

Research on the Evolution and the Current Situation of Chinese Secondary School Education

Kangyin Lu
School of Business
Northeast Normal University
P.R.China, 130117
luky440@nenu.edu.cn

Manxue Chen
School of Business
Northeast Normal University
P.R.China, 130117
chenmx839@nenu.edu.cn

Fenghua Zou
School of Business
Northeast Normal University
P.R.China, 130117
59381682@qq.com

Abstract—Education is one of the most important factors in human capital, and secondary school education is an important period of individual basic education. Since Reforming and Opening up, China gradually develops its education policy, which also improves the education quality of schools from different levels. However, education inequality still exists. Based on sorting out the evolution of Chinese education policy, this paper analyzes current situation of secondary school education from macro perspective and provide some advice aiming at existing problems. In view of current situation of limited educational resources, reaching a balance between promoting quality and quantity of education is very important.

Keywords—Secondary school education; Policy; Evolution

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important factor of individual human capital, and secondary school education is an essential period of individual development, for not only it influences the process of accumulation of individual human capital, but also a vitally important stage of individual overall development. As a result, equality is especially important in secondary school education, which means that education should be extensive and deepen. This paper is going to sort out evolution of secondary school education policy and research on current situation of secondary school education, find existing problem and provide some advice, which might offer valuable reference for optimizing secondary school education.

II. EVOLUTION OF EDUCATION POLICY

Education policy is an essential factor of revolution of educational modernization. Revolution of education policy plays an important role in education development. Since Reforming and Opening up, China's education policy has gone through three stages: Gradually Recover, Mainly Complete, and Gradually Deepen[1].

From 1978 to 1990 is Gradually Recover period of educational policy. In this period, China promoted Reforming and Opening up policy to construct socialist society, turned planned economy to market economy, economy and society had rapid development. During this period, attention were focused on economic construction, education legal system was not completed, relevant educational policies and laws were far from enough, requirements of school system and term of study were relatively low. In 1979, Party Central Committee and the State Council officially repealed "Summary of National Education Working Conference", recovered higher education examination system, removed fetters from educators' mind, and learned from previous experience in order to gradually promote education nationwide. In 1980 Party Central Committee and the State Council published "Decision on Issues of Primary Education Popularization"; in 1983 Ministry of Education published "Provisional Regulations on the basic requirements of primary education Popularization" and "Opinions on Reforming Secondary Education Structure and Developing Vocational and Technical Education". Based on polices above, Party Central Committee issued "Decision on Reform of Education", which mentioned that general education, vocational education and technical education in secondary school period should be popularized around 1995. On April 12th, 1986, The Fourth Session of the Sixth National People's Congress adopted "Law of the People's Republic of China on Compulsory Education", which was China's first special law on education. This law marked that China's education started on the right track and began to connect with the international.

From 1991 to 1999 is Mainly Complete period of China's educational policy, and also period of China's rapid development of education. China's economic development made remarkable achievement in 1990s, people's living standards also improved significantly. Based on this situation, Fifteenth Party Congress Reports proposed to implement Strategy of "Developing the Country through Science and Education and Strategy of Sustainable Development: optimize educational structure, allocate educational resources rationally,

and improve teaching quality and efficiency. While carrying out “Compulsory Education Law” and “Outline of the Educational Reform and Development in China”, “Education Promotion Plan of Action for the 21st Century” was also introduced. Based on policy support above, a series of laws and regulations was promulgated to improve China’s education system. In 1993, in order to make specific provisions on the targets of all kinds of education at all level, “Outline of the Educational Reform and Development in China” was published. China’s first special law on teachers: “Law of the People’s Republic of China on Teachers” was published in the same year. In 1995, Third session of the Eighth National People’s Congress considered and approved “Education Law of the People’s Republic of China”, which was a supplement of existing educational law and law on teachers. At the end of the same year, “Regulations on the Qualification of Teachers” and “A transitional approach to the eligibility of teacher” appeared one after another. Thus China’s basic education policy was mainly completed. In 1998, “Rules of College Entrance Examination” and “Higher education law of the people’s Republic of China” were published one after another. China’s policies and regulations on law were mainly completed so far.

In the 21st century, China’s education policy focuses on gradually deepening education development; promote educational policies and regulations to fit in with social development and improvement of people’s living standards, satisfy people’s needs. In 2003, “Decisions on Further

Developing Education in Rural Areas” was published. In 2005, “Decisions of State Council on Developing Vocational and Technical Education” and “Rules of Preparatory Class for Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Class in Institutions of Higher Education”. In 2006, “Law of the People’s Republic of China on Compulsory Education” was revised to establish security mechanism for compulsory education funds from the perspective of law. These policies and regulations supplemented and modified existing laws and regulations in varying degrees, promoting China’s education and bettering education equity.

In May 2014, 21st Century Education Research Institute and Social Science Academic Press jointly released China’s Education Blue Book(2014). The Blue Book summarized situation and challenges of China’s education development of the year, analyzed difficulties and hotspot issues in deepening education reform, and looked forward to education development of the following year. It points out that in 2013, China continued to promote balanced development of compulsory education and guarantee education equality; the amount of national financial education investment reached 4% of GDP; Opening up on Education had new progress; construction of modern school system and education reform of government restructuring just started, diversification of education and learning society appeared their early pattern[2]. In Gradual Deepen period, balanced development of education and education equity are focuses in China at present.

TABLE I. 2004-2012 CHINA’S GRADUATE EDUCATION LEVEL COMPOSITION

	Under Primary Education	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Bachelor	Master
2004	17.9%	35.2%	43.4%	3.4%	0.2%
2005	16.8%	32.5%	46.2%	4.3%	0.3%
2006	16.9%	30.6%	46.9%	5.2%	0.4%
2007	16.1%	29.4%	47.7%	6.3%	0.4%
2008	16.2%	29.3%	46.9%	7.1%	0.5%
2009	16.3%	28.6%	47.1%	7.6%	0.5%
2010	16.5%	27.6%	47.0%	8.2%	0.5%
2011	18.1%	26.2%	46.5%	8.6%	0.6%
2012	20.9%	25.1%	44.6%	8.7%	0.7%

III. DYNAMIC TREND OF EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Table 1 shows 2004-2012 composition of China’s graduate education level. It can be seen from the table that graduate education level mainly centered on primary education and secondary education, graduate of secondary education occupied half of graduate of all levels, which means educational attainment of the labor force was concentrated in the secondary education level[3]. In addition, the proportion of the labor force in the primary education level was decreasing, and the number of bachelor and master were increasing, indicating that the overall level of education of the residents and education quality of the whole people constantly improved.

From the point of education funding, during 2007-2011 China’s education funding continued to increase, the amount in 2011 (2.2804trillion yuan) was 6.6 times of that of in 2007(345.1902 billion yuan). From Table 2, it can be found that although the total amount of investment in education in regions showing increasing in recent years, but there were still imbalance among regions. Funding of Eastern region is much higher than the western region. Although Western region covers 13 provinces in mainland China, its share of the total investment accounted for only less than one-sixth in terms of investment in education.

Since this research focuses on secondary education, namely, educational quality and quantity of ordinary secondary school, dynamic trend and current situation of ordinary secondary school must be introduced. From Table 3 it’s clear that during

1985-2005 the number of secondary school students was increasing year by year, but after 2005 the number showed a decreasing trend. A possible explanation is that education reform began from 1998 make various kinds of school expand their enrollment, which leads to rapid increase of students. The newly revised Education Law in 2006 proposed that education equality and balanced development of education should be promoted, which adjusted the direction of education

development, so that the number of secondary school students changed toward a more rational and balanced direction[4]. At the same time, the number of full-time teachers in secondary school also increased steadily year by year, and growth rate of secondary school students (1.68%) was lower than that of full-time teacher (2.46%), which means the number of students per teacher decreased with reducing teachers' burden, teachers were more abundant, and the education quality was also higher.

TABLE II. 1997-2011 EDUCATIONAL FUNDING FROM SUB REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE (BILLION YUAN;%)

	Eastern		Northeastern		Mid-China		Western	
	Amount	proportion	Amount	proportion	Amount	proportion	Amount	proportion
1997	134.26	38.9%	78.56	22.8%	90.44	26.2%	41.93	12.1%
1998	134.26	38.9%	78.56	22.8%	90.44	26.2%	41.93	12.1%
1999	158.81	39.6%	91.31	22.7%	103.02	25.7%	48.29	12.0%
2000	181.74	39.9%	104.50	22.9%	114.25	25.1%	54.95	12.1%
2001	212.90	40.9%	118.05	22.7%	126.93	24.4%	62.87	12.1%
2002	254.41	40.8%	139.41	22.4%	150.50	24.1%	78.98	12.7%
2003	301.30	41.2%	158.61	21.7%	178.04	24.3%	94.17	12.9%
2004	345.96	41.6%	182.29	21.9%	198.61	23.9%	104.31	12.5%
2005	404.63	41.8%	209.13	21.6%	234.00	24.2%	120.73	12.5%
2006	467.59	41.5%	241.63	21.5%	275.20	24.5%	141.11	12.5%
2007	468.03	40.6%	241.23	20.9%	293.51	25.5%	150.49	13.0%
2008	565.42	39.4%	299.74	20.9%	372.18	25.9%	197.26	13.8%
2009	648.95	37.8%	363.10	21.1%	453.21	26.4%	252.51	14.7%
2010	716.00	37.1%	394.74	20.4%	515.79	26.7%	305.32	15.8%
2011	851.86	37.4%	457.89	20.1%	607.86	26.7%	362.76	15.9%

TABLE III. AMOUNT OF ORDINARY SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND FULL-TIME TEACHERS

	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2012
Amount of Students	4705.96	4586.00	5370.98	7368.91	8580.90	7703.25	7230.23
Amount of Full-Time Teachers	265.16	303.26	333.42	400.55	477.13	802.90	509.94

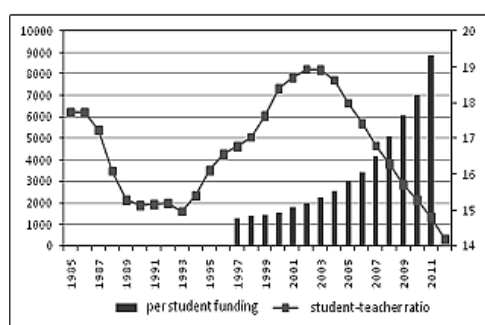


Fig. 1. Average ordinary secondary school students funding and secondary school student-teacher ratio distribution

Fig.1. shows the trend of Average ordinary secondary school students funding and secondary school student-teacher ratio distribution. Through the figure it's clear that national investment in secondary education is increasing year by year and reaches a large increase, which shows the strategic position of "national rejuvenation through science and education". As

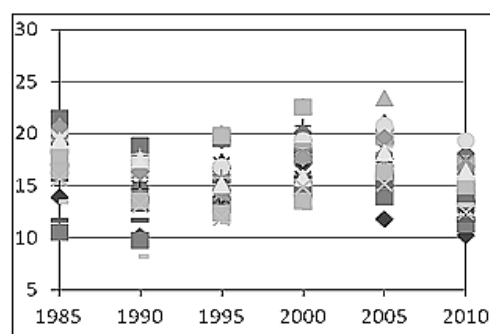


Fig. 2. 31 Provinces' main years of ordinary secondary school student-teacher ratio distribution

for student-teacher ratio, during 1985-1993 it continued to decrease, namely, overall education quality of that period was improving. However, after 1993, the ratio gradually increase until 2002, during this period the quality was in low stage. A possible reason for this might be expanding enrollment of all levels of school influenced by education reform. From 2003,

the ratio decreased year by year again, which means education quality improved gradually. Fig.2. shows that although there were differences among different provinces (including municipalities and autonomous regions), ordinary secondary school student-teacher ratio of different regions mainly concentrated in the 10-20 range in general.

IV. CONCLUSION

Since Reforming and Opening up, China's secondary school education gradually optimize. However, Education inequality is still prominent[5]. Education's role in individual human capital accumulation can't be ignored, so we should continue to promote education equality. To improve education in less-developed areas, we should increase financial backing, help to change backward educational concept, ensure all children in school age can receive good education, cooperate with developed areas to strengthen school-building, share educational resources, exchange and train teachers. Furthermore, to improve nationwide education equality, we should comprehensively improve education quality in different stages, give full play to education quality in providing better educational opportunities, promote popularization of higher education to boost productive function of individual income, expand training talents in various disciplines to achieve

"education for all" and enhance civil scientific and cultural qualities. In view of current situation of limited educational resources, we should not only pay attention to a wide degree of education as popularize primary education, secondary education and higher education, but also focus on strengthening the quality of education to reach a balance between promoting quality and quantity of education.

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