



The Educational Inequality of Exceptional Children in China and Latin America

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Abstract. The concept of inclusion is widely accepted, but special groups are still often marginalized, which include deafness, blindness, etc. This paper will use the comparative method to compare the current situation of children with special needs in the two regions from three aspects of inclusive education, family, and social support, hoping to provide effective information for future research. Through comparison, this paper found schools, teachers, and families see special children as a burden. In inclusive education, the lack of special equipment and the lack of professional knowledge of teachers has resulted in the inability of many children with special needs to receive an education. Families with special children are more impoverished because of expensive treatment costs, so many family members will abandon special children. Social support for special children is also very limited. The most widely supported special children are generally deaf children and blind children. Others, such as sensory integration disorders, emotional disorders, autism, bipolar disorder, and other children, can hardly enjoy it. to social support. The disadvantaged groups of children with special needs can affect their physical and mental development, but research shows that children with special needs can be unparalleled treasures if they are nurtured in the right way.

Keywords: Exceptional children · Educational Inequality · China · Latin America

1 Introduction

Exceptional children refer to those who are significantly deviated from normal physical, social, emotional, or intellectual characteristics and require special guidance and services. This group includes people who have physical disabilities, mental retardation, language impairments, visual impairments, deafness and hearing impairments, social or emotional impairments, and people with superior intelligence [1].

In this case, special groups of children have always been in a vulnerable position and often ignored. With the progress of education, people gradually began to pay attention to this group and try to find a suitable way for their upbringing. However, due to the influence of culture, economy, concept, professional level of teachers, and other factors, exceptional children always face great challenges and discrimination. This paper will analyze and discuss the unequal treatment of exceptional children from three aspects

(i.e., inclusive education, social support, and family) in China and Latin America, to deepen people's understanding of exceptional children.

1.1 China

1.1.1 Inclusive Education

In China, there are two basic kinds of schooling for SEND children like LRC (regular classroom study, in-class study) and special schools. Because it encourages mainstream schools to enroll children with disabilities and make appropriate adjustments to suit their requirements, the LRC is considered China's indigenous practice of inclusive education. According to the most recent data, 50.15% of disabled students in China's primary and secondary schools are enrolled in regular schools through the LRC.

However, schools are increasingly striving for excellence under the influence of neoliberal education policies, with the goal of helping students to get into the top universities through the gaokao and pushing the brightest pupils to flourish. The obsession with worldwide education rankings, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment, puts great pressure on schools to strictly focus on specific areas of education, like Mathematics, Chinese, English, and other courses. As a result, children with SEND are more likely to be stigmatized, marginalized, and disadvantaged, as they are often seen as unpromising and uncompetitive in terms of academic attainment and economic output.

According to studies, inclusive education curricula are not truly inclusive. Curricula have traditionally been created for most normally developing children across the world, with an emphasis on teaching academic abilities and developing other soft skills. However, children with SEND need additional courses which include interpersonal, learning, organization, and life skills that may need to be explicitly taught in addition to academic courses for children with SEND.

Instructors play a critical role in inclusive education in this scenario, but, children with emotional and behavioral issues are often discriminated against by some teachers who may have a negative attitude toward these children, and label them "bad, crazy, and unhappy." Children with behavioral difficulties were likely to be unwelcomed in both special schools and conventional primary schools. Mand's Teachers may be hesitant to incorporate disabled pupils into the classroom [2]. When a major exam is scheduled at school, the instructor urges low-performing impaired students to "go somewhere else" and refuses to allow them to take the test which can prevent these students to lower the class average [3].

At the same time, China's attention to exceptional children is insufficient, and the majority of Chinese teachers lack professional training, leaving them helpless in the face of exceptional children, unable to provide personalized learning for those children or manage such variability within the classroom [4, 5].

1.1.2 Family

Following the discussion of inclusive education, the family is a crucial factor to examine. According to the SNSDP, China has around 5 million handicapped children. The most prevalent types of retardation are mental retardation and multiple retardations. In

rural regions, there are more males with impairments than girls, and there are more exceptional kids in rural areas than in urban areas. In addition, the report shows that the majority of kids have low levels of support needs. Families with children who are disabled are disproportionately vulnerable and disadvantaged. Around 75% of children with disabilities live in poor rural areas, which results in limited or no access to some of the devices available to them.

Children with impairments are occasionally killed or abandoned in severe instances. Every year, more than 10,000 children in China are abandoned by their parents, and more than 90% of abandoned children in China's major cities have impairments. Crippled females fared worse: the sex ratio of impaired boys to disabled girls was 1:1.41, implying that disabled boys were more likely to live than disabled girls.

Studies show that some parents stigmatize disabled children and neglect or even abuse them. At the same time, many parents cannot afford the high cost of treatment, so many children with special needs do not get timely help at an early age, which makes their adult life very difficult [3].

According to research, children with impairments are frequently excluded from good social interactions with other children and are discriminated against by peers, adults, and family members [3].

Discrimination has a negative impact on families with disabled children, resulting in lower economic status, strained family connections, lower social standing, and social isolation. In China, many rural families with impaired children have poor wages and education levels. Furthermore, they are more likely to have children than other families. In the absence of a structured social assistance system, a handicapped child's family takes complete responsibility for his or her care and finances.

1.1.3 Social Support

Several studies have found that China lacks a social assistance system for families with impaired children that is comparable to those in the West. Most public health care does not cover children, and local schools lack the resources to fulfill the unique requirements of children with special needs.

The influence of a lack of social support on child development demonstrates that children with disabilities are substantially more likely than children without impairments to be illiterate or not attend school. Surprisingly, the proportion of children with disabilities who are illiterate or out of school in urban regions is greater than in rural areas, despite the tendency for better urban development than in rural ones. Until 2003, China implemented the policy of "miscellaneous fee exemption, textbook exemption, and boarding subsidy" for disabled students in rural nine-year compulsory education. However, if disabled students do not conform to the school's code of conduct, this subsidy will be canceled artificially by teachers or schools [3].

Many children with disabilities find it difficult to attend school due to a lack of facilities and professionally trained teachers. In addition to educational support, children with disabilities need other developmental supports such as health assessments, rehabilitation training, financial support, and special education.

1.2 Latin America

1.2.1 Inclusive Education

Studies show that there are more than eight million children and adolescents with disabilities in Latin America; Seventy percent of them do not attend school, and 50,000 are accommodated [6]. At present, the largest percentage of children in education comes from the upper socio-economic classes, urban areas, and non-Indian populations. More urban children attend special education classes than rural children because there are almost no facilities in rural areas. Since most Indians are uneducated and live in rural areas, their disabled children rarely receive special education. Most children in special education classes are between the ages of five and twelve. Few children with disabilities have attended primary school and almost none have attended university.

Teachers play a critical role in the growth and success of inclusive education. However, in today's Latin America, inclusive education does not address the requirements of children and adolescents, nor does it allow teachers to develop professional skills via training. Currently, teachers in Latin America generally face two challenges: one is the low-status of teachers, and the other is the lack of teacher education [7].

Teaching was once seen as a privileged and respectable vocation in Latin America, but this has since altered. Today, teaching is frequently connected with unpleasant sensations such as job overload, weariness, and worry about one's ability to operate. Teachers in public schools are overwhelmingly poor, with some having just rudimentary capabilities. Furthermore, instructors in Latin America are frequently underpaid, posing a barrier to outstanding individuals entering the field. In rural places where the poorest pupils are educated in multi-grade settings, the situation is much more challenging. In most Latin American nations, sending the least qualified instructors to these off-the-beaten-path locations, where housing and general living conditions are insufficient, and teachers have little or no touch with their colleagues, is standard procedure. Once they've gained enough experience, these instructors are frequently transferred to more desired schools in densely populated locations, guaranteeing that the poorest pupils are served by the least competent teachers. Teaching is a less respected job than other occupations.

Teachers' inferiority and discontent are directly related to their low standing. Around one-third of primary school teachers in Latin America lack the requisite training to fulfill their jobs effectively. Only 64% of primary school teachers in Guatemala and Peru have received suitable skills training. Training programs for special education teachers are few and limited. Some courses are attached to institutions that train teachers in nurseries or family kindergartens, while others are in normal schools. Medical personnel working in special education are well trained, but naturally regard special education as a major medical issue and rarely provide trainee teachers with any clinical experience, practical teaching, or supervised practice in the particular field they are expected to teach. Obviously, this leads to the separation of theory from practice, with theory divorced from reality and practice not based on scientific principles. Most Latin American countries try to create special education curricula parallel to the general primary school curriculum. Therefore, these courses are highly academic and almost have no professional significance. At the same time, the country also lacks a special teacher training plan and a special teacher certification system. It is the lack of professional knowledge that leads to the negative attitude of teachers towards special students. Certain students claim that

lecturers exaggerate persons with impairments due to a lack of awareness of particular groups, according to some interviews. When faced with exceptional kids, teachers are unsure of how to instruct them. Education in Mexico is either extremely terrible or very horrible, whether affluent or poor, according to a Mexican researcher [8] As a result, it is apparent that Latin American instructors require additional training to face the issues provided by children and young people from disadvantaged groups. And young people from disadvantaged groups [9].

1.2.2 Family

Latinos represent the largest minority population in the United States and are among the fastest-growing groups with autism [10]. Disability is a complex condition that affects both individuals and their families. It diminishes individual and family income and has an impact on the options accessible to people with disabilities and their families. For example, when another family member undertakes to care for a disabled person, this reduces the overall level of paid employment undertaken by family members and directly affects the ultimately available income of the family. Studies show that families with disabilities are more likely to suffer from multidimensional poverty than those without disabilities [11].

1.2.3 Social Support

Support for special education in Latin America comes mainly from four sources: lotteries, gifts, national governments, and international agencies. Some of the most successful projects have been supported by lotteries, such as work for the blind in Guatemala. Land, buildings, equipment, or money provided by parents and interested citizens of children with disabilities is a major source of support in some countries. Some governments have given little support to certain areas of special education. This is often in medical areas such as polio, where special education classrooms may be attached to hospitals. Most special education institutions in Latin America are built in buildings that are too small, equipped, and designed inefficiently and poorly maintained. Most of them were built as private homes [11].

Blind, deaf, and mentally disabled people were among the first groups to receive special facilities. Until now, attention has been focused on these disability areas. Educational facilities for persons with disabilities, social disorders, language and emotional disabilities exist but are highly restricted. There are no facilities for children with special health problems or for the intellectually gifted. Most special education programs do not have adequate facilities, materials, or educational equipment, especially in relatively backward rural areas.

2 Conclusion

TO sum up, there are many similarities in the treatment of exceptional children between China and Latin America. (1) In inclusive education, teachers have a negative attitude toward exceptional children, and most of them have not received special training to deal with these exceptional children;

(2) In terms of social support, China's policy for special children started late and is not perfect enough. In rural or poor areas, teachers and schools may decide whether to grant legal aid to special groups based on students' performance in school. In Latin America, social support for special groups mainly comes from private aid, and government support for special areas is minimal. And in Latin America, only a small proportion of children with special needs are covered, such as deafness, visual impairment, and intellectual disabilities. Other types of special groups are severely neglected.

(3) Families in both regions showed discrimination against exceptional children. Families with special children exacerbate poverty because of the high cost of treatment and the inadequacy of social assistance. Parents may feel shame and regard disabled children as a burden and burden. Abuse and abandonment are common.

Overall, many surveys and studies show that although inclusion has become a mainstream concept accepted by the world, it is still difficult to support and respect special children in developing countries, and most people still regard special children as a burden. But exceptional children can become productive members of society if given the right guidance and treatment. There is still a long way to go about the right to education, human rights, and social welfare of special groups. Everyone should face up to this problem. Society, schools, teachers, and families should focus on special groups rather than choose to marginalize them.

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