

Research on Education Guarantee for Left behind Children in Rural Areas under the Background of Rural Revitalization

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Abstract: The problem of left behind children in rural areas is a phased issue that has emerged in China's urbanization process, which is related to the healthy growth, family happiness, and social stability of children in rural areas. This article uses existing literature to sort out the current situation of education for left behind children in rural China and its impact on their development. The study found that there are problems in the education of left behind children in rural areas of China, such as lack of family education, inadequate school education, and uneven development of educational security. Research suggests that in order to effectively address this series of issues, it is necessary to take the "Family Education Promotion Law" as the core to promote families to take responsibility, enrich the content of school education, promote rural economic development through rural industrial revitalization, and strengthen the protection of education for left behind children in rural areas through the improvement of laws.

1. Introduction

In December 2022, the China Rural Education Development Research Institute of Northeast Normal University released the "China Rural Education Development Report 2020-2022" (hereinafter referred to as the "Report") online. According to the report, 90.9% of migrant children attend public schools or enjoy government purchased degree services from private schools, while the number of left behind children continues to decrease. In 2021, there were 11.992 million rural left behind children with compulsory education in China, including 7.7793 million in primary school and 4.2127 million in junior high school, accounting for 7.59% of the total number of students in compulsory education. Compared to 2012, the number of people decreased by 10.7187 million, a decrease of 47.20%. Although the scale of left behind children in rural areas is gradually shrinking, the total amount is relatively large and will not disappear for a certain period of time. Their education issues still attract attention from various aspects such as the country and society.

The characteristic of this article is to further broaden the research perspective. The issue of education security for left behind children is not only within the scope of sociology and education, but can also be explored from economic and legal perspectives. With a richer perspective, multiple paths and strategies to solve the problem can be explored to ensure that left behind children in rural

areas receive high-quality education, and to assist in the efficient implementation of rural revitalization policies.

2. The difficulties faced by education security for left behind children in rural areas

2.1 Lack of Family Education

Family education is very important for children in their growth period, as it plays an irreplaceable role in cultivating their character, cultivating good living habits, and promoting healthy psychology. From the current education situation of left behind children in China, the widespread lack of family education has posed certain obstacles to the education of left behind children.

Firstly, due to the parents of left behind children working outside for a long time, intergenerational care, and foster care at relatives' homes, this situation often leads to a weak foundation of family education. The grandparents of these left behind children usually have not received a complete and systematic education, and even cannot speak Mandarin, making it difficult to tutor their children academically. They are also prone to spoiling their children, making it difficult for them to cultivate good learning habits during their growth period. In addition, the older generation does not attach enough importance to their children's education, making it easy for them to overlook the importance of learning.^[1]

Secondly, left behind children are prone to psychological problems due to the lack of parental companionship, which can pose a significant obstacle to receiving education. Due to parents working outside and having less leisure time, left behind children have little communication with their parents. Occasional communication is also a concern for daily life, making it difficult to touch on psychological issues. Left behind children find it difficult to open up to their parents, and there is a generation gap with their grandparents who take care of them. In addition, the lack of correct guidance can easily lead to distorted values, moral and disciplinary problems, and can also cause the left behind children group to be introverted, not good at speaking, avoiding interpersonal communication, and have a bad temper. When children experience mental health problems, the negative impact on their education is self-evident.

2.2 Inadequate school education

The essence of school education is to teach and educate people, providing a good educational environment for left behind children, and playing a very important role in their growth process. From the current education situation of left behind children in China, there are certain deficiencies in school education.

Firstly, the overall level of rural teachers in most impoverished areas of China is not high. Teachers lack professionalism, and in some regions, there is a phenomenon where one teacher leads the entire subject. The teacher's profession does not correspond to the subject being taught, making it difficult to ensure the quality of education for left behind children in rural areas. Teachers lack a grasp of the personal situation of left behind children, adopt uniform educational methods, ignore the true thoughts and needs of children, and lack precision in education.

Secondly, the school's teaching content is single, focusing on exam oriented education and neglecting the concept of comprehensive development. From the current practice of rural education, everything is dominated by subjects in exam oriented education, neglecting other aspects of children's growth. Schools lack professional psychological counseling courses and do not carry out related activities, and the psychological problems that are most likely to occur for left behind children are not included in the scope of school education. Lack of safety education in schools

makes it difficult for left behind children to take full care of their children due to the difficulty of raising grandparents in the next generation. Their safety awareness is weak and they are prone to safety accidents. Schools lack legal education, and left behind children lack awareness of preventing illegal infringement, making them vulnerable to infringement or harm others. In recent years, incidents of rural left behind children violating the law due to a lack of legal knowledge have occurred frequently.^[2]

Finally, there is a lack of after-school education service mechanisms in schools, and there is a gap in educational care services for left behind children. At present, the after-school service content in rural primary and secondary schools is single, and the content is still limited to self-care homework, independent reading, and collective tutoring. There is a lack of sports, music, handicrafts, and art activities that are conducive to cultivating children's interests and hobbies. There is a lack of group practice activities that can exercise children's communication and cooperation abilities. Left behind children have difficulty accessing educational activities outside of books, which is not conducive to cultivating children's interests and hobbies, expanding their horizons, enriching their practical activities, and exercising their ability to interact with others.

2.3 Uneven development level of education security

At present, there is a certain gap in education between urban and rural areas in China, with uneven allocation of educational resources and a significant gap in the direction of children's education.

Firstly, there is a significant difference in hardware facilities for education between urban and rural areas, and there is insufficient investment in education in rural areas. The teaching environment in rural areas is significantly inferior to that in urban areas, with incomplete teaching facilities and hardware facilities such as teaching tools, student sports venues, and computer equipment that are difficult to popularize in the compulsory education stage in rural areas. There is a significant difference from the high-end and sound teaching environment in urban areas. There is a significant difference in the allocation of teachers between rural areas and urban areas. There is a shortage of teachers in rural areas and the quality of existing teachers is not high. The treatment of teachers in rural areas needs to be improved. According to existing data, the proportion of primary school teachers in rural areas in 2022 is 1.88:1, and the national average proportion of teachers is 2.02:1. During the compulsory education stage, I have been continuously employed for 10 years and have been awarded the opportunity to become a first-class teacher. The rate in urban areas is 5.3%, while in rural areas it is 3.5%. Urban areas are still better than rural areas. Young rural teachers are more inclined to teach in urban areas. The treatment of rural teachers needs to be improved, making it difficult to retain educational talents. Therefore, the quality of education enjoyed by children in rural areas cannot be compared to that in urban areas.

Secondly, due to the uneven allocation of educational resources between urban and rural areas, there is a significant gap in the direction of children's education, which affects their subsequent development. In some extremely impoverished areas, many school-age left behind children and disadvantaged children are unable to enjoy compulsory education smoothly due to various reasons, and the phenomenon of dropping out midway is still visible. Due to the gap in educational resources between urban and rural areas during the compulsory education stage, the achievements of left behind children in rural areas are far inferior to those in urban areas, and their overall academic performance is low. The proportion of left behind children in rural areas who can smoothly enter high school is not as high as that in urban areas. In terms of subsequent choices and employment opportunities based on their scores in the middle school entrance examination and college entrance examination, there is a significant difference between children in urban and rural areas. The

proportion and quality of enrollment in urban areas are significantly higher than those in rural areas, while some children in rural areas go to work or learn skills after completing compulsory education. There is a greater gap between the two in subsequent employment.

3. Analysis of the reasons behind the difficulties in ensuring education for left behind children in rural areas

3.1 Lack of parental guidance makes it difficult for children to form correct concepts

At present, rural areas in China have backward industries, low levels of industrialization, and there are no large-scale enterprises and factories that can provide sufficient employment opportunities. The labor force in rural areas cannot find employment locally, and a large number of rural populations flow to cities to seek job opportunities. However, due to the high cost of living in urban areas, they can only leave their children in their hometowns to be raised by elderly people at home, resulting in a large number of left behind children. Due to the parents of left behind children working outside for a long time and being busy with work, it is difficult to pay attention to the psychological and learning situation of left behind children. In addition, with the backwardness of rural culture and the rapid popularization of information networks, left behind children in rural areas have received a large amount of information from the internet. Without proper guidance, children lack self-control and judgment to use the internet correctly, which to some extent has a negative impact on children's values.^[3]

3.2 Serious talent loss and backward education level in rural areas

The loss of rural talents and the backwardness of education level have a significant impact on the education guarantee of left behind children. On the one hand, the quality and level of teachers greatly affect the quality of education, but currently, rural areas in China have poor conditions and lack policies to attract talents. According to the "China Rural Education Development Report 2020-2022", the evaluation of teacher titles in compulsory education requires at least 10 years of teaching. The specific number of indicators for urban and rural distribution is 5.3% in urban areas, 4.0% in towns, and 3.5% in rural areas. Urban areas are significantly higher than rural areas, making it difficult to attract high-level teachers to teach in rural areas. On the other hand, the education level in rural areas is backward, and the idea of exam oriented education is deeply rooted. School education has a situation of "only score theory", with a single teaching content and a certain degree of emphasis on different subjects. Moral education, physical education, and aesthetic education have not received corresponding attention. This exam oriented education is easy to make children feel bored and neglect the cultivation of interests and strengths.^[4]

3.3 Backward development of rural economy and imbalanced government financial investment

The economy in rural areas is constrained by the dual urban-rural structure for a long time, and the imbalance between government financial investment and distribution has a significant impact on the education security of left behind children. On the one hand, the economy in rural areas is constrained by the slow development of the urban-rural dual structure, and the education guarantee for left behind children in rural areas is constrained by the level of economic development. Since the reform and opening up, the socialist market economy has developed rapidly, but the wealth gap has also been increasing. Currently, China still has an unbalanced economic development situation, and the urban-rural dual structure is not only reflected in the economy but also in education security.

Although China has been striving for high-quality and balanced development of compulsory education, due to the large gap in economic level, there is still an unshakable gap between urban and rural areas and regions in terms of education starting point level, education security policies, and education funding investment. On the other hand, the development level of compulsory education fully relies on government funding and policy support. From the perspective of uneven allocation of educational resources and the gap in the direction of children's education, the imbalance in government financial allocation has led to a significant gap in the level of education development between regions.^[5]

4. Countermeasures and suggestions for ensuring education for left behind children in rural areas

4.1 Promoting Family Responsibility

In 2022, China introduced the "Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China", which detailed the family education responsibilities that parents or other guardians of minors should fulfill. The introduction of this law also indicates the importance that the country attaches to promoting family education. Parents are the first teachers of their children, so parents of left behind children should have a sense of responsibility and take on the main responsibility for the family. Parents should pay attention to their children's physical and mental health, actively fulfill their responsibilities, and promote their comprehensive and healthy development.^[6]

4.1.1 Parents should care for their children in action

Parents are required to fulfill their guardianship duties and obligation to raise and educate their children under minors in accordance with the law. Firstly, parents should communicate more with the school and strengthen the connection between home and school. Although they are in a different location, they should also keep in touch with their children's schools and teachers, timely grasp all the dynamics of their children in school, actively cooperate with the teacher's management work, and communicate with their children in a timely manner when problems arise. Secondly, parents should strengthen communication with their children. Communication should not be limited to daily life and study. They should understand their children's inner thoughts, listen to their difficulties and concerns, and let their children feel the care from their parents. Finally, in this era of informatization, the popularization of the internet has had a huge impact on the growth of left behind children. Children are in the stage of forming a worldview and lack the ability to make independent judgments and constraints on the overwhelming amount of online information and games. Parents should guide children to have correct access to the internet to avoid addiction to online games or being influenced by negative online culture.

4.1.2 Parents should strengthen their sense of responsibility in their thinking.

Firstly, parents of left behind children need to establish correct educational concepts, strengthen their own ideological cultivation, and resolutely abandon the ideas of "knowledge is useless" and "materialism". They should convey the positive energy of "knowledge changes destiny" to their children, and make them realize the importance of reading. Secondly, parents of left behind children should not only fulfill their responsibilities by providing material support, but also pay attention to their children's mental health. When children show certain psychological problems, parents must not take them lightly and need to provide guidance as soon as possible. Parents should be aware of their important role in their children's growth process and promote their healthy growth through correct guidance.^[7]

4.2 Strengthening School Education

4.2.1 School teachers should be aware of the situation of left behind children

Teachers should have a comprehensive understanding of the family situation and personal characteristics of left behind children, and understand their guardianship and living conditions by establishing student files. Teachers should provide education tailored to the characteristics of each left behind child, teaching them according to their aptitude, and promptly contacting their parents when problems are discovered. School education is crucial for the physical and mental development of left behind children, and should be meticulous and meticulous.

4.2.2 Schools should strengthen psychological, safety, and legal education for left behind children

The responsibility of schools is not only to impart knowledge from textbooks, but also to pay attention to the mental health issues of left behind children, popularize necessary safety education and legal knowledge. With the popularization of the internet and the lack of guidance from parents, the psychological condition of left behind children is generally more complex. Schools should hire professional psychological teachers to regularly investigate the mental health status of left behind children. Once problems are found, timely psychological counseling should be provided, and professional psychological counseling rooms should be set up to facilitate left behind children to actively seek help. In addition, schools should regularly hold safety education lectures to provide students with safety education. Schools should also hold legal knowledge lectures in their spare time, provide the most basic legal education for left behind children, so that they have a profound legal awareness and can respect, learn, use, and abide by the law in daily life.

4.3 Provide economic and legal protection for education

4.3.1 Ensuring a balanced level of educational development through the revitalization of rural industries

At present, due to the long-standing urban-rural dual structure, the problem of uneven economic development between urban and rural areas requires the revitalization of rural industries to drive the economic development of rural areas. The revitalization of rural industries should actively explore local advantages, increase investment in rural tourism industry, improve supporting industry chains, actively develop the tertiary industry, combine current hot topics to create cultural tourism projects, develop rural tourism industry, increase the income of the tertiary industry, and promote rural economic development. By vigorously developing local industries to increase employment opportunities, attracting migrant workers to return to their hometowns for work or entrepreneurship, it is beneficial for them to balance family and work, accompany children's growth, make up for the lack of family education for left behind children, reduce the number of left behind children, balance regional economic development, weaken the gap brought by the urban-rural dual system, promote rural education security through economic development, optimize the allocation of educational resources, and ensure balanced and high-quality development of education.

At the same time, the government should increase its efforts in talent introduction, formulate relevant preferential policies, and guide college students to return to their hometowns for employment with better treatment. The government should improve the treatment of talent introduction, ensure the promotion space of college students, provide high-quality economic development level as a guarantee for teacher income, attract talents to come for employment, let more high-quality talents help the development of rural education, and inject young blood into rural

education.

4.3.2 Improve the legislative guarantee mechanism for funding investment

Adequate funding is the foundation of education security. From the current situation of education for left behind children in rural areas of China, the biggest limiting factor is insufficient investment in education funds and an imbalanced supply-demand relationship. Only by continuously reforming China's current education funding system and fully leveraging the leading role of the economy can effective guarantees be provided for the education of left behind children in rural areas of China. To improve the mechanism for ensuring education funding in China, it is necessary to clearly define the content of education funding in relevant laws such as the Compulsory Education Law.

The current mode of education funding in China is that the central government is responsible for most of the expenses and local governments supplement them. However, in reality, the central government has certain deficiencies in funding compulsory education, and the investment in education funds is mainly borne by local governments. Therefore, it is necessary to highlight the core role of the central government in education funding investment, increase the central government's education funding investment, and form an education investment model led by the central government and supplemented by local governments. The proportion of central and local government education funding investment should be clearly stipulated in legal provisions, so as to ensure the precise investment of education funds and promote the leading and safeguarding role of the economy in education.

4.3.3 Improve the legal supervision system for education

Establishing an effective education supervision and responsibility mechanism is one of the important ways to ensure the education of left behind children in rural areas. In practice, governments at all levels sometimes fail to implement laws and policies effectively due to their own interests. Although China has formulated some education related regulations and policies, it lacks corresponding supervision and accountability mechanisms. To promote the education security of left behind children in rural areas and promote education equity and balanced distribution of educational resources in China, it is necessary to establish effective supervision mechanisms.

The education administrative department should establish a strict internal supervision mechanism. When inappropriate or illegal administrative actions occur within the education administrative department, they should be promptly detected and dealt with. It is necessary to strengthen the internal hierarchical supervision mechanism of the higher education department over the lower education department, so as to effectively curb the abuse of power and avoid the supervisory subject from not actively fulfilling their supervisory responsibilities for personal gain.

5. Conclusion

In the new era, to solve the problem of education security for left behind children in rural areas, it is necessary for families, schools, and governments to coordinate and play necessary roles from their respective perspectives. Through the joint efforts of family education that parents care for, rich and comprehensive school education, economic security driven by rural industrial revitalization, and sound legislative protection mechanisms, we can provide guarantees for the education of left behind children in rural areas, so as to accurately solve the education problem of left behind children in rural areas and provide comprehensive and multi-dimensional care and protection for left behind children in rural areas.

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