

Gender Inequality in Rural Education in China

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to look into the present gender equality gaps in mainland China's education system. It examines not just rural education and how it achieves gender equality, but also whether or not it prioritizes addressing gender disparity and its effects. The treatment of gender issues in rural and urban settings has been proven to be vastly different. As a result, gender inequality is a major problem in rural communities. Economic background, ingrained prejudices, differing expectations, and other factors are suggested to account for such disparities in this article. Additionally, this study proposes some plausible and realistic techniques for Chinese students and parents to attend a "Social Issues" class. This article argues that studying outside of mandated schooling can better prepare students for further education. Furthermore, this report suggests that the educational system has flaws that influence issues other than gender. However, this study concludes that as the population grows, educational defects are certain to occur. And the government is in charge of determining the best strategies. This article merely served to highlight issues with the educational system in terms of gender and to provide unproven but well-researched remedies. This publication is not only for Chinese people, but also for those in need.

Keywords: *Gender Inequality, Education in China.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, China has achieved significant progress on gender issues. One can be alarmed by the increasing reports of violent situations involving women. However, one reason for this phenomena is the gender gap in schooling between rural and urban areas. This study uses rural education as a starting point to show the other side of the story that has been overlooked. Despite the fact that many study focuses on addressing gender disparity in rural regions, many studies fail to go beyond the economic difficulties and analyze how media, globalization, and other factors play a role. Many also fail to evaluate different educational systems and offer a viable remedy to the gender gap. This study report tries to uncover the causes of gender imbalance in education in both domains and identify areas where China's educational system might be improved.

2. PROBLEMS

2.1 Gender Issues in Rural Education

Gender equality has just lately entered the consciousness of Chinese residents. Movements for gender equality and justice have just lately been launched.

Despite the fact that legislation on gender equality were passed in the 1950s, they were seldom applied in court. It is a symbol of equality, but it does not benefit people who are in need. In rural places, this condition is particularly severe. According to a research by Qiang et al., the rate of girls in rural regions dropping out of school is quite high, and the average year of schooling is relatively low [1]. The expression "women stay at home as housewives and men labor outside for money" has had a significant impact on parents in rural regions when deciding which pupils to send to school due to conventional prejudices. Boys have larger expectations from their parents, whereas girls have less. Even if females score better academically, they will leave out at an early age [2].

A case study in Gansu, a Chinese province. Mr. Wang has a high school diploma, but his wife has never attended school. He is the father of two daughters and one boy. Due to financial constraints, one of the daughters was forced to drop out of fourth grade. Another daughter intends to drop out when she completes middle school in order to work. And it is expected that the youngster would attend college [2]. Farm labour is typically done daily by girls and seasonally by males, depriving daughters of time to study [2]. As a result, their academic performance may deteriorate, contributing to the

stereotype that women are not suited to work. Females have additional challenges in the educational system. Given the shortage of schools, the placement of each one is critical. Because of the large distances and harsh weather, some parents place a premium on their daughters' safety [2]. Furthermore, the systems do not have equal distribution of teachers. The majority of the instructors in the ten communities studied by Qiang et al. were males. Despite this, the situation has improved dramatically in recent years, with male instructors in rural regions falling from 76.7 percent in 1966 to just 22.5 percent in 2015 [2].

This behavior, however, shows another issue. Males with higher educational levels are more likely to pursue other industries such as high tech and biochemistry, refusing to return to rural regions because 1) the pay are insufficient and 2) they feel that pursuing other fields will help society more. As a result of the high concentration of males and absence of girls in STEM disciplines, another stereotype emerges. Gender disparity in education fails, resulting in total inequity. In five regions studied by Qiang et al., the illiteracy rate is always greater in females than men between the ages of 29 and 65. Over 68 percent of ladies in Gansu are illiterate [2].

2.2 The Effects of Gender Inequality

Gender discrimination has existed for millennia and has never fully been eradicated. In China's rural areas, the disparity is even bigger. China's materialistic progress has not been accompanied by improvements in basic human rights. This section will cover the wide conceptions of gender inequality by many researchers. First, China can never attain true gender equality owing to the long-term effects of Confucius' history, job allocation, and tangible preconceptions [3]. Fixed expectations of oneself is one of the biggest issues generated by gender inequality. Wang uses an example to show how people's preconceptions about themselves are the source of behaviors that exacerbate gender disparity [4]. Although society might be blamed for managing these individuals, they bear the most of the burden. When assessed differently, one's cowardice and unwillingness to change despite discomfort, or, even worse, apathy to these inequities and acceptance of society as it is.

Professor Wang contends that there are no such things as ladies who deny themselves the opportunity to learn; rather, they question themselves [4]. This is a prominent side effect of educational disparity between men and women. Whether in rural or metropolitan regions, a lack of confidence to speak up hides a skill, finally leading to their demise. Gender disparity has far-reaching implications on people's psychological well-being, as well as the economy. "Gender disparity in schooling significantly impacts economic growth by reducing the average level of human capital [5]." According to Klasen.

One argument for this is that tolerating gender imbalance reduces the number of specialists available to the organization.

Because there is no major genetic difference between males and girls, both genders have an equal number of hardworking individuals and geniuses. People are putting pressure on pupils who have aptitude but lack confidence and support by promoting gender disparity in schools. Because of the absence of assistance in the educational system, students may seek help in locations that are inappropriate for them or in areas that exacerbate gender prejudice. In a broader sense, nearly one out of every ten females reported being discriminated against at school, and male teachers are often seen as more clever by children than female teachers, who are frequently termed "caring" (Global Campaign for Education). It is clear that gender imbalance in the classroom has an impact on more than only the students' academic performance, but also their social attitudes and relationships. Gender disparity in education is the primary source of gender discrimination in other domains such as the workplace, families, and the streets. Gender disparity in education has long-term consequences, not just for the individual, but also for society as a whole.

2.3 Gender problems in China's Education System

Even while economic distribution has a significant impact on gender equality, gender issues persist in metropolitan areas where all basic requirements have been met [6]. As a result, this disparity affects not just the rural school system, but the whole educational system. In the newspaper, famous persons account for 83.9 percent of males and 16.1 percent of girls [6]. Even in everyday life, as education advances, fewer female teachers are allocated to teaching positions. Females account for 50.63 percent of students in elementary school, but just 38.24 percent in conventional high school. Even at universities where female instructors are the majority, males still dominate the leadership positions. Gender discrimination continues to persist in notable colleges. Teachers frequently call on students for questions. These unconscious practices might lead to serious psychological issues including despair and stress. With the pressure of GaoKao, China's college admission test, the educational system should be modified so that everyone has an equal chance of participating in GaoKao and having equal resources after graduating from college.

Individuals are currently ignored in China's educational system, which promotes the "collective" above the "individual." In 2018, 96.84 percent of Chinese people were educated, including 98.47 percent of males and 95.16 percent of females [7]. This is a high literacy rate, but it is also because of this rate that they are ignoring others who are not forced to study by putting them into this severe system.

In addition, the Chinese educational system exhorts students to "study hard enough to get into a good college and acquire excellent careers!" Then reality is much more brutal. Only 50% of pupils are able to attend appropriate junior high, and only 75% are able to enter college [7]. Although there are only approximately 150 reputable universities in China that can get one admitted into acceptable employment, there are around 1013 million high school students, therefore this number is not supported by scientific facts. Each college has between ten and thirty thousand students. As a result, around 8630 thousand kids will be stranded.

The Chinese educational systems want everyone to be educated, but they ignore the fact that forcing individuals to attend school when they can excel in other areas is not the answer. There are certain pupils in every school who were not designed to learn. Everyone believes that education is the only way to success because of societal norms and the competitive system. People complain on a popular forum like Bilibili that they can't find a quality job even if they have a 985 or 211 (names for prestigious institutions). Construction workers are the most common employment available. If those who excel at learning are unable to get excellent jobs with a college diploma, what about others who did not attend those 150 colleges? The majority of them are even struggling to make ends meet. The initial goal of China's system was to provide opportunities for the poor via hard work, but it now feels more like pushing individuals who weren't meant to study to study simply to study. The majority of pupils in school fail to recognize the goal of their study and graduate with only their grades. This article says that a good education dives deep into people and prioritizes human rights over insignificant figures such as grades.

2.4 Modern Media and Possible Ways of Affecting Gender Issues

Many elements of China have improved since the introduction of social media. China is increasingly more open to international views, bringing with it a crucial educational right: equality. Before concentrating on rural equality, one must first modify one's perspective towards disparity. Despite being oppressed, most rural women have a deep-rooted prejudice that they must labor and not attend education. Even in remote places, however, 297 million people now have internet access because of the emergence of media. More prejudices are being challenged as more worldwide news, such as the #MeToo movement, is released. Because of the rainbow movement in the media, even those who were greatly impacted by the Chinese traditional way of thinking, such as those taught by Confucius, are receptive to LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer). If there is one method to achieve gender equality in education, it must be through the media, since the system can only be changed if everyone has an equal chance of entering it.

3. REASONS

3.1. Gender Issues in Education

3.1.1. Reasons for Gender Issues in Rural Areas of China

Many factors contribute to educational disparities in rural areas. In rural settings, the "sibling competition effect" reveals that a guy with a sister or an elder brother who is older by a big number is more likely to be highly educated, whereas girls with a brother and a younger sister who is younger by a large number are less likely to be educated [5]. As previously stated, family expectations and resource divides have a significant impact on schooling. Females are more likely to participate in farm labor and household than in school, it is thought. One, they feel that outside of the home, there are limited chances for women, and that even with a good education, it is difficult to advance. Second, girls in Chinese culture were born to marry. Many people consider girls' education to be a waste of time and effort because they will marry and live in other people's homes regardless. Other economic factors will not be explored in this work, but the author recognizes that while economics plays an important part in education, inequality stems from people's mindsets.

3.2 Solutions to Gender Inequality in Education

3.2.1 Plausible Courses to Optimize China's System

Mental illness affects 20.3 percent of 126,000 college students in 2019 [7]. The Chinese government has suggested mandating psychological therapy in all schools by the end of 2022 [6]. These courses, however, are not stated. Most students regard these courses as a chore and do not recognize their significance. One option is to switch the course to a non-mandatory psychology course. Others that are interested will spend time learning and witnessing the benefits of this subject, while those who are not will be required to take a course called "Social Issues." This is a global perspective course in which students are allowed to evaluate situations from across the world. Analysis of international news is not an intimate issue since mental health is. Students may embrace greater diversity this way. Their brains are free to embrace greater variety as a result of this, and this might be the key to unlocking equality, not only among genders but also among handicapped people, individuals from foreign countries, LGBTQs, and others. This strategy may cause some negative consequences, such as spending time away from their studies. However, this research argues that it is beneficial since an issue with Chinese students is that they often become confused once they get at college due to a lack of contact and variety in

high school, junior high, and elementary school. This course can help them succeed in college. The main issue in GaoKao is still overcrowding, which leads to intense rivalry. Individuals can invest in activities outside of school that broaden their minds before the government can take action. Every day, students and parents can schedule family meetings. It's unfair to dismiss someone based on their academics, gender, or color. This family gathering is appropriate for everyone, regardless of their location, whether urban or rural.

3.2.2 Plausible Education System for Reference

If the purpose of this article is to critique China's educational system, it must also present a system to refer to if one abandons the existing system, which is not conceivable but is thought to be better. According to the Education Rankings of 2022, the finest education system is Denmark's, which protects human rights and is the top education country in the United States. The report claims that China's large population and status as a developing country influence its educational system choices, citing concerns like as overcrowding, financing challenges, and continuing education as examples, and seeks to solve these issues. The United States will be a prominent target for symbols due of its population. When comparing China with the United States, the years of schooling are nearly same; the manner employed differs. A GPA, benchmark exam, instructor recommendations, and a record of personal achievements are all required to apply to universities in the United States [8]. Only GaoKao grades are reviewed in China.

Reduce the percentage of GaoKao grades and add additional aspects as a possible point of comparison. The goal of education is to develop well-educated people and choose future world leaders. The best way to identify and nurture one's skill is through a good system that allows everyone to have a steady chair in which to delve into their talents rather than being driven to change for the purpose of battling for that chair. Human rights and people are emphasized considerably more in Danish education [9]. The population of China, however, limits the scope of that educational system [10].

4. CONCLUSION

When considering the difficulties of gender disparity in China's rural educational system, it is clear that the problem is more than gender inequality. There are a variety of factors that contribute to this violation of human rights, including familial expectations, gender stereotypes, and other factors. This report considers solutions such as improving education in China or using social media to address these issues. Finally, a country's residents' quality of life must be prioritized before it can be considered really successful. Although the group

should be valued above the individual, a varied group cannot be formed without the spark of an individual.

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