

## *Original Paper*

# Research on Rural Compulsory Education in the Context of Rural Revitalization

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Received: May 25, 2023

Accepted: June 6, 2023

Online Published: June 9, 2023

doi:10.22158/jetss.v5n3p12

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/jetss.v5n3p12>

### **Abstract**

*Rural education has always been a shortcoming in the development of education. As the basic part of rural education, rural compulsory education affects the modern development of education from the root. At present, the development of rural compulsory education in China mainly faces the dilemma of uneven distribution of urban and rural educational resources, low teaching quality, weak educational awareness, and class division of rural families, etc. The strategy of rural revitalization in the new era provides conditions to support and policy guarantee for the development of rural compulsory education, and it is necessary to improve the development of rural compulsory education in terms of integrated planning, realizing education integration, building high-quality teachers, reshaping educational values, joint operation of urban and rural schools, and manifesting rural cultural. The development of compulsory education in rural areas should be improved in terms of integrated planning, integration of education, creation of high-quality teachers, reshaping of educational values, joint operation of urban and rural schools, and manifestation of rural culture.*

### **Keywords**

*Rural education, Compulsory education, Resource sharing, Education quality*

### **1. Introduction**

Since socialism with Chinese characteristics entered a new era, new progress has been made in the development of rural compulsory education, but it still faces the problem of educational decline. At the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the CPC, the construction requirement of “high-quality education system” was distinctly put forward. The Plenum pointed out that priority should be given to the development of agriculture and rural areas, the comprehensive promotion of rural revitalization, the insistence on addressing the “three rural issues” as the top priority of the whole Party, the pursuit of the road of socialist rural revitalization with Chinese characteristics, the

comprehensive implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, and the acceleration of agricultural and rural modernization. The rural revitalization strategy insists on the comprehensive revitalization of the countryside, and the revitalization of rural education is the “first move” of rural revitalization, and the vigorous development of rural compulsory education is an inevitable requirement to realize the modernization of rural education.

## **2. The Importance of Rural Compulsory Education in the Rural Revitalization Strategy**

Rural revitalization aims at the comprehensive revitalization of the countryside, and the most crucial thing is the revitalization of rural education. As an important part of rural education, rural compulsory education provides talent support for the continuous promotion of rural revitalization strategy, and is an indispensable source of power to realize rural revitalization strategy. The Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the State Council on the Implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy (hereinafter referred to as the Opinions) and the Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018-2022) issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council clearly point out that priority should be given to the development of rural education, and the cultivation and development of human capital should be given top priority (2020).

Education is a major national plan and the foundation of people’s livelihood. Building a strong education country is a systematic project, of which the key is to implement the fundamental task of establishing moral education , i.e., to cultivate people with both moral and intellectual ability, as well as comprehensive development of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor. Establishing moral education is the standard and requirement of the Party and the State for education under the new historical orientation, and it is the inevitable way to achieve a high-quality education system, which is the title of building a strong education country (Liu, 2023). The development of compulsory education in rural areas should be based on the actual situation, take moral education as the root, provide professional and all-round talent support for the implementation of rural revitalization strategy, promote rural revitalization with moral education, realize the two-way win-win situation of moral education and rural revitalization, and promote the modernization development of rural areas and the high-quality development of education.

## **3. The Dilemma Faced by the Development of Rural Compulsory Education in the Context of Rural Revitalization**

### *3.1 Unequal Distribution of Educational Resources and Large Gap between Urban and Rural Areas*

The main contradiction of our society in the new period is the contradiction between people’s growing need for a better life and unbalanced and insufficient development. The large urban-rural gap is one of the more prominent problems in the development process of China. At present, China still has the problem of urban-rural dual structure in many fields, and the unbalanced development of education is highlighted by the unbalanced distribution of educational resources.

First of all, the teacher strength of rural compulsory education is insufficient. At present, there is a serious shortage of teachers in rural schools, mainly in the form of “one teacher with multiple classes”, i.e., a single teacher is responsible for teaching multiple classes, which not only increases the burden of teachers, but also neglects the overall development of students’ education. On the other hand, due to the difficult conditions in the countryside, young people of today are reluctant to join the grassroots, resulting in a large brain drain in rural education. Secondly, public financial expenditure on education is uneven (Zou & Li, 2023). At present, the teaching equipment in the countryside is not yet perfect, and although rural schools have introduced some advanced hardware equipment, they still lack the technical support to match it, which to a certain extent leads to the waste of educational resources, while compared with urban areas, the diversified needs of new media provide new impetus for educational development. Responding to the new era of universalization toward a high-quality stage of development, breaking the barriers between urban and rural areas is an indispensable step. Finally, new teaching concepts and teaching methods are not synchronized and coordinated with rural schooling (Deng & Jiang, 2023). As the pace of the times continues to advance, the new period has put forward new requirements for education development. However, there is a big gap between the development status of rural compulsory education and the educational development requirements proposed in the new era, and the problem of rural compulsory education needs to be solved urgently.

### *3.2 Low Teaching Quality and Insufficient Professionalism of the Teaching Staff*

The development of education in the new era is committed to building a high-quality education system. The quality of teaching has become a major bottleneck for the modernization of rural compulsory education. To realize the high-quality development of rural compulsory education, we must break the bottleneck and build a professionally educated teacher team.

At present, the overall low quality of teaching in rural compulsory education is mainly manifested in the following aspects: First, the teaching structure is unreasonable. Most rural schools only offer the main courses such as language, mathematics and English, but there is a shortage of other courses such as computer, music and other skills courses, which is not conducive to the improvement of the overall teaching quality of the school, and also affects the overall development of students’ moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and social development. Second, the overall professionalism of rural teachers is not enough. The teachers in rural schools are polarized, one is that most of them are freshly graduated college students, who have not been able to practice their own literacy skills and teach based on their own theories alone; at the same time, as college students follow the trend of the times, most of them are reluctant to join the grassroots practice and are only temporarily teaching in the transitional period, without the intention of long-term teaching, and there is a fluke mentality in the teaching process, which affects the quality of the whole teaching. Secondly, some teachers are senior in age and have formed their own theoretical system due to years of teaching experience, which fails to be updated in time in the face of the changes in teaching methods and teaching concepts in the new period, which to a certain extent affects the improvement of education quality. Finally, the teaching management

mechanism is unreasonable (Li, Qian, Xing, & Song, 2022). The teaching management of rural schools is mostly in a loose state, the supervision and evaluation of teachers are not in place, and there is a lack of reasonable talent management mechanism, which leads to the teaching mentality of some teachers to get by and get by, and lowers the teaching quality of the whole school.

### *3.3 Inappropriate Educational Concept and Weak Educational Awareness*

One of the reasons for the continuous decline of rural compulsory education in China is that educational awareness has not been given high priority. Weak awareness of rural compulsory education is mainly manifested in teachers, parents and students themselves. At the teacher level, some rural teachers currently use the rural teaching process as a springboard to enter the internal mechanism, and their initial intention of teaching is not to devote themselves to the cause of education, which largely affects the popularization and development of rural compulsory education. When faced with the contradictory choice of pursuing personal freedom or devoting themselves to their own values, some teachers are more inclined to pursue their own freedom and lack the determination to devote themselves to society and the grassroots. At the parental level, the changing times still have not completely solved the problem of rural parents' education concept, and the "uselessness of studying" theory still exists. At the student level, the phenomenon of students dropping out of school is still prevalent. On the one hand, parents and schools fail to provide reasonable guidance to students in their rebellious stage, resulting in students dropping out of school prematurely; on the other hand, the diversified and personalized development of online media is also a major challenge to the development of education. Due to the wide range and timeliness of the Internet, it brings students a variety of messages and negative contents, such as the prevailing concept of "only those who work are the best", which has a subtle influence on the value shaping of young students and indirectly affects their learning status and life path. It indirectly affects students' learning status and life path choices.

### *3.4 Decrease in Student Population and Stratification of Rural Families*

A direct manifestation of the current unbalanced development of education in urban and rural areas is the transfer of rural students to towns for schooling (Kou & Zong, 2023). With the continuous improvement of living standard, people's pursuit is no longer purely material life, and tends to higher level of spiritual pursuit. In terms of educational investment, there is a contradiction between limited educational resources and parents' growing educational expectations. Compared with the county education system, rural compulsory education has limited resources in terms of teachers, teaching quality and infrastructure, which cannot meet the needs of some parents who are eager to change their families through education. For these families, the town means the starting point and half of their children's education is already successful. However, this phenomenon is only found in families with good income, and there is no change in the education of poor families. Poor families choose to attend school in the countryside more often due to their limited financial resources. On the one hand, as rural residents continue to move to towns and cities, a large number of rural students are lost, resulting in some local schools in the countryside becoming unused resources, and the "removal of schools" to

consolidate educational resources. The increasing disparity in education within the countryside has, to a certain extent, exacerbated the decline of compulsory education in the countryside. At the same time, the presence of a large number of families in the countryside who work in the city and whose children follow their parents to the city because they are away all the time is one of the reasons for the decrease in the number of students in rural schools. On the other hand, the county cities continue to expand the scale of schooling and build a diversified and high-quality teaching system, in contrast to rural schools, and the competition for high-quality resources accelerates the decline of rural education.

#### **4. Construction of the Path of Rural Compulsory Education Development in the Context of Rural Revitalization**

##### *4.1 Coordinate Planning and Promote the Integration of Urban and Rural Education*

Education is the “first move” to promote the development of various undertakings. In the face of the imbalance between urban and rural education resources in the new era, it is necessary to make comprehensive planning and devote to realize the integration of urban and rural education by promoting rural areas and protecting urban areas with rural areas. First of all, at the institutional level, the government should strengthen the system of rural compulsory education, focus the development of education on rural compulsory education, build a talent introduction mechanism and guarantee mechanism in line with the actual development of rural areas, cultivate and encourage more young scholars to join the grassroots, strengthen the team of teachers in rural compulsory education, solve the problem of human resources shortage, and realize the sustainable development of rural education. Second, increase the government’s financial investment in rural compulsory education. To promote urban-rural integration, the first step is to narrow the gap between rural and urban areas in terms of material resources, and to achieve a balanced distribution of human resources through the balance of material resources, which is an important step in promoting the high-quality development of rural education and an inevitable requirement for the realization of urban-rural integration. Finally, focus on practicality and strengthen the strong guarantee of compulsory education resources in rural areas (Chen & Qin, 2022). On the one hand, while meeting the diversified needs of rural compulsory education resource allocation, there must be practical safeguards for resource allocation in place to avoid the idle and unreasonable use of education resources and to realize the integration and optimal allocation of resources. On the other hand, under the call of building a high-quality education system in the new era, it is necessary to start from the actual development of rural compulsory education, avoid using urban education thinking to guide the development of rural compulsory education, build an education system in line with rural development, achieve high-quality development of rural compulsory education, and promote the integration of urban and rural education.

##### *4.2 Optimize the Education System and Build a High-quality Faculty*

The construction of high quality education system firstly proposes “quality”, followed by “high quality”. The biggest gap between rural compulsory education and urban compulsory education is the

gap of teaching quality, which is also the main reason for the continuous decline of rural compulsory education. Optimizing the system of rural compulsory education and exploring a suitable and practical path for the development of rural compulsory education is an urgent issue to be solved. First of all, to meet the broad and popular needs of teaching contents. The teaching content of rural teaching is single and inclined to theoretical courses, and courses for students' skill development and cultivation are relatively scarce. Schools should optimize the teaching structure, offer courses that help realize students' all-round development, focus on two-way cultivation of theory and practice, and provide strong talent support for rural revitalization. Secondly, teacher vocational training should be conducted to improve teachers' professionalism. Due to the phenomenon of polarization within rural teachers, vocational training must be provided to in-service teachers, emphasizing the core standard requirements of teachers in the new era and policy changes, comprehensively strengthening theoretical literacy and practical operation ability, and creating a teacher team with high quality and strong skills. Finally, the school Strengthen and improve the teaching management mechanism, build a strict and effective teacher supervision system and assessment system, realize the effective guidance and play of teachers' talents, innovate the employment method, optimize the talent incentive mechanism, activate the vitality of talents, improve teachers' psychological quality from both material and spiritual aspects, and enhance the sense of belonging and honor of teachers engaged in education work.

#### *4.3 Establishing Correct Value Orientation and Reshaping the View of Education*

Theory is the precursor of practice, and scientific and correct theory can guide us to understand practice and transform the objective world through practice. Educational concept directly affects whether the modernization process of education can be carried out smoothly, and a scientific and correct educational concept is conducive to the goal of urban-rural education integration and the construction of a high-quality education system. First of all, at the teacher level, teachers should establish a correct concept of education, have a clear understanding and positioning of the teaching profession, and have a full understanding of their position, so that they can really devote themselves to the cause of education. Faced with the difficult environment of the countryside, they should have the spirit and determination to dedicate themselves to society and others, and set an example of being a teacher. Secondly, at the level of parents, we should strengthen the role of the Internet and public opinion, enhance parents' awareness of education, and break down the barrier of "the theory of uselessness of studying". Parents should be encouraged and supported to participate in social practice activities and related training activities to popularize the concept of education with actions instead of theories. Finally, at the student level, parents must provide timely, scientific and reasonable guidance to students who are in the rebellious stage of adolescence, so that they do not go to extremes and drop out of school. In the process of education, schools should always pay attention to the psychological condition of students, and when necessary, provide guidance and direction to students to help them solve the problems they encounter in the process of education. Students themselves should resist the temptation brought by the online world and use electronic devices in a controlled and regular manner in the learning process. To

sum up, the renewal and reshaping of educational concepts not only depends on ourselves, but also needs the supervision of social groups, and the development of the cause of education needs the efforts of each of us.

#### *4.4 Jointly Run Schools in Urban and Rural Areas to Highlight Rural Characteristics*

Responding to the requirements of integrated development of urban and rural education in the new era, we innovate the form of school operation, realize joint operation of urban and rural schools, and show the advantages of rural cultural characteristics. In the face of the new situation in the new era, it is necessary to adhere to specific analysis of specific problems and find the road that truly meets the development of rural compulsory education. On the one hand, the government should increase the sharing of resources between the county and the countryside, give priority to the allocation of resources for rural education while promoting the development of education in the county, make rural education the focus of development, transform the previous mode of independent schooling into joint schooling between urban and rural areas, realize the sharing of material and human resources, narrow the gap between urban and rural education resources, enable students to enjoy the same educational resources as those in the city, and realize the reasonable distribution of student sources. In the process of building compulsory education in rural areas, the government has been working on the development of a new type of rural school, which will lay the foundation for the further modernization of education. On the other hand, in the process of building rural compulsory education, the local government must conduct scientific and reasonable research and evaluation of the “abolition of schools”, adhere to the principle of specific analysis of specific problems, according to the actual situation of rural schools, the idle educational resources are handled in a standardized manner, adhere to the coordination and unity of running schools and running good schools, and attract more students and educational professionals. We will continue to make efforts to attract more students and education professionals to join the grassroots and the education industry. At the same time, subsidies will be given to poor families facing the problem of “school abolition” to alleviate the economic pressure of poor families, to ensure the right of every child to education, to combat the problem of student attrition at the source, to promote the sustainable development of rural compulsory education, and to realize the modernization of rural education.

## **5. Conclusion**

Education is a major issue that affects people’s livelihood. Compulsory education in China is the basic part of the whole education process, and whether the foundation is strong or not depends on whether the goal of education modernization can be achieved. Under the background of rural revitalization strategy, the development of compulsory education in rural areas ushers in an opportunity period. At present, there is still a big gap between the development of rural compulsory education and urban compulsory education, which is mainly reflected in education resources, teaching quality, education concept and student source. Therefore, it is necessary to promote the joint operation of urban and rural

schools, realize the sharing of urban and rural education resources, and solve the problem of teaching quality gap from the root; increase the publicity of education policies and concepts in the new era, strengthen the public awareness of compulsory education, and improve the overall quality of rural residents. To sum up, rural compulsory education is a key step in the development of rural revitalization, and the sustainable development of rural education is an inevitable requirement to realize the fundamental task of establishing moral education and further promote the coordinated development of urban and rural areas, which is of far-reaching significance to the realization of education modernization.

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