

Urbanization Function of Education for the Left-behind Children in China

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Abstract: Basic education for left-behind children in rural China is an important issue in Chinese society and is profoundly changing China's social structure. We should give it more (focus on the introduction). Based on the social selection theory of educational resources, this article explores the core-centered proportion of urban and rural education development in Chinese families through a panel data analysis model and a certain number of field studies. Then, based on the urbanization model, suggestions are put forward on how to ensure the balance and fairness of urban and rural educational development (goals/objectives).

Keywords: left-behind children; Urbanization; Educational migration; Equalization of educational resources

1. INTRODUCTION

China's urbanization rate has maintained rapid growth in the past 20 years, gradually increasing from 36.09% to 63.89%. At the same time, China's basic education has also significantly synchronized with urbanization. The number of rural basic education students has dropped significantly, while urban "new citizen" schools have continued to increase. In other words, in order to solve the problem of high-quality education for left-behind children in China, Chinese families accelerated the development of urbanization through educational immigration (a significant finding). On the one hand, this study inspires us to be good at giving full play to the role of basic education in promoting urbanization and ensuring the sustained and healthy development of education and urbanization. On the other hand, the government must provide balanced guarantees for basic education in the process of rapid urbanization and create a fair and balanced educational environment for China's large number of left-behind children (Enlightenment/Conclusion).

2. URBANIZATION AND EDUCATION TRENDS IN CHINA

Urbanization and education trends in China have undergone significant transformations in recent years. China's rapid urbanization process, marked by the migration of millions from rural to urban areas, has reshaped the educational landscape.

One key trend is the synchronization of basic education with urbanization. Urban areas have seen the establishment of modern schools with improved infrastructure, well-qualified teachers, and access to advanced educational resources. Meanwhile, rural schools have struggled with limited resources and a declining student population due to migration.

The result is a substantial shift in the distribution of students, with urban "new citizen" schools experiencing growth while rural schools face depopulation. This

urbanization-driven trend underscores the pursuit of better educational opportunities for children, which motivates families to migrate to urban centers.

However, this trend also highlights educational disparities between urban and rural areas. Left-behind children in rural areas often face challenges accessing quality education and resources, and their emotional well-being can be affected due to family separation. Addressing these disparities is a crucial task for policymakers as they seek to balance urbanization and ensure equitable access to education for all Chinese children.

3. IMPACT OF EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION ON URBANIZATION

The process of urbanization, marked by the migration of individuals from rural to urban areas, is a global phenomenon that has been significantly reshaping societies and economies. In many developing countries, including China, urbanization has been driven by various factors, with one notable contributor being educational immigration. This essay explores the intricate relationship between educational immigration and urbanization, with a specific focus on China. We will delve into the dynamics of this phenomenon, its drivers, consequences, and implications for both urban and rural areas.

3.1 Drivers of Educational Immigration

Desire for Quality Education. The pursuit of quality education for their children is a driving force for many families. Urban schools often have better infrastructure, more experienced teachers, and access to a wider range of educational resources. This motivation has led to a significant influx of families into urban areas.

Economic Aspirations. Families recognize the link between education and future economic opportunities. They believe that access to urban education can improve their children's chances of securing high-paying jobs in the future, motivating them to migrate.

Peer Pressure. In rural areas, there is often a prevailing perception that urban education is superior. Families may migrate to urban areas due to societal pressure and the fear of their children being left behind academically.

3.2 Consequences of Educational Immigration

Rapid Urbanization. Educational immigration contributes to the rapid growth of urban populations. As families relocate, they become part of the urban demographic, increasing the demand for urban infrastructure and services.

Urban School Expansion. The influx of students from rural areas has driven the expansion of urban schools, leading to the establishment of new educational institutions to accommodate the rising demand. This has both positive and negative effects on urban areas.

Economic Impact. Urbanization driven by educational immigration can boost the urban economy. Increased demand for housing, goods, and services stimulates economic growth in urban centers.

Rural Depopulation. As families migrate to urban areas, rural regions often face depopulation, which can have detrimental effects on rural economies and communities. It can lead to the abandonment of agricultural land and a decline in rural infrastructure.

3.3 The "New Citizen" Schools

One notable consequence of educational immigration in China is the emergence of what are often referred to as "new citizen" schools in urban areas. These schools cater specifically to the children of migrant families. They play a crucial role in providing education to a growing segment of the urban population, but they also underscore the disparities in educational access.

3.4 Challenges and Disparities

Educational Inequality. While educational immigration aims to provide better opportunities for children, it can also perpetuate educational inequality. Children from migrant families often face challenges such as discrimination and limited access to quality educational resources.

Strain on Urban Infrastructure. The rapid influx of families can strain urban infrastructure, leading to overcrowded schools and inadequate facilities.

4. THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN BALANCING BASIC EDUCATION AMID RAPID URBANIZATION

As urbanization accelerates, the role of government in balancing basic education becomes paramount. This is particularly crucial in addressing the challenges faced by left-behind children, a demographic profoundly affected by the migration of parents to urban areas in pursuit of employment opportunities. This essay explores the multifaceted role of government in supporting rapid urbanization while ensuring a fair and balanced educational environment for all, with a particular emphasis on the urgency of intervention for left-behind children.

4.1 Equal Access to Education

To create a fair and balanced educational environment, governments must prioritize equal access to quality education for all children, regardless of their geographical location or socioeconomic background. Policies should include:

School Infrastructure. Investing in rural school infrastructure to provide safe and conducive learning environments.

Transportation. Ensuring affordable and safe transportation options for students in rural areas to access schools.

Teacher Deployment. Encouraging experienced teachers to work in rural schools and providing incentives to retain them.

Subsidies. Offering financial incentives, such as subsidies for school fees and textbooks, to reduce the financial burden on families.

4.2 Curriculum Equity

Balancing basic education also involves ensuring that curricula are equitable and relevant to the needs of both urban and rural students. Government initiatives may include:

Rural Relevance. Adapting curricula to include rural-focused subjects, acknowledging the importance of agricultural knowledge and rural life.

Extracurricular Activities. Providing extracurricular activities that promote a holistic education experience, including cultural and vocational programs.

Digital Access. Expanding digital access to educational resources, especially in remote areas.

4.3. Teacher Training and Support

Supporting teachers in rural and urban schools is essential for maintaining educational quality. Government efforts should encompass:

Professional Development. Offering ongoing training and development opportunities to teachers to enhance their teaching skills.

Mentorship Programs. Establishing mentorship programs to support teachers in rural areas, helping them adapt to different teaching contexts.

Resource Allocation. Ensuring equitable allocation of teaching resources, including materials and technology.

4.4. Social and Emotional Support

Left-behind children often face emotional challenges due to family separation. Government initiatives should include:

Counseling Services. Providing counseling services in schools to support the emotional well-being of left-behind children.

Community Centers. Establishing community centers in rural areas to serve as safe spaces for children and offer extracurricular activities.

Parental Support. Offering programs to support parents in maintaining strong connections with their children despite geographic separation.

5. THE URGENCY OF GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

The urgency of government intervention in addressing the educational disparities resulting from rapid urbanization in China cannot be overstated. Left-behind children, who are often victims of this phenomenon, face immediate and long-term challenges, including limited access to quality education and emotional well-being issues. Without timely intervention, these issues can lead to a less skilled workforce, social cohesion challenges, and a perpetuation of educational inequalities. Government policies and initiatives are essential not only for the well-being of left-behind children but also for sustainable urbanization and a more equitable future for all citizens. Immediate action is necessary to mitigate the negative consequences and harness the potential benefits of urbanization.

5.1. Human Capital Development

Human capital development refers to the process of enhancing the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of individuals within a society or workforce. It is a critical driver of economic growth and societal advancement. Effective human capital development involves investments in education, training, healthcare, and other forms of skill-building to empower individuals to contribute more productively to the workforce and society at large. It not only boosts economic productivity but also enhances the overall quality of life, reduces income inequality, and fosters innovation. Governments, businesses, and institutions worldwide recognize the importance of human capital development as a fundamental pillar for sustainable development and global competitiveness.

5.2. Social Cohesion

Social cohesion refers to the degree of harmony, cooperation, and unity within a society. It is a measure of how well individuals from diverse backgrounds interact, trust one another, and share common values and goals. Strong social cohesion fosters stability, reduces social conflicts, and promotes a sense of belonging among citizens. It is crucial for a healthy and functioning society, as it enables communities to address common challenges, such as economic disparities and cultural differences, in a constructive and inclusive manner. Policies that support social cohesion typically prioritize equal access to opportunities, social inclusion, and efforts to bridge divides among various groups within a society.

5.3. Sustainable Urbanization

The urbanization function of education for left-behind children in China is closely related to broader urban sustainable development issues. Ignoring the educational needs of these children could hinder the long-term sustainable development of urban areas. Without equitable access to quality education, left-behind children may struggle to become productive members of society, perpetuating social and economic inequality. Addressing this issue is critical to promoting inclusive urbanization, allowing all citizens to actively contribute to the growth and development of their cities. Sustainable urban development must prioritize educational equity to realize the full potential of urban populations and ensure the future prosperity and resilience of urban areas.

5.4. Equity and Inclusivity

The urbanization function of education for left-behind children in China raises urgent concerns about equity and inclusiveness. As urbanization drives parents to migrate to cities, these children often face barriers to accessing quality education, perpetuating educational gaps. Ensuring equity means narrowing the gap in educational opportunities between urban and rural areas and providing left-behind children with the same opportunities for success as their urban peers. Additionally, promoting inclusion involves addressing the social and cultural challenges these children may encounter, such as discrimination or isolation. Prioritizing equity and inclusion in education is critical not only for the well-being of left-behind children, but also for building a fair and cohesive urban society in China.

6. CONCLUSION

The role of government in balancing basic education amid rapid urbanization is pivotal in creating a fair and balanced educational environment. Policies and initiatives aimed at equal access, curriculum equity, teacher support, and emotional well-being can help address the challenges faced by left-behind children. The urgency of government intervention cannot be overstated, as it directly impacts human capital development, social cohesion, sustainable urbanization, and the broader goals of equity and inclusivity. By prioritizing education, governments can ensure that the benefits of urbanization are accessible to all citizens and pave the way for a more prosperous and harmonious society. As urbanization accelerates, the government's role in balancing basic education becomes critical. This is critical to addressing the challenges faced by left-behind children.

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