

Diagnosis and Solutions to Rural Education Problems in the Context of Rural Revitalization - A Case Study Based on a Rural Primary School

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Abstract: Rural education is a key step in promoting targeted poverty alleviation in poor areas and gradually realizing common prosperity. It is also a microcosm of the current unbalanced and inadequate development of my country's socialist society. This study takes a rural primary school as the research object. Through interviews and analysis of parents, students, and teachers of the school, it explores the current problems in rural education and analyzes their causes. This study shows that parents' educational concepts have changed; family structure affects education; changes in students' understanding affect education; and the unreasonable structure of the teaching staff and other issues affect the improvement of rural education quality. The study pointed out that rural revitalization is the key to improving new problems in rural education; home-school co-education is an effective way to improve the quality of rural education; and the key to solving new problems in rural education is to solve the "people" problem.

Keywords: Rural Education; New Educational Issues; Diagnosis; Cracking

1. Raising the Question

Rural education is the cornerstone of national rejuvenation and the future of Chinese education. How to measure the level of education in a country does not depend on how many double-first-class universities or top middle schools there are, but on the quality of education in rural areas of the country. Only when rural education is strong can national education be strong. The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out that "building an educational power is a basic project for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. We must give priority to education, deepen educational reform, accelerate the

modernization of education, and provide education that satisfies the people. Actively promote the integrated development of urban and rural compulsory education, pay attention to rural education, run preschool education, special education and online teaching well, popularize high school education, and ensure that every child can enjoy fair and high-quality education."

[1] General Secretary Xi emphasized: "Poverty alleviation must support intelligence." The "wisdom" here refers to intellectual education, which mainly uses rural education to cut off the "intergenerational transmission" of poverty, so that people in poor areas can acquire skills, increase economic income, and get rid of poverty. The "Rural Revitalization Strategic Plan (2018-2022)" puts forward the policy of "prioritizing the development of rural education". [2] "China Education Modernization 2035" clearly states: "Increase the level of equalization of compulsory education, establish a long-term mechanism for school standardization, and promote the balanced development of urban and rural compulsory education." [3] The introduction of these policies shows that the country pays close attention to rural education issues and vigorously supports the development of rural education. This study aims to explore the current problems in rural education through the case of this rural primary school, thereby providing inspiration for the development of rural primary schools in other areas, and at the same time providing real materials for scholars to study educational issues in rural areas.

2. Diagnosis of Rural Education Problems

In a sense, with the strong support of the party and the state, education in rural areas has made significant progress after years of efforts, and the gap with urban schools has further narrowed. However, compared with urban schools, rural schools have a distinctive feature -

mobility is the norm for such schools. Mobility is not only a distinctive feature of rural education, but also an important basis for analyzing educational issues in rural areas. Generally, in urban schools, students are relatively stable once they enroll, but in schools in rural areas, students are flowing every school year and every semester, and this flow is one-way, from the countryside to the towns, with very few returning to the countryside. In interviews with many research subjects, the author found that with the acceleration of urbanization, a large number of rural people are flocking to cities, and people's living environment, lifestyle and thinking have changed, making the current education problems in rural areas take on a new form. However, this is a dynamic process of change, so the question that the author is more concerned about is: What kind of changes are there in the current education issues in rural areas, and in what aspects and how are they reflected? This new form of education issues mainly manifests itself in the following aspects:

2.1 Changes in Parents' Concepts of Education

Suhomlinsky once said: "Only school education without family education, or only family education without school education, cannot complete this extremely delicate and complex task of educating people." [4] This also reflects from the side that family and school are closely linked. Only the perfect combination of the two can better complete the task of cultivating people. Since the beginning of the 21st century, education problems in rural areas have improved significantly. However, with the development of society and the wave of migrant workers, people are exposed to many new things, which have a greater impact on their minds. This is mainly reflected in the change of some parents' traditional educational concepts. These changes will directly or indirectly affect their educational behavior for children. The author conducted interviews with a teacher and two parents regarding their views on children's education. The following is the interview record of the teacher:

Today's rural parents' education concepts are different from those in the past. First, one of the parents is at home and says that they value their children's education, but they don't know how to teach, and they let the students go home to play

on mobile phones or games. They ignore the children's problems and do not cooperate with the teachers in educating them; second, the parents think that the children's learning and education problems are the responsibility of the teachers or the school. They only need to pay the tuition fees and don't worry about the rest; third, their parents go out to work and earn several thousand yuan a month. There are also many young people with college educations around them who earn about the same salary in the same working environment. Therefore, they think they can still make money without studying, and they are very casual about their children's education.

Through interviews with teachers, we learned that due to various factors, some parents' educational concepts in the village have changed, which has brought about changes in their educational behaviors, which directly affects their attitudes towards children's education. This educational attitude directly or indirectly affects school education, causing teachers to be in a disadvantaged position in normal educational activities. Teachers' understanding of parents' educational concepts may not be as convincing as the parents' own statements. The following is an interview record of two parents:

(Interview with parent A)

My child is in fourth grade and her grades are average. Whether she can go to college depends mainly on her own ability. I am only responsible for providing her with food and clothing. It doesn't matter whether you go to college or not. In today's society, there is a job as long as you are willing to do it. Moreover, college students are all over the streets now, and white-collar workers only earn a few thousand yuan a month, which does not include food and accommodation. After excluding living expenses, there is not much left every month. It is better for others to work in factories, with food and accommodation included, and they can save a little money every month.

(Interview with parent B)

Author: What are your children like after school?

B: Hey, my child plays on his mobile phone when he comes home from school every day. He often scrolls through Douyin at night and doesn't want to go to bed until 1 or 2 o'clock in the middle of the night.

Author: Have you ever thought about

disciplining him?

B: I can't control it. I get home after dark every day, so I don't have time to control it. If I control it too much, the child's rebellious psychology becomes even more severe. When I took away his mobile phone before, he threatened to go on a hunger strike and stop going to school. Last year, a child in the quarantine village went to an Internet cafe to play games. His father found out and beat him up. The child ran to the roof and tried to jump off the building... It sounded scary to me. I didn't want to care about him. If he couldn't study, he went out to work.

According to Parent B, children's learning is a personal choice. Parents only have the responsibility of raising children and not teaching them. At the same time, his educational concept of "hoping for his daughter to succeed and his son to succeed" has changed. He no longer forces his children to become talented, and even believes that there is no connection between education level and work and salary. According to Family A, to put it bluntly, he hopes that his children can study hard, but he is busy with his livelihood and has no time to educate his children. Even if he knows that his children are addicted to mobile phones, he cannot stop what he is doing. At the same time, he is stimulated by his children's rebellious psychology and does not dare to restrain his children too much, fearing that the children will do something irrational. Changes in parents' educational concepts have directly affected their educational behaviors, and in turn affected the relationship between "home-school co-education". More importantly, family education and school education are no longer a cooperative partnership, but two independent individuals. This relationship not only changes the requirements for teachers, but also forces teachers to change their educational and teaching behaviors in the education process. At the same time, changes in parents' educational concepts also directly affect parents' attitudes toward teachers, which in turn affects the effectiveness of teachers in educating students.

2.2 Family Structure Affects Education

Family structure is the composition of the family, which mainly refers to the interconnection between members who assume various roles in the family. It includes the demographic structure and intergenerational structure of the family. Parents' migrant work has

directly changed the family structure and functions of left-behind children in rural areas, and these changes are affected by the family environment as a medium and affect children, which in turn has a profound impact on the education of left-behind children in rural areas.

[5] C is a class teacher, a young and energetic girl. Unexpectedly, she seemed a little helpless when talking about the impact of family structure on students. "The vast majority of students are left-behind children, accounting for about 85% of the total number of students in the school, or one parent is at home, but the parents do not care about the child's studies; and most of the students' families are divorced families. There are 12 students in my class, 50% of the students are from single-parent families, and there are many contradictions in home-school co-education. At the same time, there are many students in our school who are divorced. "Through communication with the teacher, we learned that many students in the village are left-behind children, and the actual guardians of the students are grandparents. They lack educational knowledge and cannot play a good synergistic role in the students' school education. At the same time, because of the separation of generations, many grandparents try to meet all the requirements of the students. Secondly, a small number of students have one parent at home, or are affected by social development or the Internet. They have a deviated understanding of the mutually reinforcing and cooperative relationship between family and school. At the same time, they do not realize that "parents and family education are important factors that affect the development of children." They place all their hopes for their children on school education.

2.3 Changes in Students' Understanding Affect Education

The influence of the environment and education is only an external factor in the process of human development, and this influence can only be exerted through individual human activities. As far as human development is concerned, without individual activities as intermediaries, there can be no interaction between the environment, education and individuals, and there can be no development. [7] There are many factors that affect the effectiveness of students' education. In addition to factors from parents, teachers and society, they are also affected by

students' own understanding. The author conducted a collective informal interview with three fifth-grade students on education-related issues. The following is the interview record of DEF:

Author: How is your academic performance in school?

D: I don't want to say it

E: Hahaha... they are counting down in class

Author: Have you thought of any way to improve your performance?

E: It's too difficult. I can't understand or understand it.

D: The teacher's teaching was so bad that I didn't want to learn at all.

F: I tried it, but it didn't work. Maybe I'm not good at reading.

Author: But if you don't study, it will be difficult to find a good job in the future?

F: That's right, my sister went to Dongguan to work after graduating from junior high school. She earned five to six thousand a month, including food and accommodation.

D: Yes, my cousin studied excavator for a few months after graduating from elementary school. Now he has seven or eight thousand

E: That Ah Feng (the interviewee's neighbor) doesn't have a job at home. He just makes videos and earns thousands of dollars every month.

F: Yes, yes, and that Ami is also filming a short video.

Author: Do you think it is easy to make short videos?

E: It's super simple. Every time I see him singing or dancing, I get paid.

D: They make a lot of money. It's more comfortable and more profitable than working in a factory. I can also dance and sing.

Author: How long do you usually watch short videos? Don't your family take care of you?

E: They don't care about me. I can play however I want.

D: Just brush it when you have time. Sometimes they scold me, sometimes they don't scold me. If they scold me, they go back to the room and brush it, hiding from them. Anyway, just don't let them see it.

F: Sometimes my mother puts away my phone and doesn't let me use it, so I go to watch TV or quarrel with my mother. If she gets annoyed, she'll hit me. So I go to my classmate's house to watch videos with her, and I don't go home at night.

When asking about "his grades at school," the author observed that D was a little embarrassed and lowered her head quickly. E had been playing with her cell phone with her head lowered, and I don't know if she was hiding her inner activities through the action of "playing with her cell phone." On the contrary, F had relatively better grades among the three, but judging from her tone, she didn't pay much attention to her grades. Through conversations with them, I learned that their performance was not only due to their own reasons, but also to the teacher's teaching methods. For example, teachers only yelled at students and the class was unattractive. This was part of the reason why they were tired of studying. If they had a different teacher with attractive lectures, they would still be willing to study. Secondly, when discussing the "relationship between academic qualifications and finding a job," they tried to use surrounding examples to convince me that there is no direct proportion between academic qualifications and finding a job. Especially when they talked about how short videos can bring huge profits without academic qualifications, their faces were full of the desire to make money from short videos. By observing the conversations between them, I found that they were very envious of those who made money using Douyin, Kuaishou, etc. and even wanted to join this team. At the same time, the author learned that they are addicted to watching short videos whenever they have time, and sometimes they have conflicts with their families because of this. The author observed that throughout the interview process, they often watched short videos. To sum up, with the development of society and science, students' self-cognition is affected by many factors, and students' attitudes towards learning have changed. These changes will also affect the overall effect of education and teaching.

2.4 The Structure of Rural Teaching Staff Is Unreasonable

As a social and historical phenomenon that meets the needs of imparting productive labor and social life experience, education is closely related to the development of productive forces and the transformation of production relations. The realization and manifestation of educational functions mainly rely on teachers. ^[7] This illustrates the important role of teachers in education. The author conducted interviews

with teachers and parents respectively on teacher-related issues. The interview records are as follows:

The teachers in our school all have a college degree, some of them have undergraduate degrees and they also have correspondence education, and the number is small, 1-2 at most; the teachers are mostly in their 40s and 50s, and the temporary teachers are in their twenties; new teachers often try their best to be transferred to a good place after one year, and no young teachers are willing to teach in rural schools (interview with the teaching director)

The teachers here are very poor in class. They teach directly from books. Students have no interest in learning at all. They yell at children in class. My child has been in first grade for a year, and she doesn't know many pinyin. I have to teach her how to spell every day, and now she can spell a little better. Parents in the village are worried that their children are too young to take care of themselves and the tuition fees are too high, otherwise many of them will study abroad. Recently, my husband and I discussed whether to send our children to a private boarding school in the city next semester, but the tuition is a bit expensive... (Interview with a parent from the school)

During the interview with the teaching director, we learned that the town's teaching staff is dominated by middle-aged and elderly teachers. The farther away from the town center, the greater the proportion of middle-aged and elderly teachers; the teaching schools usually move every five years, and there is little job mobility; teachers rarely have training opportunities. These teachers are affected by many factors and tend to have a non-desireful attitude towards their work. This is also one of the reasons for the poor quality of rural education. At the same time, many young teachers are reluctant to teach in rural schools. Even if some young teachers are assigned to rural schools, they usually apply for transfer or resign within a short period of time. During the communication with the parent, she said that teachers in rural schools usually use traditional education and teaching methods, their teaching skills have not kept pace with the times, and they often use rude teaching methods with students, which makes students tired of learning and their grades decline. In summary, the acceleration of urbanization has attracted a large number of young teachers to move to better

places, leaving the rural teaching team lacking fresh blood, resulting in a slow improvement in the quality of rural education.

3. Strategies to Solve Rural Education Problems

3.1 Rural Revitalization is the Key to Improving Rural Education Issues

Developing education in rural areas is an important starting point for my country to comprehensively realize the rural revitalization strategy. This case study shows that the reason why the villagers in this village chose to work outside the village is because they have no financial resources to live a better life and provide high-quality educational resources for their children if they stay in the village. However, both parents go out to work and leave the children with their grandparents, which means that the children become left-behind children and the children's education will also be affected. At the same time, the reluctance of young teachers to teach in rural areas is also due to the disparity in development between rural and urban areas, which has led most people to yearn for urban life. When the countryside prospers, the country prospers; when the countryside declines, the country declines. The contradiction between our people's growing needs for a better life and unbalanced and inadequate development is most prominent in rural areas.^[8] The rural revitalization strategy promotes all aspects of rural development by developing the rural economy and attracting more people to devote themselves to rural construction. Only when all aspects of rural development are developed can educational problems in rural areas be solved.

3.2 Home-School Co-Education is an Effective Way to Improve the Quality of Rural Education

Suhomlinsky said: "The effect of education depends on the consistency of educational influence between school and family. Without this consistency, the school's education and teaching process will collapse as easily as a paper house."^[9] Effective communication and cooperation between teachers and parents can improve the quality of education and teaching and promote the development of students in all aspects. Among the four words "home-school co-education", the word "home" is ranked first,

which shows the importance of family education. One of the new forms of education in rural areas reflected in the above case study, family education has changed. Family education and school education are in a cooperative relationship. The development of students cannot rely solely on the efforts of either party. This is ineffective cooperation. Only when family education actively participates in and cooperates with school education, and the two form an educational synergy, can students' development be promoted.

3.3 The Key to Solving Rural Education Problems is to Solve the "People" Problem

First of all, the "people" here refer to students. Students are the most direct participants and educatees in the entire education process. During the author's interviews, I found that current rural students are no longer the students of the 1980s and 1990s. They have been exposed to many new things in their lives, which have both advantages and disadvantages. In this process, we should pay more attention to students' inner activities and guide students to establish a correct outlook on life, values and learning. Secondly, the "people" here refer to parents. On the one hand, due to the influence of various factors in society, parents' inherent educational concepts have collapsed. As teachers, they must carry out necessary and effective communication and cooperation with parents, and actively guide parents to establish correct educational concepts. On the other hand, the new form of education problems in rural areas arises from a series of problems caused by parents who work outside their homes all year round and have no time to take care of their children. For example, as part of the rural revitalization strategic dividend, foreign companies are vigorously introduced to promote rural economic development so that parents do not need to leave their hometowns. Then education problems in rural areas can also be improved. Finally, the "people" here refer to teachers. Why are young teachers reluctant to teach in rural areas? The main reasons include the large development gap between urban and rural areas, the small difference in wages and benefits, and the abundance of training opportunities. People are egoists, so young teachers will be more inclined to places that are conducive to their own development. The key to solving the new form of rural education

problems lies in solving the needs of different "people". Only by perfectly solving the needs of "people" can rural education problems be easily solved.

Educational issues in rural areas constrain the speed of high-quality development of education in our country. Only with the high-quality development of rural education can my country's education industry develop in a balanced way. However, education issues in rural areas are not static and will develop with the development of society, science and technology. Therefore, researchers are required to keep abreast of new forms of education in rural areas and provide effective strategies for teachers and managers in front-line positions. At the same time, it is everyone's obligation to actively promote the rural revitalization strategy and provide advice and suggestions for the construction of new villages.

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