



Realistic Dilemmas and Practical Paths for Poverty Alleviation Through Education in the Post-poverty Era

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Abstract. Poverty alleviation through education is the fundamental solution to poverty alleviation. With the introduction of relevant development plans and development programmes, the cause of poverty alleviation through education has made great progress. In the post-poverty alleviation era, as the poor population changes from “absolute poverty” to “relative poverty”, education poverty alleviation is facing serious challenges in terms of poverty alleviation subjects, poverty alleviation targets and poverty alleviation paths. The specific practical paths are to innovate the theoretical framework for poverty alleviation through education, improve the policy system for poverty alleviation through education, explore new resources for poverty alleviation through education, combine vocational education with basic education in rural areas and promote the construction of education information technology, so as to pool the combined efforts of education resources and promote the smooth development of poverty alleviation through education.

Keywords: Education for poverty alleviation · Post-poverty era · Realistic dilemma · Practical path

1 Introduction

Poverty is one of the most acute social problems facing countries around the world today, and countries, including China, and world organisations are taking measures to actively address this problem in order to safeguard people’s livelihoods and maintain long-term social stability. Poverty alleviation must be combined with “helping the poor”, “helping the will” and “helping the wisdom”, with a two-pronged approach at the level of thought and action. At the ideological level, the government must “inspire the people’s hearts” to boost the confidence and courage of the poor to break away from the poverty situation, and at the practical level, the government must “enlighten the people’s wisdom” by taking appropriate measures to improve the education level of people in poor areas. At the 2015 High Level Forum on Poverty Reduction and Development, Xi Jinping first proposed the “Five Batches” project, of which “education for poverty alleviation”, as an important part, is the fundamental solution for the entire poverty alleviation work, providing an important guarantee of talent and resources for the successful implementation of poverty alleviation work.

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2 The Current Development of Education for Poverty Alleviation

Education for poverty alleviation is a way to alleviate poverty by improving the scientific and cultural quality of the local population to promote local economic and cultural development and eventually escape from poverty through investing in education and providing educational support services for poor areas and poor people, so as to equip them with the knowledge and skills to get out of poverty and become rich [1]. Education for poverty alleviation adheres to the core concept of people-centred and sustainable development, “teaching people to fish is better than teaching them to fish”, and while investing a large amount of financial support, a series of targeted assistance measures have been introduced to poor areas to increase the width and breadth of education for people in poor areas, and a larger scope of basic education to improve. At the same time, different forms of vocational education and skills training are provided according to local conditions, thereby enhancing the social competitiveness and self-improvement of the poor and helping to eliminate the “inter-generational transmission” of poverty. The disappearance of absolute poverty does not mean the end of relative poverty, and the successful conclusion of the battle against poverty in 2020 will usher in the “post-poverty alleviation era”. “In the post-poverty alleviation era, our focus is on consolidating the achievements of poverty eradication, continuously enhancing the ability of people in poor areas to escape poverty, while reducing the risk of poverty return, increasing the income of people in poor areas, effectively improving people’s lives, and allowing the fruits of development to truly benefit all people, in which education plays a vital role in promoting poverty alleviation.

Education is the foundation of a prosperous nation. As the priority of education continues to be strengthened, the concept of education for the people has been put into practice. The state has issued policy documents on education for poverty alleviation, including important development plans or development programmes, as well as special poverty alleviation plans and action programmes. Universities and colleges have been giving full play to their knowledge reserves, talent resources and professional disciplines, linking up with poor areas and actively exporting knowledge, technology and talent resources to the outside world, with institutions of higher education “playing a major role in education precision poverty alleviation and education precision poverty eradication” [2], promoting the smooth development of education poverty alleviation. Vocational education plays an important supportive and fundamental role in the cause of poverty alleviation through education, and vocational colleges and universities should be opened in accordance with local conditions to provide professional talent resources for the cause of poverty alleviation in poor areas. “This has resulted in a poverty alleviation programme with Chinese characteristics and experience, which has provided valuable reference for countries around the world to get rid of poverty.

3 Realistic Dilemmas Faced by Education in Poverty Alleviation in the Post-poverty Era

With the advent of the post-poverty alleviation era, the cause of poverty alleviation through education is also facing higher requirements and more serious challenges. In

order to achieve the new goal of “consolidating and expanding the achievements of poverty eradication, comprehensively promoting the revitalization of the countryside and accelerating the modernization of agriculture and rural areas” [3], the government requires a better solution to the main contradictions that exist in society and a more active stance in facing the various challenges presented to us by the times.

3.1 Poverty Alleviation Subjects: From Monolithic to Diversified

With the further advancement of the cause of poverty eradication, the poor population has shifted from absolute poverty to relative poverty, and the causes of poverty have gradually diversified, and the main body of poverty alleviation, which is composed of a single group and a single source, is also facing diversified challenges. The first is that the simple organisational approach of administrative appointment is facing serious challenges. With the disappearance of absolute poverty, the poor have become more diversified in their approaches and methods of solving relative poverty, which has put forward new requirements for the main body of poverty alleviation. Encouraging and supporting social organisations from various industries and fields to participate in the poverty alleviation team will strengthen the main body of poverty alleviation and make the team more diversified, enhance the talent pool and technical support for education and poverty alleviation, and better meet the poverty alleviation needs of people in poor areas. Secondly, the lack of organic linkage between the various poverty alleviation entities that help designated areas through a single counterpart is not conducive to the mutual exchange of poverty alleviation resources. Each poverty alleviation body has formed its own unique advantages in terms of talents, resources and technology in poverty alleviation work, and strengthening communication and exchange among them can maximise the co-ordination of poverty alleviation resources and maximise the benefits of poverty alleviation, so the government advocate that “various industries and sectors should give full play to their professional advantages and form a social poverty alleviation system with cross-regional, cross-sectoral, cross-unit and community-wide participation”. Finally, the lack of educational resources is a major problem facing the cause of poverty alleviation in education under new historical conditions. Most of the poor areas are located in remote areas, with relatively backward transportation facilities and poor living infrastructure, coupled with the generally low salaries of rural teachers, so it leads to difficulties in attracting high-quality talents. As a result, it is difficult to renew educational resources in poor areas and to improve the quality of teaching, and the development of education is relatively slow.

3.2 Targeted Poverty Alleviation: From Absolute Poverty to Relative Poverty

However, at this stage, both the poverty-alleviation subject and the poverty-alleviation subject themselves are prone to mental slackness and satisfaction with the status quo, and it is difficult for their psychological state to adjust to the change in the status quo of poverty alleviation. As far as the poverty alleviation targets themselves are concerned, they do not have enough motivation for further poverty alleviation and sustainable development. With a large base of rural poor people and poor rural infrastructure such as education, healthcare and sanitation, coupled with the lack of active guidance

from sustainable development policies to alleviate poverty, it is difficult for the poverty alleviation targets to develop the momentum to sustain themselves out of poverty after they have been lifted out of absolute poverty, and they are caught in the whirlpool of relative poverty, so preventing the phenomenon of returning to poverty has become the focus of our work at this stage. At the same time, poverty alleviation work still faces the challenge that the targets of education for poverty alleviation are not clear. As there is a lack of specialised staff to carry out systematic surveys and statistics on the poor in poverty-alleviation areas, most of them are reported by local village and town governments, and are therefore prone to under-reporting and mis-reporting. The results of poverty alleviation work are not truly shared by the people.

3.3 Pathways to Poverty Alleviation: From a Single Physical Capital to a “Three-Dimensional Capital”

From the lineage of anti-poverty theory development, it is generally believed that the progressive ladder of poverty governance can be divided into three stages: material capital paradigm, human capital paradigm and social capital paradigm, which correspond to the three poverty alleviation processes of material base security, human capital appreciation and social network evolution respectively [4]. In the post-poverty alleviation era, our poverty alleviation undertaking is facing a critical period of transition from a single material capital to human and social capital, in which our main tasks are: firstly, to continuously ensure the back-up guarantee of material capital, promote sustained, stable and healthy economic development, and facilitate the continuous increase of farmers' wealth, so as to guarantee the employment and re-employment of the poor. Secondly, to increase the proportion of human capital invested in education and poverty alleviation, to improve the knowledge and employment skills of the poor through relevant poverty alleviation policies, and to enhance their own competitiveness, so as to change the mode of assistance from “blood-making” to “blood transfusion”. Thirdly, the injection of various types of social capital is encouraged, and social capital from various industries and fields is encouraged to invest in the cause of poverty alleviation through education. Relevant universities, institutions and social organisations establish direct contact with the poverty alleviation areas and formulate targeted assistance plans, so as to make their own contribution to helping the poor areas to get out of poverty as soon as possible. Finally, as different regions have their own characteristics in terms of education policies and forms of implementation, it is necessary to develop corresponding poverty alleviation paths according to local conditions and to implement “precise poverty alleviation” at the education level, so as to prescribe the right medicine and implement precise measures to solve the poverty problem in a targeted manner.

4 Practical Paths for the Successive Development of Education for Poverty Alleviation

Now that poverty alleviation work has reached a stage of victory and society has entered a new stage of development, the working methods and practical paths of education for

poverty alleviation should be adjusted and optimised accordingly to meet the development requirements of society. Education needs to be integrated into the trend of leading the common prosperity and revitalising the countryside in a more active manner, so this requires a more scientific and refined working concept and working method for poverty alleviation in education, and the whole working paradigm needs to be improved and optimised, so as to consolidate the existing achievements in poverty eradication and “better play the comprehensive function of education as a cure to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty, the government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) has been working on this issue for a number of years, and has been working on this issue for a number of years” [5].

4.1 Innovating the Theoretical Framework for Poverty Alleviation Through Education and Improving the Policy System for Poverty Alleviation Through Education

As a complex social phenomenon, research on poverty involves sociology, economics, anthropology and many other fields. The representative ones in foreign countries include Marxist anti-poverty theory, “income redistribution”, “trickle-down effect”, “empowerment” and “human capital”. The existing studies on anti-poverty in China are mostly focused on the introduction of foreign research results and their application of countermeasures. Looking at the history of poverty alleviation in China over the years, eliminating poverty and achieving common prosperity are the ardent expectations of the people, and education to alleviate poverty is an important grasp of the poverty alleviation cause. Therefore, the government should base on the specific practice of education, learn from foreign experience, and innovate the theoretical framework for poverty alleviation in education, such as the theory of “helping the will” and “helping the wisdom”, the theory of precise poverty alleviation at the education level, and other theories with Chinese characteristics. These theories provide a solid theoretical foundation for the cause of poverty alleviation in education. At the same time, the state and the government have introduced corresponding policies to alleviate poverty through education, which is a key tool to eliminate poverty. “Under the unremitting efforts of the Party and the State, China’s major education poverty alleviation policies cover basic education, secondary education, higher education, vocational education, special education, ethnic education, as well as poverty alleviation policies and funding systems for teachers” [6]. In the post-poverty alleviation era, education policies to alleviate poverty should be in line with the development of education and education teaching reform, and should play the leading role of the government in it, while at the same time focusing on the poverty alleviation targets themselves, combining their actual needs with precise measures to improve their own competitiveness. The government should be able to look at the practical activities of poverty alleviation through an open, developmental and dialectical lens, so as to forge a consensus and jointly promote the cause of poverty alleviation through education.

4.2 Tapping Emerging Resources for Poverty Alleviation Through Education

In the process of steadily promoting the cause of poverty alleviation through education, the main body of education is an important backbone, but due to the poor infrastructure

in some poor areas, the low basic salary of rural teachers, and the government's insufficient publicity for education assistance in poor areas, etc., the composition of education resources for poverty alleviation in poor areas is single and the number is tight, so it is urgent to explore new resources for poverty alleviation through education. Firstly, a group of teaching talents with solid theoretical skills, high business ability and strong service consciousness can be selected from universities, and they can be given theoretical publicity and guidance so that they can voluntarily take root at the grassroots level, so as to enrich and optimise the pool of educational talents in poor areas and serve the cause of poverty alleviation through education. Secondly, the country should actively mobilise relevant government agencies, research institutes, party and government organs, and social organisations to participate in the education poverty alleviation army, using their own resource advantages to "advise" on the cause of education poverty alleviation and strengthen the education poverty alleviation resource team. Finally, a collaborative exchange platform with the participation of multiple organisations should be set up to establish effective communication channels and sound mechanisms for various education poverty alleviation organisations to facilitate the timely sharing of information and resources, and to help form a long-term support mechanism in which different bodies can work together to support and promote each other.

4.3 Vocational Education and Rural Basic Education at the Same Time

Vocational education is an important means to serve today's socio-economic development, to train front-line talents and to improve employment competitiveness. Xi Jinping pointed out that "if a child from a poor family can receive vocational education, master a skill and be employed, there is hope for this household to get out of poverty" [7], vocational education, as an important means of education to alleviate poverty, has significant advantages such as significant effect of poverty eradication; direct effect of poverty eradication, etc. Vocational education cultivates talents with a short cycle, and after a period of skills training, they can take up corresponding jobs and join the front line of local social and economic development, promoting the development of the local economy. However, vocational education is mostly short-term skills training, so it is difficult to have a sustainable impact on social and economic development, which is a drawback that is difficult to overcome. Therefore, the government need to develop vocational education as well as rural basic education to realise the long-term effectiveness of education in poverty alleviation. "Basic education is in a basic and pioneering position in the national education system, and the government should strengthen our support for basic education, provide good pre-school education, develop nine-year compulsory education in a balanced manner, and basically popularise senior secondary education" [8]. Although the effect of developing rural basic education is not significant in a short period of time, this education policy to help the poor is focused on the overall development of people as well as the long-term development of the country, thus making a steady effort to consolidate the results of poverty eradication and achieve a better life for the people.

4.4 Promoting the Development of Information Technology in Education

At the 2015 International Conference on Education Informatization, Xi Jinping said, “The country will vigorously develop education informatization to promote educational equity” [9]. With the rapid development of science and technology in today’s society, the Internet is also playing an increasingly important role in the education industry. Online live lectures, online video conferencing and e-learning resources are gradually being used by the majority of teachers and students, proving the feasibility and effectiveness of education informatization construction. From the perspective of poverty alleviation in education, the construction of education informatization is an important boosting force, which can provide a large number of high-quality educational resources, and teachers and students can break the original traditional sense of teaching, and achieve cross-territory and cross-time zone communication, thus making up for the lack of educational resources in poor areas. At the same time, education teams from different industries, fields and professions can be formed with the help of the Internet to strengthen the education teacher team for poverty alleviation. The relevant teams can launch online training through the Internet regardless of time, space and geographical restrictions, and improve the overall quality of the teacher team. Therefore, the rational use of education information technology is a powerful helper in the development of vocational education and rural basic education, and is an important guarantee for the successful completion of the cause of education poverty alleviation.

5 Conclusion

The cause of poverty alleviation in education is a long way to go, and the country still need to work together to learn from our experiences and lessons in the process of continuous practice, and to move forward. Our country should contribute to the building of a community of human destiny.

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