

Review on Vocational Education on the Background of New Cultural Construction in Rural Areas

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Abstract—On the background of Chinese policy of building a new socialist countryside, it highlights the significance of the development of culture. The author's research perspective specializes in the relationship between vocational education and the development of culture in the countryside. The author also analyzes the status quo and the factors that affect that relationship, and draws out the strategies for the development of China's vocational education after learning from experiences of some advanced countries.

Keywords—new culture in the countryside; vocational education; development strategy

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, China is at a critical stage for building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects, and at a crucial period for deepening reform and opening up to accelerate the transformation of the economic development mode. Culture becomes increasingly important in modern times both as a source of national unity and creativity and in the competition of comprehensive national strength. Leading a cultural and spiritual life has become a keen desire of Chinese people. In China, more people are living in rural districts rather than urban areas, but the cultural construction develops poorly there as the "weak link". Therefore, cultural construction becomes an essential part of New Rural Construction. In most Chinese urban districts, cultural construction lags far behind the overall development of economic society, and the people's desires for cultural products and services could not be fulfilled. Like many other factors that affect cultural construction in rural areas, educational disadvantage plays an essential role. Except for the national compulsory education, adult education could be classified into two kinds of academic education and vocational education. The latter is more available to the public, which plays an essential role and seriously affects cultural construction in rural areas.

II. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN NEW CIRCUMSTANCES ON THE BACKGROUND OF NEW CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION IN RURAL AREAS

Since the Reform and Opening up, the rural economy has gained remarkable achievements. However, there is a wide gap between rural and urban districts. The social phenomenon that the peasants have poor knowledge might explain the reason. The lack of scientific literacy slows down the pace of New

Cultural Construction in rural areas. According to a survey by one related authority, less than 1% among nearly 500 million rural labors has received vocational education.

At the 16th Party Congress, "new peasants" is defined as peasants who have knowledge and technological skills. Under the current circumstances, only a few peasants could be called "new peasants". On the spiritual level, Chinese peasants are closed and conservative, self-interested and unenterprising, and only a few of them have fundamental civil quality in modern society such as legal system consciousness, sanitation consciousness, ecological consciousness and public responsibility. On the scientific literacy level, the data from some related departments says that only 10% of 600 millions of Chinese peasants have received vocational education, and less than 50% have graduated from middle school. Otherwise, illiteracy and semi literacy accounts for a considerable proportion. There exists a wide gap between rural and urban districts on the above data. Therefore, most peasants have to do agricultural works or choose jobs in labor-intensive industries.

Disadvantages of vocational education curbs the development of peasants, and hardly adapts to the New Rural Construction. If the disadvantages could not be changed, the situation will become an irreversible trend.

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS AND ITS STATUS QUO

A. The Significance of Vocational Education in Rural Areas

In the 21st century, China is in a period of social transformation when "Three Rural Issues" becomes truly essential. In the first place, developing vocational education has a significant meaning both to address some problems in rural areas, and to promote coordinated development between urban and rural areas. Vocational education helps a lot to promote both economic and cultural development in rural areas. In the second place, developing vocational education has an important meaning to solve the problems of peasants. Chinese peasants have lower science literacy and poor knowledge, and vocational education has a significant meaning to train knowledgeable and technical peasants. By training surplus rural labor forces to develop some technological skills, vocational education helps both the transformation of peasants into town citizens and the urbanization. In the third place, developing vocational education has an important meaning to solve

China's agricultural problems. The agricultural revolution put forward some demands for peasants whose forefathers did farming as well. Vocational education does a favor to advance the agricultural technology thus promoting the development of modern agriculture.

Overall, developing vocational education has an important meaning to address "Three Rural Issues". Culturally speaking, vocational education is beneficial to promote spiritual and cultural construction in rural areas, and to cultivate qualified heirs of national culture and folk arts. Otherwise, it develops mass culture in rural areas and enriches peasants' spiritual and cultural life.

B. The Status quo of Vocational Education in Rural Areas

There is no doubt that vocational education has a remarkable meaning for New Rural Construction. However, there exist lots of problems in both thoughts and ways of running schools which could not meet the demands of New Rural Construction.

1) *Thoughts of Running Schools*: Currently, most Chinese vocational and technical colleges take employment as their priority and guiding thought. Majors are set by considering the employment rate. High employment rate is their recruiting advantage which helps them make profits. Profits make sense in the market-oriented economy, but education is truly quasi public product which shoulders social responsibility and cultural inheritance. That situation occurs in vocational education as well. Lacking of coordinative plans, the guiding thoughts of running school are utilitarian. Under such circumstances, win-win situation between vocational education and New Rural Construction could not be created.

2) *Contents of Running Schools*: Most vocational and technical colleges train vocational skills which enhance economic development, efficiency of labor and overall productivity. However, on the background of New Rural Construction, vocational education could not provide qualified and overall education to peasants who are defined as knowledgeable and technological.

3) *Ways of Running Schools*: Nowadays, there is nearly no difference between vocational and technical colleges and ordinary schools both in theory and practical schooling. The reasons might be that it lacks of incorporation between schooling system and market, and the corporation mechanism is not created.

IV. THE STATUS QUO OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES

A. The USA

As the most advanced country, the US has the most perfect legal system and regulatory framework for vocational education. In early 1862, the First Morrill Act was issued, which is famous in the history of American vocational education. The First Morrill Act aims to carry out vocational education and train professionals by the way of using the

profits from land- selling. The First Morrill Act has a significant meaning to be the first law about vocational education in both the US and the world. Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 was issued following the First Morrill Act. The new act aims to carry out vocational education across all American middle schools, and the costs for training vocational teachers will be paid by American government. Smith-Hughes Act has more meaning than the First Morrill Act, because it helps to provide financial contribution to middle schools across America, and carry out vocational education. The act is of great effect on vocational education in several fields, such as agriculture, business and housekeeping.

B. The UK

British vocational education combines internet technology. With the website of vocational and technical training as the platform, British vocational education and training system features multilevel, multitier and flexibility, which develops the intelligence of related institutions and research organizations. Based on internet training, the UK carries out the vocational qualification certificate system which sets standards for the contents and examination criterion, and guarantees the training level. Throughout carrying out such reforms, the trainees' capacity of studying and working is improved tremendously.

V. MEASURES AND INNOVATION APPROACHES ABOUT DEVELOPING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS

A. Reforming Vocational Schooling System by National Legislation

Most western countries set administrative mode through legislation to clear-cut the responsibility and obligation between ownership and executive power. System of board of directors is the fundamental system which is carried out in western vocational and technical colleges. Founded by all investors, the board of directors appoints managers to manage colleges, and control the operation. In return, managers are responsible to the board of directors. After years of implementation, the system becomes more and more perfect.

Since the Reform and Opening Up, China has founded a more comprehensive and market-oriented economic system, and made laws and regulations to regulate benefits-oriented organizations like enterprises. However, as non-profit public institutions, Chinese vocational colleges are lack of delimitation of property rights and operation system. Currently only administrative code and governing documents have not involved in the property rights and organizing framework of non-profit institutions. Therefore, China needs to reform the school-running system of vocational education, thus fulfilling the function of vocational education in New Rural Construction.

B. Offering a Mixed Model to Accept Vocational Education

China's Vocational education is mainly provided by the Chinese government. The demands of market could not be satisfied by the simplified code. Therefore, it is necessary to provide a more mixed model to promote vocational education. Cooperating with the system of board of directors, more social forces should participate in vocational education. However, as

a quasi public product, openness of education should have its own limitation and order of priority. Vocational education is prominently different from other kinds of education in both concept and nature, for example vocational education and higher education, and different kinds of general education. The government should establish independent access system for vocational education in order to set up admittance qualification and admittance scope thus guaranteeing vocational education a quasi public product, and removing social capital to develop vocational education..

C. Promote the Adjustment of Talent Structure and Training Model of Vocational Education

Currently Chinese vocational education focuses on training labor skills which could not adapt to the current situation of New Rural Construction, and not hold the mission of offering intelligence supports to cultural construction in rural areas. On the background of New Rural Construction, vocational education should aim to offer serves for “Three Rural Issues”, and be market-oriented to improve employment capacity and employment rate. On the other hand, vocational education should fasten its reform pace in fulfilling the pertinence and localization of schooling contents and the modernization of teaching methods.

The adjustments should be implemented as follows:

- Design teaching contents according to the market demands and the prospect of the professionals.

- Replenish scientific knowledge and technical achievements, and revise teaching contents according to international norms and standards of related fields and industries.
- Add some new courses such as international culture, international politics, international economy and international trade.
- Set up more fundamental courses which help to improve students’ humanistic quality, and establish course system with some characteristics of vocational and technical education.

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