarchy established on the basis of the teaching facilities and venues of rural schools, such as classrooms, laboratories, dormitories, canteens, landscapes, playgrounds, libraries, etc., which constitute its objective entities. The spiritual activities, social relationships, and practical experiences related to learning, such as curriculum teaching, learning and seminars, cultural and sports activities, institutional development, campus atmosphere, and teacher-student relationships, are the non-material parts within this space. Positioned above the practice space and nurturing space, in terms of its generative logic, the teaching space is jointly developed and derived from the former two. The intrinsic space is derived from the first three levels of space hierarchy, yet it has a broader and more complex connotation system. Essentially, it is the overlapping, integration, and extension of natural space, spiritual space, and social space in rural society. It is a field of physical and cultural elements, as well as a hierarchy of power resources and cultural spaces. The intrinsic space

encompasses the collection of various cultural elements such as education, culture, self-awareness, cultural stance, social understanding, and daily customs that arise from the people's cognition and expectations in rural society [10].

4. Conclusion

China is a populous country, and the rural population makes up a large portion. Rural education has always been one of the focuses in China, but with the development of the times and rapid changes in technology, the direction and methods of rural education need to be constantly adjusted. It is important to closely integrate the curriculum with local rural culture, so that students can have cultural confidence. Targeted training for rural teachers can help to elevate the overall quality of the teaching team. Rational use of new media technology can help to link rural information to urban areas. Rural education can cultivate high-quality talent for national and regional development, injecting powerful momentum into the development of rural areas.

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